SENSORY PERCEPTION, RELIGIOUS RITUAL AND REFORMATION IN GERMANY,
1428-1564

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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes religious ritual in fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany. It argues that the history of ritual behavior in this period discloses what can be described as a cultural ‘reformation of the senses.’ Previous histories of religious behavior in this period have approached their subject through the lens of discourse analysis or visual culture. By contrast, this dissertation outlines a phenomenological approach which attends to the dynamic relationships between ritual practice and all five senses. This dissertation shows that in the fifteenth century, rituals of traditional Christianity explicitly appealed to all five senses, building on understandings of perception drawn from late medieval philosophy and everyday practices. The early Protestant Reformation in sixteenth century Germany re-formulated this paradigm by shifting emphasis to the role of vision and hearing in normative ritual practice. While understandings and uses of the senses in the sixteenth century demonstrate many continuities with the fifteenth century in the quotidian realm, the senses of smell, taste and touch were excluded from religious practice, or de-sacralized.

This dissertation demonstrates this argument using a variety of source materials. Manuscript and printed prayer books, material culture, images, ego-documents, personal estate inventories, and church inventories demonstrate the sensory diversity of religious practice in late medieval and early modern Germany. Church ordinances, sermons, ecclesiastical visitation reports, court cases, and polemical treatises highlight the continuities and ruptures in the normative practice of religion during this period. This dissertation contributes principally to two fields of study: 1) the historical study of the Protestant Reformation, with emphasis on its origins in the fifteenth century; 2) the historical study of sensory perception in Western European culture, which to date has largely overlooked the German Reformation as a period of significant change.
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Abbreviations

BSB = Bayerisches Staatsbibliothek
GNM = Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg
HASTK = Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln
MMB = Mainz Martinus-Bibliothek
MSWB = Mainz Stadtbibliothek – Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek
MVGN = Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg
NSB = Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg
StadtAN = Stadtarchiv Nürnberg
StAN = Staatsarchiv Nürnberg
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Introduction: A Reformation of the Senses

In the 1530s, an anonymous author remembered the five senses, “which we had in the old, true Christian faith.” Written in the free imperial city of Biberach, the manuscript likely reflected the tendency of fifteenth century catechetical texts to include a brief section on the five senses alongside the Ten Commandments, seven sacraments, and seven deadly sins. At the same time, however, it reflects one of the central cultural transformations wrought by the Protestant Reformation in Germany. Biberach, like many other cities in southern Germany, had been the site of religious conflict in the 1520s, culminating in destruction of the high altar in the city’s parish church and the prohibition of the Catholic mass at the end of the decade. The author of the manuscript wrote after these events, and while the Reformation did not objectively remove the five senses from the church, the ritual changes introduced by Reformers contributed to this widespread perception.

The Biberach manuscript tends to reinforce the notion of the Reformation as a desensualizing force in Christian worship, describing in elegiac fashion the ritual life of the city before the arrival of Protestantism. The descriptions of the various words, gestures, objects, and participants in church rituals all clearly indicated the rich variety and aesthetic appeal of the church as it had been ‘in the good old days.’ Since its re-discovery in the late nineteenth century, historians and scholars of German folk culture have considered the manuscript to be an ‘unmediated’ picture of ritual practice on the eve of the Reformation. Scholars have also largely

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accepted the narrative progression of sensual medieval worship giving way to a new, ‘de-
sensualized’ mode of Reformation worship.³

This study begins by asking a naïve question: how could one historical context be ‘less’
sensual than another? Unless one rejects the rather mundane observation that the senses mediate
every relation between mind, body, and world, it seems rather that, as Marx put it, all human
history down to the present is nothing if not a “forming of the five senses.”⁴ The senses occupy
the center of historical experience. As such, it is more accurate for historians to discuss how a
given culture elaborates a particular understanding of the five senses and creates a field of
possibilities for exercising them. Analyzing these patterns for change over time eschews de-
sensualization and instead comprehends cultural-historical change in terms of sensory ratios, or
sensoria. This study is an attempt to come to terms with the relationship between religious ritual
and the sensorium of fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany.

Historiographically, study of the sensorium is significant because it addresses and re-
frames in a fundamental way two of the central axes of analysis in the cultural study of the
Reformation: depth and coherence. John Bossy identified these axes in an article now regarded
as the classical explication of the Mass ritual. First, he asked what historians could know about
the depth of church-goers’ appreciation of the sociological and theological import of the ritual,
advancing that most participants were neither sufficiently educated, nor attentive to what was
happening at the altar. Second, Bossy wondered whether it was possible for historians to
interpret the rejection of traditional Christian rituals by sixteenth century reformers as a coherent,

³ See, for example, Carlos Eire, War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Susan Karant-Nunn, Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of
Early Modern Germany (New York: Routledge, 1997), esp. her discussion of the Mass (pp. 107-137). Thomas
im Umbruch, 1400-1600, ed. Bernhard Jussen and Craig Koslofsky (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999),
29-67.
“clearly envisaged” rejection of their sociological and theological implications.\(^5\) Since its publication Bossy’s questions about depth and coherence have informed the rubric of what one might call a cultural-anthropological turn in Reformation historiography. Cultural studies of Reformation history have turned away from more traditional theological or intellectual modes of analysis to focus on problems of ritual and symbolic thinking, often examining them through the interpretive lens of cultural anthropology of the 1960s and 1970s. Making use of the insights of scholars such as Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, historians have offered many compelling answers to Bossy’s questions.\(^6\) Through their work, we now have a richer, more complex picture of the cultural sinews that bound together the sixteenth century religious Reformations and the history of ritual changes during this period.\(^7\)

Nonetheless, these studies impart certain verbal and visual biases from the interpretive models which they follow. Absorbing methods of reading behavior as text, “thick description,” or, in Bossy’s case, “envisaging” the past, such analyses tend to overlook a whole range of experience fundamental to ritual practices. As anthropologists studying sensory perception have recently turned critical attention onto these interpretive models, they have demonstrated that especially in ritual contexts, “understandings are deliberately left unsaid and instead


communicated via the manipulation of multisensory objects." The purpose of this dissertation is to re-frame questions about depth and coherence in fifteenth- and sixteenth century German ritual by utilizing the interpretive tools of sensory anthropology and history. I approach the subject not as a text to be read, but rather as an articulation of how a group of people sensed the world, in which “body, meaning, media and message are intimately intertwined.”

My principal object of analysis is the multiple sensory modes in which ritual appealed to church-goers from approximately the middle of the fifteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century. My central questions are: how did fifteenth century churchgoers use and understand their senses, and in what ways, if any, did the early Protestant reformation reorient the late medieval sensory paradigm? The answer to these questions discloses a long term shift in the sensorium, which refers to the “proportional elaboration of the senses within a particular cultural logic.” Before the Reformation, religious ritual explicitly articulated an understanding of the senses drawn from late medieval philosophy and from everyday practices. Ritual appealed to all five senses in a variety of ways. The early Reformation in Germany changed this. Protestant reformers did not reject traditional sensory theories, and indeed in many cases relied upon them in their criticisms of traditional practices, yet they fundamentally altered the ways in which churchgoers sensually interacted with their structured ritual environment. This new model emphasized visual and aural engagement to the exclusion of the other so-called ‘lower’ senses of smell, taste, and touch. One consequence of this move, I claim, was the de-sacralization of these three senses.

Understandings and uses of these senses in the sixteenth century demonstrate

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9 Ibid, 34.
11 Scribner described de-sacralization comprising several elements, including objects, people, and institutions. He writes: “A world structured around the efficacious power of the Catholic cult and ritual becomes for the evangelical
continuity with the late medieval paradigm in the profane quotidian realm, but in normative ritual practice, the Reformation attenuated the power of these senses to evoke the divine. An intensification of the sacramental efficacy of the senses of vision and hearing in Reformation worship complemented the de-sacralization of the lower senses. These developments represent the main contours of what I call a “reformation of the senses” in late medieval German religious culture.

The Five Senses in Ritual Theory: Modern & Medieval

In this dissertation ritual is both an object of analysis and a tool for excavating sensory understandings of the past. The definition of ritual used here builds on the work of practice theorists Pierre Bourdieu and Catherine Bell. Bell and Bourdieu avoid reification of rituals by considering them as processes of generating “culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane,’ and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors.”12 Because the focus is on the production of strategies, the chief analytical questions for ritual studies become how some activities achieve differentiation, and what they accomplish in doing so.

Rituals achieve differentiation through the interplay of the quotidian, the body, and the symbolically structured ritual environment.13 The quotidian is anything ‘in the world,’ that is to

believer both an anomaly and a danger to the world as a whole. The restructuring of this world is a necessity, most effectively carried out with the removal of the old religious order and the establishment of a new. The reordering of matters such as images, relics, the church hierarchy, etc., both removed them from their position of authority and demonstrated the effective loss of their spiritual power. They took their place within a structure of being where they were symbolically indifferent.” In Popular Culture and Popular Movements, 97.

12 Catherine Bell, Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice (Oxford, 2009), 74. See also Ibid, 7, 101, 140-142.
13 Ibid, 90-93.
say, practical activity and practical consciousness outside the ritual environment. This includes the concrete indices of daily life found in medical practice, food-ways, art and material culture, among others, as well as their elaboration in scientific, philosophical, and religious discourse. The body refers in the first instance not to a discursive production, but to a concrete, physical presence. Certainly, as a locus of social experience and a medium for the internalization and reproduction of values, discourse impinges on the body, but biological process also plays a role. For the purposes of analysis, ‘the body’ means the body prior to its socialization in ritual contexts. Finally, the symbolically structured ritual environment denotes the space in which the ritual is performed, the objects manipulated in its performance, the physical movements of participants, and the hierarchical ordering of participants.

The triangulation between quotidian, bodily, and structured ritual environment produces a socially informed body, or a body with a “sense of ritual,” which designates an intuitive understanding of the appropriate ways for acting in a given cultural context. This is distinct from the communicative or linguistic function occasionally assigned to rituals. Ritual practice, as Bourdieu suggests, always “falls short of discourse” in that it never explicitly articulates its own internal logic. The object of analysis is not properly speaking the meaning of what the ritual

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14 Ibid, 69-74. For practical consciousness, see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 29-34, 130-131. Because language too is a practical activity involved in all human production, its fixing or reduction into forms in literature is also an inherently practical and social activity, and therefore practical consciousness. This means that there is no such thing as a purely isolated theoretical consciousness; only consciousness always already existing in the material elements of language, or as Williams puts it, “agitated layers of air, sounds” (34).


16 Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 120. He writes further: “the language of the body, whether articulated in gestures or, a fortiori, in what psychosomatic medicine calls “the language of the organs,” is incomparably more ambiguous and more overdetermined than the most overdetermined uses of ordinary language. This is why ritual “roots” are always broader and vaguer than linguistic roots, and why the gymnastics of ritual, like dreams, always seems richer than the verbal translations, at once unilateral and arbitrary, that may be given of it. Words, however charged with connotation, limit the range of choices and render difficult or impossible, and in any case explicit and therefore “falsifiable,” the relations which the language of the body suggests. It follows that simply by bringing to the level of discourse – as one must, if one wants to study it scientifically – a practice which owes a number of its properties to the fact that it falls short of
says or symbolizes, but “that first and foremost it does things.” To confront ritual is to engage the things it does and the objects it manipulates and in so doing reconstruct the socially informed body “with its tastes and distastes, its compulsions and repulsions with, in a word, all its senses.” Bourdieu refers here to a variety of ‘senses’ including those of direction, reality, beauty, and morality, but in the first instance he means the bodily senses – as he puts it “the traditional five senses.” This dissertation limits itself to these five bodily senses, and the manner in which they define and organize relations between the quotidian, the body, and the structured ritual environment. In this way, we see the senses as “means of apprehending physical phenomena, but also avenues for the transmission of cultural values.”

This perspective on ritual resonates with late medieval perspectives. Prior to the thirteenth century, the Neoplatonic position on the senses articulated by Augustine (354-430 CE) had been orthodox. The senses functioned as a means for the soul to extend itself outside the body in order to collect information about its physical surroundings. In religious contexts, the ideal was to transcend rather than manipulate the senses. The emerging meta-narrative of sensory history points to thirteenth century thinkers such as Roger Bacon, Thomas Aquinas, and Robert Grosseteste as essentially ‘inverting’ the Neoplatonic paradigm, and replacing sensory extramission with sensory intromission. Intromission was based on a synthesis of Aristotelian physiology and faculty psychology, Arabic and Euclidean geometry, and Galenic medicine. The theory posited that objects emitted species which imprinted themselves on passive perceiving discourse (which does not mean it is short on logic) one subjects it to nothing less than a change in ontological status the more serious in its theoretical consequences because it has every chance of passing unnoticed.”

17 Bell, Ritual Theory, 111.
18 Bourdieu, Outline, 124.
19 Ibid.
subjects. This assumption formed the basis of a fairly coherent sensory culture from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{21}

In this context, the late medieval senses were both \textit{ontological} and \textit{phenomenological}.\textsuperscript{22} We locate the basis of this interpretation in Aquinas’ theory of the human as a hylomorphic entity composed of a unity of body and soul. The body accounted for the substance, or matter, of being, while in its role as immaterial form the soul acted as a kind of meeting point between the corporeal, intellectual, and spiritual worlds.\textsuperscript{23} The project of thinkers like Aquinas was to understand the interaction between body and soul in a manner that integrated the facts of ordinary conscious experience with the best available metaphysics and natural philosophy.\textsuperscript{24} The five senses played a central role mediating between mind, body, world and divine. Categories such as mental health, physical health, and one’s spiritual state were quite fluid, and often bled into one another. The senses were therefore ontological, or as Aquinas put it “common to everything that participates in life” (\textit{communia omnibus participantibus uitam}). Cognitive and bodily functions and conditions which took place with or through the senses included: sensitive apprehension, imagination, memory, and the appetitive power (will). Aquinas considered states

Matthew Milner, \textit{The Senses and the English Reformation} (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 15-17. One of the most common pieces of evidence cited in support of this claim is the increased use of the image of a seal impressing itself into wax as a metaphor for the act of sensing. See, for example, Mary Carruthers, \textit{The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 69-76.
\textsuperscript{22} We offer this interpretation against that of Milner, who recently has suggested that this era of sensory history, including the Reformation, was ‘empirical.’ While it appears that Milner means it to refer to empiricism in an Aristotelian sense, his reading of the material seems informed by Lockean and post-Lockean empiricism. For the purposes of analysis of late medieval sensory culture, this is problematic insofar that it posits clear separation between categories of consciousness, body, world, subject, and object. See Milner, \textit{Senses}, 1-12. By contrast, we suggest that the late medieval understanding of the senses articulated most extensively by Aquinas resembles much more closely the phenomenological understanding presented by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. See Idem, \textit{Phenomenology of Perception}, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962).
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 46-56.
of sleep and wakefulness to be affections, or “bindings” and “loosings,” of the senses. The stages of life cycle and variable physical conditions reflected and were determined by the relative state of sensory destruction or privation sustained by the body: youth, old age, breathing, life, health, sickness and death all “have to do with whether the sense is in good condition or is weak.”

The act of sensing was phenomenological insofar that it implied consciousness as consciousness of something ready to hand in the world of experience, but not its subjective reconstruction through analytical reflection. As the German bishop and reformer Nicolas Cusanus (1401-1464) wrote: “to apprehend with the intellect is to attain…unto quiddity. For through a sensible tasting, which does not pertain to quiddity of a thing, we perceive, by means of the sense, a pleasing sweetness in the properties external to the quiddity.” Putting aside the intellective process, theorists saw the act of sensing as an affecting and affective relationship between perceived object and perceiving subject. The object was not an unchanging object taken out of nature by perception as later empirical traditions posited; rather it was a correlation with the body and its sensory functions. Aquinas agreed with Aristotle’s classification of this relationship as a kind of “being affected.” Thus, sensible objects fit into five classes – colors, sounds, odors, tastes and touches – corresponding to the sense organs which they affected – eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin.

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25 Aquinas, Sentencia libri de sensu et sensato, in Opera Omnia vol. 45, part 2 (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1985), 9: Primum manifestat quasi per inductionem: predictorum enim quendam cum sensu accidunt, scilicet que pertinent ad cognitionem sensitivam, ut sensus, phantasia et memoria, quendam uero accident per sensum sicut ea que pertinent ad uim appetituam, que mouetur per apprehensionem sensus; aliorum uero, que pertinent et manifestius ad corpus, quendam sunt passiones sensus, scilicet somnus, qui est ligamentum sensus, et uigilia, que est solutio eius, quendam uero sunt habitudines sensus, scilicet iuuentus et senectus, que pertinent ad hoc quod sensus bene se habeant uel debiliter, quendam uero sunt conservaciones et salutaris sensus, scilicet respiratio, vita et sanitas, quendam vero corruptiones et priationes, sciat mores et infirmitas.


27 Aquinas, De sensu, 12.

The act of sensing remained restricted to the particularity of immediate experience (the *hic et nunc* as Aquinas put it), yet at the same time the internal dynamics of faculty psychology meant that sensing could never be fully severed from higher order cognition. The particular sense organ affected by sense data conveyed raw material – or *species* of the observed object – to the internal faculties of common sense, imagination, judgment and memory, from which the intellect abstracted universal concepts; i.e., produced knowledge. Writing in Vienna, Heinrich of Langenstein (d. 1397) advanced two hypotheses explaining the mechanics of this process: 1) sense organs contained a “transparent body” which multiplied the species of external sense data entering the body, which “sensitive spirits” transported along hollow nerves connected to the brain; 2) or the spirits themselves constituted a medium of transparent bodies continuously flowing between sense organ and brain and communicating *simulacra* of sensible things to the common sense or imagination. To be sure, the Aristotelian synthesis was not hegemonic and aspects of it were disputed by Neoplatonists such as Bonaventure, ‘nominalists’ such as Wyclif and Ockham, and later by Protestant reformers such as Philipp Melanchthon. Nonetheless, even among critics, the most basic suppositions about the senses as ontological and phenomenological persisted.

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30 For Melanchthon, see chapter five.
31 Bonaventure observed and elaborated on this extensively in his *Itinerarium mentis in deum*. See The Soul’s *Journey Into God*, trans., Philotheus Böhmer (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993). It may appear somewhat unusual to find Ockham in this list, given the extensive commentary devoted to his rejection of the Aristotelian synthesis of Aquinas. What all these discussions seem to overlook, however, is that this rejection was almost exclusively restricted to the level of higher order cognition which dealt with the internal reconstruction of the object through analytical reflection, particularly the impression of species onto the internal faculties of the mind, and the problem of causation in the so-called ‘intuitive cognition’ of a non-existent (read: divine/God) object. With regard to the ‘lower’ level, he did not break significantly with the late medieval paradigm, contending that with regard to “the origin of cognition, a singular thing is first object of the senses.” *Quodlibeta* Lq.13, quoted in Susan Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18. See also: John Boler, “Ockham on Intuitive Cognition,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 11, no. 1 (January, 1973), 95-106. A. Mark Smith, “Getting the Big Picture in Perspectivist Optics,” *Isis* 72 (1981), 586-89. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 122-146, esp. 139-146. Michael Camille, “Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing,” in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert
The significance of this model extended beyond the boundaries of philosophy and science: it found immediate application in daily life where negotiating the mundane world, especially confronting the problem of sin, was also a problem of making sense. Peter of Limoges was the first to make this connection in his *Moral Treatise on the Eye*. Working shortly after Aquinas’ death (1275-1289), Limoges sought to popularize the new science of vision by demonstrating its applicability in ethics. The *Moral Treatise* brought theoretical insights into conversation with passages from scripture. Although arguing primarily that the eye “contained the edification of souls,” Limoges did not fail to treat the other senses. The two contexts to which he devoted the most attention were the classroom and the banquet hall. Reflecting on the educational system in Paris, he argued that optimal learning occurred through a balanced ratio of hearing and seeing: listening to lectures and disputations was to be balanced against quiet reading of relevant texts. While sexual temptation posed a continuous threat, Limoges was most concerned with sins associated with the pleasures of the table:

…modern people for whose gluttony taste alone does not suffice…want all of their senses inebriated by one chalice. For sight is pleased in the clearness of the wine, touch in its coolness, taste in its flavor, the nose in its odor, and since there is nothing in wine

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33 Ibid, 31-32.
34 Newhauser makes this point in contrast to other medievalists who have contributed ocularcentric readings of Limoges, including those of Biernoff, Nichols, Gumbrecht, and Tachau.
that could please the sense of hearing, they add song, the lyre, and the timbrel, Isaiah 5:

“The lyre and lute and timbrel and flute and wine at your banquets.”

The Moral Treatise cast a long shadow on the sensory culture of the later Middle Ages. It survives in 220 manuscripts, was printed three times in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and four times in the seventeenth century. Moreover, as Newhauser suggests, “by focusing attention on the need to interpret the science of sensory perception ethically, Peter’s text helped make thinking about the senses themselves part of the common cultural work of the pulpit.” Others absorbed and reiterated Limoges’ arguments. It became common to classify sins schematically according to one of the five senses. An anonymous late fifteenth century manuscript offered the following classifications: One sinned by gazing upon beautiful human forms (“schön lüst”) and “anything that is desirable to see.” Sin occurred through the ears when “man reluctantly hears the word of God,” instead preferring to take pleasure in worldly conversation and song. The smells and tastes of good herbs, foods, and drink led to sinful enjoyment of bodily pleasure, while one’s inclinations to touch oneself and others posed a constant threat. Because the senses were the soul’s gateways to the world, they were necessarily gateways to the seven sins.

36 Limoges, Tractatus moralis de oculo (Augsburg: Anton Sorg, 1476) [unpaginated, chapter 8, subchapter 6]: “ingluiuem modernorum, quibus non tantum sapor sufficit gule, sed volunt vt omnes sensus eodem inebrientur calice. Delectatur enim visus in claritate, tactus in frigiditate, gustus in sapore, nasus in odore, et quia non est in vino quod delectet auditum, assumunt canticum liram et tympanum, Ysaie v: ‘Lira et cythara et tympanum et tybia et vinum in conuiuijs vestris.’” Quoted in Newhauser, “Peter of Limoges,” footnote 14. In many ways, this seems to bear out Caroline Walker Bynum’s argument that food and eating – not sex and money – were the primary symbolic grounds on which questions of sin, salvation and divine encounter were elaborated in the later Middle Ages. See Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 1-2.
37 Ibid, 34.
39 Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, HS Md 277 (ca. 1501), fols. 1r-v.
40 Ibid, 1v-3r.
This was a common theme among popular preachers on the eve of the Reformation. In Strasbourg, Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510), perhaps the most important German preacher of reform before the Protestant Reformation, used illustrative tales from Scripture to demonstrate the moral imperative of disciplining (Zähmung) the senses. In his sermons he frequently referred to the story of King David gazing upon the bathing Bathsheba, which he claimed demonstrated how “death got in through the windows of his eyes.” While David’s path to death and sin was visual, Kaysersberg made clear that the world posed the same threat through all sensory modalities. “Objects,” he wrote:

> go into a man through the windows of his five senses so that he becomes moved towards them and the desirous force strikes, such that he would have otherwise never pondered them. Thus speaks the prophet Jeremiah: my eye has robbed my soul when death entered through the windows…My eye saw and because of evil and opulence I desired. Thus my eye robbed my soul of the virtues and graces of the Lord. Therefore, death got in through the windows of my five senses.41

Kaysersberg followed St. Augustine in suggesting that the ideal solution to this problem was to withdraw from outward sensible things and focus inwardly on contemplation of God. Yet he understood the practical challenge of such a demand. The most realistic expectation for most was mastery or taming of the senses.42

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More problematically however, it was undeniable that the five senses were also divine gifts and it was not possible, or in some circumstances desirable, to withdraw from them completely. Limoges’ argument for the optimal sensory ratio of seeing and hearing in education became a commonplace on the eve of the Reformation. As Dürer wrote in 1510, vision was “the noblest of all senses,” but could not be separated from hearing, for people “grasp something even better when it is both heard and seen.” In Nuremberg, this understanding of the senses formed the basis of the educational model before the Reformation. As Klaus Leder asserts, catechesis in churches, homes, and schools before the Reformation was principally a matter of blending communal and individual listening to sermons and lectures, singing, praying, recitation, and observing the practice of the sacraments and liturgy. Working in cooperation with Melanchthon in Wittenberg to effect this transformation, Nuremberg became a model and laboratory of educational reform in the sixteenth century.

The role of the five senses in the daily maintenance of bodily health ran parallel to their role in spiritual edification. Indeed, the two domains were closely intertwined, and boundaries between the bodily and spiritual were quite porous, as late fifteenth century regimens suggested. In particular, the proximity senses of smell, taste and touch were common avenues for the delivery of treatments. In the absence of a doctor, health regimens recommended first taking the pulse in order to discover the illness, and second to mix various fragrant waters for the patient.

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43 Albrecht Dürer, “Die Entwürfe zu dem enzyklopädischen “Werk Speis der Malerknaben,” in Albrecht Dürer, Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe, ed. Max Steck (Stuttgart, 1961), 204: “...der alleredelste Sinn der Menschen ist das Gesicht...So aber beides, gesehen und gehoert wird, so fassen wir das desto kräftiger. Darum will reden und vormachen, auf dass man’s desto besser fassen und merken möge.”
45 As with the Aristotelian theory of the senses, the senses in pre-modern medical practice extends back to antiquity. Galen, above all, is considered the founding authority on the five-sense medical sensorium. Many of his theories remained current through the seventeenth century. See William F. Bynum and Roy Porter, eds., Medicine and the Five Senses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
46 Versehung von Leib, Seele, Ehre und Gut (Nuremberg: Peter Wagner, 1489), fol. 58v.
Such texts often classified illnesses according to the sensory organs which they afflicted, and recommended corresponding treatments. For afflictions of the nose, for example, salves composed of various fragrant substances such as incense were plugged into the nostril, while intensely sweet syrups treated diseases of the tongue, mouth and digestive system. Aerial theories of contagion became widespread in the later Middle Ages, and the idea that foul winds communicated disease gave rise to common use of fumigants not only in times of plague, but also in the day-to-day maintenance of health. Such afflictions were forms of divine flagellation for sinful behavior on earth, and health regimens conscientiously brought together the moral and bodily universes by including prayers for those on their deathbeds: “Almighty, eternal, good and merciful God, I confess to you and to the priests in the city of God all my sins which I have committed against you, especially where I have used my five senses…against your divine will [and] against the salvation of my soul.”

Given the understanding of body, soul, and senses that permeated late medieval practical consciousness and practical activity, it is not surprising to find it at the foundations of liturgical theory. Authors were quite explicit about these connections, arguing that maintenance of the body and soul was an exercise in keeping the senses oriented “towards good things,” above all, the seven sacraments of the church. The sacraments were by definition “sensible things,” as Aquinas explained:

it is connatural to man that he arrive at knowledge of intelligible things by way of the sensible. But a sign is that by which someone comes into knowledge of something else.

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47 Ibid, fols. 41r, 59v.
49 Versehung, fol. 149r-v: Almectiger ewiger gütiger vnd parmherzygerr got ich beken mich gen dir vnd gen euch priester an der stat gotes aller meiner sünd so ich wider dich ye gethone habe besunder wo ich mei fünft sin mit Sehen mit Horen, Greyffe, Geen vnd Sthen wider deinen göttlichenn willen vnd vnd wider meiner sele heil gepraucht.”
50 HS Md 277, 3v-4v.
Hence, since sacred things which are signified by the sacraments are spiritual and intelligible goods by which man is sanctified, it follows that the signification of the sacrament is fulfilled through sensible things, just as by the likeness of sensible things in divine Scripture spiritual things are described for us. Thence it is that sensible things are required for the sacraments.\textsuperscript{51}

His discussion of these “sensible things” articulates the ritual process as a threefold relationship between body, quotidian and structured ritual environment. While the intelligible and spiritual were categorically distinct as ultimate intellectual products of the sensible, there was no such distinction between the sensible, the moral, and the bodily. The sacraments had salubrious effects when their sensible aspects sufficiently conformed to the Word of Scripture. Aquinas wrote: “the sacraments can be considered from the side of man who is sanctified, who is composed of soul and body, to whom the sacramental medicine in proportioned, which touches the body through the visible sign and by the word is believed by the soul.”\textsuperscript{52} The phrase ‘sacramental medicine’ is not incidental: the sensible ‘substances’ of the sacraments “naturally have placed in them powers conducive to bodily health.”\textsuperscript{53} It was for this reason that the Eucharist Host was to be composed of wheaten bread, and the wine of mature grapes.\textsuperscript{54} It also authorized the structured environment of the church as a whole. The space of the church, its sacred vessels, the materials from which they were composed, the gestures and words of the

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Summa Theologica}, part 3, question 60, article 4: Est autem homini connaturale ut per sensibilia perveniat in cognitionem intelligibilium. Signum autem est per quod aliquis devenit in cognitionem alterius. Unde, cum res sacrae quae per sacramenta significantur, sint quaedam spiritualia et intelligibilia bona quiabus homo sanctificatur, consequens est ut per aliquas res sensibiles significatio sacramenti impleratur; sicut etiam per similitudinem sensibilium rerum in divina Scriptura res spirituales nobis describuntur. Et inde est quod ad sacramenta requiruntur res sensibiles. Quoted from Editio Leonina, vol. 12 (1906), 7-8.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, article 6.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, article 5.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, articles 2 & 5.
officiating priests were all meant to represent events connected to the Passion, signify spiritual things, and affect devotion and reverence to the sacrament.\textsuperscript{55}  

William Durandus (d. 1296) elaborated on the same understanding of the senses and the sensible in his encyclopedic \textit{Rationale divinorum officiorum}.\textsuperscript{56} Durandus used the physical structure of the church to describe concisely the ideal relationship between between body, quotidian, and structured ritual environment: “by the windows [of the church] the senses of the body are signified: which ought to be shut to the vanities of the world, and open to receive with all freedom spiritual gifts.”\textsuperscript{57} The mundane world was a sinful place and thus one must discipline and guard the senses as windows into the soul. The environment of the church, however, mediated knowledge of the spiritual, and so Durandus characterized proper orientation to the church as an active sensual openness. Measuring its wider reception and influence presents some challenges, but there is significant evidence to support the claim that the \textit{Rationale} was among the most important liturgical works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, if not the most important. It was the most copied liturgical treatise of the later Middle Ages, proliferating in both Latin and vernacular versions across Europe.\textsuperscript{58} It was also one of the most

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, Question 83, articles 3 & 5.  
\textsuperscript{56} Kirstin Faupel-Drevs argues that Durandus based his understanding of images and liturgical space primarily on Augustine and Hugh St. Victor’s fourfold explication of Scripture, which she suggests shows and undermining of Thomistic authority. On the particular question of sensing, however, we see little to suggest a significant difference. In any event, Aquinas certainly accounts for Augustine’s semiology of sensible things in his own explication of the sacraments, and it seems problematic to interpret Durandus without reference to this context. See Kirstin Faupel-Drevs, \textit{Vom rechten Gebrauch der Bilder im liturgischen Raum: Mittelalterliche Funktionsbestimmungen bildender Kunst im “Rationale divinorum officiorum” des Durandus von Mende (1230/31-1296)} (Leiden: Brill, 2000). Idem, “Bildraum als Kultraum? Symbolische und liturgische Raumgestaltung im ‘Rationale divinorum officiorum’ des Durandus von Mende;” in \textit{Raum und Raumvorstellungen im Mittelalter}, ed. Jan Aertsen and Andreas Speer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 665-84.  
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Rationale divinorum officiorum} (Mainz, 1459), 2v: “Item per fenestras quinque sensus corporis significant qui extra stricti esse debent ne vanitates hauriant; et intus patere ad dona spiritualia liberius capienda.”  
popular works in the first century of printing: first printed in 1459, the *Rationale* went through forty five editions before 1501, and fifty three in the sixteenth century.\(^{59}\)

There are two good explanations for the popular significance of the *Rationale* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. First, the premise on which it was based – that one arrives at knowledge of the spiritual through the sensible mediation of the church – was self-evident and intuitively persuasive. As windows into the soul, it was clear that the senses had to be disciplined in daily life, but by the same logic it was equally necessary to open the senses to the sanctifying power of the church. Even those deeply wary of the senses could not fully reject this position. Kaysersberg, for example, conceded that the senses clearly had a place in the liturgy, so long as one exercised restraint, discipline and temperance.\(^{60}\) Second, contemporaneous non-normative writings converged on the thesis that sensing was a mutual relationship of subject and object ‘being affected,’ and as such played a fundamental role in ritual life. As devotional writings attest, the five senses were the “gates” through which “the soul reaches outward creation (*geschefftzen*) and outward things reach the soul.”\(^{61}\) Personal prayer books applied this principle to ritual life. A new genre in fifteenth century Germany, prayer books constituted an important component of the structured ritual environment. Such materials oriented individual engagement by including prayers entreating God to “instruct my senses, order my desire, and teach me to

\(^{59}\) Holmes, “Reading the Church.”

\(^{60}\) Kaysersberg, *Sämtliche Werke* 2, 108.

\(^{61}\) MSWB, HS. II 230 (ca. 1500), fol. 24 r: “Von der bereytung vnsers inwendigen deß Hertzen zu wilchem sunderlich not wirt syn, das die porten wol syen verwart. Die porten syn vnser fünff sinn – Smacken, tasten, sehn, hören, etc. Durch solche vnserer syn als durch porten gat vß die sel zu vsserlichen geschfftzen vnd vßwendigen sachen zu der selen.”
receive your holy body and the heavenly food.” 62 Others identified the Eucharist with the “fulfillment” of the senses, the “enflaming” of the five senses, and received the Host in “my soul, and my body, and all my prayers and my five senses.” 63 Personal prayer books demonstrate the central place accorded to the Eucharist in this sensible framework, but the same understanding authorized every object, gesture and word incorporated into the late medieval Mass.

**Historiography: Reformation Ritual and De-Sensualization?**

How have historians engaged the interplay between quotidian, body and structured ritual environment in Reformation studies? By and large this literature has taken the body and senses for granted, approaching rituals instead as a linguistic problem. Part of the reason for this is that the study of ritual is relatively new to the historiography of the Reformation. To a degree, this reticence stems from what Susan Karant-Nunn has characterized as the “deep, often confessional conservatism characterizing Reformation studies.” 64 Traditionally oriented towards intellectual historical methods, Reformation history since the 1960s has gradually integrated new hermeneutics from social history, subaltern studies, gender history, literary criticism, and cultural anthropology, though not without significant resistance from some. Steven Ozment and Brad Gregory, notably, have explicitly rejected such interdisciplinary work and reaffirmed the self-evident quality of documents from the past, and the sufficiency of traditional methods to recover precisely *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*. 65 While I acknowledge the challenges and perils of

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63 NSB Cent VII, 58 (ca. 1450), 53r: Mein parmhertzig got vnd aller liebster guetigister herrn, ich enphclich dir hewt mein sel, vnd mein leib vnd alle meine gepet vnd mein fünf synn. See also: NSB Cent VII, 57, 51r.
interdisciplinarity and the self-conscious application of an outside theoretical perspective, I remain unconvinced by criticisms such as those of Ozment and Gregory, finding them freighted with their own unacknowledged ideological baggage.

In the cultural history of the Reformation, the lack of sensory analysis reflects the predominately textual or linguistic approaches that have been adopted in cultural studies more broadly. Cultural Reformation studies, as Koslofsky and Jussen define it, compasses the historical formation of meanings (Sinnformationen) and “comprehends epochal change as the new ordering of symbolic forms or institutional representations.” While the authors call for an exploration of a variety of expressive modalities and cultural distinctions in this domain – including the body, images, and emotions – the method of cultural Reformation studies has nonetheless remained largely bound to the textual and linguistic models of interpretive anthropology.

The work of Bossy and Natalie Zemon Davis has played a foundational role in establishing this model. Davis’ study of early modern France was particularly important as an early model for the cultural history of the Reformation. Davis expanded social historical analysis based on categories determined by property, power or prestige to ask questions about how these groups understood the meaning of religion. Because such subjects were often poorly documented in archival sources, Davis sought out alternatives: popular plays, poems and pamphlets all supplemented more traditional archival materials such as criminal records, notarial

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67 Though we do note that Koslofsky, Reformation of the Dead, makes use of a hybrid theoretical framework which brings together more recent practice theory with more traditional anthropology.
contracts, and financial lists. Drawing on the interpretive anthropology of Geertz, Davis also saw rituals as “cultural artifacts, not just items in the history of the Reformation.” Such artifacts “could be “read” as fruitfully as a diary, a political tract, a sermon, or a body of laws.” From this diverse array of sources, Davis was able to draw conclusions not only about the perspectives of individual authors or readers, but also the dynamics and relationships between and among groups of people and cultural traditions.

Building on a framework that resembles Victor Turner’s anthropological work, Bossy sought to determine the symbolic meaning underlying the Mass. He saw the sacrificial and sacramental poles of the late medieval Mass representing a narrative of community: during the sacrificial portion of the Mass, the community appeared as “a concatenation of distinct parts,” with emphasis on the divisions or enmities between God and humans, angels and humans, and humans and humans. The sacramental portion of the Mass resolved these enmities to reflect the community as an undifferentiated whole. The assemblage of words, gestures and objects incorporated into the Mass came together to represent this progression. By the time of the Reformation, the power of this assemblage to represent unity had atrophied, leaving the Mass as a collection of symbols of society in its manifold divisions. Bossy attributes this change to two long-range cultural shifts beginning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: first, what he called “the rise of an asocial mysticism” which emphasized individual spirituality and frequent communion, often before, after or outside the Mass. Second was the “tendency to transfer the socially integrative powers of the host away from the mass as such and into the feast of the

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69 Davis, *Society and Culture*, xvi.
70 Ibid, xvii.
71 Though Bossy fails to cite Turner, his narrative of community and the resolution social distinctions closely overlaps with Turner’s discussion of the efficacy of ritual to restore *communitas* in Turner, *Ritual Process*, 96-190.
Corpus Christ, and by way of that feast to the rituals of monarchy and of secular community.”

As a result of these shifts, people were no longer able to read the same meanings of community into the Mass.

The critical reception of Bossy’s interpretation has also remained largely within the culture-as-text framework. With regard to the synchronic picture of the late medieval Mass, criticisms have focused on the narrative of community as too heavily reliant on prescriptive or ‘normative’ sources. Liturgical texts and expositions of the Mass ascribed to the ritual the power to dissolve social divisions, but such sources only illuminate the perspectives of those in power, i.e. the clergy. Miri Rubin emphasizes the multiplicity of Eucharistic experience. Whereas Bossy saw a decline in the symbolic efficiency of the practices on which the Mass was built, Rubin sees cultural accretion, in which a diversity of perspectives and participants appropriated the ritual and ‘poured’ their own meanings into the symbol of the Eucharist. This reframes the analytical problem of depth as a continuous process of “creative combinations of existing texts and symbols to produce new meanings leading to different types of action.” Virginia Reinburg and Ann Thayer focus on another dimension of the structured environment of the Mass in their studies of fifteenth century prayer books from France, Italy, Germany, and England. They shed light on a socially distinct mode of lay participation constructed around a vocabulary of images, symbols and gestures of charity and deference drawn from both sacred and everyday life. This horizon of images communicated the re-inscription of social divisions, not their resolution.

73 Ibid, 59.
75 Ibid, 357.
Charles Zika has made a similar argument for Germany using other sources, seeing the Eucharist as an object used to define and contest power relations by clergy and laity alike, in a variety of ritual contexts.  

Bossy’s diachronic explanations for the declining symbolic efficiency of the Mass and the coherence of Protestant rejections of the ritual have received somewhat mixed critical attention. The studies of Rubin, Reinburg, Thayer and Zika attenuate Bossy’s claims about the migration of power from the Mass to rituals of secular community, and by extension, his claims about the long term cultural shifts which produced and shaped the Reformation. Of course, no reformers could reject the objective significance of the Eucharist in toto and so their various positions appear as further elaborations of a deeper and broader symbolic culture of the Eucharist. By contrast, most of the scholarship affirms the relationship Bossy proposes between the Reformation and the late medieval rise of more individualistic or ‘asocial’ forms of mysticism. As Rubin writes, “the type of symbolisation which animated the mystical experience was at odds with the routinised normative practices and the formal closure of meanings recommended in teaching and ritual.”

Likewise, Susan Karant-Nunn and Amy Nelson-Burnett accept the link between mysticism and reformers’ attitudes towards the liturgy of the Mass. Karant-Nunn reads the individualistic tendency into the interior re-ordering of Protestant church spaces and the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers: people “increasingly

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80 Rubin, Corpus Christi, 316-317.
faced God as individuals." Along similar lines, Nelson-Burnett traces the origins of the model of regular, individualistic communion adopted in Wittenberg to the mystical piety of the Cistercians, Beguines, and female religious of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. She contrasts this with the more traditional form of communion in late medieval popular culture as communal, sacramental, visible, and infrequent.

In analyzing the depth of churchgoers’ appreciation of church ritual, the foregoing scholarship begins with a question *mal posée*. The model of culture as text focuses on the *message* of church ritual, largely overlooking its medium and what it does to the body. As Edward Muir has pointed out, this particular dimension of ritual, both before and after the Reformation, remains inadequately explored. The modern Western attitude towards ritual, with origins in the sixteenth century, discloses a high degree of *logocentrism* and “perpetuates a misunderstanding that ritual must be interpreted, its hidden meanings ferreted out, when what rituals do is not so much mean as emote.” Methodologically for historians, the linguistic turn has informed the assumption that knowledge about rituals can only be gotten through information declaimed in textual prescriptions and descriptions of ritual behavior. The same logic applies to the broader study of culture in the humanities and social sciences. As Geertz described it, the “culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong.”

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85 Ibid, 299.
86 Ibid, 9.
88 Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 452.
On the diachronic question of coherence, this same model of culture mobilizes a set of assumptions which guide analysis of ritual change in the Reformation. As sensory anthropologists have asserted, the linguistic turn oftentimes reveals as much about the ideological assumptions of Western academics as it does about the subjects they treat. These assumptions have produced a series of binary oppositions intended to explain in broad strokes the progression of human society. In this progression, the transition from pre-modern to modern corresponds to imagined divisions between orality to literacy, between popular and elite culture, between sensuality and rationality, and between community and individual. Historical subjects therefore occupy a particular place on a continuum in relation to their modern academic observers: the further removed temporally, the further they stand from the individualized rationality of literate culture. The ‘pre-modern’ subject is therefore more communitarian and embedded in a somehow more sensual, popular culture. While these binaries possess a certain intuitive appeal because they offer an uncomplicated means of organizing historical data into narrative forms, they often obscure more complicated realities.89

These assumptions guide the widespread narrative of the Reformation as a desensualizing moment in the history of worship. This narrative commonly plots the Lutheran Reformation as a sort of mid-way point between hyper-sensual medieval worship and Reformed Protestant worship, which typically appears as a-sensual. Looking specifically at the Mass, Susan Karant-Nunn asserts that the Lutheran Reformation left behind a “residue of sensuous cultic objects and processes” as a concession on the part of authorities to the popular need to access the sacred.90 In Reformed churches, by contrast:

89 This is to say nothing of the gendered and racial classifications these binaries also frequently authorize. See Classen, “Foundations.” David Howes, “Can These Dry Bones Live? An Anthropological Approach to the History of the Senses,” Journal of American History (September, 2008), 442-453.
90 Karant-Nunn, Reformation of Ritual, 107-137. Quoted at 133.
the sensuality of the Catholic Mass was now entirely gone. Church interiors were
whitewashed and every seductive image removed. The experience of worship service,
finding no outward distraction, had to concentrate on the Word preached – hardly a
tangible object – and on individual interiority…this kind of service was much more
intellectually demanding than that in which visible symbols were rife.”

To her credit, Karant-Nunn leaves room for variation in practice from one context to another, but
this is subordinate to the guiding narrative of de-sensualization produced in the progression from
medieval to Reformation. This naturally begs the question: how can one historical context be
less sensual than another? It seems that this position is untenable. What we are dealing with,
then, is not a narrative of de-sensualization but rather a comparative analysis of cultural
elaboration on sensory experiences in given contexts.

In Reformation studies, the later work of Robert Scribner took steps towards addressing
this problem. Scribner examined the depth of churchgoers engagement with the Mass as a
question of their physical experience of the Elevation of the Host during the Mass, which he
described as “essentially a moment of ‘putting the holy on show’” as well as “a moment of
participation in the liturgical action by the laity.” For the laity, the act of seeing was the
essence of the sacrament, effectively ‘making’ the Real Presence in the Host, while the Host
mediated sanctifying benefits to the observer. In support of these claims, Scribner cited the
elaborate staging of the Elevation through a variety of media including bells, incense, and
candles. In explaining how the Reformation broke with this paradigm, Scribner cited the rise
of Baconian optics, linear perspective, and lens technologies as shaping the contours of a new

\(^{91}\) Ibid, 122-123.
\(^{92}\) See footnoted 3, above.
\(^{93}\) Scribner, “Popular Piety,” 459.
\(^{94}\) Scribner, Religion and Culture, 89-90.
‘theological gaze’ adopted by Reformers. Scribner saw Reformation theology and epistemology as an expression of this principle: an emotionally distanced, non-sacramental, and didactic form of seeing. In a devotional sense, the theological gaze precluded affective attachment to images. The image was only useful didactically to remind the viewer of doctrine.95

In his exclusive focus on the visual, Scribner ignores the critical question of sensory ratios. As sensory anthropologists and historians have pointed out, the visual turn marks an important break with linguistic models of interpretation, but is rooted in the same modern Western intellectual tradition, which holds that vision is the only sense of major importance.96 The primacy of vision, although clearly important, is an interpretive move made by scholars, and has not been tested against evidence of other sensory modalities. Indeed, to emphasize the importance of viewing the host, authors cite objects and practices which appeal to distinctly non-visual modes of sensory perception. Incense, bells, and tasting the Eucharist might have had some visual appeal, but their appeal to smell, taste, touch, and hearing is apparent. Rather than critically engage with these objects and their corresponding sensory experiences, historians simply subsume them to the “visual theopany” of the Mass.97 The picture of depth in this respect remains incomplete.

Further, when Reformation historians have concerned themselves with the problem of sensing and ritual practice, they have heavily based their analyses of the medieval period on secondary literature, putting this into conversation with their own close readings of treatises, pamphlets, and polemics of the Reformation era. An unacknowledged telescoping effect appears to take place when transitioning from fifteenth to sixteenth century. The period before the

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95 Ibid, 122.
97 Charles Zika coined the phrase ‘visual theopany’ the Elevation. See “Hosts,” 31.
Reformation is assumed simply as contextual detail for understanding the prime object of analysis, which is treated dynamically and in great detail. Reformation practice possesses its own sophisticated internal logic which is clearly legible to the historian, in contrast to the period immediately preceding it. This telescoping contributes to the image of late medieval worship as sensually unrestrained, anarchic and lacking its own internal dynamics, and further advances the notion of the Reformation as a de-sensualizing force in late medieval practice.

*Producing and Consuming Sense: Methodology & Evidence*

The problems raised above suggest the need for a method which utilizes a consistent body of sources spanning the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and is sufficient for a systematic analysis of the multi-sensory interplay of the quotidian, the body and the structured ritual environment. Sensory historians have established four main objectives for conducting effective historical studies. First, studies must accurately document the sense experiences that existed at a given time. Second, studies must explain the cultural meanings people assigned to those experiences. The third objective is to consider “intersensorality,” or the ways in which different modes of sensory perception work in tension with one another or in complementary fashion. Finally, sensory studies should demonstrate continuity and change over time with regard to the first three objectives.

What types of sources are available to help meet these objectives? Alain Corbin, one of the foremost historians of the senses, identifies several useful categories. First, prescriptive sources “make it possible to identify the techniques of sensory restriction operating within the

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99 Smith, *Sensing the Past*, 126.
Corbin identifies educational texts and hygiene manuals as examples. Such sources disclose the imposition of culturally specific hierarchies of the senses. Descriptive ego-documents such as letters and diaries present the best prospects for doing sensory history because they provide the most detailed accounts of individuals’ subjective experiences. According to Corbin, “there is no better source for anyone who seeks to understand the historicity of the affective mechanisms, to discover the configuration and functioning of the systems of emotions, or discern the ways in which the senses were educated and employed.”

Immediately, however, the pre-modern historian confronts the problem of general scarcity in this latter category. Further, actual first person accounts of the experience of ritual specifically are quite rare, and often rather limited in what they report on the senses.

To address these challenges, this dissertation analyzes a diverse array of evidence. First, it documents the sensory experience of several contentious ritual objects both before and after the Reformation. The categories of source material for this component of the dissertation are church inventories, ecclesiastical visitation records, ecclesiastical and municipal ordinances, visual evidence from paintings and print culture, and family estate inventories. It then establishes the cultural significance of these objects and their corresponding sensory experiences by analyzing contemporary medical and scientific literature, devotional literature, personal prayer books, letters, journals, and court cases. It engages this material to answer three questions: how people used their senses in the practice of daily life; how they subjectively understood and represented their senses; and how these uses and understandings mapped onto the ritual practice.


101 Ibid.
Most of the archival sources cited here come from the city of Nuremberg, the first city after Wittenberg to adopt Martin Luther’s Reformation. While this is not a case study, Nuremberg is good starting place for several reasons. Nuremberg was a wealthy city and major trading hub between southern and northern Europe during the period under consideration. Thus, it would have had fewer restraints against acquiring the expensive and oftentimes exotic materials required by church ritual. Also because of its relative affluence, a large amount of source material survives. Further, historiography on Nuremberg traditionally asserts two important points: 1) it was the cultural center of fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany; 2) it adopted the Reformation in a liturgically conservative manner. By demonstrating a change in practices here, we identify starting points for comparison with other early Protestant communities. We supplement our analysis of Nuremberg with evidence from across German speaking lands.

Temporally, we restrict consideration to the approximate period of 1428 to 1564. The beginning of our period marks the institutionalization of the Observant Reform in Nuremberg, which was culturally significant because it inaugurated the accumulation of the largest collection of vernacular manuscripts in medieval Germany by the Dominicans of the city. We end our analysis in 1564 because the latest archival document cited here is dated to that year. This date also corresponds approximately to the end of the ‘first generation’ of the Reformation in Nuremberg and abroad, with the death of Philipp Melanchthon in 1560, and the death of

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104 See chapter one, below.
105 See chapter five, below.
Hieronymus Baumgartner (1498-1565), the superintendent of Nuremberg’s churches and de facto leader of the Reformation in the city.

In sifting through the evidence, we limit the number of objects we scrutinize from the structured ritual environment. Analysis of every devotional object of late medieval culture is obviously beyond the scope of this project. Instead, we have selected objects illustrative of some of the most important dynamics of sensual worship in late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Germany. Selection has been guided by the pro-Reformation German pamphlet literature of the early 1520s. These pamphlets were written mostly by laity, thus providing our best window onto the perspective of everyday Protestants in the earliest years of the Reformation.106 The Wittenberg Nightingale, 1523 poem by the Nuremberg shoemaker Hans Sachs, provides a clear example of this perspective. 107 Sachs enumerated the practices surrounding adoration of the Eucharist such as “vigils, fasts and long prayer,” “kneeling, bowing, stooping, and bending,” “ringing bells and blaring organs,” “censing and baptizing bells,” “brotherhoods and rosaries,” “kissing paxes and gazing at relics,” and “golden chalices, monstrances and silver icons.”108 Sachs represented the contrariety between the unrestrained sensuality of traditional Christianity embodied in these objects and the new, disciplining sensual mode of religious engagement with the Word exemplified in early Reformation worship. This new mode emphasized measured aural and visual engagement with Scripture, sermons, hymns, and prayer. Sachs was far from

alone in these sentiments. He had actually borrowed many of the items in his litany of abuses from Luther’s tracts On Good Works (1520) and On the Abuse of the Mass (1521). Similar lists proliferated in pamphlets from 1520 to 1525.  

None were quite as extensive or poetically accomplished as Sachs’ Nightingale, but all foregrounded the most prominent components of the structured ritual environment, and disclose a deep concern about what these components did to churchgoers.

Chapter Outline: Sensory Perception, Religious Ritual, and Reformation in Germany

From these litanies, we have selected several objects for their explicit appeal to non-visual senses. In so doing, this dissertation approaches the question of churchgoers’ depth of engagement in the Mass from a new perspective. Reformation historians have generally

overlooked the sensual dynamics of fifteenth century practice, or focused exclusively on vision. Chapter one analyzes the Eucharist as a problem of taste. While previous studies have built on a long scholarly tradition of considering the Eucharist as a visual problem, this chapter utilizes the work of aestheticians who theorize the productive relationship between vision and taste. As a ritual of eating, it stands to reason that the depth of churchgoer’s engagement the Eucharist had something to do with taste. This chapter finds that relation in personal prayer books from the period. Analysis shows that people in the fifteenth century imagined and described the Eucharist primarily as “sweet,” while Reformation prayer books uniformly abandoned this practice. This history reveals how Reformers rejected the traditional, phenomenological understanding of participation in the ritual by offering a new definition of prayer. In the Reformation, it was no longer possible to construct the Eucharist as an intentional object of taste during the Mass because reformers rejected the use of such liturgical prayers. Instead, reformers insisted on a verbal definition of prayer as a conversation with God and critical reflection on one’s moral standing in relation to the Word of scripture. This marked the beginnings of a shift in the sensorium towards the senses of hearing and vision.

Chapter two expands on themes in chapter one through analysis of the history of the rosary. After the Eucharist, the rosary was probably the most popular object of personal devotion on the eve of the Reformation. Analysis reveals that the rosary exemplified the late medieval dispositional towards intersensorial devotion. In its very materiality, its appeal to the sense of touch appears self-evident, but chapter two reveals a much more complex, multi-sensory story which in many ways is representative of the Reformation’s relationship to late medieval religious practice in general. By the end of the fifteenth century, the rosaries people carried into

churches had parallel uses in medicine, fashion, and other quotidian and ritual contexts. Their intersensorial design reflected these multiple uses, which were popular among both males and females. The Reformation of the rosary built on the Reformation of prayer begun in chapter one. Reformers condemned rosaries on material grounds for distracting people from the words of prayers, cultivating a false appearance of piety, and seducing people to commit the sin of idolatry. These condemnations also reflect an ideological component: despite the fact that the rosary had enjoyed widespread popularity among males and females, reformers bolstered their arguments by gendering the rosary as feminine. The Reformation of the rosary was therefore a rejection of the intersensorial devotional paradigm of the late fifteenth century.

Chapter three analyzes smell by considering the history of ritual incense. Incense persists even today as one of the most potent symbols of Catholic worship. Yet scholarship on its actual practice both before and after the Reformation is sorely lacking. Chapter three sheds light on the dynamics of incense practice. Much like the rosary, ritual incense shared many parallels with the use of fragrances in daily life. Many of these uses built on the apparently universal human association of the sense of smell with boundary demarcation and transition. In much the same way that the rosary became associated with the socially inferior category of females, reformers de-sacralized incense by associating it with the external category of idolatrous heathens and Jews. Incense thus became opposed to the idea of the Word, and theologically associated with sacrifice. This de-sacralization at the ideological level was a gradual process, paralleled by a gradual and quiet abandonment in practice resulting from the seizure of liturgical equipment by secular authority. No official prohibition of incense use appears in any of the evangelical church ordinances of the sixteenth century. At the level of theory, however,

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111 One is reminded of the recent media coverage of the Papal conclave during the election of Francis I, for example.
reformers undermined its theological basis. At the level of practice, they liquidated the necessary censers and liturgical equipment, and eliminated the major contexts for incense use.

Chapters four and five turn to the question of the coherence of the relationship of the Reformation to late medieval sensual worship. As we noted above, popular pamphleteers like Hans Sachs opposed the unrestrained sensuality of traditional Christianity to the disciplining force of a new, fetishized understanding of the Word. Chapter four analyzes how at the level of theory the Word cohered as a ‘thing’ and separated itself from the sensual edifice of traditional Christian worship. It identifies two chief contexts coalescing in the later fifteenth century: the humanist celebration of the Word and the birth of ethnographic writing. The humanist value placed on mastery of linguistic and rhetorical skills translated into devotional contexts, heightening the importance of hearing and seeing. The Word as a clear, self-evident and self-sufficient object of devotion came to be opposed to the five-sense sacramentality of traditional worship. The emergence of ethnographic writing accelerated this trend. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Germans enjoyed increasing access to the ceremonial practices of non-Christian cultures. In particular, popular ‘ethnographic’ reportage on Judaism, Turks, and peoples of the New World provided descriptions of ritual life, and raised disturbing questions about the lines between true religion authorized by the Word of God and mere external, false practices. Reformers appropriated this paradigm in their condemnations of traditional Christian worship, which they opposed to the pure, unadulterated preaching the Word. The reception of traditional Aristotelian natural philosophy among reformers reveals that the sacramental efficacy of the Word was authorized by the same affective theories of sensing that framed the five sense model of late medieval devotion. These developments suggest intensification rather than
attenuation of sensual piety. This intensification cohered in a two-sense model focused on the Word.

Chapter five demonstrates how the persistence of traditional theories of sensing caused conflict and division among educated urban segments of society in the mid-sixteenth century. Far from articulating an indifferent or dispassionate gaze, as Scribner suggests, the Reformation’s intensification of affective sensory theories meant that no act of sensing could ever be indifferent. Chapter five demonstrates this by presenting two case studies from Nuremberg. First, we examine controversies over the practice of the Elevation in the Protestant celebration of the Lord’s Supper in 1537 and 1538. The leaders of the Reformation in the city had maintained this practice since its break with the Church of Rome in 1525, but in the late 1530s, concerns over its visual appeal were mounting among educated segments of society. Achatius Parsberger, a preacher in the city, voiced these concerns in sermons and was brought before the city’s leading theologians. Parsberger’s examination reveals his concern that, as the most central symbol of late medieval sensual piety, the visual appeal of the Elevation threatened to lead Nurembergers into idolatry. The chapter then compares the case of Parsberger the 1563 trial of Joachim Heller, the city’s official astronomer. Heller voiced similar concerns about the sensual power of church ritual to ‘open a window to the devil’ and lead people into idolatry. The ‘window hypothesis’ articulated by Parsberger and Heller reflected the local political, theological and pastoral histories of Nuremberg in the early Reformation, but also spoke to much broader cultural concerns about the power of sensual worship. This chapter closes with a brief consideration of the self-consciously sensual worship of Counter Reformation Germany.
Chapter 1: The Taste Phenomenology of the Eucharist and its Reformation

1.1. Introduction

Following the imperative of Psalm 33 to “taste and see,” I begin discussion of the Eucharist as a problem of taste with an image. In 1510, Wolf Traut, then a member of Albrecht Dürer’s workshop in Nuremberg, produced a depiction of The Mass of St. Gregory [Fig. 1.1].¹ We note several things about this image. Most prominently, the ritual of the Eucharist stands at the center. Christ’s body rising above the altar signifies the miracle of transubstantiation. Blood flows from the body in narrow, straight lines to the bodies of people receiving the sacraments. Counter-clockwise from the upper left corner of the altar are the seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, confession, extreme unction, marriage, and ordination. Surrounding the altar and the sacraments, female and male members of the laity pray while clutching rose garlands. Above the image, the saints Dominic and Aquinas are suspended holding their own garlands.

Scribner claims this image disclosed the “intensely visual” nature of the late medieval Eucharist ritual.² More than other Reformation scholars, Scribner draws on the work of medievalists, who have stressed the visuality of the Eucharist ritual, in particular the moment of Elevation of the Host. While this line of thought has yielded interesting and useful results, it imputes questionable primacy to the sense of sight. Like many other late medieval representations of the Mass of St. Gregory, Wolf Traut’s depiction of onlookers praying and grasping fragrant rose-garlands clearly suggests a synthaesthetic, or intersensorial, context for

¹ Traut lived a short life from 1490 to 1520. See Paul Johannes Rée, “Traut, Wolf,” in Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie 38 (1894), 515-516.
participants in the ritual [Figs 1.2-1.4]. We will turn to the problem of intersensoriality in chapter two. This chapter narrows its focus on how the practice of praying oriented people’s imaginations towards the Eucharist as a gustatory experience, and how that changed from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century. As the speech band attached to the figure of Moses in Traut’s image proclaimed, Christ was the Lamb “whose taste is sweeter than honey.” Despite this rather unambiguous reference to taste, Scribner remarked that, with the exception of fasting, “it is often difficult to see where taste had its place” in late medieval ritual. Curiously, he never made the connection with the Eucharist. Nonetheless, as a ritual of eating, it stands to reason that its performance bears some relationship to the sense of taste. To grasp the full significance of Traut’s *Mass of St. Gregory*, we must come to terms with the Eucharist not only as an object of the gaze, but also as a problem of taste.

My argument here is that it was a popular practice for people to imagine the Eucharist as a gustatory experience, and that the Reformation broke with this practice by adopting an alternative model of prayer. In the fifteenth century, vernacular prayer books regularly describe the Eucharist as something sweet to the taste. Such prayers drew on aspects of contemporary mysticism and medical practices, as well as biological dispositions universal to the human species. We identify this as the taste phenomenology of the Eucharist. At the end of the fifteenth century, however, an alternative model of prayer which focused on verbal communication of doctrine and reflection on one’s moral state gained ascendancy. Prayer books of the early German Reformation adopted this model, and as a consequence largely discontinued

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3 See also impressive collection of images available online via the excellent database of Mass of St. Gregory Images compiled by the Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom at the University of Muenster: [http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/home.html]
4 “sein geschmack ist uber honig suß.” On the other side of the image, John the Baptist proclaims the Lamb of God “der welt dy sundt benaem.”
addressing prayers to the Eucharist. Among the few prayer books which retained such prayers, reflections on the Eucharist as an object sweet to the taste were uniformly abandoned. We therefore identify this historical moment as a reformation of the taste phenomenology of the late medieval Eucharist. This was not an explicit intention of reformers, but rather one particular expression of several long range cultural changes. In making this argument, this chapter re-frames the question of the sensual depth of late medieval church-goers engagement in the Eucharist ritual, and begins to consider the coherence of the Reformation in relation to this model of engagement.

1.2. The Late Medieval Eucharist: A Matter of Visual Adoration?

The Eucharist is manifestly a ritual of eating. Despite this, historians have tended to analyze it not in terms of its appeal to the sense of taste, but rather primarily as a visual problem. Among Reformation historians, Scribner advances the visual turn in his later work. The practices represented in Wolf Traut’s woodcut, with the Elevation of the Eucharist occupying the center of late medieval piety, cohered around a few common epistemological principles, which Scribner identifies as ‘ways of seeing.’ Late medieval ways of seeing assumed that the visible world signified the invisible, and that one attained knowledge of the divine through sensual engagement with the natural world. Images therefore contained a form of sacred power or virtue, and were not merely passive, but rather shared an affective and affecting relationship with their viewer. In popular culture, the clearest expression of this was the popularity of the

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Elevation. At this moment, the Real Presence was ‘made real’ through the affective bond between observing laity and observed Host.7

A considerable amount of evidence supports Scribner’s visual interpretation, and has been discussed by a range of scholars.8 Most of this evidence comes from the complaints of clergy. Durandus, for example, complained that many people ran to Mass only after hearing the ring of the elevation bell.9 Similarly, Gottschalk Hollen (1411-1481) lamented those who “come when they hear the bells, then enter the church, see the Elevation, and when it is over, they go, running and flying, as if they had seen the devil.”10 He further complained of laypersons, especially females, pressing close to the altar to catch a glimpse of the Host because of their belief in the extraordinary powers ascribed to it. Franz reasons that such complaints demonstrate that the laity attended Mass enthusiastically in the fifteenth century, even if their reasons for doing so were more bodily than the spiritual or intellectual.11 Mayer, Browe, and Jungmann theorize this phenomenon more explicitly as a visual experience.12 The laity had little concern for the theology of sacrifice that underlay the Mass, and were primarily concerned with access to the real presence of the divine. As Jungmann writes, “when one had seen the body of the Lord at

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9 Suzannah Biernoff, Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 143.
10 Quoted in Franz, Messe, 18. Franz also notes that Berthold of Chiemsee classified this practice as a common abuse, and preached against it.
11 Franz, Messe, 32-33.
the moment of transubstantiation, he was satisfied. In the cities, one ran enthusiastically from church to church, in order to see the elevated Host as often as possible, because he expected to gain rich rewards from it.”

Except for mystics, saints, priests, or adherents to reform movements such as the *Devotio moderna*, sacramental communion – that is communion as eating the Host – was an uncommon event for most people in the fifteenth century. Since Lateran IV (1215), annual sacramental communion at Easter had been the rule. Mid-fifteenth century synods in Germany affirmed and expanded this obligation to three times per year. Even among the devout, however, ‘frequent’ communion was often far less frequent than a weekly or daily affair. During a visit to Nuremberg on the eve of the Reformation, the humanist Johann Cochläus noted the exceptional devotion of people who received the sacrament as often as six times per year, and the “common” lay men and women, who “daily come to Mass, not to receive the sacrament, but to participate in the Mass, the sacrifice, and intercession of the priest.” Some lay orders for whom Eucharistic piety became a primary object of devotion may have communed more frequently. The lay members of the Windesheimer Congregation (Augustinian Canons-regular) took sacramental communion as often as eighteen times per year. The Beghards and Beguines communed most frequently, with reports from around the mid-fifteenth century citing daily communion; the practice appears to have been especially prevalent among the female Beguines through the end of

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16 Browe, *Die häufige Kommunion*, 86.
the fifteenth century. This was exceptional, however: most people in fifteenth century Germany communed only once annually at Easter, and some communed twice by adding Christmas. In the parish of St. Gangolf in Trier in the years 1492-1511, Easter communicants averaged 1200 (virtually 100% of the parish population), while at Christmas, the numbers fluctuated between 100-400 communicants, that is between 8.3 and 33% of the population. In the parish of St. Christoph in Mainz for roughly the same period (1491-1518), an average of 100-200 people received communion on Easter, and 30-50 received it on Christmas.

Religious orders tended to receive sacramental communion on a more regular schedule, but practice in the fifteenth century was far from uniform, and perhaps less frequent than is often imagined. The male orders such as the Cluniacs and Cistercians intensified their focus on the Eucharist and weekly communion in the fifteenth century. In Scheyern (upper Bavaria) in 1452, for example, the brothers “come as is custom each first Sunday of the month; in Advent and in Lent, every Sunday.” This contrasted with the newer Mendicant orders, who communed much less frequently. It was the norm since the mid thirteenth century for Dominicans to commune fifteen times per year; this only changed in the wake of Tridentine reforms in the later sixteenth century, which stipulated sacramental communion every Sunday during the Lenten and Advent seasons, and every other Sunday during ordinary time in the liturgical year. Among the Augustinians, the custom was sacramental communion between eight and nine times per year.

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17 Ibid, 128.
22 Quoted in Browe, *Die häufige Kommunion*, 73.
23 Browe, *Die häufige Kommunion*, 68-86.
Female religious orders in general practiced more frequent communion than their male counterparts, though here too, practice was quite variegated in the fifteenth century. The Birgittines received communion on every feast day, and when individual sisters desired more frequent communion, they were permitted to receive every Saturday as well. Dominican sisters in some parts of Germany communed every week, while in others, fifteen times per year. The Poor Clares only communed thirteen times per year in the fifteenth century – this number including all the obligatory feast days. These appear to have been exceptions to the rule of frequent communion among female religious of the fifteenth century, at least in the eyes of male clerical authority. The Carthusian inspector Dionys Ryckel (d. 1417) paints a general picture of female communion in the fifteenth century:

….in many convents and congregations that I must examine, old customs prevail…the sisters receive communion very often, namely in Advent and Lent on every Sunday. Otherwise they receive communion every two weeks, except on the feast days of the mother of God and the Apostles, the feast day of John the Baptist, the Saints Michael and Martin, and on the feasts of their patron saints. Also when the feast day falls during the week, they go on the following Sunday.

Frequent communion was again the exception rather than the rule. Ryckel explained the reason for this unusually high frequency as an expression of specialis devotio and caritatis fervor among female religious.

24 Massa, Die Eucharistiepredigt, 187.
25 Browe, Die häufige Kommunion, 93-95.
27 Ibid.
Scholars have tended to cite the rarity of sacramental communion as a reason for the historical emergence of ‘ocular communion’ or ‘sacramental viewing’ as substitutes for the laity. This practice foregrounded the moment of Elevation as the central point of contact with the sacred.\textsuperscript{28} Church authorities promoted ocular communion in several ways. One of the earliest developments was the emergence of scholarly consensus around the doctrine of transubstantiation. Lateran IV ratified this consensus into dogma, declaring that the priest’s words of consecration (\textit{hoc est corpus meum}) effected the transformation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Thereafter, to gaze upon the Eucharist in adoration before this utterance was tantamount to idolatry; after the words of consecration, spiritual gazing could be beneficial and edifying to those attending Mass.\textsuperscript{29} Durandus considered the Elevation a moment of devout gazing and supplication: “\textit{Hoc est corpus meum} the priest raises Christ’s body first, so that all those standing there will see and petition for all that is necessary for salvation.”\textsuperscript{30} By the fifteenth century, the benefits of ocular communion had considerably expanded. The Hungarian Franciscan Pelbart of Temesvar (d. 1504) preached that ocular communion was a fully valid substitute for the \textit{viaticum} received on one’s deathbed. Further, it had the power to turn one away from sins and increase grace, faith, hope and love. Pelbart even claimed that it protected one from physical harm with the appropriate accompanying prayer (\textit{prosit mihi ad tutamentum mentis et corporis}).\textsuperscript{31} Many of the most important preachers in Germany made similar claims in their sermons: Jakob von Jüterbog

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, 53-57. As Bishop Quivil of Exeter wrote in 1287, “the Host is thus raised high so that it can be contemplated by all surrounding believers. And by this the devotion of believers is excited and an increase in their faith is effected.” Quoted in Rubin, \textit{Corpus Christi}, 57.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Rationale}, lib. 4, c. 41, no. 51: Sane dictis verbis illis: \textit{Hoc est corpus meum} sacerdos elevat corpus Christi. Primo ut cunctis adstantes videant, et petant quod proficit ad salutem…Secundo, ad notandum quod non est alius dignum sacramentum…Tertio…signat Christum verum panem.
\textsuperscript{31} Massa, \textit{Die Eucharistiepredigt}, 125-128. Massa notes that Themesvar’s \textit{Pomerium de tempore et de Sanctis} was one of the most purchased collection of sermons of the period. Before 1521, the \textit{De tempore} portion appeared in 23 printed editions, and the \textit{De sanctis} portion in 27 editions.
(1381-1465), Johannes von Werden (d. 1437), Johannes Paltz (1462-1511), Johannes Nider (ca. 1380-1438), Johannes Herolt (d. 1468), even Gottschalk Hollen expounded upon the benefits of gazing at the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{32}

A visual campaign to promote ocular communion accompanied the sermons.\textsuperscript{33} In addition to the \textit{Mass of St. Gregory}, the church disseminated popular imagery such as \textit{The Host Mill} and \textit{The Mystical Wine Press}. These images represented members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy actively “producing” the Eucharist from its material elements. This part of the campaign was meant to reinforce the popular association between the clergy and the sacred power of the host. The other part of the campaign emphasized the visual participation of the laity in this process: such images commonly depict onlookers devoutly kneeling and gazing at the host.

Complementing this campaign, increasingly elaborate altarpieces served to frame the priest’s gestures during the elevation and underscore the power of the ritual moment.\textsuperscript{34} After the fourteenth century, there was also an intensified concern over the physical composition of the Eucharist host. Diocesan and synodal legislation paralleled theological tracts, stipulating that the Host be white, round, thin, and made solely from wheat flour. The \textit{Manipulus curatorum}, composed in the fourteenth century and widely circulated in manuscript and print forms in the fifteenth, made similar prescriptions, explicitly prohibiting the use of barley and rye in the preparation of the Host.\textsuperscript{35} The first exposition of the Mass printed in German (ca. 1480) reflects

\textsuperscript{32} Massa, \textit{Eucharistiepredigt}, 118-119, 122-131.
\textsuperscript{35} Rubin cites the 1333 edition. Anne Thayer notes that the \textit{Manipulus curatorum} was printed 120 times across Europe in the second half of the fifteenth century. See Thayer, “Learning to Worship in the Later Middle Ages: Enacting Symbolism, Fighting the Devil, and Receiving Grace,” in \textit{Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte} 94 (2008), 36-65. Editions of the \textit{Manipulus} printed in Germany indicate for the host: “panis qui est materia huius sacramenti est panis de tritico cum aqua elementale confectus. Panis dico quia in pasto non postest confici corpus xpi Dico eciam de tritico quia in alio pane de siligine vel de ordeo vel quocunque alio grano nisi de tritico non potest celebrari missa.” In Guido de Monte Rocherii, \textit{Manipulus curatorum} (Augsburg: Christmann Heyny, 1481), 22v.
these trends, requiring that the Host be “white, beautiful, pure, clean,“ thin, and made of unleavened wheat, without the addition of salt.\textsuperscript{36}

The campaign appears to have been effective, and in the fifteenth century controlling and limiting access to the Eucharist in order to maintain its visual power became a significant concern to authorities. The 1451 church council at Mainz for example ordered that “lest the people’s devotion cool down due to frequent viewing of it, henceforth, the sacrament shall not be carried visibly in monstrances except on the octave of Corpus Christi, and even then only during the divine office of that octave.”\textsuperscript{37} A year later, the council of Cologne decreed that “for the sake of the great honor of the holy sacrament we ordain that from now on the holy sacrament will never be put or carried visibly in any monstrances, except on the feast of Corpus Christi and its octaves once a year in every city or town.”\textsuperscript{38} Similar proscriptions appear in the synods at Salzburg (1456 and 1490), and Schwerin (1492).\textsuperscript{39}

Coupled with the rarity of sacramental communion and the fairly extensive clerical campaign to promote and control ocular communion, several cultural historical developments help explain the visual orientation of late medieval Eucharistic devotion. The notion that viewing these closely regulated hosts constituted a dynamic, affective relationship between subject and object has been well documented among medieval art historians. In German, Hans Belting identifies the thirteenth century as the moment the laity began to embrace viewing of the hosts.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{36} Die älteste deutsche Gesamtauslegung der Messe (Erstausgabe ca. 1480), ed. Franz Rudolf Reichert (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967), 99-100.

\textsuperscript{37} Miri Rubin, Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 292: Propter reverentiam divinissimo eucharistie sacramento exhibendam et ne populi fidelis devotio ex frequenti ejus visione tepescat...deinceps ipsum sacramentum visibiliter in monstrantii preterquam in festo corporis Christi per ejus octavas deferri, et tunc non nisi sub divino officio octave ejusdem ostendi debeat.

\textsuperscript{38} Rubin, Corpus Christi, 292: ad majorem honorem sanctissimi sacramenti statuimus quod deinceps ipsum sanctissimum sacramentum, nullatenus visibiliter in quibuscumque monstrantii ponatur aut deferatur nisi in sanctissimo festo corporis Christi cum suis octavis semel in anno in qualibet civitate aut oppido.

\textsuperscript{39} Zika, “Hosts,” 32-35.
Host as the primary mode of participation in the liturgy. This, along with other visual practices relating to devotional images, relics, public re-enactments of Biblical narratives, and processions attested to a widespread cultural ‘need to see.’ The daily possibility of beholding Christ, the Virgin, and saints gave rise to the belief that reality was fully accessible only in the visual domain, and that images reciprocated the viewer’s gaze. Michael Camille has made a similar argument, adding the important point that the affective relationship was reinforced by contemporaneous developments in optical theory. The most important theoreticians of vision, including Roger Bacon (d. 1292-94) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), assumed that sensation shaped the intellect, and simultaneously emphasized the human soul as an active subject of cognition. After the thirteenth century, Camille posits that this dynamic, affective theory of vision became the structuring principle of late medieval religion, used by theologians “to explain supernatural events, such as transubstantiation images related to the Mass, which emphasize the viewing subjects’ relationship to the objects of sense in this most important of all sensory experiences for Christians.”

The focus on the visuality of the late medieval Eucharist is insufficient because it ignores the productive relationship between sight and taste. Concern with this relationship was already apparent in the thirteenth century. Although the benefits of ocular communion were considerable, church authorities maintained from the thirteenth century that it alone was

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44 Ibid. See also: Cynthia Hahn, “*Visio dei*: Changes in Medieval Visuality,” in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, 169-196.
insufficient. Alexander Hales (d. 1245) distinguished *manducatio per visum* (eating by sight), which was not sacramental, from *manducatio per gustum* (eating by taste) which was sacramental.\textsuperscript{45} Similarly in the fifteenth century, while elucidating the benefits of ocular communion, Herolt, von Paltz, and Hollen simultaneously recommended it only as a well-regulated practice to prepare one for sacramental communion.\textsuperscript{46} After elaborating the physical qualities of the Eucharist host, the first printed exposition of the Mass in Germany explained that it was “in its nature sweet,” and that “we should have the sweetness to ourselves.”\textsuperscript{47} The fullest significance of communion therefore denoted the staging role played by viewing the Host in conjunction with its imaginative appeal to the sense of taste. As the Franciscan preacher Stefan Fridolin explained in 1491, the Eucharist:

> consists in the clear viewing of divine beauty and in the enjoyment of its sweetness; thus it is ordained: namely that his holy body in the form of wheaten bread be given to the soul as food, and his precious blood as drink of wine, so that in this our time of pilgrimage and sorrow, the devout may seek out and revel in the taste of divine sweetness in the sacrament, in which exist the tastes of all sweetness.\textsuperscript{48}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{45} Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 64.  
\textsuperscript{46} Massa, *Eucharistiepredigt*, 203.  
\textsuperscript{47} *Die älteste deutsche Gesamtauslegung*, 99: “Zu dem andern di hosti sol gemacht werden auss weytznn kornn; und des natur ist süß. Denn der Herre geleycht sich selbs zu dem weytzen körnlein, Johannis XII, 23: “Es sey denn, das das körnlein fall in die erd, so print es keyn frucht”; das ist, das der Herre an sich an seyn heylige menscheyt und die mit der gotheyt vereynet. Die süssegkeit sol wir auch an uns habe.” 
\end{flushright}
The foregoing quotation from Fridolin underscores the phenomenological construction of the late medieval Eucharist as a taste experience. As Carolyn Korsmeyer has suggested, both in daily life and in rituals, vision provides fundamental context for taste by stageing one’s expectations. Visually identifying “what one is eating…can be indispensable not only for enjoying the object of experience but even for having the “correct” experience.” In fifteenth century Germany, the imaginative appeal to the sense of taste was fundamental aspect of peoples’ experience of the Eucharist. At the moment of its elevation, the sweetness of the Eucharist articulated the affective bond between observing laity and observed Host, and was an important layer of its Real Presence which has remained unexplored by historians. This practice appears to have been widely distributed in fifteenth century Germany, among both males and females, religious and lay alike. Regardless of the frequency of actual sacramental communion, the sweetness of the Eucharist was a recurring keynote in late medieval religious experience.

1.3. – Sweetness in Late Medieval Vernacular Prayer Books

The core of evidence for this argument is a collection of manuscript prayer-books from the Dominican convent of St. Katherine in Nuremberg. The collection of materials from St. Katherine’s library, now stored mainly in the Nuremberg Stadtthibiothek, is uniquely suited to provide access to a broad cross section of fifteenth century German culture. By the end of the fifteenth century, the convent’s library had amassed the largest collection of German-language

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50 Most of the prayer books can now found in the Nuremberg city library. See Nuremberg Stadtthibiothek – Sammelhandschrift Katharinenkloster (hereafter NSB): Cent VII, 7; VII 9; VII 24; VII 34; VII 38; VII 39; VII 40; VII 50; VII 51; VII 56; VII 58; VII 60; VII 61; VII 62; VII 64; VII 65; VII 66; VII 67. Other important examples can be found in signatures Cent V, App. 81; Cent VI, 43P; Cent VIII, 18; Will II, 19. 8°; Will 7, 1447.8°. Several manuscripts are also housed at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, in Nuremberg (hereafter GNM): Hs 1733, Hs 1734, Hs 1735, Hs 1737, Hs 1738.
manuscripts anywhere in the world. Approximately half the manuscripts were produced by the labor of sisters in the convent, while the other half came from external donations and acquisitions. The collection also represents a diversity of geographic locations, with some manuscripts originating as far away as Strassburg in the west, and Prague in the east. The library’s collection was built primarily in the fifteenth century, from the Observant reform of the convent in 1428 to the adoption of the Protestant Reformation by the city council in 1525.

Beyond Nuremberg, comparative data from across German-speaking lands demonstrates the broad geographic distribution of the phenomenon among literate, predominantly urban, segments of society. While most of the prayer-books consulted here were owned by female religious, evidence suggests that the sweetness of the Eucharist was prevalent among the laity as well.

As with many of the trends relating to the Eucharist, these prayer books have their origins in the thirteenth century. In tandem with the practice of the Elevation, Rubin identifies a florescence of “vernacular prayers and salutations, exchanging faith and acceptance of the host as God, for a large variety of benefits.” Many individual prayers originate in the thirteenth century, but their collection and organization into books for personal use among the laity was a unique development of the fifteenth century. The largest numbers appeared in France, the Low Countries, and Italy. Significant numbers appeared in southern Germany at the same time.

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51 Karin Schneider, “Die Bibliothek des Katharinenklosters in Nürnberg und die städtische Gesellschaft,” in Studien zum städtischen Bildungswesen des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, ed. Bernd Moeller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 70-82. Schneider states there were between 500 and 600 manuscripts in the convent’s library at the end of the century.


53 By contrast, Jeffrey Hamburger argues that we should push this date back to the early twelfth century. See Hamburger, “A Liber Precum in Sélestat and the Development of the Illustrated Prayer Book in Germany,” in The Art Bulletin 73, no. 2 (June 1991), 209-236.

54 Rubin, Corpus Christi, 155.

This was primarily an urban phenomenon that emerged at the conjunction of pastoral efforts of
the mendicants and demand among aristocrats and wealthy merchant families. The prayer
book straddled multiple genres, and was used in a variety of contexts outside the Mass. Their
content, rather composite and multi-faceted, reflects their variegated uses. They often include
many different kinds of prayers, including meditations on Christ’s Passion, prayers to the Virgin
Mary or other saints, prayers against the Turks, against sickness, before meals, evening prayers
before sleep, and morning prayers upon waking. Many prayers are ascribed to individual
authorities, or to particular religious orders. They also contain supplemental materials, such as
fragments of sermons or mystical treatises, expositions of the Mass, and spiritual letters. In
Nuremberg, while the observant reform of 1428 strictly regulated personal possessions among
the religious, spiritual literature was excluded from these regulations. The personal prayer book
was one of the most popular genres of spiritual literature, as demonstrated by the large number
owned by the nuns in St. Katherine’s. Many of these passed into possession of the convent
library following the deaths of their owners. Others were donated by citizens.

Prayer books share common features which help clarify the contexts of their use. Their
status as objects of personal property is often indicated by the name of an owner. Of the
manuscripts from St. Katherine’s library considered here, sixteen indicate the names of their
owners. The names are mostly female, though six manuscripts indicate prior male ownership.

They were typically compiled over long periods of time, with individuals collecting and adding
prayers over the course of a lifetime. As material objects, they emphasize portability and ease of use: typically composed in small formats (octavo or smaller), they are oftentimes equipped with enamel or leather page-markers for quick reference to specific prayers. They all contain prayers to be read by an individual, which were very likely spoken aloud. Particular verses are often keyed to specific liturgical or ritual gestures. We are most interested here in prayers prescribed variously as ‘communion prayers’ [Kommunionsgebet], or as prayers ‘before the sacrament’ [vor dem Sakrament], ‘before the Lord’s Supper’ [vor dem Abendmahl], ‘before the reception of the Sacrament’ [vor dem Empfang des Sakraments], ‘before the reception of the Lord’s Supper’ [vor dem Empfang des Abendmahls]; ‘after the reception of the Sacrament’ [nach dem Empfang des Sakraments] and ‘after the reception of the Lord’s Supper’ [nach dem Empfang des Abendmahls].

Rubin characterizes prayer books as part of widespread pedagogical and pastoral efforts on the part of the clergy which aimed at forming “a horizon of images,” and associations around the Elevation “which followed from recurrent visual stimuli created by ritual or by private reading.” While visual stimuli were one part of the story, the prayer books of St. Katherine’s demonstrate clearly the importance of the sense of taste through their frequent use of the term sweet to describe the Eucharist. On the one hand, these sources clearly relate to language of embodiment, food, and sensuality so well documented by Caroline Walker Bynum in her path-breaking studies of late medieval female spirituality. Indeed, analysis of all the direct primary

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63 Rubin, Corpus Christi, 158.
64 Ibid, 103, 105.
source quotations in Bynum’s *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* reveals that of all utterances on tasting, a full 39% deploy the terms ‘sweet’ or ‘sweetness.’ While this paradigm had roots in female spirituality, it had by the fifteenth century spilled over into a much wider cross section of society. In this regard, it is good to think of female convents like St. Katherine’s as laboratories for the production and exchange of sensual piety in fifteenth century Germany. By the fifteenth century, the sweetness of the Eucharist appears prevalent among the laity as well, including males and females. Further, on a more speculative note, the influence of this sensual piety may also have been felt even among those who did not possess prayer books of their own, or could not read. As the scholarly literature has already shown, these prayer books were most commonly read aloud.66 The speaking of prayers therefore had the potential to involve even the illiterate in Eucharistic sweetness.

The manuscript of Wilhelm Rümlin (†1449) provides an instructive point of departure. We know a few details about how this manuscript arrived in the convent, and can date its composition to the years 1437-1498. It is composed of two parts, indicated by two different hands. The older part indicates its composition in the year 1437.67 In this part, the name “Wilhelm Rümlin” has been written in two different places.68 These are the only details of its ownership, so we can conclude that it originally belonged to a member of the laity: either Rümlin

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himself, or to his widow. According to the fifteenth century Nuremberg Chronicle, Wilhelm Rümlin died in battle in 1449, during Nuremberg’s war against Albrecht of Brandenburg. The manuscript may have found its way into the convent after his death, perhaps as a gift from his widow, but it is not possible to identify a more precise date than sometime before 1498.

According to Karin Schneider, the later part of manuscript was written by the hand of Klara Keiperin, a nun in St. Katherine’s. Keiperin’s handwriting appears in the convent’s manuscripts from 1447 until her death in 1498.

The Rümlin manuscript contains twelve sets of Eucharistic prayers. With the exception of one ascribed to “a Carthusian,” the authorship of the prayers in the Rümlin manuscript is not given. Many suggest a moral or social connotation to sweetness, beginning with overtures to God the “sweetest father,” or Christ the “sweetest Lord.” More importantly, the Rümlin manuscript routinely speaks of the sacrament as a powerful object bringing salvation to body and soul, appearing “with wonderful sweetness.” Before communion, one prayer begs God to quench the “thirsty” soul with the “sweetness of your divinity” in the Eucharist. Another describes the bread and wine as the “sweetest” and “most precious” of objects. The Host in particular is described in highly saccharine terms. In addition to it being sweet “to the soul,” to those who are “spiritually hungry,” the Host is the “sweetest of breads.” The supplicant begs the “living bread that is come from heaven” to allow him to “receive you worthily all the time, so

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71 Schneider, *Handschriften*, 296-297. Schneider also indicates that the binding of the manuscript is typical of the later fifteenth century.

72 Steinke, *Paradiesgarten*, 1, 329-364.

73 NSB, Cent VII, 24, 250v-251r.

74 Ibid, 126r-v.

75 Ibid, 269v.

76 Ibid, 274r.
that I may always live…you are sweet to the taste, desirable (lüstig) to sensation (Empfindlichkeit).”

The prayer book of Margaretha Vornam, a sister in St. Katherine’s, shares with the Rümлин manuscript its description of the Eucharist as a sweet object of consumption. Unlike the Rümлин manuscript, however, the Vornam manuscript was not composed by accretion over time. Rather, Vornam received it in its completed form as a gift from the Dominican preacher Matthias Weinsperger around 1475. Also in contrast to the Rümлин manuscript, the Vornam manuscript carefully attributes the sources of the Eucharist prayers included. The first main source is the ‘Kommunionsgebet’ from the Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit of Heinrich Seuse (ca. 1297-1366). This booklet was originally composed between 1327 and 1334 while Seuse was lector at the Dominican convent of Konstanz. Seuse intended the booklet as an example of the “practical mysticism” that the nuns who were his audience could employ in the daily life of the convent.

The “Kommunionsgebet” in the booklet’s chapter titled “Wie man minneklich empfahen sol” is of particular interest here. This prayer is one of the most commonly excerpted parts of the booklet in fifteenth century manuscripts, and is a chief source of the sweetness of the Eucharist. Addressing itself to the “loving [minneklicher] beautiful Lord,” the communicant prays that:

   my heart should have all the love [minne] of [your] heart, my conscience all the clarity of
   the angel, and my soul the beauty of all souls. So that I might be worthy of your Grace,
   Lord, I wish to receive you lovingly [minneklich]…Oh, sweet, loving [minneklicher]

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77 Ibid, 141v-142r: Ach herre wy gar süsse ist dem geist Du hast erzeigt dem grosse süßigkeit deines kindes wan
du speisserst dy hungrigen gaistlichen mit allenn gute dizc allersüsten prots…O du lebendigs prot das vom himel
kumen ist las mich dich alczeit wirdigklich empfahen dacz ich ymmer müg leben…du bist süß am smacke lüstig in
der empfindligkeit.

78 NSB, Cent V, App. 81, 89r-91v. For dating and identification with Weinsperger and Vornam, see also: Schneider,
Handschriften, 72; Steinke, Paradiesgarten, 23, 33, 73, 329, 341; Haimerl, Gebetbücher,46.

Lord…you are to the eye the most beautiful, to the mouth the sweetest, to the touch the most tender, and to the heart the most loving [aller minneklichest].

Seuse further addresses the Eucharist as the “sweet, good-tasting Bread of Heaven, which contains in it all the sweetest taste according to every hearts’ desire, delight to the dry mouth of my soul; feed and quench, strengthen, ornament and unite yourself lovingly [minneklich] with me…my will is enflamed with your sweet Love [minne].”

The second set of named prayers in the Vornam manuscript is ascribed to the early German humanist Johannes von Neumarkt (1310-1380), bishop of Olmütz and chancellor to the Holy Roman Emperor Karl IV (1316-1378, r. 1355-1378). Neumarkt was deeply influenced by Petrarch and keenly interested in the writings of the early patristic authors, especially Augustine, Ambrose and Jerome. He also traveled extensively through Italy on behalf of Karl IV. As a humanist, his most important contribution was a series of German translations of devotional materials for female members of the Prague court. Among this literature are translations of several prayers to the Eucharist. Three of these prayers are anonymous, two attributed to Ambrose, two to Augustine, and three to his contemporaries at the Prague court.

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84 Ibid, 37-41.
The prayers extensively deploy sweetness, begging Christ to penetrate the heart and “fill the veins” with the “good taste” and “sweetness” of the Eucharist as food.\textsuperscript{85} There are important shades of difference from Seuse’s prayer. The prayer of Augustine emphasizes the lowly, sinful nature of the communicant in contrast to the sweet, elevated nature of the divine:

O you dread majesty, you sweet mercy! Where shall I hide myself from your spirit?

Lord, I contemplate my iniquity and my misdeeds, so that I come to you in doubt and in fear. When, however, I observe your sweet, graceful mercy, I become on the contrary stronger in loving hope…grant me the grace to confess my sins.\textsuperscript{86}

In addition to spiritual gifts of mercy and grace, Augustine’s prayer links the sweetness of the Eucharist to “health of the body and the soul, that I become purified in body and soul, that I might become worthy of the Heavenly kingdom, and feed me so graciously with your holy Body, and quench me so sweetly with your blood, that I must be in your presence and eternally rejoice.”\textsuperscript{87}

The prayers attributed to Ambrose emphasize the human-divine divide even more forcefully through a series of striking contrasts. In the first prayer, the supplicant approaches the “highest mildness, the almighty, sweet God…as a sick man to a physician, as a filthy man to the fountain of cleansing, as a blind man to the light of eternal clarity, as a poor man to the Emperor and Lord of Heaven and Earth” begging that she might attain the grace hidden before her in the

\textsuperscript{85} NSB, Cent V, App. 81, 89v-90r.


\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 72: Vorleihe mir gesundheit des leibes vnd der selen, das ich des leibes vnd geistes also gereiniget werde, das ich würdig sei des werden himelriches, vnd spesye mich huote so genediclich mit deinem heiligen leichnamen vnd trenke mich so suzzeclich mit deinern werden plute, das ich deiner gegenwertikeit mich muzze nu vnd ewiclich frewen.
Eucharist bread. Through its consumption, the supplicant hopes that the Holy Body of Jesus, as the “sweetest”, “consoling Lord” might “be with me at all times, in my thoughts, and may it be a spiritual sweetness, a peace and a consolation, a joy and an assurance to my soul, and let it be a strength to me in all my trials, and a light, and a virtue in my works and in my words, and also a defense against my enemies.”

The second prayer follows a similar pattern of contrasts while underscoring the sweetness of bodily and spiritual reception of the Eucharist:

Beloved Lord, with what regret of my heart, with what anguished conscience, with what cleanliness of my body, with what purity of my soul should I receive this heavenly food, whereby one enjoys in truth your flesh and drinks your blood, whereby the highest unites itself to the lowest, the highest divinity with the lowest humanity…grant to me that my soul may receive your presence in divine sweetness…instruct my senses and order my desire, and teach me to receive your holy Body and this heavenly food…O Lord Jesus, how should I receive you? You are so high, and I am so low; you are holy to me, and I and sinful to you; you are noble to me, and I am a peasant [pawerisch]; you are attentive to me, and I am so disdainful of you…Jesus, you very sweet bread, enter me, otherwise I must remain dead…mild Lord, become to me the bread that has the taste of your divine

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89 Ibid, 73-74: …Allir suzzister Ihesus, meyn trostlicher herre, nu sei mir zu aller czeit dein heiliger leichnam in meynen gedanken vnd sei ein geistliche suzzikeit, ein frid vnd eyn trost, ein freude vnd eyn sicherheit meynen sele vnd sei mir auch eyne sterke in allen bekorungen vnd sei mir eyn liecht, ein crafft vnd ein tugent in meinen werken vnd worcen vnd sei mir auch a in geleite vor meynen veinden.
sweetness…make me healthy…come into my heart and cleanse it of all bodily and spiritual sins.  

Composers of Eucharist prayers in fifteenth century Germany actively utilized Seuse and Neumarkt as models. Above all, sweetness oriented the body towards the Eucharist as an object of consumption. In prayers that do not cite Neumarkt or Seuse explicitly, as with the Rümlin manuscript, sweetness appears in a variety of forms. In the manner of their production, the Rümlin and Vornam manuscripts represent opposite ends of the fifteenth century prayer book spectrum, and the general paradigm for Eucharist prayers in manuscripts from St. Katherine’s Convent.

This paradigm is not unique to the prayer books of St. Katherine’s. As Xaver Haimerl argues, Seuse and Neumarkt represent the two most important cultural vectors shaping late medieval German Gebetsfrömmigkeit. They appear in prayer books of the laity from Strassburg in the west to Prague in the east, as well as virtually all religious orders active in German lands, including the Dominicans, Cistercians, Carthusians, Benedictines, Franciscans, and the Augustinians. According to Karl Bihlmeyer, the Büchlein was the most copied and read

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91 Besides Vornam, thirteen manuscripts contain Seuse’s communion prayer. From the GNM, these include: Hs 1733; Hs 22403; Hs 114263; Hs 1588088; Hs 602690. From the NSB: Cent VI 43p; Cent VI, 81; Cent VI, 86; Cent VI, 91; Cent VI, 99; Cent VII, 38; Cent VII, 39; Cent VII, 60. Eleven manuscripts contain one or more of Neumarkt’s prayers. From GNM: Hs 1734. From NSB: Cent VI, 10; Cent VI 82; Cent VI, 86; Cent VII, 34; Cent VII, 38; Cent VII, 62; Cent VII, 66; Cent VII, 67; Cent VII, 88; Will II, 19 8°.

92 Haimerl, Mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit, 36-49, 114-119.
German mystical text of the later Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{93} A keyword search of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft online database of medieval manuscripts using the terms “Seuse” and “Weisheit” yields 176 results geographically distributed across German speaking lands.\textsuperscript{94} Across Germany, we find 58 manuscripts with Neumarkt’s prayers.\textsuperscript{95}

Geographically speaking, the first location outside St. Katherine’s is the Franciscan convent of Poor Clares in Nuremberg. Very few materials from this convent have survived, but fortunately we have one fine example that has been identified with Caritas Pirckheimer (1467-1532), perhaps the most famous sister of the German Poor Clares in the sixteenth century. The manuscript was not Pirckheimer’s personal prayer book, although it has been identified with the abbess of the Nuremberg Klarissenkloster because her signature appears on the inside of the manuscript binding. Instead, it is rather likely that Pirckheimer presided over, and perhaps ordered, its composition.\textsuperscript{96} The prayer book is in many ways typical of examples we have already discussed: a small format (10.5cm x 8cm x 6cm) manuscript composed by multiple hands, the Pirckheimer manuscript gradually took shape over several decades.\textsuperscript{97} Dating the manuscript with precision is difficult, although composition likely began at the end of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{98} Also like other prayer books of its time, the Pirckheimer manuscript contains

\textsuperscript{93} Bihlmeyer, “Einleitung,” 11-17.
\textsuperscript{94} [http://www.manuscriptamedievalia.de]. Search conducted 19 September 2011. A search with the terms “Seuse” and “Gebet” yields 14 additional manuscripts containing the prayer.
\textsuperscript{95} Through a search using the terms “Gebet” and “Neumarkt.” [http://www.manuscriptamedievalia.de]. Search conducted 19 September 2011.
\textsuperscript{97} The manuscript exhibits a total of nine identifiably different handwritings. A tenth is possible, although it bears similarities with one of the other hands, and it is not possible to make a firm judgment on it according to Pfanner.
\textsuperscript{98} Pfanner, “Einleitung,” 5-11.
a variety of prayers, including a poem-prayer for Christmas, morning- and evening prayers, a meditation on the Passion, and Neumarkt’s translations of the Augustine prayers.\(^99\)

Other Eucharist prayers included in the “Instruction and Observance before the Holy Sacrament” describe the Eucharist as sweet in a variety of ways. While kneeling humbly, and beating on her chest, the supplicant is instructed to pray: “O God, the love and desire of my heart, you are the sweetness of my mind. O God, the flame and fervor of my heart, light of my eyes, clarity of understanding…the fulfillment of my senses, a sweet sound in my ear, a honey-sweet taste in my throat, a lovely sight to my eyes.”\(^100\) Another prayer addresses to the Host in language that blends sweet taste with tones of sexual desire:

May you be greeted, best of all tastes to the hearts of your beloved friends. You are the heavenly bread, honey and bread [semel], a sweet food and sweet assurance to those who are weary beyond hunger. You are that which my heart desires. I confess mightily [kraftiglich] that you are God and human; what now might be dark in my conscience, the pure Christian faith in your presence must drive out. Nothing can remain in me that might cause you to be angry with me. Alone must your body burn inside me.\(^101\)

The sweetness of the Eucharist found in the Pirckheimer manuscript and prayer books of St. Katherine’s convent parallels its use in prayer books beyond Nuremberg. We encounter a number of examples in the region around Munich, Ingolstadt, Landshut and Regensburg. One of

\(^99\) The latest item in the manuscript is dateable to April 1541. In Pfanner, “Einleitung.” 11. The Augustine prayers are found at 39-42.


\(^101\) Ibid, 49: Gegrust seistu, aller pester gesmack in den herzen deiner lieber freunt, du pist das himelprot, honig und semel, ein susses essen und ein susse sicherheit den, dy do mud vor hunger sind. Du pist der, des mein herz begert; ich vergich[bekenne] des kraftiglich, das du pist got und mensch, was nun fynsters sey im meiner gewyssen, das muss der lawter cristengelawb alsampt von deiner gegenwartigkeit vertreyben, nichts muss in mir beleiben, darumb du gen mir zornig seyst,allein muss in mir prinen dein leib.
the most important is the 1426 prayer book of Elisabeth Ebran. Ebran was the daughter of Hans von Gumppenberg, and was married in 1426 to Ulrich Ebran von Wildenberg, a knight from the countryside between Regensburg and Munich. Johann Rothuet, provost of the Canons-Regular (Augustiner-Chorherr) cloister of Indersdorf (Bavaria, northwest of Munich), began composing the prayer book for her in the same year she was married. Haimerl argues this book became a model for many successive prayer books, circulating in convents across southern Germany, appearing in manuscripts well into the sixteenth century. They appear in the St. Katherine’s in a 1465 manuscript. Many other prayer book composers copied or borrowed judiciously from the Ebran collection, especially its communion prayers.

Haimerl suggests the Ebran manuscript differs from other fifteenth century prayer books in that it betrays a strong Augustinian influence. Its Eucharist prayers however exhibit no significant differences from contemporaneous prayer books. Prayers for receiving the Sacrament begin by describing the soul of the communicant as thirsty and hotly desirous for the food of Christ’s body. The next prayer instructs the communicant to beg God to allow her to receive the sacrament “according to your mercy and not according to my merit…and the sweet and good-tasting heavenly bread today can well strengthen my soul against all of its enemies.” Post-reception prayers persist in describing the sacrament as sweet. The first of these prayers thanks “heavenly, eternal God” who has “given me as food your only begotten son, O sweet mildness, rich treasure of grace, I sing your praise and honor and will be eternally thankful to

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103 Ibid, 159-160.
104 GNM Hs. 1735, fols. 1v-30r. Cf. Haimerl, 47.
106 BSB, Cgm. 4484, 299r. The prayer begins “O ewige weyshayt Her ihu xpe mein durstigen sel spies du hast,” and implores Christ “das wir gespeyst sullen werden mit deinem hochwirdigen fornleichnam[sic].” The same prayer describes the sinner’s “begirlichen hiczenn” for the sacrament.
107 Ibid, 301r-v: “Tu mir nach deiner parmherzikayt/ vnd nicht nach meinem verdinen wan du pist doch dass vnschuldig Ostlamp das fur aller welt sundt wirt geopfert Auch susses vnd wolgeschmachs himel prot kann heut kretichich in mein sel sterck sy wider all ir veint.”
The second prayer begins by addressing the host directly as “you sweet heavenly bread, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God the heavenly father, born of the Virgin Mary.”

We also note examples of male prayerbooks in a number of locations across southern Germany. The prayerbook of Lentzen Hanns, a school master in Freiburg, and then later in Brugg im Aargau, included Seuse’s *Kommunionsgebet*. Hanns dated his manuscript at one point to 1483, but maintained it until his death in 1541, adding to it over the years. Besides this prayer, Haimerl notes that Hanns was fond of borrowing Seuse’s expression “süßes Lämmlein” when referencing Christ, and it appears frequently throughout his manuscript. Haimerl also references two examples from Nuremberg patricians Niklas Muffel (1462) and Wilhelm Löffelholtz († 1475), who both borrowed extensively from Seuse’s *Büchlein*. Another example comes to us from the Augsburg citizen Leonhart Schielin, who composed his prayer book in 1498. Haimerl describes the Eucharistic prayers in this manuscript as “wholly characteristic” of the Dominican-influenced piety of the fifteenth century, and notes Schielin included Seuse’s *Kommunionsgebet*. Further, Schielin’s manuscript also included instructions for receiving communion from the *Vierundzwanzig Alten oder der goldene Thron* by Otto von Passau. Passau’s text prepares the communicant thus:

You should have strong and secure faith, and finally think on the sorrow of Jesus Christ, on whose account the most worthy sacrament is instituted and established; and with all the power of your soul you should have much divine observance with much fervent,

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108 Ibid, 304r: “…das du mir geben hast zu eines spieß deinen aingepornen sun O susse miltikayt O reicher schatz der genaden Ich sag dir lob vnd ere vnd will dir danckpersein ewichlich”
109 Ibid, 305r: “du susses himel prot her ihesu xpe sun guts des hymnischen vaters, geporn aus der junckfraw maria.”
110 Haimerl, *Mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit*, 114-115. The original manuscript is in the Sigmaringen Fürstliche Hohenzollernsche Hofbibliothek: Cod. 52.
111 Haimerl, *Mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit*, 117-118. Unfortunately, both of these manuscripts are no longer extant.
perfect love of all the tender sweetness and beautiful, delicate glory (herlicheyt) which through divine nature is contained in this most worthy sacrament.\textsuperscript{113}

We can round out this picture with a few brief examples from the lower and middle Rhineland, which regularly describe Christ and the Eucharist as sweet.\textsuperscript{114} One such prayer book describes the host as the “heavenly bread of divine sweetness.”\textsuperscript{115} The same prayer includes an extended meditation which describes Christ as:

A great sweetness and the most desirable…font of sweetness and graces…The tongue may not pronounce, nor the word bring forth, no matter how it tries, how Jesus tastes…an ornament of angels, a sweet song in the ears, a wonderful honey in the mouth, a heavenly assurance in the heart. O Jesus you sweetness of the heart, fountain of truth, light of the mind, which meets all joys and all desires, satisfies the mind without any irritation, and gives hunger of desire. Those who taste you hunger more, and those who drink you thirst more.\textsuperscript{116}

The foregoing quotation presents us with several of the central problems relating to fifteenth century prayers to the Eucharist. Sweetness mobilized several modes in which people comprehended the Eucharist. In the first instance, it refers in a material way to gustatory

\textsuperscript{113} Otto von Passau, 

\textsuperscript{114} Several good examples from around the turn of the sixteenth century survive in the Mainz city library: See MSWB, HS I 418 (ca. 1500, Lower Rhein); MSWB, HS I 422 (1511, scribed by Anna Kamberger; middle Rhein); MSWB, HS I 427 (ca. 1500, middle Rhein). Gerhard List has made the orthographic identifications. See: http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/hs/projekt_mainz.htm

\textsuperscript{115} MSWB, HS I 427, fol. 214r.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, fols. 33r-v: Eyn grosse sussigkeit vnd aller begirlichste…bronne der sussigkeit vnd[underlined in manuscript] gnaden…Die zunge mage nit vsssprechen noch die schryffte vorbringen der es versucht hat der weisse wie jhs schmackte…Ihesus ist ein gezierde der engel [end 33r] In den oren ein susse gesenge Ein wonderliche honige in dem mund In dem hertzen ein hyemelische feysstigkeit O du sussigkeit des hertzen ein bronne der warheit das liechte der gemutte vortryffte alle freude vnd alle begerrunge O ihs des gemuttes Sie settiget one alle verdryssunge Vnd gibt ein hunger der begerung Die dich schmacken die hungert mer Vnd die dich tryncken die durstet mer.
experience. This is clear from explicit and repetitive utterances regarding its sweet taste, as well as its positive connection with bodily health. Sweetness is also very often paired with the notion of ineffability (unaussprechlichkeit) to suggest a pre-discursive mode of cognition. Prayers further complicate this by frequently shifting between the Eucharist and Jesus as objects of desire. We also note that sweetness has a moral or social connotation, serving to distinguish the goodness of divinity from the lowliness of humanity. The multiple levels of meaning of sweetness in these prayers suggest that the Eucharist ritual in the fifteenth century was structured around a phenomenological model of taste experiences.

1.4 – Phenomenological Analysis: The Taste of the Eucharist

Certainly, sweetness in these prayer books operates at least in part as metaphor, and should not be understood as a transparent representation of a specific sensual experience of the Eucharist that took place at some specific point in time. This, however, does not obviate the importance of the category of experience in understanding the sensory language of the later Middle Ages, as Bernard McGinn and Gordon Rudy have suggested. Rudy and McGinn have argued language and text are the only actionable objects of analysis.117 As Rudy writes “it seems obvious that, however we might define “experience” (an infamously vague term), we cannot neatly segregate it from language…even if we grant that “experience” is distinct from and prior to language, it is not clear how we can use written language as evidence of it.”118

This perspective is problematic for a number of reasons. First, it is based on a rather narrow understanding of the contexts in which mysticism had influence. In this reading, the mysticism of the later Middle Ages was responsible for the flourishing of sensory language in

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118 Rudy, Mystical Language, 10.
religion, but here mysticism appears as a rather a-social phenomenon focused on the inward spiritual experiences of individuals. This reading has led scholars to posit a kind of antimony between mysticism and more social forms of religion such as ritual and liturgy.\textsuperscript{119} Yet, as we have seen above, the influence of mystics such as Heinrich Seuse in prayer books was pronounced. The significance of sensual language was therefore not limited to the a-social realm of individual mystical reflection, but rather had a powerful use in ritual practice, which people actively and enthusiastically appropriated. Second, the rejection of the category of experience is simply misaligned from how fifteenth century understood the internal processes of cognition. In the fifteenth century, the experience of the Eucharist was something which resisted capture in written and spoken language, and as such, was a cognitive problem. Some within the mystical tradition theorized the cognitive value of tastes almost as an alternative form of literacy. As the widely circulated fifteenth century tract \textit{Philosophia spiritualis} explained:

\begin{quote}
…One discovers God also in desire and in sensitive sweetness, as a very lowly simple person who does not know the Scriptures, but nonetheless recognizes God in love and in steadfast service. In a similar manner is the distinction between the recognition of the sweetness of honey through hearing words describe it, and the recognition of the sweetness itself in tasting it and in desiring for its taste.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{120}Pseudo-Johannes von Kastl, \textit{Ein nücz und schone ler von der aygen erkantnuß}, ed. Renata Wagner (Munich: Beck’sche Buchhandlung, 1972), 111: “man erkennet auch got in der begerung und in enpfindlicher sußikeit als vil schlecht ainfeltig geistlich person, die der schrift nicht wissen und doch got erkennen in der lieb und im fleißlieich dinen, in gleicher weife als unterscheid ist erkennen die sußikeit des honigs allein in dem gehörr und in den worten und die selben sußikeit erkennen in dem versuchen und in der pekerung des kostens.” Wagner identifies 21 libraries which held Latin and German copies of the manuscript in southern Germany around the middle of the fifteenth century. The oldest German manuscript was held in the library of St. Katherine’s in Nuremberg. A Latin version of the manuscript from 1456 also survives, bound with several other tracts. See: Johannes von Kastl, “Philosophia spiritualis de sui ipsius cognitione,” in NSB, Cent VII, 77, 45r-53v.
The analogy establishes two different but interrelated cognitive categories: 1) discursive, in the form of Scripture; 2) affective-corporeal, in the forms of desire, ‘sensitive’ sweetness, and sweet taste. This distinction likely originates in part in the distinction made between *liber experientiae* and *liber scripturae* by Bernard of Clairvaux. This distinction influenced much of the mystical literature addressing knowledge of God in the later Middle Ages.\(^\text{121}\) The specific use of sweetness however has a much deeper history, which has been outlined by Edith Scholl, Franz Posset, Mary Carruthers, and Rachel Fulton.\(^\text{122}\) The specific identification with sweet taste in the *Philosophia spiritualis* stems from more ancient connections between tasting, wisdom, and knowledge of the divine found in the sensual language of the Psalms and the Song of Songs. From Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament, through patristic and early medieval writers such as Jerome and Benedict, to later medieval writers such as Bernard of Clairveaux, authors readily used sweet and sweetness in both concrete and metaphorical senses. Sweetness could describe things in nature such as water, honey and fruit, while at the same time describe metaphorically things like sleep, words, or light.\(^\text{123}\) This history helps explain in part the ubiquity of sweetness in late medieval prayer books specifically, but the persistence of the symbol of sweetness across time and contexts also suggests a deeper connection to human biology.\(^\text{124}\)

Building on this, I want to suggest that the sweetness of the Eucharist found in the fifteenth century prayer books discussed above had cognitive value beyond purely metaphorical language. Sweetness ‘made real’ the Real Presence in a phenomenological sense. That is, it

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\(^\text{123}\) Scholl, “Sweetness of the Lord.”
\(^\text{124}\) Ibid. Fulton, “‘Taste and See that the Lord is Sweet,’” 202-204.
conjured the Eucharist as an object of consumption ready to hand from an amalgam of experiences from daily life. To demonstrate this, I follow the model of Carolyn Korsmeyer’s phenomenology of taste. Formal analysis must address four basic structuring components, which Korsmeyer identifies as: 1) bodily causal factors, 2) bodily conditions at the time of ingestion, 3) cultural conditions, 4) the construction of an “intentional object of taste,” which draws on the first three components. Analysis of these components discloses how composers of fifteenth century prayer books imported the cognitive value of sweetness into the Eucharist ritual.

First, bodily causal factors are taste dispositions universal to the human species, as well as invariable individual taste dispositions determined by physiology. Due to the relative paucity of personal writing from this time period, it is difficult to determine taste dispositions at the individual level. However, we can identify a few taste dispositions which appear to be universal to human biology. Above all, there are two biases universal to the human species. The first is a bias towards sweet tastes. Neurophysiologists, anthropologists, and psychologists have argued that this bias has a deep history in human evolution, stemming from the fact that “sweet indicates fruit, and hence carbohydrates, a source of energy.” The second universal bias is an avoidance of bitter tastes, which also has an evolutionary basis. In nature there is a high correlation between toxic substances and bitter tastes. Convincing evidence of the sweet-bitter axis of bias comes from clinical studies of infants’ facial reactions when exposed to sweet and bitter

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125 Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 10. Because of its subjective and primitive nature, aestheticians from Hume onward have argued that taste cannot be classified as a true cognitive sense, in contrast to hearing, and above all, vision, which are more objective and therefore more reliable means of communicating symbolic information about the world to the subject. In contrast to this discourse, Korsmeyer argues for the cognitive value of taste.


129 Ibid, 29.
substances. Jacob Steiner pioneered this work in the 1970s, and his results have been replicated several times in subsequent studies. It cannot be argued that these biological dispositions are wholly determinative, but rather constitute “the the base from which we build our actual adult likings and dislikings for food.” From a cultural historical standpoint, these dispositions form the basis for common meanings assigned to flavors.

We can trace rhetorical manifestations of universal taste dispositions in the Eucharist prayers. Paralleling the description of the Eucharist as a sweet and good thing, we encounter its contrary aspect – bitterness – embodied in a variety of ways. For example, the Rümlin manuscript juxtaposes the sweetness of the Eucharist against the bitterness of life, calling the Eucharist the “honey-flowing drink by which all the bitterness of this life and this world is made sweet.” A prayer for the Elevation in the Vornam manuscript makes a similar juxtaposition, describing the body anticipating communion “with bitter seeking.” This pattern goes back at least to Augustine, who reflected on Psalm 33: “Listen to the psalm: ‘Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.’ He was made sweet to you because he liberated you. You had been bitter to yourself when you were occupied only with yourself. Drink the sweetness; accept the pledge from so


131 Rozin, “Why We Eat,” 30.

132 Korsmeyer, Making Sense of Taste, 103.

133 NSB, Cent VII, 24, 274r: disem aller sustem prot das mym hat die wollust aller smackhaftikeit vnd den reich aller himelischen tugent den honck fliessenden getranck mit dem alle pitterkeit dizc lebens vnd diser werlt gesusset mag werden.

134 NSB, Cent V, App. 81, 92r. See also MSWB, HS I, 418, 17r-v; HS I, 422, 13v-18r; HS II, 16, 3v.
great a granary." We also note the transformation from bitter to sweet evoked by reference to analogies in nature, especially the comparison with bees making sweet honey from the bitter raw materials of flowers. Prayer books draw on each of these elements, registering the sweetness-bitterness axis as an important structuring element of the experience of the Eucharist.

Turning to bodily conditions at the time of consumption provides further insight into the taste phenomenology of the Eucharist. Korsmeyer identifies these as variable over time according to a “single individual in a rhythmic and predictable manner.” This category principally concerns the oscillation between states of satiation and hunger, drawing our attention to the close relationship between Eucharistic piety and fasting in the later middle ages. Fasting was critical preparation for the Eucharist, as well as a means of controlling the body and natural world. Ascetic forms of fasting originated with hermit saints and became especially popular among female religious communities in the later middle ages. Representations of such communities in Nonnenbücher establish connections between heroic fasting and the sweet taste of the Eucharist. One of the most famous of these books, chronicling the lives of the nuns of


136 MSWB, HS II 16, fols. 4r. MSWB, HS II, 230, fols. 18r makes a similar analogy: “vogelein das bitter safft der blumen kan verwandeln in sussen honig...Bitter ding keret er in susse ding, ob ym etwan vnrecht geschichtlich des nit rechnen wil, sunder got danek sagt.”


139 Ibid, 76-83. Analysis of all saints canonized from 1000 from 1700 reveals that all types of penitential asceticism, including fasting, were more common among women. See Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, *Saints and Society*, *Christendom, 1000-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Kroll and Bachrach’s study of 1,462 saints from 450-1500 indicates 1,214 males and 248 females. Kroll and Bachrach’s figures closely agree with Weinstein and Bell for the centuries of overlap (1000-1500). Further, Kroll and Bachrach’s analysis indicates virtual parity between male and female participation in heroic forms of asceticism (defined as fasting, sleep deprivation, and self-laceration) from the fifth through twelfth centuries, followed higher rates of female participation from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. Specifically this later period, Kroll and Bachrach identify that 4.7% of males engaged in fasting, while 23.5% of females engaged in fasting. See Jerome Kroll and Bernard Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind: The Psychology of Medieval Mystics and Ascetics* (London: Routledge, 2005), 113-122, 213-214.

140 See Bynum, *Holy Feast*, 130-139, for examples of popular Nonnenbücher.
Töss in the fourteenth century, appeared in the library of St. Katherine’s after 1454.\(^{141}\)

Originally composed by the sister Elsbeth Stagel, the manuscript details the lives of 33 women who lived in the convent from 1233 to 1340.\(^{142}\) The relationship between fasting and sweetness appears frequently throughout the *vitae*. The life of the Adelheit von Frauenberg describes a nocturnal visit by Christ and Mary during prolonged fasting and praying. After Christ speaks “sweetly” to Adelheit, he ascends into heaven, and she is left alone with Mary. Mary offered to quench her thirst with her breast milk, which Adelheit described as “unspeakable sweetness.”\(^{143}\)

This story is depicted in one of the fine miniatures from the original manuscript [Figure 1.5].\(^{144}\) Reading the gestures of Adelheit underscores the context of prayer. As she puts her lips to the breast of Mary, her hands remain clasped, a gesture designed to increase devotion and piety during prayer.\(^{145}\) Here we have a peculiar visual representation of tasting while praying which substitutes the sweetness of Mary’s breastmilk for the sweetness of the Eucharist. Bynum has noted the symbolic symmetry between Mary’s breastmilk and the blood of Christ,
particularly in late medieval visual arts and female piety.\textsuperscript{146} There is a parallel relationship in the \textit{Mass of St. Gregory} imagery between those praying and Christ squeezing blood from his side wound into the chalice [cf. figs 1.5-1.11].\textsuperscript{147} The “sweetness” of the Christ depicted in Wolf Traut’s \textit{Mass of St. Gregory} bleeds into the unspeakable sweetness of Mary’s breastmilk, evoking linkages between fasting, praying, and feeding associated with the Eucharist.

In another manuscript from St. Katherine’s, a sister describes how fasting so amplified her desire for the Eucharist that when she received it, it felt like something “no can completely describe it with words.” She claimed to drink from the wound of Christ while fasting, and when she did so, God “descended into her soul and flowed through her with his divine sweetness.” Even after this encounter, the woman described a relentless hunger to taste what she repeatedly called the “immeasurable,” “overflowing,” and “unspeakable” sweetness of divinity.\textsuperscript{148} Others, when lamenting their hunger and thirst, meditate on “sweet Jesus.”\textsuperscript{149} The 1491 devotional book of Maria Alden, a sister in the convent of St. Agnes in Prague, provides another example.\textsuperscript{150} Alden includes a miscellany of prayers and devotions, but most of the text focuses on the life of the sister Magdalena of Freiburg, a member of the Poor Clares.\textsuperscript{151} Throughout, Alden emphasizes Christ’s voice as sweet, and his body and blood as food and drink for the satisfaction of “unspeakable desire.”\textsuperscript{152} During fasts on Sundays, Alden tells the story of sisters hearing

\textsuperscript{146} Bynum, \textit{Holy Feast}, 260-296. Idem, \textit{Jesus as Mother: Studies of the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), grapples with the same problem, though is focused mainly on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

\textsuperscript{147} The \textit{Mass of St. Gregory} was produced in a variety of media, from finely carved sculpture for altar screens, to single-leaf woodcut and engraved prints. See figures 1.6-1.11

\textsuperscript{148} “Codex aus dem Katharinenkloster,” in MMB, HS. 43, fols. 5r-7r.

\textsuperscript{149} “Buch von der Übung der Andächtigkeit,” in NSB Cent VII, 32, nr. 12, fols. 83-130r. Referenced here: 90r.

\textsuperscript{150} MSWB, HS II, 16, 1r: “Anno domini 1491 ist geschreben diss buche von eyner closter jung frauwe genannt suster maria alden unter der regerung der wirdiger frauwen frauwe magdalen kuchen Eptisse des juffrauwen closters zu sint agnesen in welchs closter auch diss buch gehort”

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, 15v: Alden dates the story to 1429, writing “Disz nach geschreben ist von eyner gar andechtigen geistlichen closter junfrauwen sant claren ordens genant Magdalena zu Fryburgk, m cccc xxix.”

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, 84r.
angels flying overhead and singing sweetly with wondrous voices, which served to increase their
devotion, “for they so worthily praise that which is not speakable, the wonderful sweetness.”\textsuperscript{153}

Although not on the same heroic level as many late medieval women, a variety of fasting
practices had spread to large segments of lay society by the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{154} Abstention from
food and drink before the Mass became a normative aspect of piety, frequently encouraged by
theologians and preachers.\textsuperscript{155} The liturgical calendar provided a cycle of fast days throughout
the year. Evidence from Nuremberg suggests a considerable degree of lay participation in cyclic
fasting. Because it was difficult to procure olive oil and fish, typical meat substitutes on fast
days in the Mediterranean, the Nuremberg city council actively pursued several special
dispensations from Rome around mid-century. In 1437, it secured permission for the poor to eat
milk and eggs on fast days. The dispensation, however, excluded the well-off of the city from
this privilege, justifying this exclusion by arguing that Nuremberg’s widespread trade relations
made it possible for wealthier residents to procure sufficient quantities of olive oil.\textsuperscript{156} In reality,
the annual number of fast days was far too high to make this a realistic option, and so the city
council continued to petition Rome for further dispensations. The campaign culminated in 1476,
when Pope Sixtus IV granted permission to substitute milk and eggs for meat on all fast days.
Further, the dispensation allowed the sick to eat meat on fast days, except during Holy Week,
with the approval of a confessor and doctor.\textsuperscript{157} Many clergy disputed the dispensation: the prior
of the Dominican convent preached against it, which led the city councilmen to order a copy of
bull distributed to the parish churches in support of the cause. The preacher of chapel in the

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\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, 140r-v.
\textsuperscript{154} Bynum, \textit{Holy Feast}, 93, briefly mentions the story of the Swiss hermit Nicholas of Flue († 1487), who became
famous for living twenty years on the Eucharist alone.
\textsuperscript{155} Franz, \textit{Messe im deutschen Mittelalter}, 62-64.
\textsuperscript{156} StAN, Rep. 2c. Akten des siebenfarbigen Alphabets, nr. 88.
\textsuperscript{157} StAN, Rep. 1b., Reichsstadt Nürnberg – Päpstliche und Fürstliche Privilegien, nr. 344. Previously 1445, the city
council had successfully petitioned Eugene IV to allow residents to use butter on fast days, except on Fridays. See
StAN, Rep. 1b, Reichsstadt Nürnberg – Päpstliche und Fürstliche Privilegien, nr. 233.
\end{flushright}
Heiligen Geist Spital persisted in strongly resisting the bull, which lead to his suspension by the city council in 1478.\textsuperscript{158} Fasting in Nuremberg needs to be set in the broader context of hunger as a structural aspect of daily life in medieval northern Europe. Weather, climate and warfare resulted in irregular availability of necessary foodstuffs, and meant that the majority of people lived on the margins of subsistence.\textsuperscript{159} Religious fasting in this context “could also erode the health of those in society who were marginally nourished already.”\textsuperscript{160}

Combined with universal taste dispositions, fasting practices are causal factors for the saccharine quality of Eucharist prayers. As Korsmeyer points out, the physiological state of hunger elevates levels of desire to taste, as well as the levels of pleasure derived from taste experiences.\textsuperscript{161} Eucharist prayers articulate desire for consumption of the Host’s sweetness in tones of “heat,” “thirst,” and “lust.” As indicated above, the Rümlin manuscript describes the Eucharist as “sweet to the taste, desirable to the affections.”\textsuperscript{162} Margaretha Vornam’s manuscript describes bread “containing all sweetness, all taste, all desires for sweetness,” the “hunger” and “thirst” for which is felt in the heart and veins of the communicant “at all times.”\textsuperscript{163} The Pirckheimer manuscript calls the Eucharist “the love and desire of my heart.”\textsuperscript{164} Elizabeth Ebran’s prayerbook positions the communicant as “thirsty and hotly desirous for the food of

\textsuperscript{158} StAN, Rep. 60b., Nürnberger Ratsbücher, nr. 2, 179v-183r. The city council continued to oversee fasting activity through the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, granting the Marktmeister the power to examine foodstuffs sold in the market during the Holy Week and levy a special tax on ‘luxury fruits’ (“Luxusfrüchte”). See StAN, Rep. 60b., Nürnberger Ratsbücher nr.11, 4v: “Actum Sabato post Misericordia Domini; herr Anthoni Tucher und herf Frantz Schurstab [1516].”

\textsuperscript{159} Kathy L. Pearson, “Nutrition and the Early-median Diet” 72, no. 1 (Jan., 1997), 1-32. While Pearson focuses on the early medieval period, she draws on data from the later Middle Ages to reconstruct the maximum potential values for land productivity. Her claims therefore also have relevance for the later Middle Ages. See also Kroll and Bachrach, 82-86.

\textsuperscript{160} Pearson, “Nutrition,” 27.

\textsuperscript{161} Korsmeyer, Making Sense, 95. Significantly, a state of hunger here does not mean starvation.

\textsuperscript{162} Cent VII, 24, 141v-142r. See footnote 49, above, for German text.

\textsuperscript{163} Cent V, App. 81, fols. 90v-91r: “prot das im hat allé süßikeit vnd allen smack vnd alle lustugunge aller süßikeit...mein hertz hab alle zeit hunger nach dir...Die adern meiner sel werden erfüllet mit der süßikeit deins wolsmacks. Sie dürste alle zeit nach dir....”

\textsuperscript{164} Caritas Pirckheimer, vol. 1, 49.
Christ’s body.”¹⁶⁵ Neumarkt’s prayers petition Christ to “order my desire, and teach me to receive your holy body and this heavenly food.”¹⁶⁶ Finally, examples from the Rhineland describe the Eucharist as satisfying “all joys and all desires,” yet paradoxically, “those who taste you hunger more, and those who drink you thirst more.”¹⁶⁷

But why would elevated desire orient the body specifically towards the sweet taste of the Eucharist? Universal taste dispositions and variable bodily conditions partially explain this, but full consideration must take into account the third component of the phenomenology of taste: cultural conditions. Where universal taste dispositions and bodily conditions may be considered causal factors in our model, cultural factors provide the context in which these causes operate.¹⁶⁸ Cultural conditions help define food and drink as edible or inedible, as well as which foods are most and least desirable within the edible spectrum. In this regard, the history of medicine and foodways in the later Middle Ages shows how concerns of daily life converged in the Eucharist prayers.

The association between the sweetness of the Eucharist and bodily health reflects contemporaneous medical theory. Flavor is consistently a criterion used to classify foods and medicines.¹⁶⁹ As the treatise Summa de saporibus explains, “only taste is ordained above all the other senses as properly and principally the investigator of the natures of things.”¹⁷⁰ With regard to sweetness specifically, its effects on the body follow humoral logic. It was perceived as generally positive, but an overabundance could be detrimental. Thus, according to authorities such as Aristotle and Galen, medicines which were too sweet oftentimes ran the risk of

¹⁶⁵ BSB, Cgm. 4484, 299r.
¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Klapper, Johannes von Neumarkt, 138.
¹⁶⁷ MSWB, HS I, 427, 33v.
¹⁶⁸ Korsmeyer, Making Sense of Taste, 96.
disrupting the humoral balance of the body.\textsuperscript{171} Avicenna succinctly articulated the underlying principle in the expression \textit{quod sapit nutrit} (that which tastes good nourishes).\textsuperscript{172} The proper amount of sweetness signified foods most similar to the body in substance, and therefore most easily incorporated (digested). As a fourteenth century German medical treatise explained, healthy human blood was “warm,” “sweet, purple, and tastes good.”\textsuperscript{173} Because of this, foods such as sugar were ideal as medicine because in substance they were hot and moist, like human blood.\textsuperscript{174} By the later fifteenth century, the logic of sweetness had widespread currency in printed medical and dietary literature.\textsuperscript{175} The \textit{Arzneibuch} of Ortolf of Bavaria (d. ca. 1300), printed in Nuremberg in 1477, contains numerous prescriptions containing sugar.\textsuperscript{176} Liquid concoctions with heavy doses of sugar were considered helpful for diarrhea and cramps.\textsuperscript{177} Sugar-based syrups are prescribed for ‘bad blood’ accumulating in the head, and could cure a variety of intestinal disorders including dysintery.\textsuperscript{178} The application of pastes of grapes, sugar, honey, cloves, cinnamon and incense was considered an effective remedy for tooth pain. Heart palpitations, believed to be caused by an excess of heat in the chest, could be cured by drinking a sugar-based electuary. For those who had lost the desire to eat, a mixture of sugar, ginger and mint spread on bread or in liquid form would restore the appetite and strengthen the stomach. In addition to their curative role, sweet tastes also functioned in a preventive manner. For the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[174] Ibid, 16. Most of the medical prescriptions in the Breslau manuscript contain sugar or honey, or advocate the use of fruits as sweeteners. Konrad von Megenberg (d. 1374), notes in his \textit{Book of Nature} that medicines consisting of sugar are among the most effective, and therefore expensive, to be purchased from an apothecary. See \textit{Das Buch der Natur von Konrad von Megenberg: Die erste Naturgeschichte in deutscher Sprache}, ed. Franz Pfeiffer (Stuttgart, 1861 [facsimile edition Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962), 344-345. According to Megenberg, sugar in general is good for maladies of the chest and head. See \textit{Das Buch der Natur}, 426. Additionally, sweet foods were ideal aphrodisiacs, since sperm, which triggered sexual desire, was an excess of accumulated nutrition in the body. See Albala, 103.
\item[176] Ortolf von Baierland, \textit{Arzneibuch} (Nuremberg: Anton Koburger, 1477).
\item[177] Ibid, 6r-v.
\item[178] Ibid, 17r, 28r.
\end{footnotes}
elderly, with weaker, humorally colder, constitutions, Ortolf followed the advice of Avicenna in recommending a daily regimen of sweetened wine. For most of these prescriptions, the perception of their efficacy was based on how they balanced the humoral heat and moisture of the afflicted body, and in their “good flavor.”

Following a similar logic, cookbooks regularly include sugar in a variety of recipes. The late medieval cookbook genre is closely related to medical literature. Recipes reflect a concern with food as curative and preventative medicine. Cookbooks frequently prescribe wine for the sick which indicate fortification with massive amounts of sugar “for the strengthening of the body and the reestablishment of its natural heat.” Recipes for electuaries and medicinal wines often simply instruct to add “as much sugar as is necessary.” Statistical analysis of vernacular cookbooks widens the lens on how the logic of sweetness structured German culinary norms. For the period 1350-1600, a sample of thirty cookbooks containing a total of 7521 recipes reveals that honey was prescribed in 10.47% of recipes, and sugar in 27.09% of recipes. Regression analysis of these recipes demonstrates the pervasiveness of these ingredients over time [Table 1.1]. The same sample reveals significant positive correlations between the number

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179 Ibid, 23r, 26v-27r, 49v.
181 *Küchenmesterei* (Augsburg: Johann Schaur, 1494), D4r [NSB, Inc. 35.4°]. The author thereafter relates a brief story of a sick man who recovered with the help of this wine. Wines for the sick or for the ‘restoration of health’ are common in cookbooks at the end of the fifteenth century. They are commonly fortified with spices and heavy doses of sugar and honey. The *Küchenmesterei* was one of the most popular and frequently printed cookbooks of the late fifteenth century. The first edition was printed in Nuremberg in 1485. See Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, xiv. Its five-part structure, comprising fasting foods, foods with meats, foods with eggs, sauces and electuaries, and vinegars and medicines, was also copied into contemporaneous manuscript cookbooks in both Latin and German. See “Kochbuch, genant kuchenmeisterey,” in Universitätsbibliothek Innsbruck, Codex 671 (early sixteenth century). Another interesting example is found in the City Historical Archive of Cologne: HASK 7004 27. This manuscript, written in both Latin and German, contains a recipe for sweetened wine as a remedy for poisons. See HASK 7004 27, 31r-v. Another German manuscript from the Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen contains several medicinal wine recipes which recommend fortification with sugar to taste. See UBT, Mc. 309, 3v, 16v-17v.
of recipes per cookbook and the percentage of recipes containing sugar, as well as the raw numbers of recipes containing sugar [Tables 1.4 & 1.5]. At the same time, the increase in culinary sugar appears to be balanced against a decline in the use of honey. Table 1.2 demonstrates a negative relationship of moderate significance (correlation coefficient $r = -0.5527$) between the prescription of honey in recipes and the progression of time. Table 1.6 demonstrates a moderately significant negative relationship ($r = -0.4608$) between the number of recipes per cookbook and the percentage of recipes containing honey. This is further clarified by considering the relation between the prescription of honey and prescription of sugar. Adjusting for these variables, Table 1.3 indicates a moderate negative relationship, with a correlation coefficient of $-0.499$. The displacement of honey by sugar may reflect political-economic changes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which brought appreciable amounts of colonial plantation cane sugar into European markets.\footnote{\textit{Koch- und Kellerey von allen Speisen} (Frankfurt am Main, 1544), 57r. See also: \textit{Küchenmeisterei} (Nuremberg: Wagner, 1490), 56v, which suggests adding sugar “also vil darzu als der wurtz aller ist.”} Historians of foodways suggest some evidence for this, although the major moment of take-off in the European sugar economy did not occur until the mid-seventeenth century.\footnote{This periodization is suggested in Mintz, \textit{Sweetness and Power}, xxix. Evidence for sugar production and importation before 1650 can be found in: Noel Deerr, \textit{The History of Sugar}, vol. 1 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1950), 77, 100-123. Deborah Ellis, \textit{An Introduction to the History of Sugar as a Commodity} (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1905), 6-26. For an overview of honey harvesting during the period, see: Eve Crane, \textit{The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting} (New York: Routledge, 1999), 69, 111-134, 218-228, 333, 347, 447.} It is more likely that cookbooks reflect the symbolic power of sweetness more strongly than they do actual consumption.\footnote{Albala, \textit{Eating Right}, 4. Weiss Adamson, \textit{Food in Medieval Europe}, xvii-xviii, Idemo, “Medieval Germany,” in \textit{Regional Cuisines}, 155-156. Thomas Gloning, “‘Umerdum’: Bemerkungen zur Wortgeschichte und zur Textkritik von 17r.9 im Kochbuch des Maister Hanns von 1460,” in \textit{Würzburger medizinhistorische Mitteilungen} 17 (1998), 197-204. Gloning is also directing the pathbreaking cookbook digitization project at the University of Giessen: “Monumenta Culinaria et Diätetica Historica: Corpus älterer deutscher Kochbücher und Ernährungslehren,” [online]: http://www.uni-giessen.de/gloning/kobu.htm.} The consistent inclusion of sweeteners in recipes reflects the perceived connection between bodily health and the experience of sweetness.
The treatise *Provision for the Body, Soul, Honor and Well-being of a Human* synthesizes many of the trends discussed above. Printed in Nuremberg in 1489, it links bodily and spiritual health in a comprehensive plan for the maintenance of daily life, and places sweetness at the center of this plan. It defines sickness as a lack of desire to eat or drink, or a lack of taste for food and drink. Similar to Ortolf’s *Arzneibuch*, the *Provision* recommends administering rose sugar to those with no appetites in order address the humoral dryness of the body and strengthen the stomach. Also like the *Arzneibuch*, the *Provision* makes clear that one used the sense of taste to assay the nature and efficacy of a medicine. For certain powdered medicines, one is instructed to taste-test them and add sugar according to the desired level of sweetness. Within this framework, sweet tastes play critical curative and preventative medicinal roles. As with contemporaneous cookbooks, sugar appears as something of a miracle drug, prescribed frequently in syrups and electuaries for a wide range of maladies, from tuberculosis to afflictions of the liver. A daily spoonful of sugar mixed with licorice and wine could protect against certain forms of poison and outbreaks of the plague. Interestingly, we also find close parallels between Eucharist prayers and descriptions of afflictions of the head and mind. Cognitive and emotional imbalances, such as hallucination and depression, arose due to an overabundance of humoral heat in the head. Such afflictions could manifest symptoms very similar to the suffering and desire described in Eucharist prayers: they resulted from “heat and dryness so that one thirsts terribly and might not be able to sleep, and whatever he drinks seems bitter to him.”

185 *Verschung eines Menschen Leib, Seel, Ehr und Gut* (Nuremberg: Wagner, 1489), 5r.
186 Ibid, 73v.
187 Ibid, 47r-v, 48v: “ob dir der schmack ande thet so iß von stand an ein zucker veyel darauff.”
188 Ibid, 72r, 73r. Sugar is also prescribed to treat humoral imbalances of the stomach and liver. See 74r, 80r-v.
189 Ibid, 96r.
190 Ibid, 6r, 57v-58r.
191 Ibid, 57v: “kumpt es aber von hitze vnd von duerr so duerstet in sere vnd mag nit geschlaffen vnd was er trincket das dunckt in bitter.”
The recommended treatment was a daily regimen of syrup consisting of cassia fistula, tamarind fruit, and sugar.\textsuperscript{192}

Sweet tastes appear to have been important in the prescriptive medical literature on the eve of the Reformation, but was this the case in actual practice? Conditions on the ground from this period are often difficult to determine, but an unusually rich cache of letters recently published by Volcker Schier and Corine Schleif suggests a strong connection between medical theory and practice, at least with regard to the function of sweet tastes.\textsuperscript{193} These letters document the life of the Nuremberg patrician Katerina Lemmel (nee Imhoff), who entered the convent of Maria Mai after her husband’s death in 1516.\textsuperscript{194} In the inventory of items Katerina brought with her into the convent in 1516, we find “3 guilders of sugar, 2 guilders of honey, 3 guilders of spices,” which were described as “received by the infirman so that she can prepare and distribute refection to the ill in both convents and also to poor persons outside.”\textsuperscript{195} Katerina often helped in the preparation of such medicines. In a letter to her cousin on 22 July 1516, she complained “there is hardly any time for me to put up any refection, though I should soon like to have some sugar for this. Here they never before had anything of the kind, and they are delighted. And I think the weak are given better refreshment and strengthened thereby.”\textsuperscript{196} The convent community likewise used sugar to replenish blood. In a letter dated 4 February 1519, Katerina inquired about the availability of sugar, explaining “we have recently been bled here. I managed to scrape together enough sugar for a trisanet, but I don’t have any for any more. If

\textsuperscript{192} Ibid, 58r.
\textsuperscript{193} Corine Schleif and Volcker Schier, eds. \textit{Katerina’s Windows: Donation and Devotion, Art and Music, as Heard and Seen in the Writings of a Birgittine Nun} (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).
\textsuperscript{194} The convent was located in the village of Maihingen in Ries, eighty kilometers south of Nuremberg.
\textsuperscript{195} \textit{Katerina’s Windows}, 109.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid, 121.
sugar should become more reasonable, then we should want to buy a little to tide us over until we have recovered from our poverty.”

The foregoing analysis has demonstrated how universal taste dispositions and variable bodily conditions functioned as causal factors within the cultural contexts of late medieval mysticism and medicine. To conclude this analysis, we must summarize how this contributed to the construction of the Eucharist as an intentional object of consumption. As Korsmeyer asserts, the practice of eating revolves around relationships between bodies. As the last sensation experienced before incorporation into the body, the taste of objects of consumption carry strong emotional valences for most people. In particular, anxieties about the effect of the object on the body of the subject structure this phenomenon. This has outward and inward orientations. Outwardly, the intentional object is considered in its relation to the external world. In this case, the attribution of sweetness connects the Eucharist to a range of associations in religious and medical culture outlined above. Inwardly, the object directs attention to the state of one’s body. The subject often registers inward effects with reference to the object’s outward associations. As Korsmeyer points out, this component of taste phenomenology articulates the level of pleasure the subject takes in the object of consumption. We see this reflected in Eucharist prayers, which comprehend the effects of the Eucharist on the body and soul in terms of the value of sweetness in late medieval mysticism and medicine. Before reception, supplicants petition God to grant “health of body and soul,” and compare the relationship between communicant and Host to that of a “sick person approaching a doctor.” After reception, the power of the Eucharist is articulated as “salubrious food,” an “armament of faith,” “shield of

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197 Ibid, 319.
200 Ibid, 73.
good will, “exorcism of bodily lust and desire” and “annihilation of all vice, bodily and spiritual.” Prayers invoking the sweetness of the Eucharist reflect a phenomenological understanding of the ritual as a taste experience, and in the fifteenth century constituted an important component within the structured environment of the Mass.

1.5 – The Reformation of Taste: Deconstruction of the Phenomenological Model of the Eucharist

The Reformation deconstructed the phenomenological model of the Eucharist outlined above. Although the Reformation did not alter biologically driven taste dispositions, it effected change in each of the remaining components of the phenomenological model. Reformers’ rejection of liturgical fasting alongside efforts at poor relief and charity by municipal and territorial authorities may have partially changed variable bodily conditions, but for the most part structural hunger remained a prominent aspect of daily life after the Reformation. More importantly, however, the Reformation was an expression of cultural changes specifically relating to the practice of prayer. As we will see below in chapter five, the Reformation did not abandon the practice of Elevation in many locations. It did however abandon the means by which people constructed the elevated Host as an intentional object of taste. Reformation-era prayer books retain traces of syncretism with the medieval paradigm in that they focus in some respects on the internal condition of the communicant. However, this internal condition was never construed as an effect of the objective relationship between communicant and Eucharist Host. It rather resulted from intellectual comprehension of religious doctrine through the written

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201 NSB, Cent V, App. 81, 93v-94r.
and spoken word. There were many late medieval precedents for this model, but the
Reformation standardized it through the use of print technology. Reformation prayer books
adopted this moral-didactic understanding both in content and form, and as a consequence,
abandoned the practice of addressing prayers to the Eucharist.

The reformation of the taste phenomenology of the Eucharist developed alongside and as
a result of the emergence of humanism in late medieval Germany. We have already seen traces
of it in the prayers of Johannes von Neumarkt. Although Neumarkt’s prayers make extensive
use of Eucharistic sweetness, there is also an intense focus on the internal moral state of the
communicant. More than other late medieval Eucharist prayers, Neumarkt’s prayers focus on
the relationship between this internal state and the somewhat abstract theological concept of
divine grace. Turning to prayer books from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, we
identify two divergent humanist trajectories which resulted in a decentering of the traditional
sweetness of the Eucharist. The Hortulus Animaee (Seelengärtelein) of Sebastian Brant (1458-
1521) and Jakob Wimpheling (1450-1528) represents the first, more conservative, trajectory
which retained aspects of the taste phenomenological model. Prayers to the Eucharist as sweet
food, flesh, wine, honey describe its healthy effect on body and soul, and its power to “kindle the
affections.”203 The Hortulus model reflects vernacular printed prayer books.204 An example
from Nuremberg in 1480 describes the Eucharist as “true bread” which contains “all pleasure and

203 Sebastian Brant and Jakob Wimpfeling, Hortulus Animaee (Strassburg, 1503), 165r-v. In a series of prayers for
before communion, the supplicant begs God “salutem mentis et corporis mihi tribue,” and describes the Eucharist
“affectus inflammatur.” The second prayer addresses Christ as “dulcissime atque amantissime domine,” and
emphasizes “nunc deute desidero suscepe” (165v). The third prayer asks “dulcissime deus” and “hostia
immaculata” to “da mihi cibum salutem eternae” (167r). The fourth prayer describes the host as “mann nieu
cadidia, melle dulcius omni auro preciosus” and goes on to state “vt purificato corpe et spiritu merear degustare
sancta sanctorum” (167v). Prayers for after communion describe the host as “sanctissima caro, summa vite
dulcedo” (169v).
204 Gebetbuch (Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1476); Gebetbuch (Nuremberg, 1480); Bedebok (Lübeck, 1499).
It also includes Seuse’s communion prayer, as well as a prayer incorporating some of the contrasting language of Neumarkt’s prayers. Printed prayer books exhibit important differences from the manuscript tradition, however. The sheer number and diversity of prayers attenuates sweetness as a central Eucharistic concept. The Nuremberg edition, for example, contains 35 different Eucharist prayers. Many of these prayers refrain from using sweetness; in its place, terms such as “mildness” and “gentleness,” (Miltigkeit, Sanftmütigkeit), “Love” and “loving” (Minne, minnelich), or “merciful” (Barmherzigkeit) appear frequently. Additionally, they tend to incorporate more direct explanations of the relationship between individual reception of the Eucharist and the forgiveness of sins which is suggestive of the beginnings of a moral-didactic understanding of prayer. While manuscript prayer books typically evoke this relationship through the concept of sweetness, printed prayer books on the eve of the Reformation speak didactically to communicants to receive the Eucharist “in order that you [God] might grant me indulgence.”

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205 Gebetbuch (Nuremberg, 1480), 60v: “ein wares prot dz do verleiheh ist dem menschen daz leben Nw verleieh meinem gemuete oder sele von dir zeleben vnd dich alweg sussigligklich zeschmecken.” Item, 180r: “Du pist dz prot von dem die weiszheit bezeuget Das in Im hat alle wollustikeit vnd aller wolgeschmachen sussikeit.”
206 Ibid, 188r-191v.
207 Ibid, 182v-183r, 186v, 187v-188r, 191v-195v, 200v-201v, 209v, 213v-214v. Additionally, see Gebetbuch (Ulm, 1476), 106v-109r: O Ewiger barmhertziger almechtiger got enzuend mich mit dem fewer deiner goetlichen minne vnd liebe vnd begab mich mit den gnadn deiner barmherzigkeit dz ich mich vnd alles mein leben also bereiten muog zuo dem waren himelbrot deines heiligen fronleichnams wann du bist das ewig leben vnd das liecht das die heiligen christenheit mit genadenreiche schein erleuchtet; O mynniglicher vnd himelischer schoepfver aller genaden wer bin ich das ich dich hochwirdiges sacrament vnd hochstes guott will empfahe O vnnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe O vnmessiges guott will empfahe
208 Gebetbuch (Nuremberg), 189v: Herre ich empfahe dich darumb dz du mir ablass gebest…dz du mir bruderschaft gebest in dem himelreich…das du mich behuttest vor aller menschlicher bekoerung…
as ‘useful’ for “the forgiveness of all my sins and for my soul in eternity.” These shifts disassemble important components of the phenomenological model. Eucharist prayers which include bitterness, suffering and desire as structuring elements are not counterbalanced with the sweet experience of consumption. Disconnected from their embodied axis, the symbolic potential of such elements is circumscribed to more abstract social and moral levels.

The second trajectory in humanist prayer books breaks completely with the phenomenological model, abandoning the practice of addressing prayers to the Eucharist. Instead, these prayer books are collections of fragmentary doctrinal or edificatory writings in which individual humanists took special interest. The prayer book persists as an object of personal property composed by collection and accretion over time, but its intended use is wholly different. The manuscript of Hermann Schedel (1410-1485) illustrates the beginnings of this new model. Schedel was a Nuremberg physician and early humanist who maintained correspondence with patients in Nuremberg and neighboring cities. He also kept a prayer book, identified by Xaver Haimerl. Written in Latin, its composition appears to have taken place over the 1450s. The title given by Hermann Schedel is simply “Various passages and devotional prayers.” This miscellany includes no Eucharist prayers. It shares affinities with earlier prayer book traditions, including three series of devotional prayers to Mary (Sertulum

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209 Ibid, 187v: “Der fronleichnam meines lieben ihesu cristi Der frum vn nutze mir zu ablas vnd vergebung aller meiner sunde vnd fuere mein sele in das ewig leben.”
210 Hortulus animae oder Seelengärtlein (Nuremberg, 1498), 160r-161v.
211 BSB, Clm. 693.
213 The manuscript is found in the BSB, Clm. 693. Haimerl, Mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit, 122.
214 Haimerl, Mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit, 122. One of the last pieces in the prayer book, a series of meditations on psalms, is dated to 1458. See BSB, Clm 693, fols. 235r-351v.
215 BSB, Clm 693, fol. 103r.
Where it diverges significantly is in its understanding of prayer as a method for individual introspection and moral instruction.

The moral-didactic model in Schedel’s prayer book is most clearly demonstrated by the inclusion of Pierre d’Ailly’s *Meditations on Seven Penitential Psalms*, which takes up over one hundred folios of the manuscript. D’Ailly begins by defining human nature as sinful, and true penitance as a moral process likened to a ladder. The ladder has seven steps, to which correspond the seven penitential psalms expounded in his treatise. In this framework, prayer is an individual act of oral/aural appeal to God in the form of praise, paired with quiet reading and silent, internal contemplation of the divine. The psalm is therefore the ideal object of prayer, and the vehicle for scaling the seven-step ladder. The principle work of the prayer book, therefore, is to expound individual lines of the psalms. Line by line, D’Ailly deconstructs the seven psalms, providing to the reader in depth explanations of each word. The underlying cognitive premise is comprehension in visual and aural modalities. This appears to reflect aspects of D’Ailly’s essentially pastoral understanding of the role of theologians in church

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216 Ibid, fols. 103v-150r.
217 Ibid, fols. 235v-351r.
218 “Vera poenitentia uelut scala quaedam est qua homo peccator, qui secundum evangelicam parabolam descendit de Hierusalem in Hierico, rsum in Hierusalem (hoc est ad pacis visionem) ascendit.” in BSB, Inc. 6504 , fol. 2r.
220 Ibid, fol. 3v: “Domine exaudi orationem meam, auribus percipe obsecrationem meam. Per hanc ex diuinorum operum consideratione in Dei contemplationem ascendit: Meditatus sum, inquit, in omnibus operibus tuis, et in factis manuum tuarum meditabar.”
221 Ibid, 3v-4r: “Nos ergo si in hanc terram coelestis Hierusalem deduci cupimus, his septem poenitentiae gradibus ascendere, et in his psalmos assidua deuotione meditari debemus: exemplo beatissimi Augustini, de quo legi que ultima qua defunctus est infirmitate, huiusmodi psalmos de poenitentia, quos sibi iussaret scribi, iacens in lecto contra parietem positos intuebatur, et ubertim ac iugiter flebat.”
222 Ibid, 4v: “Hoc autem qualiter per singulos cognoscatur, licet non sit huius operis explanare, tamen quantum ad propositum pertinet, satis ex sequentibus apparebit.”
and society, as well as his advocacy of direct engagement with scripture. As we will see below, it also became the structuring principle of the Reformation prayer book.

Another important prototype of the Reformation prayer book can be found in the work of Erasmus of Rotterdam. He articulated his basic understanding of prayer in a 1499 tract, *Oratio de virtute amplectenda.* Addressed to the son of Philip of Burgundy, Erasmus composed three long prayers in order that the boy “may begin to learn Christian doctrine along with your basic literary education.” Erasmus developed his ideas on the nature and qualities of prayer through the first two decades of the sixteenth century, organizing them more systematically in his *Modus orandi Deum* of 1524/25. Prayer was to bring about individual spiritual transformation, and arose from an “ardent desire of the mind that like some piercing sound strikes the ears of God.” Its object was always God-Jesus Christ. In form, prayer was discourse between human and divine, or as Erasmus put it, a “conversation [colloquium] with God.” The human side of this equation incorporated knowledge gained from close engagement with texts, above all the Word of Scripture. As such, the Erasmian definition of prayer was rather limited in sensory terms to visual and aural media.

Given this conception of prayer, it is not surprising to find Erasmus applying the line-by-line didactic model found in D’Ailly’s *Meditationes.* His principal focus was on the Lord’s Prayer, which he considered the best and most authoritative prayer because Scripture explicitly

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225 Quoted in Pabel, *Conversing.* 22. Two of the prayers were Marian devotions: *Paean Virgini Matri dicendus, Obsecratio ad Virginem Matrem Mariam in rebus adversis.* The third was addressed to Jesus: *Precatio ad Virginis Filium Jesum.* Pabel points out that Erasmus later renounced the Marian devotions, writing in 1522 that he had written them primarily to appeal to the boy’s mother’s sensibilities “in a childish style designed to suit her feelings rather than my judgment.” He maintained that the prayer to Christ was “more to his liking.” See Pabel, *Conversing,* 22-23.
228 Ibid, 35.
stated that Christ had taught it to his disciples.\textsuperscript{229} Indeed, as it was described in Luke 11:1, the moment embodied didactic-moral model of prayer. Erasmus used the passage to emphasize the disciples’ motivation to learn how to pray: ‘Lord, since we are your disciples, it is fitting that we do everything according to your directions.’\textsuperscript{230} Because the Lord’s Prayer enabled Christians to pray in the manner Christ instructed, Erasmus saw it as his task to ensure that the meaning of the prayer was correctly understood. To this end, he published \textit{Precatio Dominica digesta in septem partes, iuxta septem dies} in 1523.\textsuperscript{231} As the title indicates, the treatise deconstructs the Lord’s Prayer into seven parts corresponding to the seven lines in the Lord’s Prayer.\textsuperscript{232} Each word in each line of the prayer receives extensive explanation. As Hilmar Pabel explains, this technique, called paraphrasing, was one of Erasmus’ favorite literary genres:

The paraphrase undertakes to expound the meaning of the text and the intention of the author. Erasmus also uses the paraphrase to fill in narrative gaps, smooth out abrupt transitions, impose order on disorganized passages, and explain points difficult to understand. He would no doubt have been pleased if pastors consulted the paraphrases as they prepared their sermons.\textsuperscript{233}

Erasmus’ method of explication here related the words of the Lord’s Prayer to their broader biblical context, and to the philosophy of Christ through generous use of allusions and direct quotations from Scripture. The \textit{Precatio Dominica} was quite popular, appearing in three Latin

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid, 110.
\textsuperscript{230} In the original edition of \textit{Precatio Dominica in septem portiones distributa} (Basel: Johann Bebel, 1523), this is reinforced by an image of Christ before kneeling disciples. Above the image is the passage “Domine doce nos orare.” See \textit{Precatio Dominica}, fol. A3 r
\textsuperscript{231} Pabel, \textit{Conversing}, 110-112.
\textsuperscript{233} Ibid, 112.
editions in 1523 alone, and in translations in German (1523), English (1524), Czech (1526),
Spanish (1528), Polish (1533), and Dutch (1593). Above all, however, it was the abbreviated
version of the explication that appeared in the *Modus orandi* in the following year which had the
greatest impact. By explaining the nature and qualities of prayer while at the same time
modeling his exposition of the Lord’s Prayer, Erasmus had created a new literary genre with the
*Modus orandi*, and provided a blueprint for teaching prayer which remained popular throughout
the sixteenth century.  

Erasmus’ writings on prayer articulated a wider and deeper cultural phenomenon among
humanists across Europe in the early sixteenth century. In German-speaking lands, this
manifested in the early Protestant Reformation. In the preface to his 1522 *Bebüchlein*, Martin
Luther perceived the problem thus:

> Among the many other harmful doctrines and books which are misleading and deceiving
> Christians and give rise to countless false beliefs, I regard the personal prayer books as by
> no means the least objectionable. They drum into the minds of simple people such a
> wretched counting up of sins and going to confession, such un-Christian foolishness
> about prayers to God and his saints! Moreover, these books are puffed up with promises
> of indulgences. Many are given precious names: one is called the *Hortulus anime*,
> another *Paradisus anime*, and so on and so forth. These books need a basic and thorough
> reformation if not total extermination.

Luther relied heavily on the Erasmian model to begin this reformation. The core of his
*Bebüchlein* was a line-by-line exegesis of the Lord’s Prayer, because, as he explained, “good

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prayer depends not on the quantity of words, as Christ says in Matthew 6, but rather on deeply and often heartfelt sighing to God, which shall indeed be without any omission.”\(^{236}\) The format of Luther’s exegesis is virtually the same as that of Erasmus, with the exception that Luther divided the first line of the prayer, “Vater unser der du bist ym himmel, geheyliget were deyn name” into two separate clauses, creating an eight line interpretive scheme. Alongside his explication of the Lord’s Prayer, Luther employed the same technique to the Ten Commandments and the Creed.\(^{237}\) According to Luther, “everything a Christian needs to know is quite fully and adequately comprehended in these three items.”\(^{238}\)

As with Erasmus, prayer, cognition, and comprehension in this text are visual and aural processes for Luther. The basis of violating the second commandment is “foolishly babbling fables about God and confusing the word of Scripture.”\(^{239}\) Violation of the third commandment is “not hearing or teaching the word of God.”\(^{240}\) Attending religious services and catechism, and listening to sermons all served to internalize doctrine and subordinate the body to the spirit. Outside structured religious services, hearing and singing Psalms edified and educated the Christian.\(^{241}\) As his thinking on prayer developed, Luther included the importance of biblical prayers. In his 1529 pamphlet *On War Against the Turk*, he thus wrote “in exhorting to prayer we must also introduce words and examples from the Scriptures which show how strong and mighty a man’s prayer has sometimes been.”\(^{242}\)

\(^{236}\) WA 10/2, 376: Und bynn des gewissz, das eyn Christlich mensch ubirflussig gepetet hatt, wenn er das vater unβer recht betet, wie offt er wil und wilchs stuck er will. Denn es ligt nit an viel wortten eyn gutt gepett, wie Christus sagt Matt. 6, βondernn an viel unnd offt hertzlich sufftzen tzu got, wilchs solt wol on unterlassz seyn.

\(^{237}\) Ibid, 377-388, 388-398.

\(^{238}\) Ibid, 377.

\(^{239}\) Ibid, 381.

\(^{240}\) Ibid, 382.

\(^{241}\) Ibid, 386, 398. Luther emphasizes “hearing all psalms and prayer” as a means of fulfilling the imperative in the first line of the Lord’s prayer “Geheyliget were deyn name.” Several later editions of the *Betbüchlein* append excerpts of Psalms. See Ibid, 410-425.

Luther’s prayer book reflects late medieval cognitive uses of sweetness at two points. First, in his explication of the Lord’s Prayer, in describing the grace and mercy of God the Father, he evokes memories of sweet tastes of childhood to appeal to sense memory.\(^{243}\) Second, he uses sweetness synthaesthetically, interpreting the seventh line of the Lord’s Prayer (“nitt eynfure unss ynn vorsuchung”), as an appeal to God’s help “so that we hear something sweet, perceive something lovely; we shall seek not something containing lust, but rather your praise and honor.”\(^{244}\) Luther uses sweetness at a few other points in his prayer book, although never to describe the Eucharist as an object of consumption. It appears as a metaphor for mildness, gentleness, or love, as it often does in other late fifteenth century printed prayer books.\(^{245}\) In making this move, Luther narrows the meaning of the term, severing it from its corporeal moorings while retaining its meaning as a social or moral concept. It became a way to describe people’s behavior, and the effects of internalizing doctrine. Luther thus writes of “patience, gentleness, goodness, peacefulness, mercy and all things belonging to a sweet, friendly heart, without any hatred, wrath or bitterness against any man, or enemy” as springing from the “doctrine of patience, gentleness, peace and unity.”\(^{246}\) While Luther’s prayer book strongly parallels the Erasmian conception of prayer, there are some important differences. Above all, Luther breaks with Erasmus on the question of human agency. Where Erasmus understood prayer as a conversation with God, thus allowing for considerable agency on the part of the human mind ‘extending’ towards God through prayer, Luther was clear that Christians needed to

\(^{243}\) Betbüchlein, 395: “Szo gib unß durch die selb barmhertzickeyt ynn unßer hertz eyn troestliche tzuvorsicht deyner vetterlichen lieb unnd lassz unß empfindenn den aller lieblichsten schmack und suessickeyt der kindlichen sicherheyt, das wyr mit freuden dich eynen vater nenen, kennen, lieben und anruffen muegen ynn allen unßern noedten.” Luther is careful to add “du nicht eyn leyplicher vatter bist…Bondon der du ym hymell bist eyn geystlicher vatter.”

\(^{244}\) Ibid, 405: “Hilff Bo wyr ettwass susses hoeren, etwas lieblichs empfinden, das nit darynnen lust Bondon deyn lob und ehe gesucht werde von uns.”

\(^{245}\) Ibid, 399: In explaining the third line of the Our Father, he writes: “durch deyn gnad yn unß regire eynfeltige süssickeyt und brüderliche trew und allerley freundschaft, miltickeyt, sanffmutcickeyt etc.”

\(^{246}\) Ibid, 387.
pray because God commanded it and promised to hear them. Prayer was therefore the “proper response” to God, placing the human in a passive role.

Luther’s prayer book was republished many times in the sixteenth century. The Weimar edition of his works lists forty editions published during his lifetime in Germany, Switzerland and France, and sixteen editions published after his death to the year 1604. It provided an important point of reference for the reformation of prayer books undertaken by Luther’s followers. Mary Jane Haemig claims that Luther’s citations of biblical prayers such as that of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:5-12 played a critical role in sixteenth century evangelical prayer practice, in particular influencing “how Lutherans taught and learned prayer and what they saw as the occasions and purposes for prayer.”

Above all, reformers emphasized prayer as an aspect of daily life, in times of need, sadness and despair. In this regard, the Reformation of prayer books proposed by Luther further removed them from the specifically liturgical roles played by their fifteenth century counterparts.

The prayer book of Otto Brunfels (1488-1524) demonstrates this reorientation. First published in Strassburg in 1528, the Biblical and Christian Prayer Book of the Prophets, Patriarchs, Kings, Judges and Old Fathers, built on the model set down by Luther, and shares little in common with its fifteenth century predecessors. In his preface, Brunfels criticized the old prayer books as inventions of the devil, misleading simple folk into error. Brunfels’ project was therefore to provide systematic instruction to individuals on when, where, and how

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248 See WA 10/2, 355-362.
249 Ibid, 526.
251 Ibid, 8v-9r.
to pray, to provide prayers based in the words of Scripture, and to explain the significance of these prayers. In content, the prayers consist largely of direct quotations of Scriptures, especially from the Psalms and Old Testament. Brunfels removed prayer from its medieval liturgical role and placed it squarely in the narrative of personal morality and daily life by emphasizing the necessity of prayer arising from the sinful condition of humanity. He categorized prayer systematically as “appeals for rescue, for peace, for temporal necessity and in times of pilgrimage; for protection against your enemies; for thanking God for honor and wisdom, and for all manner of divine benefices you have received…for praising God…for begging God for something that might be necessary to you.”

Worldly adversity arose as a form of divine punishment for the sinful internal state of Christians. Brunfels expends considerable energy delineating how God has permitted Jews, Turks, “heathens,” Antichrist, and other “enemies of the Word” to persecute true Christendom, which he perceived in his time to be a very small minority. To be sure, similar patterns can be found in fifteenth century prayer books, but Brunfels’ prayer book was severed from any relationship to the structured ritual environment of the Lord’s Supper. Bodily conditions such as hunger resulting from famines and natural disasters were rooted in sin, and generated their own sets of prayers based on excerpts of Scripture, but these did not contribute to the construction of the Eucharist as an intentional object of consumption. Severed from its relationship to the liturgy of the Mass, Reformers conceived of hunger narrowly as a societal problem which needed solving, and designed prayers

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252 Ibid, 11r-47v, 49r-124v. Similarly, prayers of thanks and praise to God are Psalm-based. See fols. 132v-170r.
253 Ibid, 8v-9r: an der Seelen oder am Leib was du von Gott zuhoffen oder zubegeren not hast In anfechtungen vmber zeitliche notturfft vnd wolart Vmb schutz gegen deinen feinden vmber Gott ehe vnd weissheit vnd vmb allerley empfangner goettlicher wolthaten jme zudancken [end 9v] Gott zuloben vnd zu preisen vnd was dise zu aller zeit weitter nach gestalt vnd gelegenheit vmber Gott etwas zuerbiten oder zuerlangen nottwendigk zusein moecht wirstu hierin reichlichen vnd genuosam finden vnd keynes weiteren newerdichten Bettbuechlings nimmermehr wann dise zu deiner notturfft bedoerffen werden.
254 Ibid, 29r-47r, 64r, 89v.
255 Ibid, 149v-152r.
specifically for that purpose. As with most other Reformation prayer books, the *Biblical and Christian Prayer book* does not include Eucharist prayers.

Brunfels’ prayer book is representative of other evangelical prayer books of the first generation of the Reformation, even across the mounting division at mid-century between Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans. When examining their contents, we find the same moral-didactic model applied, with intensive focus on constructing prayers from biblical passages and providing explanations of their significance. This left little room for traditional Eucharist prayers. In those prayer books which included Eucharist prayers, the focus is on relating the moral state of the communicant to the ritual through explication of the associated Scriptural passages. Metaphors of illumination, writing, and the Holy Spirit and Christ as teacher take center stage. The 1532 *Common Prayer Book* of Michael Weynmar, an evangelical preacher of the *Heilig-Geist Spital* in Augsburg, provides an instructive example:

Almighty, merciful God and father…through your spirit you have commanded us to pray for the authorities and for all people, so that we pray to you with humble hearts devoutly…illuminate all hearts in recognition of your Gospel…Send your Holy Spirit, the comforter and teacher, who writes your law in our hearts, takes away our blindness and our sin…O Lord, make them living, and illuminate our eyes, that we might see the truth and truly recognize how in us is nothing but vain sin, death, Hell, and the deserved wrath of God…Grant us, O Lord and Father, that we may keep this Supper of our Savior, as he established it, in our memory with comforted and joyous heart, unified in love with

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257 An early anonymous example of this paradigm appeared in Nuremberg and Speyer in 1523. See *Ein Christenlich nuetzpar Betpuechlein mit dem ausszug der heyligen Euangelion vnd aller sant Pauls Episteln, auch dem heiligen Glauben, Vater vnser, Siben pusspsalmen, mit irem rechten verteutischen verstand, vnd einer rechtgeordenten christlichen bekentnus oder peicht, sampt anderm* (Speyer: Jacob Fabri, 1523), as the title indicates, is largely a collection of biblical passages and explanations. The final section of the book includes non-biblical prayers to the persons of the Trinity, pace Brunfels, as well as a special prayer for those “in anfechtung.”
everyone…let us pray as our teacher Christ Jesus commanded, and speak from the heart.\textsuperscript{258}

This model of prayer book persisted in mainstream evangelical culture through the 1550s. Althaus classifies these prayer books as an essential part of devotion in the sixteenth century alongside evangelical religious services and church songs. Indeed, the lines dividing sources such as prayer books, catechisms, song books, and hymnals is very blurry, and we often find one category borrowing material from another.\textsuperscript{259}

Sweetness disappeared from Reformation prayer books, but is it possible that it may have simply migrated elsewhere? Catechisms such as the Nuremberg pastor Leonhard Culmann’s 1537 \textit{Wie iunge und alte leuet recht petten sollen} contain no Eucharist prayers and instead carefully define prayer aurally as “nothing other than an elevation of consciousness to God. When the heart is elevated, and resounds to God and desires something from him, one calls his name, sighing and crying out to God with desire of the heart and mouth, and speaks.”\textsuperscript{260}


\textsuperscript{259}Althaus, \textit{Forschungen}, 3-7, 60-63.

\textsuperscript{260}Leonhard Culmann, \textit{Wie iunge und alte leuet recht petten sollen: ein schlechte einfeltige underrichtung} (Nuremberg: Jobst Gutknecht, 1537), B2 v: “Das gepet aber ist nichts anderst dann ein erhebung des genuots zu Got/ wenn sich das hertz erhebt/ vnd schwinget sich zu Got vnd begert etwas von jm/ ruefft seinen namen ann seuffzt vnd schreyt zu Gott mit begin des hertzen vnd mundt vnd spricht.” Culmann was the preacher in St. Sebald’s in Nuremberg from 1549 until 1558. He was among the foremost representatives of Melanchthon (a “Philippist”) in the city, in opposition to Gnesio-Lutherans and other controversialist factions emerging in the mid-sixteenth century. For a brief biography, see Julius Hartmann, “Culmann, Leonhard,” in \textit{Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie} 4 (1876), 639.
Sweetness appears once to describe singing psalms of praise. Others, such as Veit Dietrich’s 1546 *Summaria Christlicher lehr*, include Eucharist prayers modeled on the moral-didactic pattern exhibited in Weynmar’s prayer above. A survey of the songs of the first generation of the Reformation similarly eschewed the use of sweetness. Of the 1,487 songs documented from the 1520s to the end of the sixteenth century, 6.6% use sweet or sweetness in some form. The majority of songs deploying sweetness do so in discussing the Word, music, or for more abstract concepts such as divine comfort, grace, and love. Very few actually apply it to the sense of taste, and within that category, only four songs use sweetness to describe the Eucharist specifically. These points reinforce the argument for a reformation of the taste phenomenology of the Eucharist.

This reformation therefore took place primarily in prayer books, but occurred against the cultural backdrop of a more generalized shift in the cultural value of sweetness. Further evidence of this shift appears in the first German translations of Psalm 33 (“Taste and see that the Lord is sweet”). As Rachel Fulton, Edith Scholl and Mary Carruthers have demonstrated, use of the Latin *suavis* in translations of this passage persisted throughout the Middle Ages,

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261 Culmann, *Wie iunge und alte leut petten sollen*, C2 v: “wirdt das gepet starck vnd dringt durchs flehen/ wird aber süss vnd angenem durch den danck.”
262 Veit Dietrich, *Summaria Christlicher lehr, für das junge volck, Was auss ein yeden Sontags Euangelio zu mercken sey*. The 1555 edition of the *Summaria* includes several Eucharist prayers, see Dietrich, *Summaria* (Nuremberg: Johann vom Berg & Ulrich Neuber, 1555), F4r.
263 This survey is based on the edited collection by Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 3: *von Martin Luther bis auf Nicolaus Herman und Ambrosius Blaurer* (Stuttgart: Verlag Liesching, 1841; reprint Hildesheim: Olms, 1964).
264 Of the four, one is by the first female song writer of the evangelical tradition. The songs are: Elizabeth Creutziger, *Lobsanck von Christo* (1529): “das wir hie mugen schmecken deyn suisickeyt ym hertzen vnd dursten stets nach dir”]. Michael Weisse, *Geburt jhesu christi*: “lebendiges himmelbrot, speyss vnd erkwick vnser doerffigkeit mit deiner suessiskeit, das wir starck vnd volgeschicht werden zu gutten geberden”]. Hans Schmid, *Gemeinschaft Christi* (no date): "vnde uns wol ruesten mit allen Christen als ain sued brot on trug vnd listen." The final song is by the Gnesio-Lutheran Erasmus Alberus, *Vom Sieg Christi* (1569); "dis ist das rechte osterlamm, gebraten an des creutzes stamm, davon niedlich zu essen ist, das ist der lieb herr jhesu christ/dis ist das rechte suesse brodt, welchs von vns treibt den ewigen todt, des lamms blut trincken wir da bey, so sind wir fuerm tirannen frey."
referring actively to taste as both metaphor and concrete experience.\textsuperscript{265} Beginning with the first printed German translations of the Bible in the late fifteenth century, however, there was a tendency to translate this passage in a way that obscured its experiential, corporeal dimensions. German Bibles printed before Luther’s edition rarely use the term “süß.” Instead, they tend to use “senft” (gentle), which parallels the reformation of prayer books by moving the passage away from its experiential, embodied meanings, towards its social and moral implications.\textsuperscript{266} Luther’s translation of the passage completes this movement: “Taste and see how friendly the Lord is” (“Schmecket und sehet, wie freundlich der Herr ist”). In their citation and explication of the Psalms, authors of prayer books such as Otto Brunfels also utilized this translation.\textsuperscript{267}

Likewise the first compilers of evangelical Psalters encouraged audiences to contemplate divine friendliness, not sweetness.\textsuperscript{268}

Additionally, a contemporaneous devaluation of sweetness in medical contexts might have contributed to the reformation of the taste phenomenology of the Eucharist. As Kenneth Albala has demonstrated, the value of sweet tastes in this culture underwent fundamental change. Dietary literature for the period between 1470-1530 upheld traditional humoral theories, and borrowed heavily from medieval Arab and Jewish authorities. This supported the perceived efficacy of sugar as medicinal food.\textsuperscript{269} Authors of this period were interested in balancing bodily health and pleasure through diet. A break occurred around 1530, however, and persisted through

\begin{footnotes}
\item[266] Fifteenth century high German editions which use “senft” include: Mentelin (Strasbourg, 1466), Eggstein (Strasbourg, 1470), Eggstein (Strasbourg, 1472), Zainer (Augsburg, 1474), Pflanzmann (Augsburg, 1475), Sensenschmidt & Frisner (Nuremberg, 1476-78), Zainer (Augsburg, 1477), Sorg (Augsburg, 1477), Pflanzmann (Augsburg, 1477), Sensenschmidt (Nuremberg, 1478), Sorg (Augsburg, 1480). Editions using ‘süß’ include: Koberger (Nuremberg, 1483), Grueninger (Strasbourg, 1485), Schoensperger (Augsburg, 1487), Schoensperger (Augsburg, 1490).
\item[267] Brunfels, \textit{Biblisch Bettbüchlein}, 54r-v: “Ich wil den Herren loben all zeit...Schmecket vnd sehet wie freuntlich der Herre ist/ Wol dem der vff jhnen vertrawet.”
\item[268] Georg Schmaltzing, \textit{Der Psalter Davids vber die Hundert vnd fuenfftigck Psalmen Ynn Gebetsweys auss heyliger Goettlicher schrift gegrundet} (Zwickau, 1527), 37v: “O Herr lass sich deinen Engel vmbmich her legern/ das er mir auss helffe/ lass mich deiner freundligneyt gewar worden.”
\item[269] Albala, \textit{Eating Right}, 11.
\end{footnotes}
to approximately 1570. In this period, authors posited that the body must be corrected, its natural instincts disciplined and subordinated to the mind and rationality. This ushered in a new attitude that taste should no longer be the basis for choosing foods and organizing diets, thus resulting in a rejection of the doctrine *quod sapit nutrit*. Foods once commended for their flavor and nutritional value were newly labeled dangerous. The most significant change in dietary recommendations occurred around sweets. Many authors of this period believed that purely medicinal sweets were used to excess solely for the sake of pleasure. Consequently, some suggested avoiding sweets altogether, and the traditional image of sugar as an ideal food gave way to sugar as a delicious but dangerous temptation.  

1.6 - Conclusion

The history of prayer books in fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany demonstrates that the Reformation broke with the taste phenomenological model of Eucharistic experience of the fifteenth century church. Before the Reformation, vernacular prayer books regularly described the Eucharist as something sweet to the taste. Prayers orienting people’s imagination towards the sweetness of the Eucharist operationalized causal factors such as biological taste dispositions and variable bodily conditions in the context of contemporary mysticism and medical practices. This taste-phenomenological model of the Eucharist was predominant in the fifteenth century, though by the end of the century alternative moral-didactic model of prayer had gained wider currency. This model aimed at communicating central aspects of doctrine and reminding the

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270 Ibid, 177-179. Albala suggests this is linked to the contemporaneous establishment of sugar plantations in the new world. In the fifteen century, sugar was considered an ideal food, but by the mid-sixteenth century, authors living in centers of sugar refining in Europe, such as Fridaevallis in Antwerp, observed with some concern that sugar was used on every day foods. Albala thinks that medical opinion changed in reaction to the wave of intensified use and extensive popularity in urban centers. Subsequently, authors increasingly identified sugar consumption with rotting teeth. See Albala, *Eating Right*, 212.
suppliant of his or her moral state. Prayer books of the early German Reformation adopted this model, and as a consequence largely discontinued addressing prayers to the Eucharist. Further, among the few prayer books which retained such prayers, reflections on the Eucharist as an object sweet to the taste appear to have been uniformly abandoned. Small traces of the traditional model persist in some contexts, but the majority of the evidence points to a reformation of the taste phenomenology of the late medieval Eucharist.

Returning to Wolf Traut’s *Mass of St. Gregory* reminds us that this is only part of the story. In this chapter we have focused primarily on the sweet content of prayers spoken during the ritual. To be sure, this constituted a significant part of the structured environment of the Mass, yet we must be careful not to overlook how the act of prayer participated in the *materiality* of late medieval religion. Traut’s depiction of onlookers praying while clutching fragrant rose-garlands draws our attention to this phenomenon. The rose-garlands are a clear representation of the Rosary, one of the most popular devotions in fifteenth century Germany. Its presence in depictions of the Eucharist miracle raises further questions about the role of the senses in late medieval ritual. Chapter two turns to address some of those questions.
2.1 – Introduction

Next to the Eucharist itself, the rosary was the most popular object of devotion on the eve of the Reformation. Its history discloses how late medieval prayer was a synaesthetic or intersensorial practice, and illustrates another dimension of how the early German Reformation changed late medieval ritual engagement. Careful consideration of the evidence for the period before the Reformation reveals that praying the rosary compassed a complicated set of relationships between beliefs, practices, texts, and material culture. In its simultaneous and disorderly appeal to multiple senses, the rosary played a critical role in late medieval devotional culture. The Reformation of the rosary therefore represents a rejection of the synaesthetic, or intersensorial, devotional paradigm of late medieval ritual.

At the most basic biological level, synaesthesia can be characterized as “unusual perceptual or cognitive pairings.” Culturally, sensory anthropologists have used the term synaesthesia to refer to one of two modes of intersensoriality, or the “multi-directional interaction of the senses and of sensory ideologies, whether considered in relation to a society, an individual, or a work.” The first mode of intersensoriality, which we might call “sequential” intersensoriality, indicates the staging of one sensation after another. We saw an example of sequential intersensoriality in chapter one when discussing the staging role played by vision in the taste phenomenology of the Eucharist. This contrasts with combinatorial intersensoriality,
which indicates two or more simultaneous sensory experiences, and is more properly identified with synaesthesia. The experience of intersensoriality can have a social function in that it often dissolves ideologically determined sensory hierarchies. Such hierarchies, Howes explains, are “always allied with social rankings and employed to order society.” Dominant groups are associated with esteemed senses and sensations. Those in positions of power typically index subordinate, ‘unpleasant,’ or dangerous’ social groups to less-valued senses and unpleasant sensations.4 Because of its power to dissolve – at least temporarily – such normative constructions, appropriating intersensoriality can be a potent ritual tactic.5

As an assemblage of texts, material objects, and practices, the late fifteenth century rosary was an intersensorial practice built upon historical layers of devotional culture. In this chapter, I trace its history in several stages. First, a brief overview establishes its pre-history to 1475, when the first Confraternity of the Rosary was founded in Cologne. Next, the chapter examines the rapid spread of the Rosary Confraternity across German speaking lands at the end of the fifteenth century. The chapter then places the rosary in the context of late medieval material culture, considering both quotidian and religious uses. Following this, analysis shows how the synaesthetic language of popular Rosary handbooks articulated the materiality of the rosary. Turning to the Reformation, we consider the grounds on which reformers rejected the rosary. Reformers rejected the rosary as a material object, on theological grounds, and on ideological grounds by gendering it as a specifically female object. In practice, it is important not to overstate the impact of the Reformation of the rosary. It is clear that the rosary as a

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material object was excised from normative ritual, but estate inventories indicate that Protestant women often held on to their rosaries – whether as an object of private devotion, magical power, or simply as a piece of jewelry – long after the Reformation had taken effect.

2.2 – Formation of the Rosary: Prelude to 1475

What was the Rosary? Superficially, it was a set of prayer beads with a corresponding series of prayers and meditations. Today, the most recognizable series of prayers and meditations originates in the late medieval tradition known as the Marian Psalter, often called the “Dominican Rosary.” It comprises 150 Ave Marias divided into fifteen sets of ten. Each set is preceded by an Our Father and ended by a Gloria patri, and corresponds to one of fifteen ‘mysteries’ of the lives of Jesus and Mary, upon which the devotee is to meditate while praying. Historical scholarship has tended to stress the Rosary as a prayer and meditational form, while de-emphasizing its material aspect in the form of prayer beads. By contrast, we claim here that the sensual experience of looking upon, clutching, and even smelling, prayer beads was (and is) essential to the Rosary. The rosary first achieved widespread popularity in fifteenth century

Germany only when prayer beads and prayer-meditational forms “merged into a single practice.” The fifteenth century therefore marked the intersection of two historical arcs: the material evolution of prayer beads as a devotional object, and the development of the set of prayers specifically associated with this object. These two trajectories form the basis of the Rosary as a synaesthetic technology.

The material culture of the rosary has a genealogy that is both broad and deep. The use of prayer beads is attested to in several world religions, ancient and modern alike. The earliest archaeological evidence comes from pre-Aryan India (before 1700 BCE), and is associated with the cult of Shiva. Sects within Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam all have prayer bead traditions. In the Christian tradition, the earliest reference to prayer beads comes from Paul the Hermit (d. 341 CE), who claimed to use a string of small stones to count the 300 Our Fathers he prayed daily. Some evidence suggests that prayer-garlands (Gebetskränze) of hardened leather hoops or knotted cords embellished with glass, precious gems, and metals were occasionally used to track prayers in the early and high Middle Ages, but references in the written record to prayer beads

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8 Carroll, 487.
10 The first known reference to prayer beads in the written record also comes from India, in the Brahmanistic literature of the fourth century BCE. Local variations on the classical Buddhist 108-bead prayer string, likely borrowed from Hinduism, are documented in India, Burma, Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan, and remain current devotional practices in many of these locations today. Strings of 99 beads symbolizing the 99 names of Allah recited by Muhammad have been a material component of Islamic devotional culture since the eighth century CE. In many of these contexts, prayer beads are embellished by perfuming, painting, or attaching items of special personal or religious significance. See John Miller, *Beads and Prayers: The Rosary in History and Devotion* (London: Continuum, 2001), 76-84. Lois S. Dubin, *The History of Beads: From 100,000 B.C. to the Present* (revised and expanded edition) (New York: Abrams, 2009), 79-92. There is also some oblique evidence for the religious use of beads in Pre-Colombian Andean culture. See Penelope Dransart, “A short History of rosaries in the Andes,” in Lidia Sciamma, eds., *Beads and Bead makers: gender, material culture and meaning* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 129-146. Idem, “Concepts of Spiritual Nourishment in the Andes and Europe: Rosaries in Cross-Cultural Contexts,” in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8, no. 1 (Mar., 2002), 1-21.
are sparse.\textsuperscript{11} Archaeological evidence from the twelfth century onwards documents the use of prayer beads among some of the clergy and aristocracy.\textsuperscript{12}

The first major turning point in the evolution of prayer beads occurred around the middle of the thirteenth century. Such prayer beads were not associated with the Rosary or its prototypical forms. Rather, they were most likely used only to count Our Fathers, much in the same manner as Paul the Hermit. Around this time, Europeans began to identify sets of prayer beads simply as “paternosters.” The first reference appears in a 1253 travel report by the Dutch Franciscan William of Rubruck. Writing to Louis IX of France of his experiences among the Mongols, Rubruck described men who to his surprise carried prayer beads “as we carry the paternoster.”\textsuperscript{13} In 1257, Ulrich von Lichtenstein described paternoster-beads as an essential piece of women’s fashion, often worn about the neck.\textsuperscript{14} In 1261, we encounter the first prohibition against wearing expensive paternosters made of amber and coral among the lay brothers of the Dominican chapter of Orvieto. Prayer-beads appear to have grown in popularity throughout the fourteenth century. By the end of the century, we find more articulated devices which differentiated between ‘paternoster’ and ‘Ave-Maria’ beads.\textsuperscript{15} At the turn of the fifteenth century, Heinrich von Kalkar (Cologne, 1328-1408) is credited as the first to insert a Paternoster after every tenth repetition of the Ave Maria.\textsuperscript{16} After 1400, sets of prayer beads identified as paternosters became increasingly common among the laity, appearing with some frequency in

\textsuperscript{11} Ritz, 53, 59.
\textsuperscript{12} Thurston, ““Our Popular Devotions II: The Rosary,” in The Month 47 (April), 383-404.
\textsuperscript{13} “sicut nos portamus paternoster.” Quoted in 500 Jahre Rosenkranz, 199. A few decades later, Marco Polo noted that the king of Malabar wore a chain of 104 gems for counting morning and evening prayers. In Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rose, 14. The number 104 is likely either a mistaken count made by Polo, or a derivation of the traditional 108 bead Buddhist prayer string.
\textsuperscript{14} “der an ir puosen hanget.” From his Vrouwenbuch. In 1260, “Livre des métiers” of Etienne Boileau makes the first reference to a guild of “paternotrier” – men responsible for the production of paternosters. Guilds also appear in London in the later thirteenth century. See Ritz, 62-64.
\textsuperscript{15} Ritz, 66-67.
\textsuperscript{16} He also described his own set of prayer beads as consisting of a cord with 10 beads and one large bead. See Beissel, Geschichte der Verehrung Marias in Deutschland während des Mittelalters, 513.
estate inventories of both males and females across Europe. In German speaking lands, the earliest references appear in areas along the Rhine, particularly the lower Rhine and Westphalia.\textsuperscript{17}

Prior to the fifteenth century, prayer beads did not always imply the series of prayers and meditations typically associated with the rosary today. Prayer beads preceded the Rosary, but the prayer form that emerged in the fifteenth century represents the progressive layering of devotional cultures onto this material substratum. We identify four such historical layers. The original layer consists of the devotional practice of counting repetitions of the Lord’s Prayer. Indeed, the original name for the material object – ‘paternoster’ – draws our attention to this layer.\textsuperscript{18} The repetition and quantification of prayers in the service of attaining salvation discloses the more practical religious orientation of this layer. The second layer evolved from the monastic devotional culture of the Psalter. Beginning in the twelfth century, Carthusian lay brothers began to replace the text of the Liturgy of the Hours with repetitions of the Lord’s Prayer. This layer shaped the form that the rosary would later take as a series of prayers: the division of 150 prayers into three series of 50 corresponds to the number of Psalms in the Psalter, and the monastic tradition of dividing them into three \textit{quinquagena}.\textsuperscript{19}

In the third layer, we identify the first texts explicitly called Marian Psalters, which emerged at the intersection of devotions to the Liturgy of the Hours and popular culture. As the Liturgy gradually evolved into the simple recitation of antiphons paired with a specific quantity of Our Fathers or Ave Marias, the content of these antiphons became unmoored from the Psalms, and they were replaced by rhymed paraphrases or litanies in praise of Mary, typically organized

\textsuperscript{17} Ritz, 65.
\textsuperscript{18} Winston-Allen, \textit{Stories of the Rose}, 14-15. In confessional books from as early as the eighth century, the praying of 20-50 Paternosters was considered an act of penitence.
\textsuperscript{19} Ritz, 51-54.
into 150 verses. Alongside this development, German vernacular texts increasingly used the term “Rosenkranz” to refer to the Marian Psalter. As with the prayer form itself, the naming practice appears to have been a popular development: the vernacular “Rosenkranz” precedes the appearance of ‘rosarium’ as a reference to the Marian Psalter in later Latin texts. Early vernacular rosaries seldom shared a direct relationship to a specific Latin source, suggesting an organic relationship to popular culture. This culture appears to have construed prayer in concrete, material terms. Marian legends from this period emphasize the beauty of the prayer’s repetition as pleasing to Mary. Konrad von Würzburg (d. 1287) described the practice as making a golden garland of gems and blossoms. Albrecht von Scharfenberg called it building a ‘temple of words’ for Mary. Caesarius of Heisterbach (d. 1240) reported a woman who regularly recited fifty Hail Marys and experienced a sensation of sweetness in her mouth.

These rosaries remained popular through the fifteenth century. Two examples survive from St. Katherine’s in Nuremberg, both produced in the first half of the century. In content, they lack a strong narrative structure, instead consisting mainly of lists of attributes of Mary and Jesus, derived in part from the language of the Song of Songs. Such litanies bear strong resemblances to the Eucharist prayers discussed in chapter one. Psalters describe Mary as “very sweet,” a praising her for bearing “the sweet Jesus Christ, who is crowned with you in heaven.”

21 Ibid, 101-103.
23 One such manuscript, NSB Cent VI, 42v, was destroyed during the war. See Winston-Allen, “Origins,” 625. Fortunately, the Marian texts are printed in Karl Bartsch, ed., Die Erlösung: Mit einer Auswahl geistlicher Dichtungen (1858), 279-90. In his introduction, Bartsch dates the manuscript’s composition to the fifteenth century. The manuscript contains two Marian texts, titled “Marien Rosenkranz,” and “Marien Rosengarten.” The original texts from which the manuscript was composed are from the first half of the fourteenth century. See Bartsch, “Eintleitung,” 51.
24 A fifteenth century copy of the original manuscript can be found in: Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, MS Germ. qu. 494, fols. 1r-7r. This manuscript has been printed in Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts, ed. Philipp Wackernagel, vol. 2 (1864-77; repr. Hildesheim, 1964), 614-17. Quoted here from Wackernagel.
In addition to extensive use of sweetness, the language of these Marian Psalters is synaesthetic, appealing to multiple senses in simultaneous and disorderly fashion. One text, the “Rose-garland of Mary,” uses 41 different epithets to describe and praise Mary. Here she appears variously as “red dawn,” “sweet fruit of paradise,” a sapphire, carbuncle, almond milk, sweet honey, cinnamon, clear wine, sugar, balsam, a beautiful singing nightingale, a kernel of myrrh, a mint leaf, and a beautiful lantern. In the same manuscript, the “Marien Rosengarten” evokes synaesthesia through an overwhelming array of descriptive terms for Mary. Mary is a “noble sweet rose blossom,” “clear bright sun,” “golden crown of divinity,” and a “noble sweet gem,” among others. These Rosaries also reify the practice of praying by focusing on the body’s sensual orientation to the implements and objects of prayer. The “Rose-garland” text begins by stating that “I offer to you [Mary] this garland.” The “Rose garden” text ends by entreating Mary to purify “the heart and the senses,” in order to let the Holy Spirit enter, and to “receive this rose-garland, which I have spoken to you today.” A number of the prayer books cited in chapter one contain one or several “Marienrosenkranz” or “Marienrosengarten” texts alongside their collections of Eucharist prayers. Rosaries of this type persisted into the seventeenth century in some cases. As we will see below, the synaesthetic language of these texts persists in later rosary handbooks, and was closely aligned with the materiality of late medieval prayer.

The fourth and final layer of devotional culture combined the Marian Rosary with meditations on the life of Christ. Winston-Allen hypothesizes that this fusion emerged from the

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25 Bartsch, 279-284.
26 Ibid, 284-290.
27 Cf. “noble sweet gem” here with Seuse’s communion prayer, which also describes the Eucharist as a “sweet gem of paradise.”
30 NSB Cent VII 9, fols. 1-10r; VII 24, fols. 69v-88r, 93v-97r; VII 34, fols. 73r-80v; VII 61, fols. 2r-21r; VII 62, 2r-4r.
practical need for a stronger narrative device to discipline the prayer form.\textsuperscript{32} Such long litanies of virtues and praise for Mary were monotonous and difficult to remember. The need to focus attention and sequence meditations in order to learn and remember them led to the layering of the Life of Christ narrative over the sequential recitation of Ave Marias and antiphons. Until fairly recently, the insertion of the Life of Christ narrative was attributed to Adolf of Essen (d. 1439) and Dominic of Prussia (d. 1460), Carthusian monks at Trier who advocated the new rosary as a means of achieving deeper spirituality.\textsuperscript{33} In his “Liber experientiarum” (1458), Dominic claimed to have invented a series of fifty meditations on the life of Christ while reciting Ave Marias.\textsuperscript{34} A study by Andreas Heinz contradicts this claim, finding a \textit{vita Christi} rosary from the Cistercian convent of St. Thomas on the Kyll (within the bishopric of Trier, approximately 40 km away), dated approximately to 1300.\textsuperscript{35}

Although Dominic and Adolf may not have been the first to fuse the Marian Rosary with the Life of Christ narrative, they were certainly responsible for the widespread diffusion of this devotional form in the first half of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{36} Through the network of Rhineland Charterhouses, this Rosary was disseminated throughout western and southern Germany. The Carthusians at Trier allegedly produced more than 1000 manuscript copies of Adolf and Dominic’s texts for circulation.\textsuperscript{37} By 1433, Adolf was able to claim that his vernacular text “Rosengertlin U.L.Fr.” was used in Charterhouses in Cologne, Mainz, and was prayed daily in

\textsuperscript{34} Winston-Allen, \textit{Stories of the Rose}, 1-2, 17.
\textsuperscript{35} Andreas Heinz, “Die Zisterziener,” 262-309.
Strassburg, Koblenz, and Nuremberg. By the time of Adolf’s death in 1439, the Rosary was established among the laity in the region around Cologne.

Dominic’s *Psalterium Beatae Marie virginæ*, composed between 1431 and 1438, provides insight into the practice of praying the rosary in these early communities. Dominic’s description brings together several of the developments discussed above. It appears to have been growing in popularity. Dominic described people praying this Psalter every day of every week throughout the year: “as with the Psalms in the Psalter, 50 Ave-Marias three times, or three Rosaries, and it was called the Psalter of Our Lady.” The rosary of the early to mid-fifteenth century also appears to have been expanding from a somewhat limited liturgical practice into daily life. For those who “do not have enough time, or are too weak in nature to be able to pray ardently the fifty parts of the Psalter three times: they should divide the Psalter and speak one part of fifty the first day, and the next the following day, and the final part on the third day.”

Dominic believed the Rosary articulated a three-way relationship between material practice, the internal piety of the practitioner, and the divine. As he explained, proper performance served to increase practitioners’ “ardor” (“ynnnigkeit”) and beatitude. Moreover, it was pleasing to both God and Mary. Dominic’s rosary enjoyed considerable success in the first half of the fifteenth century, but some did not embrace it so enthusiastically. The Dominican Alanus de la Rupe (d. 1480) presented himself as a reformer of Dominic’s Rosary, although in truth he borrowed heavily from it when he founded the “Confraternity of the Psalter of the Glorious Virgin Mary” at Douai in 1470. Alanus claimed that Mary had personally commissioned him in a vision to revive the Confraternity, which he argued went back to Mary’s own life. Despite attempts to distinguish his form of the prayer as authoritative, the *Livre de ordonannce* of the Confraternity

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39 Ibid, 103-104.
recommends a method of prayer which differs little from its predecessors: it calls for the division of 150 Aves into three sets of fifty, with corresponding meditational series on the Life of Christ.

40 His most important contribution was his Confraternity and his use of the new print medium to spread the devotion, strategies adopted by Rosary Confraternity founded in 1475 at Cologne by the Dominican Jakob Sprenger, which we will discuss below.

Just before the foundation of the first Rosary Confraternity in Germany, historical developments had brought together the constellation of material culture, devotional practices, and meditational series under the single rubric of ‘the Rosary.’ As we have seen, the name ‘rosary’ was applied to the Marian psalter in vernacular German already by the fourteenth century, but this could indicate a variety of devotional forms. In the fifteenth century, the efforts of Dominic, Adolf and the Carthusians progressively associated the name ‘rosary’ with a specific prayer form consisting of three sets of 50 Aves organized and divided by Our Fathers. Bound up in this process, the Rosary also became more closely linked to the use of prayer beads. This appears to have emerged from popular practice, as neither Adolf nor Dominic recommended or even discussed the use of prayer beads. By the time of Dominic’s death, however, the association appears well-established, particularly in western German lands. A 1460 manuscript from Cologne tells of a young woman who “spoke the Rosary of Our Lady Mary on a paternoster containing small and large stones.”41 By the time Alanus de Rupe wrote his Psalter and founded his confraternity, the use of beads in the devotion was assumed to be standard practice.

40 Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rose, 66-72. When later forced to defend his position before the Archbishop of Tournai, however, Alanus enumerated a large number of thematic variations, including meditations on the wounds of Christ, the limbs of Christ and Mary, on virtues, on friends, on saints, and on the altars of the Church.
41 Quoted in Klinkhammer, 104: “Die…jungfraue sprach…unser Frauwen Marie Rosenkrontze zu sant Mathiam an eynem pater noster, dar an cleyner steyne waren und auch gross.”
2.3 – *The Confraternity of the Rosary: Social and Institutional Factors, 1475-1516*

The rosary as a set of prayers and meditations, and a material object in the form of prayer beads first cohered in fifteenth century Germany. In the second half of the fifteenth century, institutional and social factors contributed to its ever-widening popularity. The Confraternity of the Rosary, first founded in Germany in 1475, mobilized these factors in its promotion of the devotion. Among all developments of late medieval German religious culture, the history of the Confraternity of the Rosary is uniquely suited to address questions of geographic and demographic diversity. A considerable amount of documentation of Confraternity membership has survived, and has been much discussed in the scholarship. This is important because, relative to other varieties of popular piety on the eve of the reformation, we have a fairly good idea of who participated in the cult of the rosary.

The history of the Confraternity begins with the Dominicans Michael Francisci (1435-1502) and Jakob Sprenger. Francisci had been at Douai in 1465-1468, during Alanus’ tenure, and dedicated himself to interpreting, organizing and communicating Alanus’ work. In 1468, he became professor of theology at the University of Cologne, a position he held until 1481. While at Cologne, Francisci promoted Alanus’ devotion and its confraternity through a series of lectures. These lectures interpreted Alanus for a larger public, and presented a more practical, useable form of the devotion. Jakob Sprenger relied heavily on Francisci’s work when he founded the first German Confraternity of the Rosary in Cologne on 8. September, 1475. Like

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42 For a brief biography, see: “Michael Francisci,” in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 21 (1885), 671-672.
43 Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*, 67. A first edition of these lectures was printed in 1476 under the title *Sequitur determinatio quodlibetalis facta colonie*. A second edition was printed in 1480 under the title *Quodlibet de veritate fraternitatis rosarii seu psalterii beatae Mariae virginis*.
his predecessors, Sprenger claimed to be renewing an ancient form of the Rosary.\textsuperscript{45} He retained the basic structure of 150 Aves, but differed in how he divided them. Instead of fifteen Paternosters dividing the Aves into repetitions of ten, Sprenger recommended five Paternosters dividing Aves into sets of 50 repetitions.\textsuperscript{46} Despite this somewhat minor point of divergence, Sprenger followed his predecessors in that his chief concern was in presenting a practical and useable form of the devotion in order to encourage its spread.\textsuperscript{47} More importantly, he differed from his predecessors in that he made use of the new printing technology to reach a much wider audience. He composed the first statutes of the Confraternity which were printed at Augsburg in 1476.

The statutes distinguished the Rosary Confraternity from other late medieval confraternities in several ways. Most importantly, the Rosary Confraternity promoted a relatively egalitarian social ideology. In contrast to other confraternities, Sprenger explicitly encouraged both males and females to enroll.\textsuperscript{48} Also unlike other confraternities, enrollment required no fees.\textsuperscript{49} One simply had to enter their signature in the rolls of the local chapter of the Confraternity. Sprenger argued that for this reason, the poor can become “equals of the rich” if they joined the Confraternity and prayed their Rosaries.\textsuperscript{50} Other promoters emphasized these points in popular pamphlets and broadsides.\textsuperscript{51} Further, as Winston-Allen suggests, there was a

\textsuperscript{45} Jakob Sprenger, \textit{Erneuerte Rosenkranzbruderschaft} (Augsburg: Johann Bämler, 1476), fol. 1r. Sprenger uses the words “ernewert und wider aufgericht.”

\textsuperscript{46} Winston-Allen, \textit{Stories of the Rose}, 68-89.


\textsuperscript{48} Sprenger, \textit{Erneuerte Rosenkranzbruderschaft}, fol. 1r.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, fol. 1v: “Es seind vil bruderschaft in der cristenheyt, der kein armer mensch teilhaftig kan werden, in besunder wann er des gelltes nicht hat, das man dan in die bruderschaft raichen muss und betzalen. Aber in diser unser bruderschaft ~ wird keinem menschender weg verhalten wie arm er ist, sunder ye aermner, verschmaechter, veraechter, ye gnaemert, lieber und tewrer er in diser bruderschaft geachtet wird.”

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, fol. 1-2r.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ein GAR nützlich Büchlein der Psalter oder Rosenkranz Marie} (Ulm: Hans Schäffler), A4 r: joining “requires giving no money at the beginning, middle, or end.” The 1492 broadside “Vnsser lieben frauwen Rosenkranz” encouraged both males and females to join by claiming that Mary would advocate for either sex: “sy will gen got
certain degree of intellectual egalitarianism in the Confraternity of the Rosary in that there was no real literacy requirement. People were expected to sign their names into the membership rolls, but they could ask someone else to sign for them, and the Confraternity actively courted the illiterate by publishing popular picture texts explaining the Rosary in images rather than words.\textsuperscript{52}

The statutes also emphasize that the Rosary offered rich spiritual benefits to participants while not being an overly burdensome devotional practice. “In order that a person be even more industrious in this prayer,” Sprenger explained, “the most worthy lord Alexander, bishop of Forliff and legate of the Holy Seat in Rome to all of Germany, has granted forty days of indulgence for each Rosary, as often as he prays it, be it ten times in a day, twenty times or thirty times in a day, or in several days.”\textsuperscript{53} To receive these benefits, the statutes recommended praying Sprenger’s form of the Rosary each week, but it was a matter of discretion as to how individual members accomplished this task. Sprenger also encouraged experimentation with different Rosary forms to meet the needs of members: one could pray the entire Rosary (150 Aves and 5 Paternosters) all in one day, or divide it into parts and distribute prayer sessions into “several times in the week, as is most convenient.”\textsuperscript{54}

These rules appear to have resonated with a considerable number of people in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. In its first five years, the Confraternity grew rapidly in Cologne.

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\textsuperscript{52} Winston-Allen, \textit{Stories of the Rose}, 80. Most notably, the Confraternity at Ulm advertised that “Whoever wants to be enrolled in the brotherhood of Mary’s psalter should come to the Dominicans in Ulm. But anyone who cannot come to Ulm should humbly request his name and surname be written out on a piece of paper and sent to Ulm to the Dominican cloister which has been authorized by the pope to accept brothers and sisters and to enroll them.” In Peter Amelung, \textit{Der Frühdruck im deutschen Südwesten, 1473-1500}, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Württembergische Landesbibliothek, 1979), 237.

\textsuperscript{53} Sprenger, \textit{Erneuerte Rosenkranzbruderschaft}, 3r: “das sich der mensch desto mehr vleisse zu disem gebet, hat der wurdigst herr herr Alexander, bischoff zu Forliff, derselben tzeit ein legat von dem heiligen stul zu rom in gantzem Tewtschenland, einen yeklichen der einen rosen krantz betet, so offt und er in betet, es sey an einem tag zu tzehen malen, zu tzweintzig malen oder zu dreissig malen oder in mer tagen, von einem yeglichen krantz in besunderheit vietzig tag ablass geben.”

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, fol. 2v: “oder auff mer in der wochen/ wie es im aller füeglichiest ist.”
The 1476 edition of Sprenger’s statutes lists 8,000 members. The significance of this figure is underscored by the best estimates of the city’s population, which place it at 40,000 at both the beginning and end of the fifteenth century. As population historians have noted, plague in 1451 leveled the city’s population: estimates for the number of deaths range from 21,000 (Keyser) to 30,000 (Schönfelder). These estimates are probably somewhat high. Nonetheless, the plague year was followed by a period of economic stagnation through the first decades of the sixteenth century, which likely curbed population recovery. All this suggests that the population in 1476 could well have been significantly less than 40,000. This means that membership in the Cologne Confraternity constituted at least 20% of the total city population, and perhaps even more.

From Cologne, the Confraternity spread southward and eastward. The first cities where the Confraternity took root were in the Rhineland, where Dominic and the Carthusian network had already laid the groundwork in the previous generation. These cities were also closely tied to Cologne through a well-defined economic network, which likely facilitated the spread of the Confraternity. By the 1480s, confraternities were well-established in the towns and imperial free cities along the Rhine in Alsace. In 1484, the city of Colmar documented 2,783 members in the city, and an additional 427 members in the area surrounding the city. This is a highly significant figure, given that the total city population reported in the 1495 imperial survey under

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55 Ibid, fol. 5r. In 1475, Francisci claimed that 5,000 members had joined. See Küffner, “Zur Kölner Rosenkranzbruderschaft,” 115.
Maximilian I was only 7,639. The Colmar Confraternity served as a regional office (Filiale), and as such, maintained enrollment lists for the nearby towns, accounting for a total of 5,597 members in the region.

Turning to the larger urban centers of southern Germany, we encounter the earliest Confraternities in the Swabian cities of Augsburg and Ulm. The Augsburg edition of Sprenger’s statutes notes the rapid growth of the Confraternity there. In 1476, the tally was already 3,000 and was “increasing every day.” A second edition of the statutes printed a year later reports membership at Augsburg had climbed to a staggering 21,000. We should regard this number with some degree of critical caution. On one hand, the best population estimates for Augsburg in the second half of the fifteenth century place it between 18,000 and 22,000, and so this number appears likely exaggerated if it only includes members from Augsburg. On the other hand, it might also appear high because it included numbers not just from Augsburg, but also from the surrounding towns and hinterlands for which the Dominicans in the city claimed responsibility.

Like the Colmar Confraternity, the Augsburg Confraternity functioned as a “branch office” to the Cologne Confraternity. As such, it was also tasked with encouraging and monitoring its growth in the region, and likely maintained membership rolls for an area beyond the city walls.

Unfortunately, the original registers for both Cologne and Augsburg have not survived, so it is

61 Schmitt, 83-84.
62 Sprenger, Erneuerte Rosenkranzbruderschaft, fol. 5r: “Die tzaale zu Augsburg von dem Montag des selben jares yetz in Ostern gewesen biss auff Allerheyligentage ist drey tausent und meret sich von tag zu tag.”
63 Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rose, 80.
64 Werner Lengger, “Siedlung und Bevoelkerung von der Wuestungsperiode bis zur Binnenkolonisation im aufgeklarten Absolutismus,” in Geschichte Schwabens bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts, ed. Andreas Kraus (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001), 435-460. Martha White Paas, “Population change, labor supply, and agriculture in Augsburg, 1480-1618” (Ph.D. diss, Bryn Mawr College, 1979), 34-40. Lengger gives the figure of 18,000. Paas gives the figure of 22,000. As Paas points out, these estimates are fairly reliable relative to other late medieval German cities because of the unique primary source on which they are based: the city’s Register of Vital Statistics, which recorded births, deaths and marriages in the city.
difficult to answer this question satisfactorily. Nonetheless, there is other evidence to suggest
the popularity of the Confraternity in Augsburg and neighboring Ulm: from 1489 to 1492, five
ditions of Alanus de Rupe’s *Psalter* were produced in these cities. Additionally, the first
Rosary “picture text,” which eschewed alphabetic text in order to demonstrate how to pray the
rosary through a series of woodcuts, was first printed at Ulm in 1483. It was reprinted in seven
ditions over the next twenty years, and inspired a popular ‘para-literature’ explaining the
meaning of each of the images. Anne Winston-Allen interprets this as evidence of the
widespread appeal of the Rosary among the illiterate, who constituted most of the population in
late medieval German society. While a precise figure might not be attainable, we can safely
conclude that the Confraternity was highly popular in Augsburg and Ulm.

In the Frankish cities of Bayreuth and Bamberg, the Confraternity also appears to have
taken root. In 1479, Bamberg reported two lists to Cologne, totaling 1,362 members. Population figures here are even more tentative than in other locations, but estimates suggest that
Bamberg’s population grew over the course of the sixteenth century, only reaching 12,000 on the
eve of the Thirty Year’s War. This suggests that membership in the Bamberg Confraternity
would have represented well over ten percent of the city’s total population at the end of the
fifteenth century. In Saxony, the evidence for the Confraternity is somewhat more oblique. In
Leipzig in 1479, the Observant Dominican Conrad Wetzel received license from Cologne to
preach the rosary in the city. In 1481, Johannes of Chemnitz preached the rosary in nearby

68 Ibid, 31-33.
69 The Confraternity in Bayreuth was founded in 1490. See Jäggi, “Rosenkranzbruderschaften,” 5.
71 Karin Dengler-Schreiber, “Ist alles oed vnd wüst…: Zerstörung und Wiederaufbau in der Stadt Bamberg im
Zeitalter des Dreißigjährigen Krieges,” in *Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 57 (1997), 145-161. Marco Eckerlein,
“Die bürgerliche politische Führungsgruppe in Bamberg zu Beginn der Frühen Neuzeit,” in *Bamberg in der Frühen

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Freyburg. Finally, in his Spiegel hochloblicher Bruderschaft des Rosenkrantz Marie (Leipzig, 1515), Marcus von Weida described the process of joining the Confraternity by signing one’s name in the membership rolls as having “fair and good cause, and is befitting of the special praise to God and his esteemed mother, and of the improvement of many people.” In Brandenburg, we find traces of the Confraternity in the records of the 1542 evangelical visitations, where visitors obtained the accounts of the brotherhood of “Our Beloved Lady and Rosary.”

The foregoing analysis demonstrates the popularity of the Confraternity in the last quarter of the fifteenth century both demographically and geographically. In 1482, Johannes von Lambsheim estimated that membership across Germany exceeded 100,000. This, however, only accounts for official, organized forms of Rosary use. When we consider locations without the institutional support of a Confraternity, the popularity appears even higher. A number of notable cities in the German-speaking world lacked Rosary Confraternities at the end of the fifteenth century, but even in these cases, rosaries were clearly popular in practice. Before the Reformation, citizens of the Swabian city of Biberach had formed nine different Confraternities, but the Rosary was not one of them. Despite this, praying the rosary was widely popular. As

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74 “Visitation of Perleburg, 1558,” in Die brandenburgischen Kirchenvisitationen-Abschiede und-Register des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts, ed. Victor Herld, vol. 1: Die Prignitz (Berlin: Kommissionsverlag von Gsellius, 1928), 239-448, at 289. These funds were subsequently placed under the authority of church leaders for the maintenance of the common good (gemeinen kasten), a theme to which we will return at the end of this chapter, and explore more thoroughly in chapter three.
one commentator explained: “In the true Christian faith, one carried many *paternosters*, both women and men, and especially to the churches, where one prayed with very much devotion.”

There were no Rosary Confraternities in Luzern or its territories (central Switzerland), yet personal estate inventories from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century indicate both men and women enthusiastically embraced rosaries. Similarly in the parish churches of Braunschweig-Lüneburg and Kalenberg-Göttingen (Lower Saxony), the Confraternity does not appear to have been popular. In contrast to Brandenburg, inventories from the territorial ecclesiastical visitations of 1542-1544 do not mention the Confraternity of the Rosary, while closely scrutinizing the property of numerous other local Confraternities. Nevertheless, rosaries appear frequently in the inventories of church furniture. Occasionally, these rosaries were used as decoration for Marian icons. Visitation records from as far away as Stettin (Pomerania) indicate that the Confraternity of Our Beloved Lady possessed a statue of Mary, about whose neck hung a coral rosary.

One of the most striking examples of this pattern comes from Nuremberg, where efforts to form a Confraternity failed to bear fruit. Sometime after 1478, Klara Keiperin, a nun in St. Katherine’s convent, produced a brief Rosary handbook by piecing together several Marian prayers, instructions for founding a Rosary Confraternity from Alanus de Rupe’s Psalter, and the

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77 Ibid, 18.
78 Jäggi, “Rosenkranzbruderschaften.” 7. Jäggi documents twenty four rosaries in the years 1502-1519. For descriptions of these rosaries, see Appendix A. Further, portraiture of wealthy urban Swiss, particularly marriage portraiture, frequently depicts couples clutching rosaries. See Gabriel Meier, “Der Rosenkranz in der Reformationszeit,” in *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 7 (1913), 296-303, at 299-300.
79 See Karl Kayser, ed., *Die reformatorischen kirchenvisitationen in den welfischen Landen, 1542-1544* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897). For descriptions of these rosaries, see Appendix A.
81 The Nuremberg City Council was uniquely wary of both guilds and confraternities during this period. Trade guilds were explicitly illegal, and confraternities were implicitly discouraged. As a result, there were only four Confraternities in the city at the end of the fifteenth century: Cutlers, Candle-makers, Bakers, and Barber-surgeons. See Schlemmer, *Gottesdienst und Frömmigkeit*, 343.
papal indulgence issued by the legate Alexander of Forliff.\textsuperscript{82} Keiperin’s manuscript advocated for Alanus’ form of the rosary (150 Aves divided by fifteen Paternosters).\textsuperscript{83} Like Sprenger’s statutes, Keiperin’s manuscript calls for members to join the Confraternity by signing their names into a membership book.\textsuperscript{84} St. Katherine’s also took efforts to institutionalize the rosary. In 1490, the convent attempted to stage a public Rosary festival in the city, but was forbidden from doing so by the City Council.\textsuperscript{85} The male Dominicans in the city also appear to have been in the business of selling rosaries to the laity. In his account book, Michael Behaim recorded the purchase of a rosary from them on the 29\textsuperscript{th} of March, 1501.\textsuperscript{86}

Despite lacking an organized Confraternity, the Rosary was a popular devotion in Nuremberg on the eve of the Reformation. In the years 1507-1517, the account books of Anton Tucher document yearly donations of candles to light the Rosary sculpture in the Dominican Church [Fig. 2.1].\textsuperscript{87} Tucher also commissioned Veit Stoss’ Rosary sculpture, installed in the parish church of St. Lorenz in 1518 [Fig. 2.2].\textsuperscript{88} Like other locations without a Rosary

\textsuperscript{82} NSB, Cent. VII, 9, fols. 1-21v. The prayers occur at 1r-10v; the excerpts from Alanus occur at 11r-18v; the indulgence occurs at 19r-20r. Karin Schneider identifies Keiperin’s hand and the approximate date in Die Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg, vol. 1: Die deutschen mittelalterlichen Handschriften (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965), 275.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, 16r-v.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 17v.

\textsuperscript{85} StAN, rep. 60b, Nürnberger Ratsbücher Nr. 5, fol. 147v.


\textsuperscript{87} Tucher’s accounts were published in Wilhelm Loose, ed., Anton Tuchers Haushaltbuch (1507 bis 1517) (Tübingen: Litterarischen Verein, 1877), 56-156. The donations occurred regularly at the end of Advent (usually the 22\textsuperscript{nd} or 24\textsuperscript{th} of December), and in the middle of August (perhaps suggesting a connection to the celebration of the Assumption, which falls at this time of year).

Confraternity, rosaries appear regularly in estate inventories and account books. Also like other locations, portraits, altarpieces, and memorials from the period frequently depict wealthy citizens and religious clutching rosaries [Figs 2.3-2.6]. The visual evidence depicts rosaries in the hands of males and females, as well as adults and children.

In terms of social participation, the visual evidence from Nuremberg largely agrees with analysis of the Confraternity registers. While records for the larger Confraternities at Cologne and Augsburg have not survived, the detailed records for Colmar reveal the Rosary was widely popular among laity, males and females alike. Of the first 1,000 entries, 583 were female. Only 16 of them were members of religious houses; the rest were laity. Of the 417 males, 106 were members of the clergy. When we consider the full register, we find that 290 married couples joined the Confraternity, and 310 were children who had been enrolled by their parents. This suggests that the egalitarian social ideology of the Rosary Confraternity was to a significant degree reflected in practice.

Institutionally, the spread of the Rosary benefitted from the Observant reform movement, particularly the variety practiced by the Dominican order. Each of the major fifteenth century proponents of the Rosary was involved in the Observant reform: Dominic of Prussia, Johannes Rode, Alanus de Rupe, Michael Francisci, and Jakob Sprenger, the latter three all belonging to the Dominicans. Other important promoters in the latter fifteenth century, such as Marcus von Weida, were also Dominicans, and the major confraternities in the Rhineland and southern

\[89\] Tucher, for example, documents giving several elaborate rosaries as gifts to female relatives, as well as a brace of seven dozen wooden rosaries to the convent of St. Clara’s. See Haushaltbuch, 58, 61, 86, 126. For full descriptions of these and other rosaries in Nuremberg, see Appendix A.

\[90\] Schmitt, 100-102.

\[91\] Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rosary, 73-79.

\[92\] Klinkhammer, “Die Entstehung des Rosenkranzes,” in 500 Jahre Rosenkranz, 41-44.
German-speaking lands were under the supervision of Dominicans. In cities such as Strasbourg, which had both reformed and unreformed Dominican houses, the Rosary Confraternity was established in the reformed house. In Augsburg, which had no reformed houses, the Confraternity was founded at the church of St. Moritz by the Observant pastor Johannes Molitoris, working under the commission of Sprenger. In regions such as Central Switzerland, where there was no urban Observant Dominican presence, the Confraternity failed to take root. Nuremberg appears as an unusual case: it had been a center of the Observant Reform in Germany since the days of Johannes Nider. Here, however, it appears that the lack of a Rosary Confraternity stems from two factors: 1) the city council’s unusual suspicion of Confraternities and guilds in general; 2) the contentious relationship between the city council and St. Katherine’s convent, which undertook the primary role in promoting the Rosary at the end of the fifteenth century.

2.4 – Material Culture of the Rosary

The spread of the Confraternity of the Rosary across German speaking lands in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was accompanied by a material component. Here, we analyze how the rosary was produced and consumed, and in doing so provide a basis for understanding the Rosary’s appeal. The following analysis will demonstrate this by answering

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93 The Dominican house at Colmar was the first in German-speaking lands to institute Observant reforms in 1389. Cf. Ambrosius Esser, “Konrad de Grossis,” in Neue Deutsche Biographie 12 (1979), 540.
94 Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rose, 78. This was the women’s convent of St. Nicholas in Undis.
95 Ibid.
97 Barbara Steinke, Paradiesgarten oder Gefängnis? Das Nürnberger Katharinenkloster zwischen Klosterreform und Reformation (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 21-64.
several questions. First, we examine what the rosary was, materially. Next, we consider how rosaries were produced. Third, we identify how rosaries were distributed. Finally, we offer evidence of the ways in which rosaries were consumed. Several categories of sources can help us answer these questions. Of primary importance are personal estate inventories. Such inventories were taken down at the time of death of an individual, and provide a crucial window onto the material culture of daily life. In Germany, they begin to appear with frequency in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries among the wealthier, urban sections of society.\(^9\) In particular, they provide a wealth of information on the material composition of rosaries from the period. Church inventories, church account books, merchants’ account books, and household accounts help fill out this picture. Occasionally, one finds descriptions of rosaries in letters, journals, and travel narratives. From this array of sources, we have compiled descriptions of 742 rosaries from the years 1362-1662 [See Appendix]. This constitutes the foundation of our analysis, which we supplement with images and surviving rosaries from the period.

What was the rosary, materially? In contrast to the standardized form we encounter today, rosaries in fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany represented an array of diverse forms, materials, and modifications. Gislin Ritz has suggested three basic forms current in the fifteenth century: a short form of 10-25 beads, a medium-length form consisting of 25-50 beads, and a long form, often called a ‘full-‘ or ‘Psalter-form‘ of 150 beads. Ritz also suggests a gender division in the ownership and use of these forms, finding greater popularity of the rosary among females. Short rosaries were the least common, and were specifically popular among males. Medium-length rosaries, the most common form, were used by both sexes. The Psalter-form was popular among lay and religious females, and gained in popularity at the turn of the

sixteenth century. Analysis of rosary descriptions conforms roughly with Ritz’ argument, though demonstrates several important variations [Table 2.1]. In our sample, we find that males owned 13.2% of total rosaries, females owned 53.5%, and 33.3% are unidentified.

We observe two points about these numbers: first, unidentified rosaries came largely from church inventories, where it is impossible to determine individual ownership. Moreover, in several instances rosaries appear intended for ‘public’ use. For example, visitors to the parish church in Basse (in the duchy of Kalenberg-Göttingen) documented in 1542 a black jet-stone rosary with twenty coral beads and six buttons with pearls decorating a statue of Mary. In other cases, rosaries may have been placed in churches for the use of those who had forgotten or did not have one of their own, as Eamon Duffy has shown for the England. A 1519 inventory taken of the Frauenkirche in Nuremberg, for example, found “in the church” seven “good and bad” coral rosaries, nine rosaries of chalcedony and mother of pearl, twenty “small and large” coral rosaries, and one mother of pearl rosary. Second, when we look strictly at individual estate inventories in which the identity of the owner is known, we find that ownership of rosaries is roughly equally distributed between the sexes (55.1% male, 44.9% female), although the individual females documented in the sample tended to own much larger collections of rosaries [Table 2.2].

It is not always clear that use of a particular bead-count corresponds neatly to gender divisions as Ritz suggests. Of the rosary descriptions surveyed here, only twenty nine indicate a specific bead count. Nineteen of these fall roughly under the mid-length classification

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100 Ritz, 64-65.
101 “Basse,” in Die reformatorischen kirchenvisitationen in den welfischen Landen, 391. It is likely that many of these were special bequests by wealthy donors, as Eamon Duffy has shown for the case of England. See Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580, 2nd ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 40-41.
102 Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, 72.
103 StAN Rep. 44e, S.I.L. 131, no. 10, fols. 5v-6r.
(approximately 25-50 beads). Females owned fourteen of these, males owned one, and ownership of the remaining four is unidentified. Four fit the criteria of the short form (10-25 beads), all of which were owned by males. The remaining six were owned by one female; each of these exceeds 100 beads in length, but none corresponds to the 150-bead form referenced by Ritz. Two are 133 beads in length, one is 111, another 141, another 175, and one 200.

Generally, descriptions in the inventories do not specify use for a specific social category, with the exception of six: two are identified as ‘children’s rosaries,’ and four as ‘men’s rosaries.’ Two of the men’s rosaries approximate the short form. The 1591 estate inventory of Johannes Hessler, Provost of Young St. Peter’s in Strassburg, describes a “crystal men’s paternoster, of nine beads.” A second men’s rosary consisting of ten beads appears in a 1598 treasury inventory of the Munich Residence Palace. The other two men’s rosaries do not indicate length or number of beads. Even in instances where gender is indicated, it may be problematic as evidence of the identity of owners and users. In Nuremberg, for example, the estate inventory of Lazarus Spengler’s wife (d. 1529) indicates that she owned “one coral men’s paternoster with a pearl button and a silk tassel.”

What can we take from the foregoing evidence? First, the connection between gender and rosary forms appears roughly in keeping with Ritz’ argument, although we note with caution that rosaries of all varieties likely changed hands between sexes, so it is difficult to pin down this problem with certainty. This relative fluidity seems appropriate, given the Confraternity’s emphasis on the Rosary being a devotional practice for both males and females, as well as the

105 “Ein Mannspaternoster von 10 indianischen schwarzen Bohnen.” In Ritz, 75.
106 “gel agsteinin mannspaternoster,” in “Inventar Johannes Hesslers,” 45.
evidence from surviving registers, which reveals relative gender parity in Confraternity participation. Second, the considerable variation in rosary forms suggests that the material culture was less bound to the structured narrative of the prayer and meditation sequence of the Rosary, which by the second half of the fifteenth century was always organized into sequences of ten, fifteen, fifty, or 150 repetitions. Indeed, of the rosaries for which specific bead counts are given, only 17.2% meet this criterion. Further, it seems that the number of repetitions supported by an object was of secondary importance, as only 29 (3.9%) of the total number of descriptions surveyed here provide any indication of bead-count. By contrast, inventories are usually very meticulous in describing the material components of each rosary. This contrast stems in part from a bias inherent in the estate inventory as a category of source material, but it also reflects the significance people assigned to the materials from which rosaries were constructed.

Turning to the materials for composition provides further insight into this problem. Because it was inexpensive, wood indigenous to Europe was by far the most common material for making rosaries.\(^{108}\) Wood accounts for 14.3% of the rosaries documented here [Table 2.3]. This is not the highest percentage for a single material. However, we know that because they were not especially valuable, indigenous wooden rosaries usually escaped documentation in personal estate inventories. We do find occasional references to rosaries of exotic species: cedar, ebony, and aloe constitute 5.6% of all wooden rosaries documented here. The remaining rosaries are of unspecified woods, or identified as an indigenous species, such as oak. Alternative sources document the considerable presence of wooden rosaries. The account books of Ott Ruland, a merchant active in Ulm from 1446 to 1462, highlight an extensive trade in wooden rosaries across German-speaking lands. Alongside tools, livestock, and the occasional shipment of wine or saffron, Ruland shipped oak and medlar rosaries, sometimes by the barrel, to

\(^{108}\) Ritz, 75.
Nuremberg, Augsburg, Frankfurt, Cologne, Vienna, Mainz, and Strassburg. Such rosaries also circulated in the gift economy of the later Middle Ages. Anton Tucher, for example, donated 84 boxwood rosaries to the sisters of St. Clara’s in Nuremberg in 1509. We will consider the circulation of rosaries more generally below.

Besides wood, several other materials commonly appear in the inventories. Coral is the most commonly documented material here, accounting for 24.5% of rosaries [Table 2.3]. Coral rosaries were typically red in color, although one inventory makes reference to a rosary of blue coral. Coral rosaries also frequently appear in images from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries [Figs. 2.3, 2.5, 2.6]. After coral, jet-stone (lignite) is the next most common material, comprising 22% of the rosaries. These were commonly black, but occasionally white. Next, amber accounts for 19.1% of rosaries [Fig 2.7]. Other semi-precious stones, including carnelian, garnet, chalcedony (jasper), and amethyst make up 4.2% of rosaries, while pearls, glass, crystal, silver, and gold account for 6.2% of rosaries. Bone and ivory appear in 2.6% of descriptions. Only 6.7% of descriptions fail to mention the material from which beads were composed.

In addition to the close attention to the materials for rosary beads, inventories closely describe the various things people attached to their rosaries. Table 2.4 organizes the attachments into twelve categories and indicates the frequency with which they appear in the descriptions. Death’s head attachments appear infrequently in our sample, but were nonetheless important.

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109 Ott Rulands Handlungsbuch [1444-1462], ed. Franz Pfeiffer (Stuttgart: J. Kreuzer, 1843).
111 This appears in the 1579 inventory of the hospital at Molsheim (Alsace).
112 Although we must note here that the numbers for jet-stone and amber are somewhat more approximate than the other categories, and might not reflect the true composition of some of the rosaries, as those taking down the inventories occasionally appear uncertain whether a rosary is of amber or jet-stone composition. This appears in several entries in which rosaries of “yellow jet-stone” or “black amber” are identified. Several fine examples of amber rosaries from the late fifteenth century were catalogued in a special exhibit at the Archdiocese Museum of Cologne in 1975. See 500 Jahre Rosenkranz, 161-198.
often in conjunction with another attachment, such as an icon, coin, or Bisamapfel. Hearts, tassels and rings were also popular, as were crucifixes, Agnus Dei, and Saints’ icons [Figs 2.8-2.10]. The category of specialized attachments includes a variety of unique objects. Anna Haller, the wife of Joachim Haller of Nuremberg (1492-1540), owned a silver gilded rosary to which she attached an image of her and her husband.\footnote{Wilckens, “Schmuck auf Nürnberger Bildnissen,” 89. For biographical information on this branch of the Haller family in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Johann Gottfried Bidermann, \textit{Geschlechtsregister des Hochadelichen Patriciats zu Nürnberg}, ed. Georg Ernst Waldau (Bayreuth: Dietzel, 1748), table 138.} The wife of Lazarus Spengler owned one “round carnelian rosary with five white linking pieces and a round linking piece, with pearls and a matching pax board.”\footnote{“ain großer, runder karnioler paternoster mitt funf weissen undermarcken und einem runden untermarcken, mit perlein und einem pacem gleich.” Additionally, she owned a “schwarzen, geschnittnen aidstainen paternoster mit einem silberin undermarcken gleich einem puchlein,” in StadtAN, B 14/III, Inventarbücher, Nr. 11, fol. 168v} In the Pomeranian town of Köslin, a 1531 visitation report documents a coral rosary with a pair of gilded fish attached to it.\footnote{“Kleinodienverzeichnis der Kirche zu Köslin (1531),” \textit{Protokolle der Pommerschen Kirchenvisitationen}, vol. 3, 39. The rosary was draped about an icon of Mary. Another rosary with a silver herring attachment appears in a Stettin inventory from 1535. See “Verzeichnis der Kleinodien von S. Nicolai und S. Jürgen zu Stettin,” in \textit{Protokolle}, vol. 1 (1961), 46.} Wolves’ teeth set in silver were also popular, as were gilded acorns, and, for those possessing them, family coats of arms.\footnote{According to his estate inventory, Paul Lauffenberger the Elder, a citizen of Strassburg, kept in the lower chamber of his house several rosaries, including one “rot corallen paternoster mit 1 wolfzan, in silver gefasst,” and another “rot corallen paternoster mit silver vergulten eicheln und 1 wolfzan, in silver gefasst.” See “Inventar Paulus Lauffenberger der Ältere,” in \textit{Elsässische Altertümer}, vol. 2, part 2: \textit{Laien Einwohner}, 99-106. At 106. The 1662 estate inventory of Katherin Viatis of Nuremberg also documents two coral rosaries with pearls and silver wolf’s tooth attachments. See Wilckens, “Schmuck auf Nürnberger Bildnissen,” 90. The Bishop of Strassburg Erasmus Schenk von Limburg (1507-1568) kept one “gross paternoster von eychenmistel mit einer eychenmistelin ingefassten gabeln, daruff meins gnedigen herrn seligen wappen und sechs verguelte eycheln.” See “Inventar des Bischofs Erasmus von Limburg,” in \textit{Elsässische Altertümer} vol. 1, part 1: \textit{Bistum Strassburg}, 17-20. At 17.} Other, more unusual, attachments appear occasionally as well. The 1543 estate inventory of the wife of Richart Siebolt (Strassburg) describes a black jet-stone rosary with six silver gilded buttons and four miniature “censers” (“rauchfasslin”).\footnote{“Der Frau Richart Siebolt Versetzte Kleinodien (1543),” in \textit{Elsässische Altertümer} vol. 2, part 2, 108-110. At 108: “schwarz agsteinen paternoster, hat 50 korner und sechs silberin vergult knopf, vier rauchfasslin und einen silberin vergulten eckechten bisemknopf.”} It seems unlikely that these censers had any function in burning actual incense. Nonetheless, their attachment to a rosary visually evokes the central olfactory dimension of the Mass.
Also attached to this rosary in Siebolt’s inventory was a curious item called a

\textit{Bisamapfel}.\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Bisamäpfeln} appear in 19.3\% of the rosary descriptions documented here – more than any other kind of attachment. In contrast to the miniature censers, the \textit{Bisamapfel} had a clear function as a perfume container. The history of these containers in medieval Europe begins with the Crusades. New trade links with the near east and Asia facilitated the flow of fragrant materials used for making perfumes into Europe. The first literary references to \textit{Bisamäpfeln} appear in the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{119} In the wake of the Black Death, aerial theories of the spread of contagious diseases supported use of the \textit{Bisamapfel} as protective and preventative medicine.\textsuperscript{120} After the mid-fourteenth century, medical tracts on the \textit{Bisamapfel} spread from Italy to German speaking lands.\textsuperscript{121} The fifteenth century marks the emergence of the \textit{Bisamapfel} and its corresponding medical practices into wider society.\textsuperscript{122} Manuscript evidence from across Germany suggests the circulation of \textit{Bisamapfel} perscriptions. By the latter half of the century, such prescriptions appear regularly in popular printed \textit{Pest-regimen}, such as the 1473 \textit{Pestordnung} of Heinrich Steinhöwel, and the verse-form regimen of Hans Folz.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{118} The items are identified variously in the inventories as “Bisamapfel,” “Bisamknopf,” or “Bisamkapsel.” Here, we use “Bisamapfel” as the primary designation, following the example of the leading expert on this object, Renate Smollich. See Smollich, \textit{Der Bisamapfel in Kunst und Wissenschaft} (Stuttgart: Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, 1983).

\textsuperscript{119} Smollich, \textit{Der Bisamapfel}, 1-2, 18-19. Smollich notes that in 1174, Frederick Barbarossa was given an apple filled with musk when he reached the Apennine mountains during war against the Lombard League.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, 75-76. As Smollich explains, the aerial theory originates in Arabic intellectual traditions of the early Middle Ages, appears in the Latin West in Benedictine monasteries in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and begins to spread into wider society in the fourteenth century.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, 90-105.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 107-111. By the fifteenth century, we encounter manuscript evidence of \textit{Bisamapfel} prescriptions all over German speaking lands.

\textsuperscript{123} Heinrich Steinhöwel, \textit{Büchlein der Ordnung der Pestilenz} (Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1473). : Mer hab ich gesagt wie wol schmackende ding das hercz krefftigen…, darumb so machet man bisem öppfel, die der mensch by im trage uß den selben und anderen wol riechenden ding als ist holcz von aloes, wyroch, ambra, bisem, costus, storax, vernis, die süe assa, negel si als du findest in den recepten…So aber der merteil söllicher stuck dar zu dienend nit intutsch gebracht werdern mögen und gewöhnlich allein in den apotheken gefunden, so habe ich sie latin gelassen, in solcher geschriift als sie die doctores gewonlich dar in schriben, dz ein ieder solch recept der des bedarff müge abscriben und in die apotheck senden…ze sumer zyten synd diese nachgeschriben öppfel ze machen, die synd öch gut den krancken. floru. nenuf, viol florum, buglosse, rosru, sandal rubrum et citrini, spody ana drachma una, camphore drachmas duas, corticum citri scrupula 2, mace nucemus, maiorane, ozimi garificio, karabe, storacis calamite, carscripel 1, ambre grana 15, musci grana 7, laudani optimi drachmas 3, conficiantur cum aqua risz ultimo...
Technical advances in German goldsmithing encouraged the spread of the Bisamapfel not only as a medical device, but as a fashion accessory in the fifteenth century. Particularly among the wealthier segments of urban society, men and women enthusiastically carried Bisamäpfeln and attached it to a variety of items, including mirrors, manicure-kits, and of course rosaries. In Nuremberg by the late fifteenth century, we encounter goldsmiths such as Martin Schongauger, Matthias Zuendt, Virgil Solis, and Paulus Müllner, who specialized in designing liturgical instruments, rosaries, Bisamäpfeln, and other fine jewelry pieces mainly for nobility and urban elites. This rise in popularity parallels an increasing tendency in portraiture of the late fifteenth century to depict subjects clutching rosaries with Bisamapfel attachments. Materially, it also resulted in a diverse array of elaborate Bisamapfel forms. The rosary descriptions documented here underscore this diversity.

Several factors effected the material production of rosaries. First, geography played a significant role in determining the raw materials available. Prussia, Pomerania, and the Netherlands were the primary sources of amber in the fifteenth century. Coral was an exotic material, and had to be imported, primarily from the Iberian and Italian peninsulas. As

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124 Smollich, Der Bisamapfel, 170-171.
126 Smollich, Der Bisamapfel, 183-185.
127 Smollich, Der Bisamapfel, 183-185.
mentioned above, the majority of wooden rosaries were of indigenous species, though a few notable exceptions were identifiably of exotic species. Cedar and terebinth were especially prized for their fragrant qualities and their origins in the Holy Land. While the German mining industry from the mid-fifteenth century onwards saw significant transformations in technology, labor organization, and capital concentration, silver and gold remained accessible only in small portions of southern Westphalia, Saxony, Bohemia, the Upper Palatinate, Tyrol, and Styria.\textsuperscript{129} Other industrially produced materials such as glass were similarly limited to particular geographic regions of production.\textsuperscript{130}

A second factor effecting the production of rosaries was socially organized forms of labor. The most valuable materials – precious metals and glass – found their way into the hands of goldsmiths and jewelers, who produced custom-made rosaries for wealthy clients.\textsuperscript{131} Most materials, however, were directed to a specialized class of artisans known as \textit{paternosterers}. The paternosterer-trade was widespread throughout fifteenth century Germany. In some instances, artisans organized themselves into guilds. Lübeck and Schwäbisch-Gmünd were the largest and best-known examples of paternosterer guilds.\textsuperscript{132} In many other locations, however, the trade appears to have been the province of individual artisans. Ott Ruland, for example, kept accounts with individual paternosterers in Frankfurt and Vienna.\textsuperscript{133} In Nuremberg, where guilds were prohibited, the city council attempted to regulate the production of rosaries by individual


\textsuperscript{130} Tom Scott, “Economic Landscapes,” 18. Scott cites portions of Hesse as important centers of glass production.


\textsuperscript{132} Ritz, 76, 87-89.

\textsuperscript{133} Ruland, \textit{Handlungsbuch}, 6-7, 25, 27.
paterenoster workshops. A fifteenth century manuscript from the city library in Nuremberg illustrates the labor in one of these workshops [Fig 2.11].

Access to materials for making rosaries was highly localized, which has lead scholars to posit that ownership of particular kinds of rosaries was largely determined by geography. In our analysis, however, we find little correlation between geography and ownership of particular kinds of rosaries. The reason for this is that rosaries flowed across German speaking lands along a well-developed distribution network. This network operated on two levels. The first level connected elite merchants in a more or less formal set of trans-regional exchanges. For the merchants who operated at this level, finished rosaries and the raw materials such as amber, coral, or precious gemstones, were part of a larger array of commodities which included spices, wine, textiles, and tools. Ott Ruland, who effectively connected rosary makers with rosary vendors and rosary consumers across German speaking lands, is one example of such a merchant. In Nuremberg, Hans Praun purchased and sold glass, tin, and brass rosaries across Germany in the 1470s. More significant than individual merchants was the development of trading companies based in Nuremberg and Augsburg, the commercial centers of the fifteenth century. At the beginning of the century, we already find Nuremberg located at the crossroads of several trade routes which connected Spain and Italy in the south and west to Prague, Breslau, and Prussia in the north and east. Coral rosaries, along with other jewelry, saffron, ginger, and

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134 Specifically, the council was concerned with the materials from which rosary beads were made. These regulations are collected in Nürnberger Ratsverlässe über Kunst und Künstler im Zeitalter der Spätgotik und Renaissance (1474-1618), ed. Theodor Hampe, vol. 1 (Vienna: Karl Graeser, 1904), 25 (March 1479); 56 (February 1489); 179 (November 1518); 185 (September 1519). In both 1518 and 1519, the council commanded the city’s paternoster workshops to stop producing brass rosary beads.
135 NSB, Amb. 317, fol. 13r. The manuscript was begun in 1426, and added to until 1799. The image is one of the manuscript’s earliest additions, dates to the years between 1426-1430. See Schneider, Die Handschriften, vol. 1, 236-237.
136 Ritz, 75. Winston-Allen, Stories, 111-118.
137 In a few instances, these exchanges operated on what one might reasonably call a global scale.
silk moved out of Venice and Spain, and stopped in Nuremberg before transferring to the north and east. In exchange for these items, Bohemian and Silesian wool and fustian, along with Prussian amber rosaries flowed back through Nuremberg on their way to other German towns and southern Europe. As the fifteenth century progressed, Nuremberg consolidated its position in this network first by securing the most significant portion of German trade with Venice and Genoa, and then by gaining control over a central trading artery connecting Iberia to Franconia via towns such as Lyon, Geneva, Basel, and Constance. By the end of the fifteenth century, trading firms linked to an emerging global network for the first time. From Iberian and Italian ports, German merchants took part in journeys to Egypt, the African coasts, the Azores, and even India. This expansion was significant not only for the raw materials used in making rosary beads, but also for the fragrant substances which filled Bisamäpfeln.

The second level of distribution operated on a smaller, somewhat less formal, scale. Rosaries circulated through three different conduits. First, peddlers purchased rosaries from trans-regional merchants and circulated them at the local level. We encounter only passing reference to these figures in the sources, although the practice appears to have been well

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140 For Nuremberg’s connection with the Italian cities, see Amman, Die wirtschaftliche Stellung, 172-179. Within the first quarter of the fifteenth century, 30 different Nuremberg merchants were registered in Venice, representing virtually all of the city’s major trading companies, including the Pirkheimer, Teufel, Pfinzing, Hirschvogel, Ebner, Gundelfinger, Halbwachs, Rummel, Imhof, Kress, Koler, Stromer, Mendel, Granetl, Eisvogel, Paumgartner, Stromer, and Waldstomer. In 1434, the representatives of the Rummel, Imhof, Koler, and Kress companies founded a chapel in Venice dedicated to Nuremberg’s patron saint Sebald. The chapel was maintained by representatives of the leading Nuremberg companies throughout the fifteenth century. In Genoa, Ulman Stromer exported spices, silk, and pearls to Nuremberg.

141 Amman, Die wirtschaftliche Stellung, 120-121. Representatives of the company, such as Sebald Kneussel and Hans Henner, had exceptions written into their contracts in 1511 and 1514 which exempted them from travel to India, and only required them to travel to Lisbon.

142 For example, in 1401, Erhard Lettel, a representative of the Runtinger trading company in Regensburg, reported that he had sold 30 pounds of saffron to the apothecaries of Prague. In Das Runtingerbuch, vol. 2, 143-144. Bisamapfeln prescriptions also instructed patients to acquire their ingredients from apothecaries, and provided prescriptions in both German (for the patient) and Latin (for the apothecary). See above discussion of Bisamapfel.
established by the mid-fifteenth century. In Nördlingen, a 1488 inventory of the peddler Hans Belhans included “two chests containing odds and ends (“Kremerei”), namely belts, knives, brushes, shoelaces, “Horbetter,” pipes, saffron, shears, rosaries, and other things which belong in a peddler’s stall.” Many of the vendors who purchased wooden rosaries from Ott Ruland would likely have also fallen into this category, and kept inventories that looked much like that of Belhans. Second, religious orders such as the Dominicans were also in the business of selling rosaries. As noted above, Michael Behaim reported purchasing a rosary from the convent in Nuremberg in 1501. Third, rosaries circulated in the gift economy of the fifteenth century. Albrecht of Brandenburg (1490-1545) was well-known for distributing amber rosaries as gifts, among other things. In 1509, Christoph Scheurl wrote to Caritas Pirckheimer: “I received your gift of a rosary. May I add that it is most pleasing and dear to me, and I give eternal thanks that God will grant me the opportunity and occasion to return the favor.” Lucas Rem, an Augsburg merchant, described in his journal two rosaries he had received as wedding gifts in 1518. The first was silver and came from “Hans Guotratt and his wife in Nuremberg.” The second came from the prioress of the convent of St. Ulrich in Augsburg. It too was silver, but was decorated with two images. In the same year, Katerina Lemmel sent Bisamäpfeln and small rosaries to the wife and children of her relative Siegmund Führer in Nuremberg. In 1520, she sent a small rosary to her cousin Hans Imhoff, of the Imhoff trading company. In

143 Quoted in Ritz, 89.
144 Ritz, 95.
145 Pirckheimer, Briefe, 151: “Accepi et munus tuum rosarium scilicet. Id, quod iucundissimum addo et gratissimum mihi est, ago habeoque gratiam immortalem, deus offerat michi occasionem facultatem referendi.”
147 Katerinas Windows: Donation and Devotion, Art and Music, as Heard and Seen in the Writings of a Birgitine Nun, ed. Corine Schleif and Volcker Schier (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2009), 237. A year later she sent another small rosary to her cousin Hans Imhoff, of the Imhoff trading company. In Katerinas Windows, 309.
exchange she asked him to send to her convent 1 lb. of saffron, 2 guilders’ worth of ginger, 1
guilders’ worth of cloves, and short pepper.\textsuperscript{148}

How were rosaries consumed? That is, once people got their hands on them, how did
they use them? Several modes of profane and religious consumption are apparent. In the
profane realm, both visual and written evidence attest to the rosary as a popular fashion item in
everyday life. Above all, they appear as a marker of wealth, social status, and power. At the
turn of the sixteenth century, Conrad Celtis described the popularity of rosaries among city
councilmen and honorable citizens of Nuremberg: when in public, it was customary to wear a
golden ring with a seal or gem on the left hand, and an expensive rosary with an elaborate
\textit{Bisamapfel} on the right.\textsuperscript{149} The rosary also appears in political ritual: Swiss ambassadors in
Venice in 1512 entwined rosaries in their fingers to cultivate an image of superiority and
devotion.\textsuperscript{150} The popularity of the rosary as a fashion item is also reflected in the attempts by
religious and civic authorities to regulate their use. In Nuremberg, sumptuary laws for both men
and women from the early fifteenth century prohibited the wearing of rosaries valued at greater
than twelve Hallers. These same laws stipulated that rosaries could not be worn “over the arse”
(“uber den ars”), but should be worn to the front on one side, as tradition dictated.\textsuperscript{151} Legislation
at the end of the century reiterated this prohibition, but changed the maximum value of rosaries

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, 372.
\textsuperscript{149} BSB, Clm. 431, fols. 28v-29r: “Senatoribus tamen et honestis aliis…annulus aureus in leua signaculo aut gemma
inclusa. Dextera autem zona oraria cum ampulla olearia tereti ambitu formata.” Celtis began writing this
manuscript in 1495. It was published in 1502. Hans Rupprich, “Celtis, Konrad,” in \textit{Neue Deutsche Biographie}
3 (1957), 181-183.
\textsuperscript{150} Meier, “Rosenkranz in der Reformationszeit,” 297.
\textsuperscript{151} “Verordnung gegen die Übermäßige Kleiderpracht bei Männern und Frauen,” in \textit{Die Nürnberger
Polizeiordnungen aus dem XIII bis XV Jahrhundert}, ed. Joseph Baader, (Stuttgart: Literarischer Verein, 1861), 65-
66: “Ez habent auch gesetzet di burger vom rats, daze in ieclich burger, er sei alte oder junck, kain silberin gürte
mer tragen sol danne die einer halben mark silbers wert sei, noch kaine silberin taschen noch kain silberin welchisch
messer noch kaine vin pereln, noch kain zerhauwen schuhe noch zerschniten schuhe, noch kainen zerhauwen rock,
der unten und an den ernen zerschnitzet sei, noch kainerley paternoster, daz uber zwelf haller wert sei, und sol
auch den uber den ars niht haben, er sol in vorn an der seiten tragen als man von alter her getan hat.”
to twenty Rhenish guilders, and applied the prohibition only to women.\textsuperscript{152} In Leipzig, a 1463 sumptuary law prohibited serving girls from “carrying and using” coral rosaries.\textsuperscript{153} Alanus de Rupe admonished members of the Confraternity to wear rosaries in public in order to set a good example and remind sinners of death and hell.\textsuperscript{154} Gottschalk Hollen – as he lamented the popularity of viewing the Eucharist host – also complained of women who wore coral rosaries about the neck.\textsuperscript{155} In 1498, the Franciscan Dietrich Kölde provided careful instructions to men who wished to wear a rosary properly: they were to attach a ring to the rosary and hang it from their hands.\textsuperscript{156}

Also in the profane realm, rosaries functioned as apotropaic magic and folk medicine.\textsuperscript{157} This was grounded in the very substance of the rosaries. The magnetic property of amber and jet-stone (when rubbed against wools, furs, or clothing) may have encouraged this association for some. Crystal was believed to be efficacious against sorcery. Red-colored stones – whether of coral, carnelian, or other gemstones – by virtue of their color were held especially effective against blood-related problems, including circulation, blood-loss, or humoral imbalances.\textsuperscript{158} Amethysts were considered to protect against the effects of alcohol, poison, and snake bites. Agates protected against epilepsy, insanity, thieves, and sometimes gout, while garnets protected against bad dreams. Some stones, including pearls and coral, were efficacious against evil more

\textsuperscript{152} “Kleiderordnung für Frowen und Junckfrowen,” in Baader, 95-109. At 103: “Auch soll kayn frow oder junckfrow eynichen paternoster mer tragen, der über zwaintzig guldin reinsch kost oder werdt sey. Welliche das überfüre und darumb fürbracht wurde, die soll gemeyner statt zu pass verfallen sein die übertewrung, was unnd wievle der paternoster über die gemelten summa der zwaintzig guldin werdt were.”
\textsuperscript{153} “dinstmeide sollin nicht corellen Paternoster nüzen noch tragen.” Quoted in Ritz, 94.
\textsuperscript{154} Winston-Allen, \textit{Stories of the Rose}, 116. The \textit{Livre de ordonnance} at Douai offered a 10,000-year indulgence for wearing a rosary.
\textsuperscript{155} Ritz, 94. Cf. Hollen’s sermons on the ten commandments, specifically his explication of idolatry: \textit{Preceptorium divinae legis interpretis venerabilis Gotschalci hollen de ordine heremitarum sancti Augustini} (Nuremberg: Koburger, 1497), fols. 5r-32r.
\textsuperscript{156} Ritz, 72.
\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens}, eds. E. Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächhold-Stäubli, vol. 7 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1935), 786-787.
\textsuperscript{158} Ritz, 99.
generally. Rosaries of woods from the Holy Land, including cedar and terebinth were effective against the plague, which was believed to be born on foul winds. In addition to the substance of beads, rosary attachments protected against demonic assault, bad luck, bad weather, and the plague. In sending rosaries and Bisamäpfeln and other attachments to Siegmund and Katharina Fürer of Nuremberg in 1518, Katerina Lemmel explained that “the fragrance is supposed to be good for warding off the bad vapors, and on it [the Bisamapfel], in the quill of a feather, are the tau sign and many devotional words, which one should have on one’s person at the time of death. And so I believe that it will probably not be long until the plague returns.”

Related to its status as a symbol of social prestige in popular fashion and its apotropaic powers, the rosary also played an important role in rituals of the life-cycle, including birth, marriage and death. Following the christening of his daughter Afra in 1476, the Nuremberg citizen Konrad Rohrbach noted the red coral rosary which she had received as a gift and wore “on her neck.” Rosaries appear most frequently in German wedding portraiture for the period from 1450-1550. Such portraits commonly depict wealthy urban males and females making pious gestures of prayer on separate panels. While males commonly hold their hands pressed together, females reflected in the opposite panel entwine rosaries in their hands [Fig 2.12]. Additionally, cities legislated on the use of rosaries in marriage rituals. The Lübeck Luxus-Ordnung of 1454 stipulated that the ecclesiastical benediction of an engagement was differentiated from the secular celebration of the engagement by the formal exchange of a rosary.

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160 Edith Wurmbach, Das Wohnungs- und Bekleidungswesen des Kölner Bürgertums um die Wende des Mittelalters (Bonn: Hanstein, 1932), 69.
162 Katerina’s Windows, 237.
163 Ritz, 92.
from groom to bride. Rosaries could also mark the end of a marriage. A 1451 report from Frankfurt described the symbolic role of rosaries absolving widows of their husbands’ debts: “if a woman allows her mantle or rosary to fall on the hallowed grave of her husband and no longer wears a gown, then she is not obliged to pay the debts which her husband has amassed.” In Constance before the Reformation, families were required to demonstrate that bodies would be buried with rosaries in order to receive permission to be buried in consecrated ground. Those bodies which lacked rosaries “were not considered Christian.”

Rosaries were also an integral component of pilgrimages. The Benedictine convent of St. Matthias in Trier was an early destination for rosary-carrying pilgrims traveling on foot in Western Germany and the lower Rhineland. More important were pilgrimages to the Holy Land. In 1519, Hans Stockar commented on the popularity of buying rosaries he had observed while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. While at port in Rhodes, Stockar and his fellow pilgrims walked about the city, observing the rosaries made there. He explained that they were especially popular among pilgrims because of their exceptional beauty. In the later sixteenth century, the Protestant Bartolomäus Sastrow criticized pilgrims carrying rosaries in his autobiography, writing “Thus, when the pilgrims thus come there, permitted by the attendant priests at a small

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165 Ritz, 96.
166 “Wenn eine Frau ihren Mantel oder paternoster auf ihres haußwirths sel. grab fallen läßt und nicht mehr dann ein Kleid anhält , so ist sie nit schuldig zu zahlen die Schuldien, die ihr haußwirth gemacht hat,” quoted in Ritz, 96.
167 “Wer Khein patter Nosster Tragen hat oder bey Ihm gehabt hat, den hat man nit für ein Christenmenschen gehabt. Wann er gestorben were, so man nitbey Ihm were gesein, so derffte man Ihn wohl nit in das geweycht gelegt haben, mann hett Ihm den vor den Khürchhoff zue Cosstanz zue gewunnen,” in A. Schilling, ed., “Die religiösen und kirchlichen Zustände,” 176.
gable to touch the rosary to the Marin icon, the rosary receives from the touching many terrible indulgences, so that one cannot exterminate them from a principality.”

Rosaries also played critical roles in votive offerings. People often placed rosaries on images of saints as a votive offering to that particular saint. In addition to the evidence from ecclesiastical visitations of German territories the sixteenth century, we commonly encounter descriptions of icons – especially Marian icons – decorated with rosaries in the narratives of Swiss iconoclasts in the early 1520s. In Nuremberg prior to the Reformation, icons in the city’s parish churches were decorated with all manner of clothing and liturgical items, including rosaries. A 1493 manuscript written by the sexton of the St. Lorenz church described how statues of St. Katherine and St. Elizabeth were especially popular objects of this devotional practice.

It was also common for people of means to donate rosaries to churches upon their deaths. There is good documentation of this practice in Strassburg, where the city cathedral systematically maintained records of all donations from 1320 to 1521. Donations of all kinds, including jewelry, clothing, cash, real estate, produce, church furnishings, and even weapons and armor, were intended to finance the construction of the cathedral. Donors represented a wide range of the social strata: records indicate that religious ranging from bishops to lay sisters donated, while members of the laity from emperors and dukes down to servants and wives of  

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171 Meier, “Rosenkranz in der Reformationszeit,” 300.
173 Charlotte Stanford, Commemorating the Dead in Late Medieval Strasbourg: The Cathedral’s Book of Donors and its Use (1320-1521) (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011). The practice was discontinued in 1521 with the coming of the Reformation.
tradersmen also donated. Among the donations, 54 sets of prayer beads were given; three sets from males, 45 from females, and six from multiple (usually married couples) donors.\textsuperscript{174} Rosaries were donated in exchange for masses and prayers spoken on behalf of the dead, as the 1421 entry for Anna von Goppingen illustrates: “For God’s sake, keep in mind the honorable Anna von Goppingen of blessed memory, [who] designated for the work of Our Beloved Lady one black mantle with a silk lining, and one coral 50-bead rosary with a Bisamapfel and one black 50-bead rosary with a gilded Agnus Dei. Pray for her.”\textsuperscript{175} We find similar practices in other locations. Adelheit Locherin donated a chalcedony rosary to a chapel in Oberbüren (the canton of Bern) in 1490.\textsuperscript{176} In Nuremberg, Sixtus Tucher bequeathed a chalcedony rosary along with several other items to the Poor Clares of Nuremberg in 1507.\textsuperscript{177} As with other gift exchanges, the principle of reciprocity applied here, and the Poor Clares were obliged to designate special prayers for the soul of Tucher.

Finally, the rosary was a material part of the structured environment of the Mass on the eve of the Reformation. Written evidence is somewhat oblique. In Biberach, for example, commentators describe men and women binging rosaries “into the church.”\textsuperscript{178} This could indicate the presence of rosaries during the Mass. However, it is equally likely that the author was referring to the use of rosaries in other ritual contexts such as quiet individual devotions or more communal prayer practices, often organized by local chapters of the Confraternity of the

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid, 26-38, 48.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid, 50, footnote 59: “Item Begendencken umb gotteß willen der erbern Annen von goppingen seligen Hat / dem werck unser lieben frouwen besetzt Ein in schwarten duchem mantell mit einem / syden futer Ein korallen funffitzig mit eine Bysem apffel und ein schwartz funfftzig / mit einem vergulten agnus dei Orate pro eat[sic].”
\textsuperscript{176} Meier, “Rosenkranz in der Reformationszeit,” 297.
\textsuperscript{178} Schilling, “Die religiösen und kirchlichen Zustände der ehemaligen Reichsstadt Biberach,” 18.
Rosary. A popular handbook late fifteenth century describes praying the rosary during the Mass, but also mentions several other contexts: “you may well pray the Psalter of Mary in the church during the Mass on a work day, or at home, or in a field, or wherever you wish.” The visual record offers further evidence for the rosary’s association with and use in the Mass. In popular print media as well as painting, rosaries have a place in the iconography of the Mass of St. Gregory. They appear in two ways: first, the rosary appears as a frame to the Crucifixion scene. These images often reference the miracle of transubstantiation along the outside margins, as in the interpretations by Erhard Schön and the Breslau Master [Figs. 1.2 & 1.3]. These tropes also appear in altarpieces, triptyches, and other commissioned images consumed publicly in churches as well as privately in chapels [Fig. 1.4]. We might also place Veit Stoss’ 1518 rosary-sculpture in this category. This piece hung above the choir in St. Lorenz [Fig. 2.2]. For those standing in the nave of the church, the rosary appeared suspended directly above the elevated host. This parallels the iconography of the rosary held over the body of Christ by St. Dominic and Thomas Aquinas in Wolf Traut’s 1510 woodcut [Fig. 1.1]. Second, observers of the miracle of transubstantiation are depicted praying and clutching rosaries or rose garlands – which symbolize rosaries – as illustrated by Wolf Traut’s 1510 woodcut [Fig. 1.1]. We find another example in the winged altarpiece Hans Pleydenwurff created for the Dominican church in Nuremberg (1465) [Fig 2.6]. When the altar is closed, an outside panel depicts St. Dominic and Thomas Aquinas along with St. Gregory as witnesses to the miracle of transubstantiation. In the border at the base of the image, a nun kneels and prays on a coral rosary. The accompanying

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179 Sprenger, for example, prescribed that Confraternities should hold four special prayer-vigils every year for all souls of the deceased Confraternity members, while other brotherhoods organized around the clock vigils. See Winston-Allen, Stories of the Rose, 121.  
180 Ein GAR nützlich Büchlein von dem Psalter od er Rosenkranz Marie (Ulm: Schäffer, 1501), fol. 8r: “Vnd wäre dises gepet vergäss oder nit petet in ainer wochen der mage ain andre wochen wol erfüllen oder peten. Auch magst du den psalter marie wolpeten in der kirchen bey der mess am werchtag, oder ym hauss oder ymm veld oder wo du gern wilt.” This text also describes special prayer services organized by the confraternity. See fols. 22r-24v.
script guarantees an array of indulgences for those who kneel before the image to pray Pater Nosters and Ave Marias. The altarpiece was first on display in the Dominican church in Nuremberg, and then later in St. Lorenz. In a similar vein, triptyches and memorials for private and public consumption depict the individuals and families who commissioned such images kneeling and praying with rosaries before Crucifixion [Figs. 2.3, 2.4].

Other popular woodcuts not depicting the Mass of St. Gregory specifically also reference the presence of rosaries in the Mass. Like the Mass of St. Gregory iconography, they represent people holding rosaries while praying before the Elevation. We find two examples of this an early vernacular explication of the Mass printed in Der Spiegel der Tugend und Ersamkeit (1493). In both images, females appear clutching rosaries while observing the priests’ consecration of the Eucharistic elements. Behind the women, demons hover or are seated, threatening the scene with a diabolical chalice and ritual scripts of their own [Figs 2.13, 2.14]. The women, however, form a wall against the demons, blocking their access to the Eucharist. Not only do these images depict the presence of rosaries during the Mass; they also effectively demonstrate their apotropaic power to ward off diabolical assaults. Other images, such as the 1512 woodcut by Hans Schäufelein of Augsburg, depict people clutching rosaries while receiving the host on their tongues [Fig. 2.15].

This section has outlined contours of the material culture of the late medieval Rosary. Rosaries in this period represented an array of diverse forms, materials, and modifications popular among both sexes. The considerable variation in rosary forms suggests that the material

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181 The full title is: Der Spiegel der Tugend und Ersamkeit, durch den hochberümtten Ritter vom Turn, mit schonen und kostlichen hystorien und Exempel, zu underweisung syner kind, in franzosiher sprach begriffen, und durch den Edlen fürmemen und Strengen, herrn Marquart vom Stein Ritter und landvogt zu Montpellicart, in Theutsch transferiert und gezogen (Basel: Michel Furter, 1493). The text was originally composed by Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry in 1371. The first Basel edition was richly illustrated with 46 woodcuts. Subsequent editions appeared in Augsburg (Schonsperger, 1498), Basel (Furter, 1513), and Strassburg (Knoblauch, 1519 and Cammerländer, 1538). Cf. Franz Falk, Die deutschen Meß-Auslegungen von der Mitte des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahre 1525 (Cologne: J.P. Bachem, 1889), 46-47.
culture was less bound to the structured narrative of the prayer and meditation sequence of the Rosary. Geography and the social organization of labor specific to this period played significant roles in the production of rosaries, and well-developed merchant networks distributed rosaries across the entirety of German speaking lands. People consumed rosaries enthusiastically in a variety of profane and religious contexts. They appeared in everyday life as a marker of wealth, social status, and power, as well as a form of apotropaic magic and folk medicine. These quotidian uses were firmly grounded in the materials from which rosaries were composed and their various attachments. In particular, the medicinal and magical power of the rosary is reflected in the popularity of Bisamapfel attachments. This necessarily makes the quotidian use of the rosary a multi-sensory exercise which engaged the senses of touch, smell, hearing, and vision. Related to its quotidian uses, the rosary also played an important role in a number of more formal ritual contexts, including the Mass. When people came into the church, they carried with them a synaesthetic device which effectuated a range of powerful associations. In the following section, we consider how material practice was reflected in the language of rosary texts.

2.5 – Rosaries, Materiality, and Synaesthetic Devotion

The foregoing analysis has established the formation of the late medieval rosary as an assemblage of prayers, material objects, and practices. How do we understand the significance practitioners assigned to it? Most recently, Anne Winston-Allen has argued that the rosary must be placed in relation to a broader contemporary ‘language of spirituality. Central to this language of spirituality is a tension between what she identifies variously as a ‘ritualistic’ or ‘quantitative’ piety on the one hand, and ‘meaningful’ or ‘qualitative’ spirituality on the other.
This tension persists from the earliest rosary texts through the sixteenth century, and allows her to construct a progressive narrative based on several binary oppositions. In this narrative, ritualism is a characteristic of the illiterate, while meaningful spirituality represents the goal of the literate, anxious about maintaining a devotional mindset focused on the words of the rosary text. The *vita Christi* was the fifteenth century attempt to “alleviate the monotony” and empty ritualism of the earlier Psalters, which focused on repetitive, unstructured enumeration of the traits and virtues of Mary. It became a “condensed gospel,” or a kind of doctrinal touchstone, and the “essential part of the true character of the devotion.”

We claim here that Winston-Allen’s notion of the language of spirituality is insufficient primarily because it limits the significance of the rosary to the model of the text. Some church authorities may have perceived the essence of the Rosary in the *vita Christi* narrative, but it is not clear that all did. It is even less clear that the laity perceived it as such. In contrast to Winston-Allen, we offer our own interpretation. Our model assumes that most peoples’ first contact with the devotion was through the rosary as a material object. When we examine the parallel explanatory literature, we find important parallels with the material culture of the rosary discussed in the previous section. In this regard, the rosary illustrates the concept of late medieval materiality recently discussed by Caroline Walker Bynum. Bynum posits that fifteenth century religion regarded all matter as a theoretical and practical problem: the entire world was created and therefore could represent God. In contrast to earlier formulations such as Scribner’s sacramental gaze, the materiality of devotional objects gestures not towards the

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183 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 17. This breaks with Scribner’s argument that the visible world could signify the supernatural insofar that it is not limited to the visual, but rather applies to the material world, and therefore all sensory modalities. Bynum is also critical of the assumed binary between the material and immaterial that is embedded in Scribner’s formulation.
unseen (divine), but rather to the power manifested in the substance of the devotional objects themselves. As Bynum puts it, devotional objects “speak or act their physicality in particularly intense ways that call attention to their per se “stuffness” and “thingness.” As we will see, the writers of rosary texts frequently drew attention to the thingness of the rosary through the language of synaesthesia.

Exempla stories from the mid-fifteenth century onward point to the materiality of the devotion. In these tales, the rosary often implicates multiple senses, especially touch and smell. One such manuscript from Bernkastel-Kues (ca. 50 km northeast of Trier) explains the origins of the rosary prayer. Here, the author tells of a “simple layman who was in the habit of weaving garlands of roses, flowers, or herbs…and setting them upon a statue of the most Blessed Virgin Mary.” The act of engaging with the materials produced a positive internal effect. As the story goes on to explain: “With this act, he sensed a great devotion” and, partaking in the “incarnate Grace through the glorious Virgin,” left the world and entered a religious order. It was only while living in the religious order that his understanding of the devotion was disciplined to the written word:

When a wise father learned [of the man’s devotion], he instructed him to speak the Ave Maria instead of making garlands, and assured him that this prayer of the Blessed Virgin was more pleasing than all of those garlands, which he had made for her before. That man complied with the good council, and kept the devotion as instructed. Then, after he had observed this prayer exercise for some time, it befell him that he had to pass through

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184 Ibid, 28-29.
186 Heinz, 312 (fol. 140r): “homo quidam simplex secularis consuevit facere sertum de rosis vel de floribus vel de herbis…et imponere idem sertum ymagini beatissime virginis Marie.”
a forest in which robbers hid themselves. In a place in the forest, he tethered his horse and prayed on his knees 50 Ave Marias. The robbers who stayed in the forest saw this, and wanted to steal the man’s horse. But when they came near, they saw from a distance a beautiful Virgin standing next to the brother. The Virgin gathered one blooming rose after another from the mouth of the brother and wove a garland. When she was finished with the garland, she set it upon the head of the brother, and ascended into Heaven. The robbers were amazed by the vision they had seen, and ran to ask the brother what he had done, and who had been the Virgin they had seen at his side. The brother answered that he had had no Virgin by side, but rather he had spoken the Angelic Greeting fifty times in place of woven rose-garlands for Mary, as he had been instructed. But when the robbers revealed to him what they had seen, he clearly recognized that the glorious Virgin Mary herself had been there and had received his rose-garland. Thus he rode forth to pray the rosary with great devotion; he taught others to pray it just so. And thus the Rosary had its beginning, and it was woven from the Angelic Greeting repeated fifty times. But in our times, forty years later, one has added the life of our Lord Jesus Christ in the form of clauses.  

188 Ibid, 314 (fol. 140v): Quod cum prudens quidam pater percepit, docuit eum, quod loco prioris serti diceret L vicibus Ave Maria, promittens ei, quod plus placere deberent beate Marie quam ulla serra, que ei fecerat antea. Qui acquiescens bono consilio fecit ita. Cum ergo ad tempus id continuasset, contigit eum extare per silvam, in qua latrones latitabant. Ubi cum allegasset equum suum, flexis genibus dixit L Ave Maria. Latrones, qui erant in nemore, eum videntes cupiebant capere equum ejus. Sed cum proprius appropinquaret, viderunt a longe juxta fratrem stare pulchram virginem que semper pusillam recepit floridam rosam de ore ejus et faciebat sertum. Quod cum completum esset, imposuit in capite suo et ascendit in coelum. Qui, quoniam valde mirantes, accurrerunt et fratrem ipsum interrogaverunt, quidnam is egisset et que virgo illa esset, quam secus eum vidissent. Qui dixit, se ullam virginem secum habuisse, sed L vicibus angelicam salutationem pro rosario Marie serto dixisse secundum quod edoctus esset. Sed cum latrones sibi dicerent, quid vidissent, manifeste cognovit, gloriosam virginem Mariam ibi fuisse et rosarium suum sumpsisse. Une cum magna devotione id continuavit et alios similiter facere docuit et rosarium istude dici primitus cepit et fiebat ex angelica salutatione quinquagies repetita. Sed temporibus nostris usque adhuc infra XL annos vita domini Jhesu Christi addita est per clausulas, ut supra patet in ipso rosario. Et quantum hoc domino Deo placet et sanctissime virginis, matri ejus, bene patet in sequenti magno exemplo.
As one of the earliest rosary tales, this story was also one of the most commonly reproduced in both manuscript and print rosary literature from the middle of the fifteenth century through the first two decades of the fifteenth century.\(^{189}\) Turning its content draws our attention to the materiality of the devotion. It is significant that the tale begins by describing the man weaving garlands and placing them on a statue of Mary. This parallels the practice of using rosaries as votive offerings documented above. That the tale depicts the simple layman’s devotion becoming disciplined to the word (spoken and written) at first might appear to verify Winston-Allen’s interpretation. However, we interpret the tale presenting a much more complicated message by insisting upon the materiality of the practice. First, the tale explains how the brother prays: he is kneeling, and we might also guess assuming the gesture of clasping his hands around a rosary as in the images detailed above. Further, the tale clearly represents the praying the rosary as a form of apotropaic magic in that it protects the brother from the threatening robbers.\(^{190}\) Whereas the beginning of the tale emphasizes the transition from a multi-sensory practice towards a more structured meditation focused on the written and spoken word, the second half of the tale returns to the materiality of the prayer in the form of a synaesthetic vision. The robbers perceive the Virgin gathering roses from the brother’s mouth and weaving them into garlands. The miraculous transformation of the spoken words of the prayer into a fragrant, visually appealing object thus signifies the persistence of a synaesthetic understanding of the

\(^{189}\) As Winston-Allen points out, prototypical versions of this tale appear as early as the second half of the thirteenth century in Latin, Catalan, and German, in a legend called “Aves seen as Roses.” See Stories of the Rose, 100. See for example the version in 1454 manuscript from Mainz titled “Unser Frauwen Rosengertlin.” See MSWB, HS 322, fol. 84r: “Darnach geviel dem menschen zu synnen, daz er in eyn orden zoch und wart eyn conversus, eyn leyenbruder.” The manuscript is attributed to Adolf von Essen. A longer version also appears in the 1460 “Zwanzig-Exempel Schrift” (Cologne) manuscript mentioned above. The manuscript is reproduced in Klinkhammer, *Adolf von Essen*, 172-187.

\(^{190}\) In other versions of the tale, authors identify the threatening men as both robbers and murderers. See Weida, *Spiegel*, 7v.
devotion. We see this pattern in the rosary *exempla*, rosary texts, and in explications of the rosary, all found in the rosary handbook literature.

*Exempla* from other rosary handbooks reinforce the characteristics outlined above, insisting upon the materiality of the devotion. The 1460 Cologne manuscript which describes a woman who prayed the rosary on a set of small and large stones also describes the practice in synaesthetic terms. With each Ave-Maria spoken by the woman, one of the small stones “was transformed into a small green leaf”; and when she prayed an Ave-Maria on one of the large stones, “it became a beautiful rose.”\(^{191}\) Another tale admonishes readers to follow the example of a sick man who devoutly “wove garlands” of roses for Mary by praying the devotion. The text describes the appeal of the devotion to all five senses: “Some saw, some touched, some smelled, and some had a sweet taste in their mouth when they spoke the rosary. Some smelled a noble smoke, as if they were in an apothecary’s shop; as the matron at Cologne who had a honey sweet taste and thereafter secretly told the bishop.”\(^{192}\)

Most commonly, *exempla* draw attention to the materiality of the rosary through stories of its apotropaic magical and curative medicinal properties. Alanus de Rupe’s rosary handbook includes a variety of such tales. Most of Alanus’ examples encouraged belief in the rosary’s materiality and synaesthetic properties as the source of its protective magic. Usually this meant the tactility of the beads and orally spoken prayers acting in conjunction as a shield.\(^{193}\) In the

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\(^{191}\) Quoted in Klinkhammer, *Adolf von Essen*, 104: “und wan sie ein Ave-Maria sprach an eynen kleinen stein, so wart er verwandelt in ein grune bletchin; sonder wan sie kam zu einem grossen steine an dem pater noster und da sprach ein Ave-Maria, so wart ein schone rose davon.”

\(^{192}\) Quoted in Klinkhammer, *Adolf von Essen*, 177: “Etliche haben sie gesehen, etliche gegriffen, etliche smeken sie und haben sussen smack darvon in jrem monde, so sie den rosenkrantz sprechen. Etliche richen edel en roch, also ob sie in eyner apotheeken weren, wie eyne matrona zu Kollen auch honig sussen smack dor von hatte und auch dar nach der heilige bischopp, dem sie daz heymelichen sagte, daz habe ich vor gheschriben jn der kronen Marie by dem funften steyne jacinto.”

\(^{193}\) His *Vuuserr lieben frauwen Psalter* appeared in several German editions in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, suggesting that it was fairly popular. Here, we draw on the Augsburg 1502 edition. The full citation for
preface to his handbook, Alanus thus admonished his readers to take up rosaries “in your hands as the Harp of David” and “as the sling of David.” In doing so, he explained, users will “drive out the devil” and “conquer Goliath – that is, the world.” 194 The story of the origins of the rosary similarly demonstrated the power of synaesthetic devotion: the “Altväter” of Egypt carrying rosaries “in their hands and on their belts,” and goes on to state that “as long as they were praying the Psalter, they withstood the devil, but as soon as they ceased the prayer the devil drove them into the eight deserts.” 195 Yet another described St. Dominic’s detailed instructions to a knight on how to construct a rosary from fifteen multi-colored stones. The knight followed Dominic’s instructions whereupon he was attacked by a devil while trying to pray the rosary. He defended himself with it, striking the devil on the neck and overcoming him. Thereafter the knight understood the power of the rosary and distributed many throughout his castle to ward off evil spirits. 196 Other tales described those who, sick in body or spirit, could not receive the sacrament. Upon praying the rosary they found the strength to receive the “sweetness” in the sacrament frequently. Others simply emphasized the power of the tactility of the rosary. Alanus claimed to have witnessed people dying of the plague rescued simply by touching a rosary. A devil was exorcised from a possessed man when a rosary was laid on his body. At another point, Alanus claimed to have witnessed a mute man able to speak after kissing a rosary and pressing it to his neck. 197 Another story detailed a converted Jew who is protected from a hell-hound while

this edition is: Unser lieben Frawen Psalter, vonn den dreien rosenkrenntzen, wie man die ordnen vnd peten sol mitt vil bewerten exempln eyn vast nutzlichs büchlin (Augsburg: Lucas Zeissenmair, 1502).
194 Ibid, 5r: “Darumb ir aller liestenin cristo nemt den psalter in euer hend als die harpfen Dauit. Dar mit ir den teüfel auss treibt als geschriben stet am ersten buch der Küng am xvj. Auch nempt disen psalter in euer hend als die schlingen Dauit damit ir über windet Goliam; das ist die welt als geschreiben ist am abgemelten büch.”
195 fol. 4r: “Vnd als lang sy den psalter beten waren so lang wider stunden sy dem teüfel so bald aber vnd sy das gebet abliessen so hat der teüfel sy anss 8 wüsst getrieben.”
196 Ibid, 47v-48r.
197 Ibid, 6v-8r. Tales of exorcisms with rosaries are common in the literature. Ein GAR nützlich Büchlein contains a brief version of an apparently widely circulating story of a possessed woman at Cologne: “Item zue koeln ist
gathering medicinal herbs. Initially doubting the power of this “little piece of jewelry,” he is convinced when the rosary he wears protects him from the hound’s bites. Like the knight, he used the rosary as a weapon to drive away the dog. Such tales underscored the power of the very materiality of the rosary, and it synaesthetic appeal.

Late fifteenth century texts of the rosary devotion, as well as explications of the rosary, also draw upon synaesthetic language deeply inflected by the earlier Marian Psalters, the biblical Song of Songs, and rose-garden imagery from courtly literature. While Winston-Allen posits that the patterns of earlier Marian Psalters evolved into more narrative-driven rosaries, the earlier and later forms actually existed comfortably side by side. For example, Jacob Sprenger concluded his rosary statutes with the admonition to make garlands and “let us follow the good-smelling savor of Mary with such good-smelling garlands to the place where our sister Mary now is.” In Nuremberg, a late fifteenth rosary text addresses Mary as “a clear light of heaven, a sweetness of paradise, an honor to all angels, a joy of all saints, [and] a gem of all virgins,” entrusting to her the supplicants “soul, heart, body and life, my five senses, and all my thoughts, words and deeds.”

The city library of Mainz houses several especially good examples of the persistence of the language of synaesthesia in explications of the rosary. A 1454 manuscript attributed to Adolf von Essen describes the rosary as “three roses, from which the Rosary of Our Lady is made.” The first of these rose is “the Word” which was planted in paradise in the beginning by the “first gardener.” The second rose is Mary herself. Mary appears as a “summer rose, which blooms in

gewesen besessen ain tochter mit dem boesen geist. Do verhyess sy ain andere fraw zu peten den Psalter Marie vnd hencket ir den psalter Marie an irem hals do ging von stund ander tüffel von ir” (14r).

198 Ibid, 27v-28r.
199 Erneuerte Rosenkranz, fol. 14r.
200 NSB, Cent VII, 61, fols. 19r-v: “Ein clarer schein des himels Ein sussigkeit des padys Ein ere aller engel Ein frewd aller heyligen Ein gym aller JunckfrwenlIch beuilch dir hewt vnd ewigklich Mein Sel, Hertz, leib vnd leben Mein funff synn vnd alle mein gedancken wort vnd werk”
201 MSWB HS I 322, fol. 85f ff.
May, is full and smells good,” symbolizing the “eternal desire to shine.”\textsuperscript{202} The author praises Mary-as-rose for her beautiful white and red colors, her “sweet smell” and even her “noble fume.”\textsuperscript{203} This last description builds on a common late medieval trope linking ritual incense to prayer: “and Mary in this prayer was thus a good-smelling smoke, which went out of a censer burning full of good incense and noble herbs, before which was driven to flee.”\textsuperscript{204} Further, Mary’s prayers were “incense or myrrh, which in a censer was burning; [and] from the good smell all evil things must have yielded and fled, and all good things desired to come. Thus when this noble rose Mary in her heart or mouth ardently prayed, so all the evil spirits must have fled and yielded.”\textsuperscript{205} The third rose in this text is Christ, who is “without thorns” and “blooms like a good-smell, delicate rose on a rose-bush,” and “draws every day the sinners to him with his noble smell.”\textsuperscript{206} At another point, the text explains that the “sweetness of Christ” is foreshadowed in the Psalms: “As David speaks: how sweet is the Lord, and to be sated on the honey of eternity, it must be drawn from hard stone, whereof Moses speaks…the hard stone, from which one shal draw honey and oil is our Lord Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{207} Further, Christ’s “entire Holy Body, which died hanging and drying on the cross, smells to the ardent paramour like a well-roasted Easter Lamb, like a crisp, well-baked angelic bread that was consecrated in honey.”\textsuperscript{208}

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid, 85v, 89r.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid, 90v: “so ist Maria darumb eyner rosen gliche, wan als eyn dornrose yrn sussen geschmack und yren eden roch von sich gibt”
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid, 87v: “Und Marien in des gebet was also eyn wolriechender rauch, der uss eym rauchfesselin ginge, daz voll guttes wirauchs und edeler wurczen enczundet were, darvor der bose geist pleget zu fliehen.”
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid, 91r-v: “so Maria bedende was, also eyn wirauch oder mirra, die in eynem rauchvass enczundet weren; von dem gutten geroche allebose ding muste wichen und fliehen und alle gude dinge dar begerten zu komen. Also wan diese edele rose Maria irs herczens oder mundes ynges und wolriechendes gebet det, so mussten alle bose geiste darvor fliehen und wichen; und Got, den sie andechtiglichen anrufte, der mechte sich nit lange enthaltten: er musste zu ir komen und sie in yrm czemlichen und voilkomenen begirnisse erhoren.”
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid, 98r-v.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid, 99v.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid, 101v.
Other late fifteenth and early sixteenth century rosary texts from Mainz include intensely synaesthetic language alongside *vita Christi* narratives. Texts describe counting on the rosary as transforming prayers into “roses not dark but rather beautiful, blooming and good-smelling lights.” Another describes Mary as having received the honey and manna of divine sweetness, and Mary herself as a “honeycomb, a spring, a chalice,” thanking her for giving the “pure drink” to the world, and bringing forth “the sweet light which you tasted.” The prayer goes on to describe Mary bringing a “true grape-vine” to those who thirst and a light to those who were blind. These prayers are followed by a series of meditations on the precious stones that decorate Mary’s crown. The third stone in this series – jasper – signifies “when all angels desired from you the sweet fruit of Jesus.” The seventh stone represents how Mary “rejects not the sinner when he stinks with sins.”

The foregoing evidence establishes the basis for understanding the rosary as a synaesthetic devotion. In its materiality and in the language of its accompanying literature, the rosary’s simultaneous and disorderly appeal to multiple senses also served to actuate its sacred, magical, and even medicinal powers. Synaesthetic devotion remained efficacious on the eve of the Reformation in both profane and religious contexts. Despite claims to the contrary, more narrative-driven or text-based forms of the rosary do not appear to have predominated on the eve of the Reformation. Nor is it true that people perceived a conflict between the more narrative driven forms and older forms which appealed to the devout through the language of synaesthesia. Rather, the rosary at the end of the fifteenth century was an assemblage of material culture, texts,

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209 MSWB HS I 422, fol. 132r: “Christ, der die blynde sehen macht vnd die dauben horen;” “vff den rosen krantze daz die rosen nyt doce syn sonder bluenden lichten schone vnd woleriche warden.”
210 MSWB, HS I 427, fol. 214r, 216r: “eyn honige rasse, Ein bronne vnd ein kelche Du hast geschenckt der welt den luttern trancke vor die heffen des ersten menschen”; 219r: “du has furbracht das susse liechte das du hast geschmackt.”
211 Ibid, 219v.
212 Ibid, 225r: “wan allen engel waren beger von dir die susse frucht ihm.”
beliefs, and practices layered on top of one another. In this regard, complexity and synaesthesia were its hallmarks. It stood as a symbol of relative social egalitarianism, and was enthusiastically embraced by a wide cross section of the population, male and female alike. At the same time, rosaries also functioned as visual, tactile, and olfactory markers of social distinction.

2.6 – The Reformation of the Rosary and its Limits

The Protestant Reformation was a rejection of the synaesthetic devotion represented by the rosary. Unlike the Eucharist, which reformers could never completely reject, the rosary disappeared from normative worship contexts in three phases. In the first phase, Martin Luther struggled with the rosary as both a theological and material problem. Theologically, the rosary was part and parcel of the late medieval economy of salvation which he found so troubling. Even before the publication of his 95 Theses, we find him writing criticisms in the margins of a rosary handbook he owned. Next to a story of a young man praying the rosary, Luther wrote “thus through a stupid work he merited justification,” while in another of a man praying the rosary for Mary’s intercession, he wrote “not through Christ, but by works.”

Luther went public with his criticism in his 1520 treatise Von guten Werken. Materially, the rosary was threatening because it distracted people from the proper object of devotion, the Word. Luther thus criticized the physical practice of praying the rosary, specifically in the context of the Mass:

“there we stand like dumb blocks…the rosary beads rattle, the pages of the prayer books rustle, and the mouth babbles.”

In the second phase, other early reformers translated theological and material criticism of the rosary into the popular print culture of the early 1520s. Here the rosary constituted one in a litany of offensive objects associated with traditional Christianity. The Nuremberg cobbler Hans Sachs provides us with one of the most powerful examples of this litany. In 1523 poem the *Wittenberg Nightingale*, Sachs criticized the rosary on three grounds: 1) that one could not manipulate these objects to gain entrance into heaven as the church suggested; 2) that they were contrary to the Word, and were either diabolical or human inventions; 3) and they were generally displeasing to God.

In other pamphlets from the early 1520s, the rosary frequently appeared as an object of scorn, and signifier for the sensual devotion of traditional Christianity. Like Sachs, these pamphleteers criticized the notion of praying the rosary as a good work. Many focused more specifically on the nature of that work, disparaging the rosary as a lengthy exercise in “babbling” out specific numbers of prayers while ticking them off rattling beads, and practice which distracted from true devotion to the Word. Reformers also criticized the rosary as a device that cultivated a deceptive appearance of piety. Here we find the rosary derided as a “fool’s trick (Gauckelwerk), “ape’s game” (Affenspiel), and in one instance, as a form of idolatry.

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215 WA 6, 240: “da stehn wir wie die oelgotzen, wissen nichts auff tzubringen noch zuklagen, da klapern die rosenkranz stein, rauschen die bletter und das maul plappert.”


An important ideological shift occurred in this phase of the Reformation of the Rosary.

One component of this shift focused on the institutional basis of the Rosary. In 1522, the pamphleteer Jacob Strauss criticized the Rosary Confraternity, along with all religious confraternities, as dangerous because it distracted people from the one true brotherhood in Christ.\textsuperscript{218} He contrasted this true brotherhood and what he believed to be its firm foundation in Scripture against the popular confraternities of his day: “neither gold nor silver, candles, idols, processions, singing, ringing, pipes, nor any human institution; here instead one may have Christ alone in his holy Gospel, teaching, leading, and exercising the brothers and sisters to brotherly love of their neighbors.”\textsuperscript{219} A year later, Strauss advanced even harsher criticism at the Dominican order for its promotion of the rosary, listing it as one among many diabolical assaults of the traditional Church: “O, how lovely do the shackles of heaven ring and intonate…they are thus highly endorsed with indulgences and grace, and whoever is subscribed to their Confraternity and yearly pays a tithe falls under the greatest parts of the Pope’s authority, and so must go to heaven, but the devil shall carry him away.”\textsuperscript{220}

A second ideological component cast the rosary as an idol, associating it with women and ‘heathens’ easily misled by sensuous worship. Heinrich of Kettenbach (d. 1524) forcefully articulated this position. A Franciscan who converted to Luther’s cause in 1521, Kettenbach

\textsuperscript{218} Jakob Strauss, \textit{Vnderricht D. Jacob Straussen, wartzu die Bruderschaften nütz seyen, wie man sy bissher gehalten hat, vnd nu fürohin halten sol} (Augsburg, 1522), fol. 1v.

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid, fol. 2r: \textit{In diser bruderschaft ist kain Patron/ oder vormuender/ auch kain besonder angenommner gotsdienst/ dann allain Christus vnd sein leer vnd gesatz/ also / das hie weder gold noch silber/ kertzn/ goetzen/ begaengknus/ singen/ klingen/ pfeyffen/ noch kainerlay menschen recht hie statt mag haben/ dann allain Christus in sein hailigen Euangelio leeret/ fueret/ vnd uebet die brueder vnd schwoester nach bruederlicher liebe.”

\textsuperscript{220} Strauss, \textit{Ein neüw wunderbarlich Beychtbuchlin, in dem die warhafft gerecht beycht vnd bussfertigkeit Christenlichen gelert vnd angetzeygt wirt} (Strassburg, 1523), B1 v - B2 r: \textit{vnd bey den predigern im Rosenkrantz. O wiewol klingeln vnd thoenen auch darbey die schellen des heyligen geysts/ sanct Anthonius/ Sanct Bernharts berg/ Sanct Veltins bottschaft; die also hoch begabt seind mit ablass vnd genaden/ wer irer bruoderschaft eingeschriben ist/ vnd jaerlichen zynss gibt/ der mag von den grossen sticken Baepstliches gewalts auch geleidiget werden/ vnd muess gen himmel vnd solt jn der teuefel hynauff tragen.”
spent his remaining years preaching the Reformation message in Ulm. In his polemic, A Dialogue between Brother Heinrich of Kettenbach and an old, pious mother from Ulm (1523), Kettenbach used the genre of a dialogue to gender the rosary as a specifically feminine devotion which led the heart into idolatry. Kettenbach portrayed the old woman as foolishly and childishly attached to the material culture of the traditional church. At one point, the woman claims to burn candles every week, and saves her money in order to purchase rosaries to decorate the church. In exchange for these deeds, she receives the benefit of having masses sung and read on her behalf, and is assured by her confessor that she “can do no better work, and no better service to God” by such acts. Kettenbach answers her thus:

It is evil with you people to speak of such things…you religious women wish to be right, and desire praise of your conduct and your superstition, which is without foundation in scripture and is against God. And when you hear something spoken to the contrary, you become incensed yourselves…and help the antichristian apostles against me…I will give you an answer from an Epistel or letter of Jeremiah, which he sent to the Jews who were in Babylon among the heathens and idolators…In the book of the prophet Baruch, we read that Jeremiah wroten to those in captivity at Babylon: when you are in Babylon, you will see golden, silver, wooden and stone idols, and they become priests, or when it is ordained, they are carried in the procession…and therewith spoke Jeremiah: they wish to terrify you, so that you fear the idols, and honor them, and offer them money….kneel not before them, pray not to them! Speak: O God in heaven to you alone should one pray.

222 Heinrich von Kettenbach, Eyn gesprech Bruder Hainrich von Kettenbach mit aim frommen alte mutterlin von Vlm von etlichen zufellen vnd anfechtung des altmutterlin auf wellyche antwurt gegeben von Bruder Heinrich (Augsburg: Ramminger, 1523), A2 r.
See, my little old mother, even now you religious women hang on statues gold, silver, rosaries, silver Agnus Dei, silver hearts, and garlands.”

At the heart of Kettenbach’s criticism is an ideological shift which gendered the Rosary in a very historically specific manner. In contrast to the earlier Confraternity of the Rosary, which had promoted the rosary as something for both males and females, Kettenbach’s *Dialogue* positioned it as an object of devotion among “you religious women.” This meant specifically cloistered women.

It is also significant that Kettenbach represents his antagonist as an *old* woman, a social category which, beginning especially with the Reformation, caused a good deal of anxiety. As Heide Wunder has demonstrated, gender was not simply a binary issue of masculinity and femininity. Rather, it was graded according to age, marital status, and social class. With the coming of the Reformation, which centered the moral order of the sexes around marriage, women outside the married household were generally viewed with a good deal of suspicion, and relegated to a lower position in the moral hierarchy of society. The old woman of the convent would have likely also suggested suggest parallels to the figure of the witch in the late medieval popular imagination. In the late fifteenth century, the notion emerged that the witch’s power to do evil arose from a pact with the devil, sealed with illicit sexual relations. That the pact was something which occurred between the devil and a woman was assumed among ecclesiastical

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223 Ibid, A2 r-v: Es ist boess mit euch leuten reden von solchen dingen…also thon jr auch/ jr gaisterin wellen rechtt haben/ vnnd wellen das mann euch lob in eurm fuernemen vnnd aberglauben/ der nit grund in der schrift vnnd got wider ist/ vnnd wann jr etwas hoert darwider reden/ so erztuerzet jr ir in euch selber/ vnnd verkert mit vnnd eym ander sein wort/ vnnd helffet den Entchristischen aposteln wider mich [A2r].…Ich wil dir geben anttwurt auss einer Epistel oder sendbryeff Hieremie/ den er zuschicktt den Juden die da waren in Babilonie vnnder den haidn vnnd abgoertern…In dem buch des propheten Bar. ca. vlti. lesen wir/ dz Hier. schrib den in dem gefenknis zu babilone also zuo babylone werdt jr sehen guldin/ silbrin/ hueltzin vnnd stainin goeter/ vnnd die werden die priester/ oder wen sey dartzu verorden/ tragen in den procession…vnnd damit spricht Hieremias wellen sy euch erschrecken / das jr die abgoetter fuerchten / vnnd sy eeren vnnd gelt opffern vnnd steuren das vil golds say say/ aber kerdt euch nit daran/ nit knyen nider vor in/ nit beeten sy an/ sprech/ O got im himel dich allain soll man anbeten. Sihe mein mueterlein/ also hencket jr gaisterin yetzund ain oelgoetzen vol golds/ silber/ pater noster/ silbereyn angnus dei/ silberyn hertzleyhn/ krentzein.”
and learned circles: “Since Eve was fashioned from Adam’s rib, she did not possess the same likeness to God as Adam and was, as the seduction by the serpent shows, morally weaker. Women were the “weaker sex” – weak in body and faith – and were therefore more easily seduced by the devil.”224 Especially with regard to the body, woman’s weakness made her especially susceptible to the sensual sin of idolatry.

In the third and final phase, reformers moved to institutionalize this understanding of the rosary in religious practice. In most Swiss territories, where reformers took a much stricter stance on the problem of idolatry, the narrative appears relatively straightforward. Both in ritual and in quotidian contexts, the rosary was eliminated. By 1522, the Zurich city council began to enforce fines of 10 Gulden for anyone found carrying or wearing a rosary in public. In Bern, reformers classified the rosary formally as an idol, dissolved the city’s Rosary Confraternity, an instituted a similar monetary penalty in 1528.225 In the free imperial cities of the Holy Roman Empire, the narrative is more complicated. For the geographic region generally, the Augsburg Confession (1530) addressed the rosary under the rubric of “good works,” criticizing the practice as “childish” and “needless.”226 While this marks an important turning point, particular histories of the Reformation of the rosary reflect variations on this theme, closely tied to local circumstances.

In Nuremberg, for example, the city council never formally prohibited carrying a rosary in public, and because there was no established Rosary Confraternity, there was no reason to pass laws against it. Nevertheless, a number of the city’s leading advocates of reform argued

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against it. In his 1519 pamphlet *Schutzrede für Luthers Lehre*, the city clerk had publicly accused the traditional church of deliberately deceiving the “poor, unlearned folk” through “outward ceremonies” such as “the praying of rosaries and psalts, all day babbling the rosary, making many pilgrimages and fasts, lighting great candles and many lights, comforting the poor souls with holy water and other similar outward works.”

The solution was the “preaching of the clear Word of God” over and against these outward works. A series of letters he exchanged with his cousin Dorothea Mock, a cloistered nun in nearby Dorfkemmathen, reveals the gendered basis of his position. He criticizes Mock’s understanding of scripture as irrational, “wholly fleshly,” and instead of thinking of Christ on the Cross, the women of convents only think of Christ as roses and lilies. Far from honoring Mary, Spengler believed that the nuns’ use of rosaries profaned her and God. Spengler attempted to address the problem by designing his own liturgical ordinance in 1524. This ordinance stripped the Mass and Vespers to their most basic components by removing “all Ceremonies” without foundation in Scripture. Alongside the rosary, Spengler rejected special blessings and the Corpus Christ procession, instructing that these things henceforth should be regarded as “fool’s works.” To ensure that “in the church, people might be able to hear as best as possible,” Spengler also recommended setting aside the best acoustic space in the church for preachers when it came time

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228 Spengler, *Verantwortung*, 392.


230 Ibid, 444, 452.

231 Ibid, 452.


233 Ibid, fol. 5r.
to read the letters of Saint Paul. As Bridget Heal has shown, Spengler’s liturgical ordinance articulated a broader concern among city reformers about the ordering of church space for the purposes of the clear aural administration of the Word. The city’s principal churches adapted to this concern by removing altars because they “get in the way of people hearing the word of God.”

The city’s leading reformers appear to have shared Spengler’s opinions on the rosary. After 1525, the Reformation movement in the city began the work of excising rosaries from religious practice. Andreas Osiander, preacher in the Lorenzkirche and the city’s leading reformer, recommended their removal to the city council. These recommendations were published in his 1526 Gutachten zur Zeremonien, which echoed earlier criticisms, calling the rosary a “fool’s trick” (Gauckelwerk). In 1528, he added to this criticism an argument against the rosary as contrary to the moral-didactic model of prayer reformers wished to promote in the city. He explained that the counting of prayers on rosaries distracted people from the specific words of the prayers and their focus on God. Osiander eventually succeeded in institutionalizing his perspective in the city’s church ordinance of 1533, which officially removed the rosary from religious rituals, condemning it as “unchristian babbling” characteristic of “old hags” and “fools.” By adding “old hags,” this last condemnation draws its ideological basis from the polemical literature of the early 1520s: the image of the old, perhaps dangerous, woman is deployed to justify the removal of practices of the traditional church.

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234 Ibid, fol. 10r.
236 Gutachten über die Zeremonien (1526), in Gesamtausgabe, vol. 2, 261.
237 Gesamtausgabe, vol. 3, 156.
238 Sehling, vol. 11, 169.
Even though the Reformation of the rosary appears to have been successful at the level of religious practice, its effect on daily life appears more limited. In Nuremberg, rosaries appear regularly in family estate inventories before the Reformation. After the Reformation, inheritance inventories indicate the continuing presence of rosaries. Even the wives of some of the city’s leading reformers appear reluctant to relinquish them. Notably, the laymen Joachim Haller and Lazarus Spengler documented their wives’ extensive rosary collections after their deaths. We cannot determine with certainty if or how people used them in the confines of their homes, but we offer two hypothetical explanations here. First is the rather mundane observation that these were expensive pieces of jewelry, as well as family heirlooms. Even among the wealthier segments of urban society, discarding them would not have been done lightly. Second, and more interesting, is the fact that rosaries with their Bisamapfel attachments were part of a well established medical culture of the later middle ages which perdured through the sixteenth century. As Smollich has shown, the aerial theory of contagion remained a guiding assumption in medical practice well into the seventeenth century. So long as people saw a connection between bad smells and disease, Bisamäpfeln and the jewelry to which they were attached remained important medical tools. In the next chapter, we delve further into these problems in our consideration of incense ritual.
Chapter 3:  
Olfaction, Transition, Reformation: Incense in Ritual Theory and Ritual Practice.

3.1 – Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined rosaries as a significant component of the structured environment of the fifteenth century church, and the Reformation’s orientation towards the rosary. By the 1530s, the early Protestant Reformation had removed rosaries from normative worship. This was accomplished by criticizing the material, theological and ideological basis of the rosary. They accomplished this task in three phases. In the first phase, Luther addressed the rosary as both a theological and material problem. The reach of the early Protestant Reformation into daily life was somewhat more limited. Many early Protestants held onto their rosaries. In all likelihood, they did so because they remained valuable as jewelry or fashion items, but also because of their connection to late medieval medical culture. Specifically, aerial theories of the transmission of disease persisted through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and remained an important motive force in medical practices. The sense of smell was central to this paradigm.

This chapter looks more specifically at the sense of smell and its role in religion. To get at this most ephemeral of senses, I look at the history of incense ritual. As in previous chapters, this chapter triangulates between this, the body, and daily life. In considering the history of incense before and after the Reformation, I identify a trajectory very similar to that of the rosary. Like the rosary, this history unfolded in three phases: theological, popular-polemical, and institutional. Also like the rosary, early Reformation arguments against incense were grounded in ideological shifts. Reformers associated incense with what they perceived to be socially and morally external, marginal, and inferior groups and individuals. This time, however, the focus
was less on females, and more on outside ethnographic categories. Above all, incense became something practiced by Jews, but also Papists, and to a lesser extent, Muslims. As with the rosary, reformers also opposed incense to normative Protestant participation in rituals as aurally-visually mediated devotion to the Word. By contrast, incense became a form of idolatry. While many similarities exist between the histories of incense and the rosary, there was one important difference. In contrast to the developments in chapter two, there were no explicit condemnations of incense during the institutional phase. That is to say, official church ordinances generally remained silent about incense, and when they did mention it, it was only with a high degree of ambivalence. Nonetheless, as the evidence below will suggest, incense rituals disappeared from early Protestant worship, albeit in a rather unceremonious, inconspicuous fashion. Despite its success at the institutional level, the reformation of incense, and by extension, the reformation of smell more generally, appears limited in its impact on daily life. As with the rosary, the Reformation did little to change the traditional understandings of smell which contributed to the perceived efficacy of incense. Not surprisingly, we find its continued use in non-religious contexts alongside other fragrant items such as the *Bisamäpfeln* discussed in chapter two.

As in the previous chapters, the history of incense in both late medieval and early Reformation contexts discloses changes in the sensorium. The first section of this chapter comes to terms with theories of late medieval incense ritual as it related to broader understandings of the sense of smell. This section demonstrates how smell had an important role to play in affecting bodily senses of boundary demarcation and transition. Next, we consider how this theoretical understanding of olfaction and transition was articulated in practice in the fifteenth century church. Although exhibiting significant local variations, the family resemblances between incense practices from one location to another disclose the deeply embedded
associations between olfaction and transition. In the next section, focus shifts to how the Protestant Reformation challenged the traditional set of relationships between body, daily life, and structured ritual environment. As we will see, smell as a means of demarcating boundaries and transition persisted in daily life even as ritual incense disappeared. Yet on a theological level, the associations between incense ritual and sacrifice were grounds for its rejection. Reformers eliminated traditional seasonal blessings – some of the most important contexts of incense use in late medieval ritual. Further, the transfer of church wealth into the hands of secular authorities often resulted in the disappearance of the liturgical equipment, that is censers, necessary for incense ritual. Beyond this, Reformers opposed incense to the notion of the Word, associating it with the idolatrous practices of foreign cultures, especially the Jews.

By focusing on idolatry as an olfactory problem, this chapter distinguishes itself from earlier studies of idolatry and iconoclasm in the Reformation era. Previous approaches have, quite reasonably, conceived of this as a visual problem. As Lee Palmer Wandel writes:

Iconoclasts called attention to the ways the objects in the churches enabled a certain form and manner of worship and participated in a particular conception of divinity: Images were an essential medium of medieval Roman theology. In all the churches where the “idols” were smashed, the images gone, the visual dimension of traditional Christianity was silenced with the whitewashed walls. The iconoclasts’ acts altered the environment in which they worshiped. They had initiated the removal of the physical setting of the mass, the visual referents of one theology, and the medium for one way of conceiving of an incarnate God. In so doing, they made traditional worship impossible.¹

Here, by contrast, we will show that, at stake in the category of idolatry was not simply the “visual dimension of traditional Christianity,” but a whole range of problems relating to the sense of smell. Without coming to terms with these problems, we overlook fundamental aspects of the depth and coherence of the structured environment of the late medieval Mass, and its Reformation.

Before beginning, a few observations about the challenges of writing a history of the sense of smell are in order. For the historian of the senses, olfaction presents a unique set of challenges. Regarded by many in the deodorized cultures of Europe and the U.S. as a purely “animalistic,” or “biological” sense, there is a tendency to associate smell with “primitive backwardness” or pre-modernity, and therefore a frivolous, exotic, or irrelevant object of analysis for cultural studies. Yet smell has always subtly pervaded nearly every aspect of human culture, regardless of time or place. Olfaction is a cultural phenomenon, and therefore a social and historical phenomenon as well. Approaching it historically necessarily means engaging the text, and therein lays the principle challenge: of all the senses, olfaction is the most difficult to encapsulate in language. Sorely lacking in olfactory vocabularies, European languages can only apprehend scents in their ‘likenesses’ to other things. While this presents difficulty to the anthropologist in the field, the historian is still further removed by time. It is difficult enough for those who have left behind a considerable written record, but the challenges to getting at the general sensibilities of a predominately unlearned and unlettered mass of late medieval people would seem to be magnified as the historian shifts focus onto olfaction. Further compounding

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the problem are the types of sources available. Alain Corbin, perhaps the best-known historian of smell, suggests that letters and diaries present the best prospects for doing sensory history because they provide the most detailed accounts of individuals’ subjective experiences. The historian of fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany immediately confronts the problem of a dearth of sources in this category.

Still another problem is that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there does not appear to be one single agreed-upon definition of what the substance of incense actually was. The only other previous study of religious incense use in medieval Europe studies assumes the substance we identify today as incense: the gum and resin from frankincense trees which made its way into Europe via trade routes originating in the Arabian peninsula. Unfortunately, for the case of fifteenth century Germany at least, there is little actual documentation of this. In contrast to other spices such as sugar, saffron, pepper, cinnamon, or nutmeg, which appear regularly and clearly indicated in German merchants’ accounts from the period, ‘incense’ as a commodity is invisible. It is likely that actual incense flowed along these trade routes, though escaped documentation by merchants, who probably classified it under the general category of Spezerei, which could mean spices, but could also include other nonperishable imported goods, most often fragrant plant and animal products. The account books of a Paderborn monastery suggest this interpretation. For the years 1528-1540, the accounts consistently indicate the purchase of incense and chrism oil alongside other items pro conquina (for the kitchen), including saffron,

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6 In German, the word for incense is “Weihrauch.”
sugar, honey, grains of paradise, pepper, cloves, ginger, and other spices. Even here, however, it is not possible to determine whether this indicates incense as we understand it, or a mixture of more local fragrant substances. Saffron, for example, grown in parts of the Italian and Iberian peninsulas, was used as incense on occasion. It is more likely that the majority of the incense burnt in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries fell under the latter category.

These challenges necessitate an approach that engages with a sufficiently wide array of different kinds of sources. To this end, this chapter utilizes subjective or descriptive sources where available, but also relies heavily on ritual ordinances and manuals, theological treatises, polemics, as well as church inventories. As in previous chapters, the majority of archival materials discussed here are from Nuremberg. This is for two reasons. As the first free imperial city to institute Luther’s Reformation (1525), common wisdom has held that Nuremberg did so in a liturgically conservative manner. The city council, which oversaw the Reformation, was quite hesitant to break with traditional ritual practices. Moreover, even at its most radical moment in the early 1520s, the Reformation movement in Nuremberg never generated the kind of iconoclastic riots described by Wandel and others, in which segments of the unlettered populace stormed into churches to destroy church furniture. In general, historians have been disposed to see Nuremberg as somewhat exceptional in its liturgical conservatism, gesturing toward the political, economic, and intellectual as the proper domains of Reformation in the

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8 “Computus annus receptorum reddituum et pensionem et expoterum monasterii Willebissensis ab anno 1528 ad usque 1540,” in Erzbischöfliche Akademische Bibliothek Theodoriana Paderborn, Cod. 70, fols. 27r-109r.
9 Freedman, 10.
10 This was certainly the case for Judaism, Christianity, and Roman religion in antiquity. See Freedman, Out of the East, 78-83; Susan Harvey Ashbrook, Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Nigel Groom, Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade (New York: Longman’s 1981), 1-11.
city. Here, however, we demonstrate that Nuremberg was far from exceptional in how it eliminated incense from normative worship. In contrast to popular wars against idols in other locations, Nuremberg slowly but effectively executed a top-down, silent kind of iconoclasm as it related to incense. Similar patterns emerged elsewhere in what became Lutheran territories of Germany, suggesting a more generalized paradigm of the early Reformation reflective of longer term cultural shifts.

3.2 – Theory: Medieval Olfaction and Transition

According to sensory anthropologists, the efficacy of olfaction in religious ritual lies in its seemingly universal associations with boundaries. As David Howes explains, the sense of smell is “constitutive of and at the same time operative across all of the boundaries we draw between different realms and categories of experience.” Howes considers this phenomenon on three levels of boundary demarcation and transition, which he identifies as logical, psychological, and sociological. Here we locate late medieval theoretical discussions of incense on each of these levels. The paradigm we consider has deep roots in antiquity, but cohered in the thirteenth century in the works of Thomas Aquinas († 1274) and William Durandus († 1286).

There is an immanent connection between smell and logical transition marking the movement of bodies across space and time. For example, as a body crosses from one space into another, it immediately registers new odors at the threshold between spaces. Temporally, the scent of an object can anticipate the object and the apprehension of its taste in the future. Take

for example the aroma of a food cooking. The aroma is like the food, but it is not the food in itself; rather, it is the concept of the food.\textsuperscript{14} Nicolas Cusanus illustrates this concept in his dialogue \textit{Idiota de sapienta} (1450). Explaining the intellectual pursuit of wisdom, he describes the anticipation of tasting wisdom as a fragrant scent which “can be said to be an untasteable foretasting. For a fragrant scent, replicated from its perceived source and received in something else [i.e. the sense organ of the nose] attracts us to its pursuit, so that because of the fragrant perfumed scents, we seek after the perfume itself.”\textsuperscript{15} In the later Middle Ages, well before the industrialization of the modern European economy and the concomitant ‘deodorization’ of modern European culture, the association of particular smells with specific times and places would have been a deeply embedded aspect of daily life.\textsuperscript{16}

Spatially, a pungent olfactory topography overlaid everyday experience. One English traveler concisely summarized the common olfactory experience in German lands: for every good smell, one was certain to draw in “twenty ill savours.”\textsuperscript{17} Spaces were inundated with their own peculiar odors. City streets were ripe with animals’ filth and rotting animal carcasses, while cities situated on or near bodies of water were characterized by the reek of stagnant canal

\textsuperscript{16}It is difficult for us to appreciate the potential temporal associations smells carried in the pre-modern period, though worth considering. J. Douglas Porteous hypothesizes how different the olfactory map of late medieval Europe would have been from the modern smell environment. In a pre-industrial agricultural economy, each season was marked by the particular smells of the work associated with them. In the spring, the fragrance of fruit blossoms became a key note, while in the summer, cut hay and clover. In autumn the numerous odors of harvest mingled with the smells of people smoking fish and flesh, and winter brought with it the smells of small, poorly ventilated quarters. See Porteous, “Smellscape,” in \textit{The Smell Culture Reader}, 99. For the deodorization thesis, see Corbin, \textit{The Foul and the Fragrant}; Mark Jenner, “Civilization and Deodorization? Smell in Early Modern English Culture,” in \textit{Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas}, ed. Peter Burke, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 127-144.
\textsuperscript{17}Fynes Moryson, \textit{An Itinerary containing his ten yeeres travel through the twelve dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Schweizterland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland & Ireland} (1607), ed. Charles Hughes, vol. 3, (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1907), 362.
water. It seems humans were just as much to blame. In 1543, the Nuremberg city council found it necessary to forbid its citizens from using the city streets as a toilet during the Emperor’s visit, ordering them instead to use the nearest latrine. Heading indoors provided no refuge from the smell assault. The aromas of putrid meat, sour wine, stinking beer, filthy beds and smoking wood furnaces intermingled and inundated the walls of inn and home alike. The homes of German burgers were especially pungent. With windows and doors tightly sealed against the cold, people used wood-burning stoves to dry wet clothing, creating a smell that could not escape the room, which “dulled the brain” and “almost choked the spirits” of the unaccustomed. It seems the countryside may have been even more odoriferous. Miasmas, mephitic blasts, and poisonous fumes arose from swamps, forests, caves and mines. The odors of the world - both rural and urban - infiltrated nostrils and emplaced the body.

It is difficult for us to appreciate the potential temporal associations smells carried in the pre-modern period, though worth considering. In an age when visual technologies of marking the passage of time such as clocks and sundials were largely absent from the daily lives of most

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18 Moryson singles out Luneburg, Prague, and Bremen as especially odoriferous. See volume I, 9, 29, 82, 90. Prague was apparently so rank that Moryson was encouraged to speculate that the stench of the streets had done more to hold the Ottomans at bay than had its walls.


20 Moryson I, 27, 76. The smell of putrefying meat may have been part of the food preparation process: several recipes from fourteenth through sixteenth century German cookbooks actually instruct to leave meat in open air for a day or more as part of the preparation process. See Das büch von güter spise: aus der Würzbürher-Münchener Handschrift (14th Century), ed. Hans Hajek (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1958); and Sabina Welserin, Das Kochbuch von Sabina Welserin (Augsburg, 1533), ed. Hugo Stopp (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980).

21 Moryson IV, 15.

22 Urban-rural space is frequently divided by olfaction, country air often presenting a greater threat to health. This is not necessarily a ‘modern’ phenomenon as Corbin has suggested. See Largey and Watson, “Sociology of Odors,” 33. Moryson mentions sulphuric fumes escaping from the silver mines near Freiburg, and the country air around Heidelberg as particularly unhealthful. See volume I, 23, 68.
people, smells may have possessed a temporality of their own. In a largely agricultural economy, each season was marked by the particular smells of the work associated with them. In the spring, the smells of damp, overturned earth intertwined with the fragrance of fruit blossoms. In the summer, cut hay and clover filled the air along with wild flowers, and in autumn the numerous odors of harvest time mingled with smells of people smoking fish and flesh for later consumption in the winter. Winter brought with it the sting of cold in the nostrils and the pungent smells of small, poorly ventilated quarters. Smells marked the passage of daily time as well: the smell of cooking food logically anticipated a meal time, and following rainstorms and on dewy mornings at daybreak, the moisture released the rich smell of the soil in the fields. In an olfactory map not yet overwhelmed by the uniform base-notes of oil and metal characteristic of the smell environments of modernity, nor ‘deodorized’ by the science of hygiene, the logical associations between olfaction and transition in late medieval smell culture were especially potent.

Incense in Christian ritual articulated these associations. It affected a very real sense of spatial transition in the Christian body. In contrast to the olfactory map of daily life, the internal space of the church was meant to be refreshing. As Aquinas explained, it was employed during the Mass “in order that any disagreeable smell, arising from the number of persons gathered together in the building, that could cause annoyance, might be dispelled by its fragrance.”

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23 Harry Kühnel discusses the relative scarcity of such devices from ca. 11th through 15th centuries. He notes the increasing popularity of sundials in late fifteenth century, and the gradual spread of tower clocks throughout German-speaking territories beginning in the mid fourteenth century. See Harry Kühnel, “Zeitbegriff und Zeitmessung,” in Kühnel, eds., Alltag im Spätmittelalter (Graz, Vienna, Cologne: Kaleidoskop, 1984), 9-16.


Ritual incense marked the passage of time as well. At the level of daily practice, Durandus reflected on the burning of incense during the services of Vespers and Matins as a means of marking the transition from day to night and night to day. He argued incense had its scriptural mandate in Exodus 30: 7-8, which instructed Aaron to burn incense both in the morning and evening.\textsuperscript{27} Widening the lens to encompass the entire liturgical year, incense was also associated specifically with the twelve evenings between Christmas and the feast of the Epiphany. This period was commonly referred to as “Rauchnächte” in German-speaking lands, during which clergy would proceed through towns, fumigating the homes of its more prominent citizens.\textsuperscript{28} In Mainz, detailed instructions indicated that this period culminated with annual blessing of incense on the feast of the Epiphany.\textsuperscript{29}

At the psychological level, scents mediate perceived transitions inside the body, influencing moods and emotions. The power to evoke such transitions is rooted in both nature and culture. Of all modes of sensory perception, olfactory neurons have the most direct connection to the parts of the brain governing emotional response and long term memory (the amygdala and hippocampus, respectively), and visceral bodily functions such as heart rate and sexual arousal (the autonomic nervous system and endocrine system). Because of this biological hard-wiring, psychologists and cognitive scientists have hypothesized that olfactory stimulation is a uniquely potent means of evoking emotional memories and affecting mood changes, and even changes in the perception of bodily health.\textsuperscript{30} Building on this, anthropologists suggest this

\textsuperscript{29}Agenda iuxta ritum gloriose et prestatissime Ecclesie Collegiate: sanctos Mauriciij et Maria Magdalene Hallis ad Sudarium domini (1536) (MWSB, Hs I 434a, fols. 15r-17v).
might make the use of odors especially well-suited to ritual behaviors intended to encourage a sense of transformation or impart an affective message.\textsuperscript{31}

Late medieval physicians certainly thought odors had a role to play in health. The aerial theories of disease transmission discussed above in chapter two were one expression of a larger, complex late medieval health literature deeply concerned with the relationships between smells, bodies, and souls. Late medieval physicians understood that the human spirit was a “subtile, pure, lucid, airy, and unctuous vapor,” and other vapors most similar to the substance of the spirit “by reason of their likeness, they stir up, attract, and transform the spirit.”\textsuperscript{32} Pleasant fragrances positively transformed the spirit and body: ambergris, balsam, saffron, aloe, musk, cloves, laurel, citrus, and of course, incense were all prescribed.\textsuperscript{33} Conversely, foul stenches could prove harmful to health, and were to be avoided. From the late fifteenth century, printed health regimens prescribed the use of aromatics in the daily maintenance of the Christian body and soul, as well as the prevention of disease.\textsuperscript{34} Bisamäpfeln prescriptions were a critical part of this

\textsuperscript{31}Howes, “Olfaction and Transition,” 132.
\textsuperscript{32}Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, \textit{De occulta philosophia libri tres} (1510), ed. Perrone Compagni (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 170. Agrippa explains: that all fragrant substances, including ointments, love potions and collieries, transform their objects according to their fragrance: “collyria etiam et unguenta, naturalium coelestiumque vires conspirantia circa spiritum nostrum, possunt eum multiplicare, transmutare, transfigurare, transformare alias aliter, iam vero et transpositionem inducere potetierum illarum, quae sibi insunt, ut iam non solum possit in proprium corpus agree, sed etiam in propinquum atque illud per radios visuales, per fascinationes perque contactus quadam simili afficere qualitate. Spiritus autem noster quia vapor est sanguinis subtilis, purus, lucidus, aëreus atque unctuosus, iccirco conducit collyria ex similibus vaporibus conficere, qui cum spiritu nostro magis consonant in substantia, tum propter similitudinem magis alliciunt, attrahunt spiritumque transformant”, 169-170. Item: “Suffumigationes etiam quaedam ad stellas accomodatae pluriumum possunt, quatenus aërem spiritumque vehementer afficiunt ad dotes coelestes opportune sub stellarum radiis capessendas: spiritus enim noster ab huuismodi vaporibus plurimum transmutatur, siquidem uterque sit vapor quidam alterius similis,” 165.
\textsuperscript{33}Ibid, 168. Pleasant fragrances healed head and heart: “Hac igitur ratione paeonia, citraria, gariophyllon, cortices citri, amaracus, coryncnium, cinnamomum, crocus, lignum aloes, thus, ambra, muscus et partim myrrha medentur capiti et cordi,” 130.
\textsuperscript{34}Marsilio Ficino (d. 1499) suggested that “vapours exhaled by merely vegetable life are greatly beneficial to your life” in \textit{Opera Omnia} 2: 15, 523. Kenneth Albala discusses odors and the development of this health literature in the context of late medieval foodways in \textit{Eating Right in the Renaissance} (Berkeley: University of California Press,
literature. As Heinrich Steinhöwel, author of one of the popular *Pestilence Ordinance Booklet* (1473) explained: “I have often said that good smelling things strengthen the heart…therefore, one makes *Bisamäpfel*, which one carries on himself; made of the same and other good-smelling things such as aloewood, incense, amber, musk, costus, storax, vernis, sweet assa, and cloves as you find in recipes.”35

In practice, people who could afford it appear to have taken the connection between smell and bodily health quite seriously. Hermann Weinsberg (1518-1597), a citizen of Cologne, kept a journal which describes several outbreaks of plague in the mid-sixteenth century and the measures people took to survive. In 1541, pestilence hit the city. “At that time,” he wrote, “I allowed myself to be bleed, and thereby refreshed; I used much incense, garlic, vinegar, pestilence pills, theriac and other similar materials, and also censed constantly…and our God took mercy on me, so that I remained healthy.”36 In May of 1553, an “evil air” brought another plague into Cologne, lasting several months. Weinsberg and his family retreated from the city this time, but the plague followed them to nearby Cronenberg, where they sought from the apothecary or “wherever we could,” vinegar, and pestilence pills, and “censed the sleeping chamber and the entire house in all places.”37

2002), 81-120. For other examples of late medieval health literature, see Ficino’s *De vita libri tres* (1489), Bartolomeo Sacchi, *De honesta volupta* (1474), Elius Eobanus Hessus, *De tuenda bona valetudine* (Frankfurt, 1556), Gunther von Andernach, *De vistus ratione cum ratione cum alio, tum pestilentiae tempore observanda* (Strasbourg, 1542).
35 Heinrich Steinhöwel, *Büchlein der Ordnung der Pestilenz* (Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1473), 4r: Mer hab ich gesagt wie wol schmackende ding das hercz krefftigen…, darumb so machet man bisem öppfel, die der mensch by im trage uß den selben und anderen wol riechenden dingen als ist holcz von aloes, wyroch, ambra, bisem, costus, storax, vernis, die süße assa, negeli sic als du findest in den recepten.”
37 Ibid, 234: “Wir aren aber noch nicht lange da, so hub es rundumher und hart neben Cronenberg ebenfalls an zu sterben, so dass wir nach der vierten Nacht wieder unters Rathaus schlafen gingen, und Rat suchten, wo wir immer
On the theoretical level, the use of fumigations also suggests a direct connection with emotion and memory. Incense and other fumigants could heal and protect the body as well as “affect fantasy...[and] fit us to receive divine inspiration.”\(^{38}\) Infiltrating vapors and the qualities they infused were believed to linger within the body, and to imprint images directly onto the ‘interior senses’ of imagination and judgment: The two interior senses worked together: imagination retained “those representations which are received by the former senses,” and presented them to “fantasy, or power of judging, whose work is also to perceive and judge by the representations received…and to commit those things which are thus discerned and judged, to the memory to be kept.\(^{39}\)

Theories of ritual incense and fragrant oils in the later Middle Ages often overlap with their medical counterparts. Explaining the fragrance of the chrism oil used in rites of anointing, Durandus wrote, “Christians are called from Christ, as the anointed would be derived from the Anointed One, namely, Christ; so that all may unite in the odour of that unguent, namely, Christ, whose name is an oil poured out.”\(^{40}\) The fragrance of the oil conjoined transformations in spiritual health with bodily health. As Durandus emphasized, the chrism oil had the power to invigorate Christian spirits as well as heal the sick: “if it is worthily received, it either effects, or without a doubt increases, that which it signifies, that is, health, according to the Word: They will

\[^{38}\] Agrippa: “quare vaticinaturo adhiberi solent suffumigationes ad phantasiam afficiendam, quae quidem certis numinibus consentaneae ad divinam inspirationem suscipiendam nos accommodant,” 165-166.

\[^{39}\] Ibid, 217: “secundus vis imaginativa, cuius officium est, cum ipsa nihil praesentiat, imagines a prioribus sensibus acceptas retinere easque tertiae sentiendi naturae, quae phantasia existimandi atque cogitandi vis est, offere; cuius opus est, acceptis imaginibus, quid aut quale sit id cuius illae imagines sunt percipere atque judicare atque ea ipsa quae sic discoverit, coniunxerit, perceperit, iudicaverit quartae potentiae, quam memoriam dicimus, servanda commendare.”

\[^{40}\] Durandus, 116: “von Christo werdent christenlewt genennet, als di gesalbten abgenet werdent von dem gesalbten, wizzenleich von Christo, daz si alle mitlauffen in den gesmakch der salbe, dez wizzenleichen Christes, des namen ist ein oele ausgegeozzen.”
lay their hands upon the sick, and they will be healed.”  

The fragrance of the oil used in baptism and extreme unction rituals locked together pleasant odors with perceived health and a sense of Christian identity. The pleasant odor of balsam was used in baptismal oil “in order that we may know that the Holy Ghost, who works invisibly, is given to him, when the oil nurtures tired limbs and affords light.”  

Even after death, the fragrance was applied to cleanse the body, “especially on those parts in which the five senses chiefly reside, that whatever sins the rich man may have committed by means of these may be abolished by virtue of this unction.”  

Clearly the dead themselves would not have experienced any psychological transitions in their perceived health during these rituals. The living, however, certainly did. Durandus believed that incense smoke during rituals protected Christians from bodily and spiritual diabolical assaults. To counteract the corrupting, disease carrying smells of death during funeral masses in the late fifteenth century, the body of the dead was censed, incense led processions from the church to the cemetery, and often fumigated the gravesite. Finally, there was the belief that the smell of incense actuated emotion that lingered in the memories of those who participated in rituals, even beyond the immediate space and time of the ritual. Durandus

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41 Ibid, 113-114: “Darumb ist ze merckhen pei dem ersten daz czwaier slachte salbung seindt, die auzzer, die da hantreiblich oder leibleich unde sichtleich ist, und di inner, did a geistlich und (unsichtleich) ist. Mit der auzzern wirt der leib sichtlichlich gesalbet, mit der inner wiert daz herz gesalbet unsichtleich…Di auzzer salbung ist der inner zaichen, diz bezaichenst is, sunder (auch) ein sacrament, dart ist ein heilichhait, wann so sie wierlichlich wiert emphangen, so machete sie oder meret ane zweivel daz, das sie bezaichent, daz ist daz hail, be idem wort: Auf di chrankchen werdent si auflegen ier hant, und si werdent wol haben.”

42 Ibid, 117: “darumb wiert si mit crism, der von oele und von balsam ist gemachet, daz wier wizzen daz im geben wiert der heilige geist, der unsichtleichlich wurchet, wann daz ole neret muede gelider und verleichet liecht…der balsam wol smakchen.”


44 Atchley, 133.

45 Agrippa also describes the well-established use of incense during the funeral as a means of repelling demons: “the auncient Fathers skilled in spirituall thinges not without a cause haue ordained that deade mens bodies should be buried in a holy place, and shoulde be accompanied with lightes, sprangled with holy water, perfumed with incense and purged with prayers.” In Agrippa, Of the Vanitie and Uncertaintie of Artes and Sciences (1526), trans. James Sanford, ed. Catherine M. Dunn (Northridge, CA: California State University Press, 1974), 132.
explained that incense was burnt “to exercise the five senses of the body so that the report of our good works may extend to our neighbors.”\footnote{Durandus, 111: “In fumf steten wiert gemachet oder geprennet, wizzenleich in dem vier ekken und auch in dem mittle, wann als wier sollen üben di fumf sinn unsers leibes, das unsers guetten weriches wort oder lewnt zw dem nechten werde werde rerekchet.”} Less important here were the scent molecules that may have remained embedded in clothing: the intense psychological connection between olfaction and emotional memory carried the incense well beyond the spatial or temporal constraints of the ritual, and, in theory, affected “fragrant,” moral behavior in daily life.

Finally, at the sociological level, smell actuates collective sentiment.\footnote{Gale Largey and Rod Watson, “The Sociology of Odors,” in \textit{The American Journal of Sociology} 77, no. 6 (1972), 1021-34; Constance Classen, “The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories,” in \textit{Ethos} 20, no. 2 (June, 1992), 133-166.} Every-body emits odors, but most people are so accustomed to their own personal and group scents that they become unaware of them, noticing only the odors of others.\footnote{Classen, “Odor of the Other,” 134. Largey and Watson, “Sociology of Odors.”} As Martin Manalansan succinctly puts it, the sense of smell provides a “strategic mode of communicating identities, bodies,” and drawing lines around communities.\footnote{Martin F. Manalansan IV, “Immigrant Lives and the Politics of Olfaction in the Global City,” \textit{Smell Culture Reader}, 41-52. Quoted here: 42.} In addition to establishing boundaries between communities, olfactory markers establish social hierarchies within communities. Sensorial anthropologists, for instance, point to the common (almost universal it seems) cross cultural phenomenon in which the dominant class in a society to characterizes itself as pleasant-smelling, or lacking a smell, and the sub-ordinate class as foul-smelling.\footnote{Classen, “The Odor of the Other,” 136. Largey and Watson, “Sociology of Odors.”} Further, odors, whether real or alleged, are often used to index the moral purity of particular individuals and groups within the social order.\footnote{Largey and Watson, “The Sociology of Odors,” 29-30.} In practice, people feel antipathy toward some thing or some body because its odor is offensive, while equally imputing offensive odors \textit{a priori} to things or bodies towards which they feel antipathy. The converse is true as well: feelings of sympathy lend themselves to
positive smell associations. Hence, social distance may be maintained by conventionally imputed, rather than “actually perceived,” odor impressions. Finally, in order to avoid moral stigmatization and create an olfactory identity in accord with social expectations, bodies actively engage in ‘odorizing’ practices through the “art” of perfuming. Largey and Watson hypothesize that in ritual and mundane contexts, group intimacy or alignment is at least partially established or recognized through such olfactory stimuli, which simultaneously serve as index for avoiding out-groups and generating an intersubjective “we-feeling” within the in-group. These patterns are palpable in the olfactory map of late medieval Christendom.

These patterns were palpable in late medieval Christendom. People believed that internal morality manifested itself as external odor and signified membership in particular social, cultural, or religious identities. This particular dimension of smell culture had its scriptural origins in 2 Corinthians 2, 14-16, in which Paul wrote:

Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.

Notions of a pleasant Christian scent connected to internal moral rectitude and outward displays of good works. Durandus expounded on Paul’s passage, explaining that the Church was a “field of flowers,” fragrant with its members’ good works. Those “closest” to Christ in the social-moral hierarchy smelled best. People often believed that their priests exuded a pleasant aroma,

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54 Ibid, 34.
55 All biblical translations from the Authorized, or King James, Version.
56 Durandus, 111.
and of course, the saints – in life and in death – were infused with the odor of sanctity.\textsuperscript{57} Social categories imagined as morally deficient, such as prostitutes, witches, lepers, and Jews, were supposed to exude offensive odors.\textsuperscript{58} In the later Middle Ages, the notion of \textit{foetor judaeicus} (the Jewish odor) became especially potent: Preachers told their parishioners that Jews were “dipped in the sewers of Hell,” and “stink like goats,” the quintessential diabolical animal.\textsuperscript{59}

Durandus and Aquinas understood ritual censing in this sociological context. In his explanation of incense, Aquinas cited Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, writing that it manifests in all places the “savor” of Christ, who was full of grace “as of a good odor.”\textsuperscript{60} The uses of incense articulated the social hierarchies within the church. After censing the altar, Aquinas explained, “all those present are censed in proper order.”\textsuperscript{61} Durandus explained that “the frequent use of incense is the continual mediation of Christ the Priest, and our High Priest, for us unto God the Father.”\textsuperscript{62} Hence, the practices of burning incense reflected the delineation social hierarchies within the church. Its pleasant odor first descended from Christ to those “closest” to him. Relics of saints were often stored beneath the altar – the symbol of Christ and


\textsuperscript{59} The Jewish body came to possess its own negative olfactory cues in opposition to Christians: the stenches of ritual murders, host desecrations and the consumption of Christian blood mingled together in the concept of an innate diabolical scent. This discourse incorporated the belief that because Jewish men menstruated every month, they were naturally less healthy than Christians and prone to various malodorous diseases. At the same time it was believed that Jewish men needed to replace this monthly loss by consuming Christian blood. See Johnson, 282-295; and Joshua Trachtenberg, 44-52, 227-229. The standard text for discourses of ritual murder is: R. Po-Chia Hsia, \textit{The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

\textsuperscript{60} Aquinas, 281: “pertinent ad repraesentandum effectum gratiae, qua, sicut bono odore, Christus plenus fuit.”

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid: “Et ideo, undiquethurificatio altari, per quod Christus designator, thurificantur omnes per ordinem.”

\textsuperscript{62} Durandus, 111.
his sacrifice - in cases “together with three grains of frankincense.” Again citing Paul, Durandus suggested that bishops ought to douse themselves in myrrh, “because in the works of bishops and other superiors there ought to appear more than in their inferiors the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the aroma of good report.” In marriage ritual, incense was used to mark the bodily transition of couples from one social category (unwed) into (wed) another. Upon entering the church, and occasionally when the ceremony ended in the marriage bed itself, clouds of incense would greet and surround couples as they entered into matrimony and proceeded towards consummation. Finally, we can consider death ritual on similar grounds: the use of ritual incense and fragrant chrism oil on the corpse from the social category of the living to the very real social category of the dead friends in purgatory.

By incorporating 2 Corinthians 2 into their understandings of incense, Durandus and Aquinas added an important sociological dimension to incense. By contrast, theorists of the early and high Middle Ages tended to conceptualize incense in a strictly liturgical sense, grounding their interpretations in scriptural passages that bore more directly on liturgy. Particularly important were the prescriptions for the altar of incense in Exodus 30, and Psalm 141, 2: “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” By the later Middle Ages, however, incense articulated senses of bodily transition at the logical, psychological, and sociological levels. Given these overlapping spheres,
it is not surprising to find that incense constituted a fundamental component of the structured environment in ritual practice.

3.3 – Practices & Family Resemblances: Censing in the Fifteenth century

So far, we have examined theoretical understandings of the significance of smell in church ritual and identified an important connection between incense and boundary demarcation. The question remains however: was theory articulated in practice? To this, one must answer a qualified yes. The picture of fifteenth century practice that emerges from ritual ordinances is one frequently punctuated by fragrant incense in masses, vespers, and special blessings. We can hypothesize that these practices suggest a persistent and deeply embedded cultural association between olfaction and transition, but given the local diversity these sources demonstrate, we cannot say that association was articulated in a uniform manner. The local practices discussed here demonstrate significant degrees of variation, but nonetheless bear a genetic relationship to one another and to normative structures determined by ecclesiastical authority and tradition. In conceptualizing this phenomenon, Wittgenstein’s notion of family resemblance provides a helpful model. Wittgenstein suggested resemblances between family members such as build, eye color, and temperament, could be useful in thinking through how words and language practices could appear connected by one essential feature but in actual practice be connected by series of similarities which emerged, overlapped, and sometimes disappeared across times and spaces.68

The origins of fifteenth century family resemblances are in northern European mass orders from the eleventh through fourteenth centuries, which typically prescribed incense for

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high masses at some point during the sacrificial portion of the mass. Josef Jungmann has
demonstrated the most common points for censing were just before and during the Offertory,
when the gifts were brought to the altar and the elements of the Eucharist were prepared. He
posits that this pattern was the result of a fusion of Frankish and Roman liturgical practices in the
later Carolingian period. However, as Jungmann observes, even this general pattern was subject
to a wide range of local variation. Some orders from these centuries prescribe censing during the
Introit procession while others call for censing of the Gospel text immediately before its
reading.\textsuperscript{69} Jungmann concludes that burning incense was an important method of distinguishing
high masses from low masses. He also notes it demarcated temporal boundaries within a single
mass, writing: “censing at the beginning of the mass in effect proves to be mainly an initiation-
ritual, which recurs with greater ceremony at the second initiation, the beginning of the
sacrificial part of the mass.”\textsuperscript{70} Further, Jungmann observes that more censing was prescribed on
special feast days in the liturgical year, such as during Holy Week or on local saints’ days.\textsuperscript{71}

As we move into the fifteenth century, we encounter instructions reflecting a similar
pattern. Though subject to local variations, missals printed in German cities on the eve of the
Reformation most commonly indicate censing was to take place near the end of the Offertory
portion of the mass. The official order of the Church of Rome, printed many times in German
cities as the \textit{Missale Romanum}, instructed that the altar was to be censed three times as the
elements of the Eucharist were prepared, after which the priest was to wash his hands, kiss the
altar, and conclude the Offertory with the \textit{Secreta} prayer.\textsuperscript{72} Missals produced for religious

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{69} Jungmann, vol. 1, 556-557.
  \item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid, 396: “So erweist sich die Inzensierung am Beginn der Messe in der Hauptsache als ein eigentlicher
  Eröffnungsritus, der sich nur mit größerer feierlichkeit bei der zweiten Eröffnung, am Beginn der Opfermesse,
  wiederholt.”
  \item \textsuperscript{71} Ibid, 259-268, 393-397; Jungmann, vol. 2: 171-254.
  \item \textsuperscript{72} I refer here to the Basel 1487 edition: \textit{Missale Romanum} (Basel: Michael Wenssler, 1487), fols. 170v-171v.
\end{itemize}
orders adhere closely to this form of the Roman rite. Other orders for specific German cities deviate somewhat from the Roman model while maintaining incense at some point in the Offertory. The order for Strasbourg in 1486 locates censing after the preparation of the elements and before the Secreta, though neglects to include the instructions for washing hands and kissing the altar. The Augsburg missal of 1510 includes these instructions, and then indicates that censing should occur after the preparation of the elements, immediately before the beginning of the canon.

Missals which include incense also prescribe a prayer alongside it. The prayer which appears in German manuals derives from or is simply a direct transcription of that which was prescribed by the Missale Romanum: “Let this incense, blessed by you, ascend to you oh Lord, and let your mercy descend upon us. Let my prayer, oh Lord, be directed as incense in your sight, [and] the lifting of my hands as an evening sacrifice.” This prayer form, as Jungmann points out, has its origins in the later Carolingian period, when church authorities conscientiously began to model their liturgies on Old Testament ritual forms. In this context, the quotation of Psalm 141, 2, invoking a special connection between incense, prayer and evening sacrifice, parallels the rituals prescribed in Exodus 30. Jungmann’s observation about more frequent censing on special feast days also holds true for fifteenth century prescriptive literature. Incense was prominent in the processions and masses during Holy Week. In particular, prescriptions often call for censing to mark the close of processions to and from masses on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Of these, the Grablegung procession, in which the Eucharist host proceeded

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73 *Missale Benedictinum* (Bamberg: Johann Sensenschmidt, 1481). See also *Missale ordinis fratrum eremitarum sancti Augustini de observantia* (Nuremberg: Fratres ordinis Eremitarum ordini sancti Augustini, 1491).

74 *Missale Argentinense* (Basel: Michael Wenssler, 1486), fols. 186v-187r.

75 *Missale Augustense* (Basel, 1510), fols. 111r-112r.

76 *Missale Romanum*, fols. 171r-v: “Incensum istud a te bene dictum ascendat ad te domine et descendat super nos misericordia tua. Dirigatur domine oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectus tuo eleuatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum.”

through the church before being laid in its ‘grave’ at the altar, was especially important and subject to censing.\textsuperscript{78}

Several forms of visual evidence suggest the use of incense at some point around the moment of Elevation. Because the Offertory preceded the Elevation, depictions of the Mass of St. Gregory commonly depict smoking censers placed either before or beside the altar, suggesting that they have already been used prior to the Elevation. A 1495 tapestry which hung in the Choir of St. Sebald’s church in Nuremberg illustrates this pattern [Fig. 3.1]. In other depictions, a sacristan appears clutching a censer while kneeling alongside the priest, or standing alongside the altar [Fig. 3.2]. Especially fine examples can also be found in illustrated prayer books from the pre-Reformation period. The prayer book of Claus Humbracht (1500-1508) depicts a sacristan holding a censer while kneeling alongside the priest before the altar [Fig. 3.3]. The richly illustrated prayerbook of the Nuremberg couple Jakob and Anna Sattler (1515-1525) hides the censer behind the altar, but suggests the fragrant presence of the incense all the more powerfully through a billowing plume of blue-gray smoke, which fills the panel [Fig. 3.4]. Other images of the Mass of St. Gregory, such as Dürer’s 1511 woodcut, show a man standing alongside the altar while maintaining the censer [Fig 3.5]. The pattern appears in other depictions, such as Bartholomäus Bruyn’s 1515 painting [Fig. 3.6], and a 1519 painting from lower Saxony [Fig. 3.7]. Probably the most widely distributed representation shows an angel hovering around the ritual participants while swinging a censer. In the late fifteenth century, this image was commonly attached to an indulgence, and appeared in printed books as well as in

\textsuperscript{78} Missale Ratisponense (Bamberg: Johann Pfeyl, 1485), 103v-104r. Missale Bambergense (Bamberg: Johann Pfeyl, 1499), 101r. Missale Argentinense, 101v. Missale Romanum,100r-102v. The 1513 Missale Moguntinum includes instructions for censing on Good Friday that parallel the Missale Romanum. See Hermann Reifenberg, Messe und Missalien im Bistum Mainz: Seit dem Zeitalter der Gotik (Muenster: Aschendorffsche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1960), 67.
single-leaf broadsides [Fig. 3.9] The act of censing the five corners of the altar as described by Durandus does not appear in the visual record.

While German mass orders and visual evidence suggests incense commonly during the Offertory in the moments leading up to the Elevation, we must also leave space for a high degree of local variation. The most common alternative form of appears to have been censing the Gospel text just before its reading.\textsuperscript{79} In this role, incense paralleled the seasonal benediction rituals discussed below, fulfilling what Bob Scribner has identified as a “sacramental” function – that is, a medium for making a ritual action more efficacious.\textsuperscript{80} In other orders, however, incense is completely absent.\textsuperscript{81} Further, there does not seem to be any correlation between the prescription of incense in processions and special feasts and its prescription in the regular order of the mass. In the diocese of Bamberg, for example, censing was clearly an important part of processions; particularly those during Holy Week, yet the mass order printed in the city’s 1499 missal makes no provision for it.\textsuperscript{82}

Beyond the mass, fifteenth century sources suggest that incense was a critical component of vespers (evening prayer) services. This should come as no surprise, as incense historically took its scriptural mandate from the evening sacrifice in Exodus 30. As with the mass, its use during vespers highlighted the special status of particular services. In cathedrals, incense distinguished services over which the bishop presided. Manuscripts from the Tournai cathedral (modern Belgium), for example, indicate that two boys with incense were to walk ahead of the

\textsuperscript{79} Missale (1463) Nuremberg Stadtbibliothek – Sammelhandschrift Katharinenkloster, Cent III, nr. 87. See also Jungmann, 85-87; Atchley, 229-240.
\textsuperscript{80} Scribner, Popular Culture, 5.
\textsuperscript{82} Missale Bambergense, 155r. Xaver Haimerl, Das Prozessionswesen des Bistums Bamberg im Mittelalter (Munich: Kösel-Pustet, 1937), 23-24, 122.
bishops during processions to and from the altar.\(^{83}\) While singing the *Magnificat*, two canons would prepare a thurible with incense, present it to the bishop, and lead him through its fragrant cloud to the high altar and the image of the Virgin.\(^{84}\) Instructions from the diocese of Bamberg provide similar instructions for censing at the altar while singing the *Magnificat*.\(^{85}\) Prescriptions for incense during Vespers services throughout Holy Week occur regularly.\(^{86}\)

The benediction rituals that punctuated the liturgical year consistently reference incense. Such rituals are catalogued in sources known variously as *Obsequiale*, *Rituale* or *Agenda*, as well as in missals. Evidence from these sources reinforces the notion that the smell of incense carried specific temporal associations. It is typically prescribed to conclude annual blessings of salt and water often found at the beginnings of missals.\(^{87}\) These same blessings appear in the *Obsequiale* literature in addition to a variety of other seasonal blessings. The Augsburg *Obsequiale* (1487) calls for incense in blessings of various objects throughout the liturgical year, including candles on the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, palms on Palm Sunday, fire during the Easter vigil, wine on the feast of John the evangelist, herbs on the day of the Assumption of the Virgin, as well as foods such as cheese, bread, eggs and cakes during Pentecost.\(^{88}\)

As with the mass, we observe contours of resemblance within an array of local variations. The Eichstätt *Obsequiale* (1488) provides no indication of censing for Palm Sunday, the feast of John the Evangelist, or for the various blessings of foodstuffs during Pentecost.\(^{89}\) For the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, it instructs that censing should occur before the singing of

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\(^{84}\) Ibid, 37.

\(^{85}\) Haimerl, *Prozessionswesen*, 146-147.


\(^{88}\) *Obsequiale Augustanum* (Augsburg: Erhard Ratdolt, 1487), fols. 3r-7v, 13r, 22r-23v, 40v, 52v-53r, 55r.

\(^{89}\) *Obsequiale Eystetense* (Eichstätt: Michael Reyser, 1488), fols. 44r-49r, 92r-95r, 97r.
hymns. During the Easter vigil, censing also commenced hymn singing, appeared again just before the words *sacrificium vespertinum* during the singing of the Psalm, and during the procession following the Psalm. For the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, herbs were to be censed at the conclusion of the ritual. Censing during the Easter vigil in the Regensburg *Obsequiale* (1491) follows the same general pattern as Eichstätt. Unlike Eichstätt, however, instructions for Palm Sunday indicate the choir was to be censed just before singing the hymn. The blessing of wine on the feast day of John the Evangelist was to end with censing, as were the blessings of foodstuffs during Pentecost. Regensburg also paralleled Augsburg in that the blessing of herbs ended with censing. Unlike Augsburg, however, it occurred alongside blessings of other foodstuffs during Pentecost rather than during the Feast of the Assumption. The *Obsequiale* for Freising (1493) provides the same instructions as Regensburg for censing on the Easter Vigil and Palm Sunday, but makes no mention of blessing herbs; nor do the blessings on the day of John the Evangelist and Pentecost mention incense. For the Purification of the Virgin, it follows the pattern of Eichstätt, prescribing it just before the singing of the hymn.

The argument thus far has drawn its evidence from normative sources that people could have chosen to disregard entirely. This likely happened on occasion, but other categories of more descriptive evidence demonstrate symmetry with the patterns outlined above. The late
fifteenth-century *Mesnerpflichtbücher* of Nuremberg’s two parish churches, St. Sebald and St. Lorenz provide a useful example. These manuscripts are somewhat unique in that they blur the line between what we might call “prescriptive” and “descriptive” sources. Written by the sacristans of the churches, they contain ritual instructions spanning the entire liturgical year, but are also occasionally interrupted by reminders written in the first person. For example, in his description of Easter morning Vespers, the author of the St. Lorenz *Mesnerpflichtbuch* (1493), noted that during the entry procession:

one carries two candles and two small banners before [the procession], and I must have with me a censer and aspergillum; and at the third response, one goes from there [the choir] to the sepulcher and carries two candles and two small banners before [the procession]; I must have with me the censer and aspergillum, and when the pastor knocks on the church door, I give him the Künhofer-mantle.

We observe two points from the above passage. First, the interruption of the first-person voice in an otherwise typical instruction for Easter services suggests that the sacristan was reflecting on his own participation in a previous ritual. Second, the description of censing on Easter, while adding specific local detail, remains consonant with the general fifteenth century German paradigm already described.

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102 *Das Mesnerpflichtbuch von St. Lorenz*, 21: “so tregt man 2 kerzen und 2 fenlen vor und ich [muβ] ein rauch und ein weichprunnen darbei haben und zü dem dritten respons so get mon herab zü dem grab und tregt aber 2 kerzen und 2 fenlen vor; ein rauch und ein weichprunnen muβ ich darzü haben und, so der pfarrer an die kirchtür klopf, so gibe ich im den Künhofermantel”

103 Karl Schlemmer has made a similar argument for Nuremberg’s liturgy more generally. See Schlemmer, *Gottesdienst und Frömmigkeit in der Reichsstadt Nürnberg am Vorabend der Reformation* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1980), 230.
Considering the picture of censing across the liturgical year in the sacristans’ books reinforces this final point. The *Mesnerpflichtbücher* mention incense 94 different times.\(^{104}\) It is described 30 times during masses, 18 times during vespers, twice for matins, and six times for processions. Additionally, it is mentioned five times in the context of singing the *Magnificat*, without indication of which service. The books also describe censing of a specific altar in the churches 18 times, and on 15 occasions simply indicate “use” of incense on specific feast days without further elaboration. Several of the feast days described in the general paradigm above as particularly important for censing are indicated in the *Mesnerpflichtbücher* as well: the Feast of John the Evangelist (in both churches), Purification of the Virgin (in St. Lorenz), *Grablegung* procession on Good Friday (in St. Sebald), the Easter vigil (in St. Lorenz), the Octave of the Assumption of the Virgin (in both churches), Palm Sunday (in both St. Lorenz and St. Sebald), and the Pentecost vigil (in both churches).

We might also evaluate the argument from the perspective of material culture. Drawing attention to the family resemblances between such “official” prescriptive sources as printed *missales* and more descriptive local sources like *Mesnerpflichtbücher* can provide a good outline, but we must keep in mind that we are dealing with a society of relatively small means, and incense would have been an exotic and expensive commodity to burn, even for a fifteenth-century economic hub like Nuremberg. Economic factors notwithstanding, Nuremberg church inventories demonstrate that censers constituted an important category of liturgical equipment at least up to the Reformation. The earliest reference to censers comes from a 1435 inventory of the church of Our Lady (*Frauenkirche*), which indicates the church was in possession of a silver

\(^{104}\) For this analysis I rely on Schlemmer’s parallel comparison of the liturgical year in both churches, in *Gottesdienst*, 173-226.
censer, a brass censer, and a “silver box in which one carries incense when one censes.”

Records from the Franciscan Convent indicate it had one silver censer. In 1466, St. Lorenz church documented two silver censers, one large and one small, which appeared in subsequent inventories in 1484 and 1512. For St. Sebald in 1509, the church superintendent Lazarus Holzschuher noted a small and a large silver censer, as did Anton Tucher in his inventory of the Helig-Geist hospital chapel in the same year.

Moreover, taking into account evidence from church inventories alongside the Mesnerpflichtbücher suggests that censing in Nuremberg occurred perhaps even more frequently than prescriptive sources indicate. Anton Tucher, for example, indicated that the smaller of the two censers at Helig-Geist was used on a daily basis, though failed to indicate during which service. It seems the significance of censing extended beyond the Nuremberg city-walls as well: as noted by the pastor Heinrich Hertel in 1494, the parish church of Regelsbach had received a brass censer from the Nuremberg Carthusians, along with numerous vestments, monstrances, and chalices.

Inventories across Germany confirm that censers were an important part of church’s liturgical equipment, especially in more urban areas. Censers were always either brass or silver. The bishopric of Strassburg appears especially well equipped with censers. A 1528 inventory of

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105 Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Rep. 44e, Losungsamt, S.I.L 131, nr. 7, fols. 2v, 3r, 25v. Quoted here, 3r: “silbrein püchsen darin man den weirach tegt wen man reücht.”


107 Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Rep. 44e, Losungsamt, SIL 130: nr. 7, fols. 7v (for 1466), nr. 6, fols. 9r (for 1484); Schlemmer reproduces the 1512 inventory in Schlemmer, Gottesdienst, 152-160.

108 Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Rep. 44e, Losungsamt, S.I.L 131, nr. 2, fols. 6r (for Sebald’s); S.I.L 133, nr. 9 (for Heilig-Geist).

109 Rep. 44e, S.I.L. 133, nr. 9, fols. 4v: “ain Silbren Rauchfaß das man teglich braucht.”

the chapel of the palace of the Bishop of Strassburg indicates one brass censer.\textsuperscript{111} The cathedral in Strassburg kept three large silver censers.\textsuperscript{112} Inventories from Strassburg’s Old St. Peter’s church indicate one silver censer, while Young St. Peter’s had two.\textsuperscript{113} The Dominican convent in the city kept one silver gilded censer and one copper gilded censer.\textsuperscript{114} The large hospital in the city kept three brass censers.\textsuperscript{115} Smaller chapels and monastery churches in the countryside surrounding Strassburg also appear well-stocked.\textsuperscript{116} In the first generation of the Reformation, ecclesiastical visitations in newly Protestant territories document the liturgical equipment of the traditional church. In more rural regions, these records document somewhat fewer censers than the numbers found in Strassburg. In the duchy of Branschweig, for example, which comprised over 350 parish churches, monasteries, and city churches, no censers appear in the inventories. It is possible that visitors overlooked the censers, though this seems unlikely, as virtually every other category of liturgical furniture, from monstrances and chalices, to Agnus dei and pax boards were carefully described and evaluated.\textsuperscript{117} In the parish churches of Brandenburg, visitors documented six censers in a total of 424 locations.\textsuperscript{118} The entire territory of the Steiermark (Austria) appears only to have possessed one silver censer, held in a convent in

\textsuperscript{112} “Schätze des Strassburger Münsters, 1588” in \textit{Elsässische Altertümer}, vol. 1, part 1, 143-144.
The main line of division between areas with high densities of censers and low density areas appears to have been one of town and country. Urban areas generally had more censers, while rural parish churches were less likely to possess them. This hypothesis appears supported by evidence from as far away as Stettin (Pomerania). The churches, hospitals, and convents within city were well equipped with liturgical furnishings, including several fine silver censers, while parish churches in the rural hinterlands of the city had fewer liturgical implements overall, and fewer censers. A similar emerges in inventories for parts of Saxony.

3.4 – Incense to Idolatry: The Reformation of Smell in Theory

Even as incense remained an important component of liturgical practice on the eve of the Reformation, attitudes towards its use began to change. This process of cultural change contributed to what I call a de-sacralization of the sense of smell. While many of its traditional quotidian associations persisted, early Reformers abandoned the manipulation of smells in sacred contexts. This process developed slowly and unevenly, and evidence of it can often be somewhat ambiguous and oblique. There was never an explicit prohibition against incense in the early evangelical church ordinances, but as we will see in Nuremberg, its use was eventually discontinued. This on its own does not prove the de-sacralization of smell, but other evidence demonstrates that the early Protestant Reformation in practice eliminated the most important ritual contexts for incense, and dismantled most of the late medieval theoretical framework that authorized its use. When taken together, these facts suggest a cultural paradigm shift in attitudes


towards the sense of smell which disassociated it from its traditional mediating role with the
divine.

Beginning with his *Formula missae* (1523), Luther decreed with regard to incense “the
matter is free.”¹²² This utterance is the only explicit mention of incense in any evangelical
church order produced in Saxony, Thuringen, Brandenburg, Lower Saxony, Brandenburg-
Ansbach, Baden-Württemberg, the Palatinate, or Bavaria in the sixteenth century.¹²³ Not
surprisingly, historians have also largely left the matter free themselves.¹²⁴ Luther’s order,
however, bears further scrutiny. He refers here specifically to censing of the Gospel text before
its reading, but as we have already seen, the normative location of censing occurred during the
Offertory, evoking the sacrificial dimension of this portion of the mass. Luther’s theology of the
mass, however, rejected the notion of sacrifice, and not surprisingly, the *Formula* explicitly
prohibited the Offertory. Subsequent evangelical church orders in the first half of the sixteenth
century modeled themselves after Luther’s *Formula*, and were unified in the elimination of the
Offertory, and one of the most important – if not the most important – contexts for censing in
late medieval olfactory culture.

To return to Scribner’s terminology for a moment, Luther’s *Formula* seems to leave the
door open to incense as a sacramental, but it became problematic through its associations with
sacrifice. Even as a sacramental, however, its position was precarious. In Nuremberg, the
Reformation eliminated the chief ritual contexts for sacramental incense, namely the
benedictions throughout the liturgical year. Already in 1524, city ordinances prohibited

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¹²² “Ubi nec candelas neque thurificationem prohibemus, sed nec exigimus. Esto hoc liberum.” in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* vol. 12 (Weimar: H. Bohlau, 1883-), 211; Hereafter WA.
blessings of salt and water.\textsuperscript{125} In 1526, Andreas Osiander, pastor of St. Lorenz from 1522 to 1548 and one of the leaders of the city’s Reformation, wrote a recommendation in which he developed a threefold classification of ceremonies as forbidden, commanded, or left free. Though he made no explicit mention of incense, under the category of forbidden ceremonies he included the traditional blessings of salt, water, herbs, wax and palms.\textsuperscript{126} The 1533 \textit{Kirchenordnung} banned blessings on St. John’s day, blessings of fire and bread, and prohibited all processions with crosses or the sacrament.\textsuperscript{127} The 1545 \textit{Agendbüchlein} of Veit Dietrich, pastor of St. Sebald’s, reproduced these prohibitions.\textsuperscript{128}

Nuremberg was far from alone in this domain. From the late 1520s through the 1540s, we find similar prohibitions in Reformation cities across the German territories mentioned above.\textsuperscript{129} Local reformers authorized these prohibitions by reference to their conformity with the 1528 \textit{Instruction for Visitors to the Parish Churches in Saxony}.\textsuperscript{130} The \textit{Instruction} stipulated that the few remaining feast days of the liturgical year were permitted strictly for the purposes of preaching, praying, and learning God’s Word.\textsuperscript{131} Seasonal blessings and the blessing of objects such as bells were banned.\textsuperscript{132} Further, the \textit{Instruction} admonished that parishioners must be instructed firmly not to confuse “true Christian prayer” with the outward-oriented sacrifices and

\textsuperscript{125} “Gottesdienstordnung der pfarrkirchen,” in \textit{Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen}, vol. 11, 46-50.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen}, vol. 11, 183.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid, 550.
\textsuperscript{129} See footnote 122, above. In Saxony for the years 1528-1540, we encounter prohibitions in Schmiedeberg, Zahna, Domitzsch, Grimm, Kolditz, Herzberg, Jessen, Leisnig, Liebenwerda, Prettin, Schlieben, Torgau, Zwickau, Meissen, Allstadt, Aldenburg, Remsen, Buch, Schneeberg, Franken, Gnandstein, Leipzig, Oschatz, Pirna, Meissen, Chemnitz. In \textit{Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen}, vol. 1.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen}, vol. 1, 149-174.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, 164.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, 168-171.
good works characteristic of Judaism. It also suggested pastors remind disobedient parishioners of the Biblical tale of Korah (Numbers 16), in which God caused the earth to swallow up 250 men offering incense.

We can locate the cultural origins of these developments well before the 1520s, at least among educated and literate segments of society. By the turn of the sixteenth century, humanists like Erasmus undermined the traditional scriptural mandates for incense, reinterpreting it as a sacrifice displeasing to God. Erasmus arrived at this interpretation through his reading of Isaiah 1 and the Pauline epistles, in particular Hebrews 9-10. In the *Enchiridion* (1501), he emphasized the imperative of Isaiah 1: “bring no more vain sacrifices to me; incense is an abomination to me,” arguing that it must be understood in light of Paul’s condemnation of the “outward” practices of ancient Judaism. In his paraphrase of Hebrews (1520), he concentrated specifically on Hebrews 9-10 in this regard, which made clear that the sacrifice of Christ’s death had superseded the altar of incense in Exodus 30. He continued to elaborate the argument for the rest of his life. In one of his final publications, he argued the Psalm 14 condemned all external worship (*Dei cultus externus*). In addition to Isaiah 1, he cited a preponderance of evidence from Old Testament prophets demonstrating how incense was one of the “external ceremonies of the Jews” that had angered God. Having reached this point, Erasmus found it

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133 Ibid, 154.
134 Ibid, 155: “Es ist auch nützlich den leuten die exempel furtragen, da gott die aufrührischen gestraft hat, als Datan und Abiram…Dazu fur das feur aus, und fras die zwei hundert und funfzig menner, die das reuchwerk opferten.”
137 “Enarratio Psalmi xiv qui est de pvritate tabernacvi sive ecclesiae Christianae (1536),” *Opera Omnia* 5, vol. 6 (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1985), 290-316.
138 Ibid, 290, 310-313. Among humanists who remained true to the Church of Rome, Erasmus was not alone on this point. Agrippa von Nettesheim, for example, fumed over the vessels, vestments, gestures, bells, lights, and organs of the Mass, singling out incense as especially sacrilegious. In his book *On the Vanitie and Vncertaintie of the Artes*
necessary to modify medieval interpretations of 2 Corinthians 2. Since incense was contemptible to God, “sweet savor” could not possibly refer to the smell of incense, but must instead signify praise and glorification of God through good works and prayer.\textsuperscript{139}

Erasmus made four important moves here, establishing a series of oppositional categories. First, he leveraged the Pauline epistles and Old Testament prophets, primarily Hebrews 9-10 and Isaiah 1, against traditional scriptural mandates for ritual incense. Second, he categorized incense as an external ceremony, in contrast with proper ‘internal’ piety. Third, he associated it specifically with the ethnographic category of Jews, which stood in opposition to Christians.\textsuperscript{140} Fourth, he articulated an opposition between the good sacrifice of prayer and good works, and the bad sacrifice of incense. Most notably we see this in his revised understanding of 2 Corinthians 2. These binary oppositions broke down important aspects of the late medieval olfactory paradigm and established the parameters within which the early reformation of olfaction developed at the theoretical level.

Of the early reformers, Huldrych Zwingli’s understanding of incense shared the most in common with Erasmus. The \textit{Auslegen und Gründe der Schlussrede} (1523) provides the most extensive treatment of incense in Zwingli’s written corpus.\textsuperscript{141} Here he categorized incense as one of the outward “ceremonies” established by humans, but not ordained by God in scripture.\textsuperscript{142} Like Erasmus, he also considered it a specifically Jewish ceremony, and grounded his

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, 316: vt homines videntes illius opéra bona gloricient Patrem qui in coelis est, suauissimum illi thymiama incindit. Quaemodum scribit beatus Paulus: \textit{Bonus odor sumus Deo in omni loco…} Est sacrificium laudis, quo Deus amat glorificari.


\textsuperscript{142} Ibid, 124-125, 244-245.
interpretation in Hebrews 9-10 and Isaiah 1. Zwingli also read these passages as transparent evidence that incense was displeasing to God. Zwingli, however, diverged from Erasmus in that he did not emphasize the opposition between prayer and incense. Rather, he viewed it relation to his theology of the Lord’s Supper as a memorial service. As a form of sacrifice, he unequivocally rejected incense as idolatry, and explicitly prohibited it from Christian worship.

The early thought of Luther developed within the Erasmian framework, though in a different direction. Most significantly, the letter to the Hebrews and Isaiah 1 did not figure prominently in his view before the mid-1520s. In his 1517 gloss on Hebrews, Luther recognized a tension between the Pauline letter and the more traditional medieval mandate for incense in Exodus. At this early stage, however, he did not condemn it outright as Erasmus had. Rather, Luther maintained that Hebrews spoke obscurely on the matter, and refrained from connecting it with Isaiah 1.

At the core of Luther’s interpretation was a sense of contrariety between prayer and incense, which originated in his earliest lectures on the Psalms. In 1513, he argued that the smoke mentioned in Revelation 8 signified the devotion of prayers ascending to heaven. In the early 1520s, Luther elevated prayer above incense as the acceptable form of sacrifice to God. His 1522 Adventspostille explained that when Paul admonished the Philippians to “let your prayers be known to God,” he also meant to say: “if you want to cense so that it is good smelling and sweet before God, let your prayers be known through supplications and thanks; that is the fine, sweet smell which is to be known and ascend before God.”

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143 Ibid, 442-444.
144 Ibid, 114-125, 270.
145 “Glossa capitulum nonum Pauli apostolici ad Hebreos epistola (1517),” (WA 57: 47-48b, 202-204b).
147 (WA 10, I: 184): “Und das S. Paulus hie spricht: lasst ewer bitte kundt werden bey gott, hatt er gleych den rauch vom reuchfasß angesehen und deuttet, als sollt er sagen: wenn yhr wollt reuchenn, das fur gott wollrieche und susße
prayer and incense persisted for the rest of Luther’s life, as his 1544 sermon at the consecration of the Thurgau castle church demonstrates. Admonishing those gathered to call upon God in prayer, honor his Word, give thanks, and be faithful, Luther urged congregants to “take hold of the censer with me, that is, seize hold upon prayer, and let us call upon God and pray…For this is what God would have from us all, and this is the true incense of Christians – to pray earnestly for all of these necessities.”

With his insistence upon the Word, and earnest prayer as ‘true incense,’ Luther clearly ordered the visual and aural over the olfactory. In contrast to traditional church ritual, which deployed incense to signify the transition into sacred space and time, Luther explained that sanctification only occurred “when we have heard God’s Word.”

Luther also often criticized incense as an outward ceremony, though this criticism only cohered after his break with Rome. From 1521, his position in this regard became more closely aligned with that of Erasmus and Zwingli, as incense became in his polemical writings one in a litany of liturgical abuses committed by the Church of Rome. In On the Abuse of the Mass (1521), he criticized it as “contrary to the divine institution and Scripture,” a “mockery of the devil,” and a threat to Christian salvation. In sermons from 1521 and 1522, he called it an “outward and corporeal thing,” “magic,” and “foolishness.” In addition to incense, chrism oil, holy water, the blessing of bells, the use of organs, monstrances, and silk vestments all fell into this category.

148 (WA 49: 613-14): “lieben Freunde...so greiffet nu auch mit mir an das Reuchfas, das ist: zum Gebet, und last uns Gott anruffen und beten...Denn solches wil Gott von uns allen haben, und das ist das rechte Reuchwerck der Christen, das man fur alle diese not ernstlich bitte.”

149 Ibid.

150 (WA 8: 503): “die viel unter sich haben, thun nichts mehr, den sie tzu tzyettyn eyn perlen Infel tragen, holtz und stein mit wasser und rauch weyhen, glocken tauffen, darumb, das sie sich selbst wider gottliche eynsatzung und schriftt auffgeworffen haben. Sie sind des teuffels spott, gottis feynde, mit yhrem fursten und schoepffer, dem Bapst, gar bald durch die zukunft unβers heylands zuvertilgen.”

It was also around this time that Luther began to associate incense with the ethnographic category of Jews. We find the first explicit reference in a 1523 sermon, in which he contrasted proper offerings to God with those of the Jews, who offered food and incense.\(^{152}\) A year later in his lectures on the minor prophets, Luther wrote “incense and the sacrifice of foods were foremost among the Jews, which were done as the highest form of idol worship in all valleys and under all the trees.” True Christian incense, Luther explained, was prayer: “Therefore, the Word and prayer are the two sacrifices of Christians.”\(^{153}\) The apprehension of incense as a form of sacrifice associated with outside social categories marked a critical turning point for Luther, and became an organizing principle for his subsequent criticism of it. We see this most clearly in his lectures on Isaiah (1527-1530). Here, Luther wrote mockingly: “This is the holiest sacrifice, and it is before God like an idol…So the Turk and the papists shun idols and yet commit sacrilege…Their heart is full of idolatry…Offering incense is an idol.”\(^{154}\) By the 1530s, incense had become a keynote for all three of the chief outside social categories in Luther’s thought: Jews, Turks, and Papists.

We find Luther’s new understanding of incense articulated at more popular levels in the mid-1520s. For example, the Nuremberg cobbler Hans Sachs in his 1523 poem The Wittenberg Nightingale echoed Luther’s litany of abuses.\(^{155}\) Other contemporary pamphleteers reflect Sachs’ attitude. Johann Sonnentaller for example, provides a similar litany. He writes:

They have tonsures, cowls, they wear long robes, their spiritual clothing is of many specialized colors, they are anointed with oil, they have white choir robes, they hold

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\(^{152}\) “Dominica ante Martini,” (WA 11: 201).
\(^{154}\) (WA 31: 573): “Aliud sacrificium, quod incensum dicitur…Ita Turca et Papistae fugiunt idola et sacrilegium committunt, non possunt parvum peccatum videre et rapinantur deo gloriam suam…Plenum idolatria cor est eorum. Ita Papistae degraduiunt camelum excolantes culicem, quia quaurunt suam iusticiam. Das rechtern ist idolum.”
Masses, sing high and read quietly, they kneel down and get back up, they play organs, sound bells, bless candles, fumigate incense, sprinkle water, carry crosses, banners, golden chalices and silver monstrances. These are not spiritual things.\textsuperscript{156}

Indeed, far from being spiritual things, Sonnentaller criticized them on several grounds. They were “outside of Scripture,” contrary to the Word, and against the Gospel mediated by Martin Luther. They were also characteristic of the practices of Turks, papists, and heathens.\textsuperscript{157}

Others articulated the same sentiment. An anonymous pamphlet from 1522 described incense and the entire sensual edifice of the late medieval church as “cultivating heathen tyranny under the appearance of Christ with all worldly pomp and voluptuousness.”\textsuperscript{158} In 1524, Johann Sonnentaller described incense, along with practices of wearing vestments, anointing with oil, singing highly and reading lowly, bowing, stooping, piping organs, ringing bells, blessing candles, sprinkling water, carrying crosses, banner, chalices and monstrances as “not spiritual things,” contrary and external to the Word (“ausserhalb der shrifft”).\textsuperscript{159} Similarly in a 1525 pamphlet, Johannes Eberlin von Günzburg, a student of Luther, admonished Christians to dispense with the all ritual incense, which “helped souls in no way whatsoever.”\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{156} Sonnentaller, \textit{Vrsach, warumb der vermeint geystlich huff mit yren patronen das Evangelion Jesu Christi nit annimpt sunder schen det lestert und verfolget mit kurzter Contrafactru der Pfafferey Müncherey Nonnerey} (Strassburg, 1524), C2 v: “Haben sy doch platen kutten/ sindt beschoren/ tragen lang reck/ besunder farben/ geystlich kleydung/ sindt mit oel gesalbt/ haben wiss korreck/ halten mess/ singen hoch vnd lessen nider/ bucken sich hyn vnd wider/ orgeln pfiffen/ lueten glocken/ wihen kertzen/ reuechen wyrauch/ sprengen wasser/ tragen cruetz/ fanen/ gulden kelch vnd silbern monstrantz. Sindt dz nit geistlich dingen.”

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, B2 r.

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Ein kurzer Bericht vn einem zukünftigen Konzil} (Strasbourg: Knobloch, 1522): “Die selb ist ein gestalt und euesserlicher schein der geistligkeit. Der d steet in solchen zeichen, wie obgesagt, das gesind heysst der antichrist. Die treiben und ueben under dem schein Christ ein heydnischer tyrannischer wesen mit allem weltlichen pracht und wollust.”

\textsuperscript{159} Sonnentaller, \textit{Ursach, warumb der vermeint geystlih huff mit yren patronen das Evangelion Jesu Christi nit annimpt} (Strasbourg, 1524), C3 r: “Haben sy doch platen kutten/ sindt beschoren/ tragen lang reck/ besunder farben/ geystlich kleydung/ sindt mit oel gesalbt/ haben wiss korreck/ halten mess/ singen hoch vnd lessen nider/ bucken sich hyn vnd wider/ orgeln pfiffen/ lueten glocken/ wihen kertzen/ reuechen wyrauch/ sprengen wasser/ tragen cruetz/ fanen/ gulden kelch vnd silbern monstrantz. Sindt dz nit geistlich dingen.”

pamphlet from 1555, Catharina Zell reflected on traditional worship, mockingly writing “do you not know that by laying a little piece of incense in the censer, the idols are worshipped?”\footnote{Zell and Ludwig Rabus, \textit{Ein Brieff an die gantze Burgerschaft der Statt Straßburg} (Strasbourg, 1557), fol. D1 r: “Ir haben euch doch ettwan hoch geruempft/ das ir kein character oder zeihen des Bapsts an euch haben/ vnd dessen ein sondere freud vnd hoffart gehbet/ Wie haben dann ir jetz ewer selbs vergessen/ vnd ir worden; wissend ir nit, das ein klein stuecklin Wyrauchs ins rauchfass gelegt ist schon den Goetzen gedient”}

In Nuremberg, Lazarus Spengler wrote:

> If we run through the entirety of Scriptue, we shall determine that in no place has God neither commanded or taken pleasure in public processions, pilgrimages, going to church, bells, relics, carrying banners and monstrances, the singing and shrieking of religious, and other similar outward ceremonies...[as] God speaks in Jeremiah 6: “to what purpose does incense come to me, which you bring from Saba, and the other good-smelling spice of foreign lands?”\footnote{Spengler, \textit{Stellungnahme zum rechten Verhalten angesichts der Türkenbedrohung} (1522), in \textit{Lazarus Spengler Schriften}, vol. 1, ed. Bernd Hamm et al (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995), 249-250: “So wir nun die gannten schrift durchlauffen, werden wir an keinem ort befinnden, das Got die offenlichen procession, wallfarten, kirchgenge, glogken, heylthumb, fannen und manstrantzen tragen, das singen und schreien der gaistlichen und was dergleichen eusserliche ceremonien sein, ye gepotten oder daran gefallen gehab hab...Hieremie 6 spricht Got: “Was soll mir der weyrauch, den ir von Saba bringt, und die wolricchend specerei auß frembder gegend?”}

Following suit, Osiander in 1524 warned against incense as one of the deceptive abuses of the “children of Belial” perpetrated against the truth of scripture.\footnote{Osiander, “Vorrede zum Brief J. von Schwarzenbergs,” in \textit{Gesamtausgabe}, vol. 1, 285-294} In the same year, he also reiterated Luther’s lectures on the Minor Prophets, arguing that the Book of Malachi’s discussion of food offerings and incense actually referred to prayer, which was “true incense” and a “sweet smell” to God.\footnote{“Grund und Ursach,” in \textit{Gesamtausgabe}, vol. 1, 223.}

Smell was de-sacralized, yet traces of its traditional associations with boundaries persisted. We observe that the displacement of incense ritual to outside religious groups articulates traditional notions of smell as marker of social, cultural and ethnic difference. Luther provides a powerful example of this in one of his polemical writings. Inverting the meaning of 2
Corinthians 2, Luther wrote that “if you consult your senses,” the believer would comprehend that the Church of Rome was in fact not “the fragrance of life,” but rather “the fragrance of death.” Further, associations between smell and bodily health remained especially powerful. The physician Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, for example, simultaneously condemned ritual incense while recommending the power of its fragrance in medical practice. Similarly, Günzburg recommended that fragrant chrism oil could still prove useful in the healing of wounds. In parish churches, many people continued to believe that fumigation with incense would protect them against bodily threats of demons, weather magic, and witches. As urban authorities examined and condemned many of these activities, they considered the space of the countryside and its associated smells to be threatening. Included in the lists of expenses in from Nuremberg’s second visitation (1560-61) are perfumes, which visitors stated were necessary to counteract the “foul” country air of some of the stops on their itineraries. Luther himself routinely discussed these problems with his students. In one such discussion, he is reported to have said: “There are many devils in the woods, waters, deserts, and in damp foul places, so that these place may do people harm. Many are also in the black and thick clouds, which make the weather, hail, lightning and thunder, and poison the air and fields.” While smells no longer

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165 Luther, Selected Psalms, in Pelikan, Oswald & Lehman, eds., 12, 8: 9.
166 Agrippa von Nettesheim, Of the Vanitie and Vncertaintie of Artes and Sciences, 187-189.
had a role to play in religious ritual, the perception of their significance in medicine and daily life remained strong. Despite the persistence of traditional understandings of smell in daily life, the cultural changes wrought by the Reformation dissolved the need for incense in religious practice.

3.5 – Idolatry to Income: The Reformation of Smell in Practice

The cultural framework of incense becoming idolatry provides a lens for re-interpreting the economic history of the early Reformation. As Vogler has argued, the transfer of church wealth into secular hands was an important component of the city reformation in Nuremberg in 1524 and 1525.\footnote{Günter Vogler, Nürnberg 1524/25: Studien zur Geschichte der reformatorischen und sozialen Bewegung in der Reichsstadt (Berlin: Deutscher Verlage der Wissenschaften, 1982), 311-336.} This included the liturgical equipment described in church inventories above. On 12 December 1524, the Augustinians in the city applied to give “all their temporal goods” to the community chest.\footnote{Ratsverlass 225 (12 Dec 1524). In Pfeiffer, ed., Quellen, 31.} On the 30\textsuperscript{th} of December 1524, the city council instructed the prior of the city’s Carmelite cloister to prepare to submit the cloister’s liturgical furniture to the common chest.\footnote{RV 251, in Pfeiffer, ed., Quellen, 35.} A week later he argued before the council that the cloister should keep all its liturgical furniture, but the argument ended with the sacristan and prior striking a deal in which they surrendered most items into the city council’s custody.\footnote{RV 275-278, in Pfeiffer, ed., Quellen, 38. Cf. RV 278: (10 January 1525) “Auf handlung, so bey dem messerern geschehen, haben sy sich bewilligt, das sy die ornat, clainot und anders ainem rat wollen ergeben und zugestellt haben, damit ze thun oder ze wenden irs gefallens; doch das inen ein zentner wachs und ir leichtuch werd zugestellt.”} By May 1525, the city council had custody of all income and wealth of both the Augustinians and Carmelites, and had commanded the Dominicans and Franciscans in the city to inventory all of their liturgial furniture.\footnote{RV RV 556 (26 April 1525); RV 638 (15 May 1525), in Pfeiffer, ed., Quellen, 76, 87.} The liturgical furniture of the city’s four principal churches – St. Sebald’s, St. Lorenz, the

in den schwarten vnd dicken Wolcken, die machen Wetter, Hagel, Blitz vnd Donner vergifften die Luft, Weide, etc,” (278).
Frauenkirche, and the chapel in the Heiligen Geist Spital – was likewise inventoried and placed under the custody of the city’s Losunger, Hieronymous Baumgartner, in 1530. The city council mandated the same action for the churches in its rural territories in the same year, adding that all implements considered surplus to the requirements of Lutheran worship were to be taken to Nuremberg and inventoried.

The transfer of liturgical property into the custody of the city council did not necessarily indicate the immediate physical transfer of this wealth into an actual community ‘chest,’ nor did the city council immediately sell such items. Nonetheless, it does seem to indicate that these items were removed from ritual practice. For example, the council determined that once the surplus liturgical furniture of its rural parishes had been inventoried, it was to be kept in Nuremberg and sold at the city council’s discretion. This pattern holds for the censers in St. Sebald’s, St. Lorenz, and the Frauenkirche. Inventories for these churches from 1530, 1532 and 1533 list the same censers from pre-Reformation inventories. The inventories provide no indication of whether they were still in use, but given the cultural context outlined above, this seems unlikely. A 1532 letter by the Englishman Thomas Eliot supports this interpretation. The letter describes a religious service he attended in St. Lorenz, noting in detail the reading of the Gospel in German and the omission of “the secretes and preface” (i.e. the Offertory). It makes no mention of incense. Despite the fact that they were probably no longer used, the censers remained stored away, in possession of the Nuremberg churches until 1552, when the church

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176 StAN Rep. 44e, Losungsamt, SIL 131, no. 22, fol. 2v. The inventories were collected by Sigmund Fürer, Andreas Imhoff, Erhart Tucher, and Schürstab.
179 StAN Rep. 44e, Losungsamt, SIL 131, no. 22, fols. 2r-11v, 23r-25r
superintendent Hieronymus Baumgartner unceremoniously ordered that they be appraised, melted down, and sold for cash.\(^{181}\)

The case of Nuremberg illustrates a rather silent, almost epiphenomenal kind of olfactory iconoclasm. Because all of the contexts for which incense had been necessary in the traditional church were eliminated, censers no longer had any use value in the ritual life of the churches. Further, the cultural context of incense outlined above made the inventoried censers not simply neutral objects, but lingering physical manifestations of Papism, idolatry and unrestrained sensuality. Although censers were only a very minor source of wealth alongside the foundations, lands, and taxes that were transferred into secular authorities’ hands, the culture of the early Reformation had established an association between incense and idolatry which authorized their sale.

Nuremberg is representative of a broader pattern of quiet olfactory iconoclasm among early Lutheran communities. Other communities achieved the same end through different means. Nuremberg is somewhat unusual because the city did not use official ecclesiastical ordinances to achieve this end: none of its ordinances from 1524 through 1533 mention the transfer of surplus liturgical furniture into the community chest.\(^{182}\) Church ordinances for other Lutheran communities recommended that inventories of liturgical implements be taken, and all unnecessary items sold for the benefit of the community. In Saxony and Thuringia, 29.3% of church orders from 1528-1550 made similar proscriptions.\(^{183}\) Numbers break down differently in other territories: Bavaria = 8.3%; Baden-Württemberg = 4.5%; Brandenburg = 30.3%; Lower

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\(^{181}\) The inventories were compiled into a single dossier by Baumgartner in 1552. See Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Rep. 44e, Losungsamt SIL 131, nr. 22. 
\(^{183}\) *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen*, vol 1.
Saxony = 32%. The division between northern and southern territories may reflect the urban-rural division discussed above with regard to inventories. In northern territories where liturgical implements such as censers were less common, churches had less property and wealth to transfer to secular authorities, and so concern with capturing it all was more pronounced. Nonetheless, even in areas where concern for capturing liturgical furniture appears low, such as Baden-Württemberg, it was still oftentimes collected and sold for the benefit of the common good. We find documentation of this in Stuttgart, where a ducal decree in 1534 authorized inventories for “liturgical furniture, silver dishes, letters, and other things” which were to be “closed in a container.” Secular authorities were then to evaluate the relevance and necessity of said items, and sell off what was no longer needed. Authorities appear to have executed this decree with considerable efficiency. In Marbach, for example, the parish church’s considerable collection of liturgical furniture was reduced to only the most necessary items, which consisted of one silver chalice, and one copper chalice for celebrating the Eucharist. We find the same pattern in ecclesiastical visitation records as far away as Stettin in Pomerania, where in 1539 the city council removed the censers from its parish churches and sold them for the benefit of the common church coffers.

The transfer of this wealth achieved practical ends, altruistic and authoritarian. The 1529 ordinance for Thurgau, for example, stipulated that all liturgical implements be inventoried, and the unnecessary items be sold for the poor and the maintenance of church buildings and church

\[184\] This figures were determined through analysis of the ordinances documented in Sehling, ed., Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen, vols. 1, 3, 6-7, 11, and 17.
\[186\] Ibid, 289.
personnel salaries.\textsuperscript{188} It is also clear that authorities perceived the apprehension of church wealth as a means of reforming practice which still resembled Catholicism too closely. As instructions for the 1542 visitations in Braunschweig and Lüneburg indicated: “the idolatry at Hainholz near Hannover, and at St. Anna’s near Munder shall be done away with and whatever silver, treasures, or things of iron, wax, or whatever is at hand, shall be inventoried and carefully withheld until further notice. Such should happen in all places where such running about, idolatry and jugglery has been practiced.”\textsuperscript{189} These particular condemnations stemmed from especially popular local devotions to icons of Mary nd St. Anna, but the recommended action applied to all liturgical furniture.\textsuperscript{190}

3.6 – Conclusion

\textsuperscript{188} In Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen, vol. 1, 678: “So soll vn nun an in Torgau der gemeine kasten, den ein rat aus gutem bedenken für uns geordnet, bleiben und erhalten werden, daraus der kirchen bau, derselben und der schul diener, auch die gebeude der pfarre, calan, schulheuser erhalten werden. Dohin orden und schlahen wir alle der kirchen güter, samt dem einkommen aller vorfallen lehen comenden und stiftung hospitals und was sich der lehen altar oder comende durch der besitzer absterben vorledigen...auch aller vorrat an silber, ornaten, barschaft an gelde und schuldun der kirchen und brüderschaften, auch vorfallenen lehen und in summa, was geistlicher güter sunst mehr genannt werden...so also vorordent, soll über den zugestalten vorrat und stuck, klein und gross, ein ordentlich inventarium gestellt, das soll gedreihfacht und jedem teil eines vorpitschift übergeben werden, sich mit der rechnung darnach zu richten haben...derselben amt soll sein sich denjenigen, die des kasten hülf begern, lebens oder wandels und unvermogens zu vorstehen oder je vleissig zu erkunden, domit der kirchen güter niht müssiggengern und willig armen, sondern denjenigen ausgezielt werde, die recht arm sein, den soll von dem beutelgelt, so in der kirchen gefellt und vn schuldun eingemannet wirdet.

\textsuperscript{189} Die reformatorischen kirchenvisitationen in den welfischen Landen, 254: “Und Sonderlich sal die abgotterei vor Hannover zum Heinholz, vnd zu S. Annen vor Munder abgeschaft vnd was von Silber, einodden vnd sonst von eisen vnd wachs daselbst furhanden, jnuentirt vnd bewarlich bis auf weiter bescheit hingehalten werden; solch soll an allen enden, da solch umlauf, abgotterei vnd gauckelwerk geubet worden ist.”

This chapter has traced the reformation of smell by tracing the history of incense ritual in fifteenth and sixteenth century Germany. Incense had an important use value in the ritual practice of the late medieval church, articulating quotidian understandings of the role of the sense of smell in demarcating boundaries and transitions. This phenomenon operated at logical, psychological, and sociological levels. By contrast, reformers rejected incense use in several stages. Theologically it became problematic through its association with the sacrificial portions of the Mass ritual. Underlying the theological rejection of incense, we find several important binary oppositions, mobilized by both learned theologians and lay pamphleteers. Reformers desacralized incense by contrasting condemnations in the Pauline epistles and Old Testament prophets against the scriptural mandates traditionally deployed by the late medieval church.

Second, reformers categorized incense as an external ceremony in contrast to proper ‘internal’ piety. Related to this, reformers associated incense with external individuals and social groups imagined to be morally inferior to what they considered the normative, or ‘true’ evangelical Christian subject. In this domain, the Jews as an ethnographic category gained special polemical force. In each stage, contrasts between ‘external’-‘internal’ and ‘Christian-non-Christian’ were governed by assumptions about the moral and physical efficacy of the concept of ‘the Word.’ The Reformation attempted to translate these understandings into practice through a series of ordinances and ecclesiastical visitations and inspections. In contrast to the more violent forms iconoclasm characteristic of the popular Reformation movements of the early 1520s, church authorities executed what I have called above a silent form of iconoclasm. Authorities inventoried and transferred the wealth of the traditional church into secular hands. Censers fit within the larger category of liturgical furniture, which through the 1530s, 1540s, and 1550s, often appears to have been liquidated and sold for cold hard cash. This
silent form of iconoclasm reflects the practical fact that such items no longer had a religious use value. It was therefore necessary to transform them into more fungible forms of wealth in order to access their exchange value. In the next chapter, we examine these assumptions more closely, looking in detail at how reformers reified the Word in its aural and visual senses, and how this reified Word came to be considered contrary to the sensual forms of piety discussed above in chapters one through three.
Chapter 4:
The Fetish of the Word: The Coherence of the Sensual in Reformation Ritual

4.1 – Introduction

The first three chapters of this dissertation examined three components of the structured ritual environment of traditional Christianity: Eucharist prayers, the rosary, and incense. These studies re-framed questions of the depth of churchgoers’ participation in church ritual posed by cultural historians of the Reformation. Instead of considering whether or not the average churchgoer comprehended the intended verbal message ritual was meant to convey, we considered at how rituals differentiated themselves from the profane realm through the interplay between quotidian, body and structured ritual environment. Chapters one through three examined these objects to reveal the particular strategies whereby late medieval ritual established itself as sacred through its multi-sensory appeal. In each case, the verbal message of the ritual, which Bossy construed as a theological and sociological text, was less important than the medium of the ritual, and what it did to churchgoers.

In this chapter and the next, I turn to the question of the coherence of the Reformation in relation to the late medieval model of sensual piety. This requires consideration at the theoretical and practical levels. In this chapter, I focus on the theoretical. The argument of this chapter is that at the level of theory, the early Reformation in Germany does not represent a significant and systematic break with the late medieval model of sensual piety in its most basic assumptions, but rather a narrowing and intensification. Rather than a five sense model of diffuse sacramentality which allowed for mediation between the divine and human ritual participants through a variety of ritual objects, the Reformation program cohered around a two-sense model focused on a
single object: the Word. The Word in Reformation piety normatively appealed to the senses of sight and hearing.

Previous scholars have interpreted the Reformation emphasis on the Word in various ways. Many have been hesitant to think about it as a matter of the senses. This is especially true among more traditional historians insisting on a theological or intellectual interpretation. In these interpretations, the Word takes on a strictly ‘spiritual’ or ‘internal’ meaning. While it is true that reformers frequently emphasized spiritual or internal Word, it is equally true that they also described it as a visual or aural phenomenon. The fact that they did not see a contradiction between these two modes of description is simply evidence of a broader cultural shift – fairly well documented among cultural historians and historians of the senses – which represented the senses of hearing and seeing as somehow the ‘least bodily’ and ‘most intellectual’ of the five senses. In Western Europe, this shift began with the Renaissance, was consolidated in the late eighteenth century, and has become an ideological assumption in contemporary culture.

For cultural historians of the Reformation, art historians, and even some musicologists, the argument that the Reformation Word expresses an intensification of the visual and the aural will be nothing new. Indeed, it has become something of a commonplace to describe the Word variously as a devaluation of the visual in favor of the audible, or an important component of the historical transition of society dominated by the ear to one dominated by the eye. Luther’s attitudes towards the aural Word, the visible Word, images and music have all been well-documented. As Bossy wrote: “his word was a word to be heard, a promise to be received in

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faith, not a text to be pored over. Faith, as St. Paul had said, came by hearing; the ear, not the eye, was the Christian sense. \(^3\) More recently, Ulinka Rublack has advanced the notion that early Lutheran culture cohered around a reified notion of the Word which possessed a physical reality appealing to both senses of vision and hearing. Acts of speech, reading and writing, therefore had a level of meaning which transcended the rather abstract logo-centricism of modernity. \(^4\) This scholarship has made many important advances, and here I aim to build on them, showing how the fetish of the Word in Reformation piety cohered in relation to the five-sense model of piety that immediately preceded it.

This chapter shows that the two-sense model of Reformation piety was ultimately limited and determined by its late medieval context. The Word in late medieval piety was one of many diffuse ritual objects that mediated access to the divine by exploiting the affective relationship between percipient subject and perceived object proposed in late medieval theories of sensing. This model posed a problem to early Reformers, who tended to separate the Word from the ritual practices of traditional Christianity. Two interrelated cultural histories precipitated this history: 1) the cultural and educational program of late medieval humanism, which celebrated the written and spoken Word, 2) the emergence of early ethnographic writing, which by representing the sensual and generally idolatrous ritual practices of foreign cultures, further contributed to the separation of the categories of ‘Word’ and ‘mere’ or ‘external’ ritual. These two cultural vectors informed the lens through which reformers viewed the practices of traditional Christianity and their own relation to the normative center of ritual practice embodied in the Word. At the same time, although reformers in the early 1520s followed the example of humanists by posturing

\(^3\) Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, 100.
rhetorically at rejection of Aristotelian natural philosophy, they ultimately failed to develop an alternative system. Increasingly, the exigencies of institutionalizing reform led back to questions which simply could not be answered within the intellectual framework reformers had adopted and developed in the early 1520s. Faced with these challenges, the magisterial Reformation beginning in the 1530s re-appropriated and reasserted the same Aristotelian framework that had been rejected in the early 1520s. From the standpoint of theory, then, the Reformation ultimately did little to undermine the most basic assumptions about the sensual relationship between perceiving subject and perceived object in ritual practice. The affective sensual relationship survived intact, albeit in a more focused, intensified manner around the fetish of the Word.

4.2 – The Word and the Senses’ Books in Late Medieval Piety: Nicholas Cusanus

The notion of ‘the Word’ in late medieval Germany was more than a disembodied spiritual concept. It possessed an affective, sensible reality that inhered in the practices of daily life and religion. As such, it is possible to speak of a ‘fetish’ of the Word in late medieval Germany – a Word legible and accessible by its objective qualities. These qualities were not restricted to a particular sensory modality, but were multi-sensory in their appeal. The ‘pure’ unadulterated Word was not contrary to the overly sensual or ‘merely external’ ritual practices of late medieval piety. It rather complemented their sacramental efficacy. This efficacy derived from same affective relationship between perceiving subject and perceived object supported in late medieval theories of sensing. The late medieval understanding of the Word exploited the affective relationship as a means of providing sacramental access in two socially distinct cognitive modes: ‘knowledge of words’ and ‘knowledge of things.’ These two cognitive modes allowed for all five senses to provide sacramental access in ritual contexts.
The thought of Nicholas Cusanus exemplifies this paradigm. Although Cusanus is generally described as a mystically inclined humanist by scholars, his understanding of the Word shares much more in common with late medieval liturgical theorists. In Cusanus, the Word appears as both a transcendent, universal concept, and a sensual, particular concept. As a transcendent, universal concept, the Word meant the rational basis of reality, or *Logos*, with its source in God. He argued in his dialogue, *De pace fidei* (1453), “the rational Ground that is *Logos*, the Word, emanates from [God] the producer. Hence, when the omnipotent produces the Word, those things which are enfolded in the Word are made in reality.”

In his treatise on the Qur’an, Cusanus claimed that this same understanding of the Word was found in the Muslim faith: “it is likewise certain from the Koran that all things were created by means of God’s Word. Therefore, the Word of God is uncreated, since all things were created through it. Therefore, the Word is eternal and uncreated. Hence, that Word is not a perceptual word: rather, it is more than intellectual.”

When Cusanus states that the Word is ‘more than intellectual,’ he is referring to its relationship to human cognitive faculties as articulated in late medieval sensory theory. Scribner has overstated the case that Cusanus adhered to an Augustinian theory of the senses opposed to the Aristotelian inflected theories current in late fifteenth century popular piety. While it is true that Cusanus frequently expressed an Augustinian understanding of the senses, especially in his mystically inclined writings, it is not true that he considered this understanding opposed to the more widespread Aristotelian understanding of the senses. Indeed, particularly on questions of physiology, psychology, and the practical functioning of the senses, Cusanus differs very little

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from his late medieval counterpart Aquinas. In this regard, it is more appropriate to see Cusanus as rather orthodox in his understanding of the senses, and the role they played in religion. Cusanus considered the human soul to be composed of sensitive, rational, and intellectual parts. The sensitive part drew the sensual experiences of the outside world into the soul, and the rational part acted as a kind of mediator between sensitive and intellectual soul. The intellectual soul comprehended data communicated by the rational soul by virtue of its affinity with divine, universal nature.\(^8\)

Throughout his career, Cusanus always maintained the existence of intellectual and sensitive souls, but was inconsistent on the question of the mediating device between them. On some occasions, he describes this as the rational soul. On others, he writes of ‘spirit’ as a substance communicating sensory data or “means of conveyance” from the sense organs to the intellect.\(^9\) Thus:

> When our mind is stimulated by encountering forms conveyed, in a replicated way, from the objects unto the spirit: by means of these perceptual forms our mind assimilates itself to the objects, so that by way of the assimilation it makes a judgment regarding the object...the mind that is present in our body makes various fine or coarse configurations in accordance with the varying pliability of the arterial spirits present in the sense organs.\(^{10}\)

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\(^8\) Cusanus, *Idiota de mente*, trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 1996), 804-806. He also writes elsewhere: “There is no doubt that a human being consists of senses, intellect, and reason (which is in between and which connects the other two). Now, order subordinates the senses to reason and reason to intellect. The intellect is not temporal and mundane but is free of time and of the world. The senses are temporally subject to the motions of the world. With respect to the intellect, reason is on the horizon, so to speak; but with respect to the senses, it is at the zenith, as it were; thus, things that are within time and things that are beyond time coincide in reason.” In Cusanus, *De docta ingnorantiae*, vol. 3, trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 1985), 127.

\(^9\) *Idiota de mente*, 563.

\(^{10}\) Ibid, 557.
Regardless of whether the mediating device was spirit or the rational soul, Cusanus considered the human relationship to the Word through the lens of sensory physiology. Thus, the Word was ‘more than intellectual’ because it formed the basis for all practical intellectual activity. Without it, Cusanus argued, “no one – neither Father nor son nor Holy Spirit nor angels nor souls nor any intellectual nature – could understand anything.”

Further, the Word transcended the intellectual because it was also the ultimate object of practical intellectual activity. Cusanus indicates this when he identifies the Word with the principle of wisdom. Ultimate wisdom, by virtue of its infinite nature, was incomprehensible to humans. It could be known “in no other way than through the awareness that it is higher than all knowledge and is unknowable and is inexpressible by any speech, incomprehensible by any intellect…unsensible by any sensing.”

Such quotes illustrate the centrality of a negative epistemology in Cusanus’ philosophical system. Human words, concepts and the senses were incapable of comprehending the Word because they attain only to the finite and particular dimensions of temporal existence, whereas the a-temporal Word ultimately lies beyond an ‘epistemological wall,’ identified throughout Cusanus’ writings as the murus paradisi (wall of paradise). Cusanus’ entire philosophical and theological system was geared towards breaching this epistemological wall, and least in a mystical sense.

Following this negative theology to its most extreme logical conclusions, Cusanus determined that both rituals and the written word of Scripture were technically adiaphora because they both remained on the sensible, human side of the epistemological wall. Even the

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13 Ibid, 499.
14 Prasad Theruvathu, Ineffabilis in the Thought of Nicolaus of Cusa (Münster: Ashendorff Verlag, 2010), 6-7.
15 Ibid.
Eucharist, he claimed, was *adiaphoron*. As he wrote at the conclusion of the dialogue, after discussing with wise men from nations across the world and gathering together all the writings on religions, “it was ascertained that the entire diversity lay in rites rather than in the worship of one God. From all the writings, which had been collected into one, it was learned that since the very beginning all have always presupposed God and worshipped Him in all their religious practices.”

This idea, commonly identified as the *prisca theologia* of Neoplatonist humanism, was promoted by Cusanus and the Italian humanists Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Under their influence, the belief that God gave some form of insight into divine laws and mysteries to all nations became widespread among humanists both in Italy and Germany. North of the Alps, the idea was promoted by the likes of Hartmann Schedel and Conrad Celtis in Nuremberg, and Conrad Mutianus in Erfurt. Mutianus, following Cusanus, applied *prisca theologia* to argue against the necessity of the Eucharist. As a ceremony, its sensible properties could play a positive role in shaping faith, but ultimately it too was *adiaphoron* to the core elements of religion.

At the same time, however, this insight was of little use in the day to day practice of fifteenth century religion. In his role as a reforming bishop, Cusanus recognized this. Cusanus held synods in his own diocese of Brixen regularly, during which he set down sharp regulations on ritual practice and preaching in his parish churches. In the 1454 synod, he instituted the practice of regular ecclesiastical visitations which were designed to disseminate ordinances, evaluate the degree to which ordinances were observed, produce written reports on church life,

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16 *De pace fidei*, 666-669.
17 Ibid, 669.
and discipline backsliders.\textsuperscript{19} The central points of his reforming agenda focused on several areas of clerical life, ritual and piety. Clergy were to be punctual for services, wear the proper liturgical vestments, avoid fancy rings, long hair, and shoes with pointed toes. Further, they must pay close attention to the words of the texts, perform all ritual gestures at the appropriate times, including all prescribed moments of standing, bowing and sitting.\textsuperscript{20} Cusanus also demanded uniform practice of the sacrament of the Eucharist. He insisting upon cleanliness of those performing the ritual, and maintaining the altar and all liturgical vessels in a good state of repair. He also advocated that all liturgical books be in readable condition, and that the missals in particular be up to date and uniform throughout his diocese. For the laity, Cusanus commanded people to attend Mass in their local parishes, discouraged improper and overly frequent displays of the host, prohibited processions and festival invoking questionable saints or weather magic, and strongly emphasized sermons as a means of reform by instructing people in how to live the Christian faith. He himself preached over 160 times in Brixen.\textsuperscript{21}

To understand how Cusanus viewed the significance of these reforms, we must return to his theological and philosophical writings. With regard to practical questions of how human intellect functioned, Cusanus was quite aware that any human intellectual activity must partake on some level in the immediate, particular, and sensible. As he wrote in his treatise \textit{De visione dei} (On the Vision of God):

because the intellect is united to the body through the medium of the sensible, it is not perfected apart from the senses. For whatever comes to it proceeds to it from the sensible

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 89.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 90.
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world through the medium of the senses. Hence, there cannot be in the intellect anything which is such that it was not first in the senses.\textsuperscript{22}

Cusanus’ invocation of the peripatetic axiom necessarily brings the concept of the Word into the domain of the senses, at least in part. As he wrote in his treatise \textit{De venatione sapientiae (On the Pursuit of Wisdom)}, the Word, or “wisdom \textit{per se}, which is intelligible light, precedes whatever can partake of intelligible light – whether what partakes of it is called the senses or the other name what partakes of it is named.”\textsuperscript{23} Cusanus here distinguishes intelligible light (wisdom \textit{per se}) from perceptual light, which is the efficient cause of the sense of sight. In the act of seeing, “perceptual light is united with intelligible light – the two being as extremes, viz., the summit of the lower, corporeal nature united with the lower level of the higher, cognitive nature.”\textsuperscript{24} Cusanus recognized that the distribution of these two natures differed from person to person. Thus, while they were \textit{adiaphora} to the deeper, more abstract mysteries of faith, Cusanus considered the Word and ritual in myriad forms necessary and desirable for the purposes of the overarching goals of forming faith and increasing devotion:

\begin{quote}
It is necessary to make great allowances for the weakness of men, unless doing so militates against eternal salvation...where conformity cannot be had, nations are entitled to their own devotions and ceremonies...Perhaps as a result of a certain diversity devotion will even be increased, since each nation will endeavor with zeal and diligence to make its own rite more splendid.”\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

Cusanus understood the internal device responsible for increasing devotion as a kind of ‘nourishment.’ The sources of nourishment were the means by which humans could effectively

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{24} Ibid, 1354.
\bibitem{25} \textit{De pace fidei}, 669.
\end{thebibliography}
‘read’ the Word in their sensible environment – that is, the acceptable forms of sacramentality. In his dialogue *Idiota de sapientiae* (The Layman on Wisdom), he allows for two distinct forms: the written word, and all other perceptual objects, referred to as ‘natural nourishment’ or ‘the senses’ books.’ The allowance of two distinct forms reflects a socially articulated understanding of sacramentality. The dialogue takes place between a wealthy Roman orator and a humble layman. The orator argues that the true source of nourishment is in the written word.26 The layman, representing Cusanus’ own position, however, criticizes this definition as too restricted. Spiritual nourishment comes in part from writings, but is also attainable in the more general sensible experience of life, or what he refers to as ‘natural nourishment.’27 The existence of natural nourishment is apparent because “those who first devoted themselves to writing about wisdom did not derive their growth from the nourishment of books, which did not yet exist; rather, by means of natural foods they were brought unto the state of being grown men.”28 In addition to foods, Cusanus includes in this category of natural nourishment the most humble practices of daily life – even counting money, weighing and measuring items, and commerce.29

At other points, Cusanus describes perceptual objects beyond the written word as ‘the senses’ books.’ The senses delight in perceptible objects because they provide physical nourishment and feed the intellect: “Just as sensible life reasonably seeks its sustenance in the various perceptual objects by which at some previous point it was nourished, so the intellect pursues intelligible food by means of perceptual indicators once reason has been applied.”30 In this function, perceptual objects became ‘the senses’ books’:

26 *Idiota de sapientiae*, 497.
27 Ibid. 498.
28 Ibid, 497.
29 Ibid. 499.
in these books the intention of the Divine Intellect is described in perceptible figures. And the intention is the manifestation of God the Creator. Therefore, if regarding any given thing you are puzzled as to why it is such and such or why it exists in the way it does, there is an answer: because the Divine Intellect willed to manifest itself to the perceptual cognition in order to be known perceptibly...Thus, if you proceed by way of touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing, and if you consider carefully how each sense has a power of knowing, then you will find that all objects in the perceptible world are ordained to the service of cognitive [nature]...in these different ways the manifestation of the Divine Intellect is so very wonderful.\footnote{De Beryllo, 824.}

The senses books integrated the Word into the ritual edifice of the church. First, because Christ was the Word incarnate, he was properly an object of the senses: “Jesus, who is blessed forever, who is the goal not only of all understanding (because he is truth) but also of all sensing (because he is life).”\footnote{De docta ignorantia, vol. 3, 142.} Christ could be read in scripture as well as liturgy, which was a form of natural nourishment on par with other human arts and practices. All rituals were a human art, and “all human arts are ‘images’ of the Infinite Divine Art.”\footnote{Idiota de mente, 537.} Discussing the devotional use of icons, Cusanus writes that rituals develop out of the necessity determined by human physiology. Though the sensible, rational, and intellectual parts of the human soul were imperfect means of apprehending the divine, they were nonetheless the only means of doing so. Through engagement with sensible figures which form a likeness to the divine, one may “acquire in this lifetime, through a most pleasant savoring, a foretaste of that meal of eternal happiness to which we are called in the Word of Life by the Gospel of the Ever-blessed Christ.”\footnote{De visione dei, 680.}
The concept of the Word in Cusanus relates to the broader late medieval sensorium in several important ways. His understanding is characteristic of the later medieval tendency to diversify and expand sensual access to the divine. Because of this, there is no perception of contrariety between the Word and ritual – both are constituent parts of the sensible edifice of the late medieval church. The invocation of both written word and the experience of daily life as sources of nourishment builds on St. Bernard’s distinction between the liber scripturae and liber experientiae, and is thus closely related to the phenomenological mode of ritual participation described in chapter one. This position acknowledges and reflects the limited access to the written word in a structurally illiterate society, and opens itself to diverse alternative modes of sensual participation. Related to this, Cusanus considered the human interface with the Word not as an exclusively visual problem, nor an aural problem, but as a synaesthetic, or multi-sensory problem. To be sure, Cusanus considered sight, and to a lesser extent, hearing, to be the more refined, intellectual senses, but because the Word was legible in the so-called ‘books of the senses,’ all five senses could mediate between it and the human intellect.

Further, while much has been said about the importance of transcending the senses in Cusanus’ thought, these interpretations ignore the stubborn fact that when it came to the actual day-to-day functioning of the senses, Cusanus was entirely orthodox in his adherence to the theoretical paradigm which made the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries – to borrow the phrasing a Milner – a “coherent and distinct period in the history of the senses.”35 Cusanus thus understood the act of sensing as an affective relationship perceiving subject and perceived object. The human encounter with the Word is only comprehensible through this relationship, mediated through all five senses:

The spirit, then, that is directed to the eyes is very swift. Accordingly, when it encounters a certain external obstacle, it is turned back and the soul is stimulated to take note of that which is encountered. Likewise, in the ears that spirit is turned back by voice, and the soul is stimulated to apprehend….so also smelling occurs in dense air…which, upon entering the nostrils, impedes that spirit because of its fuminess, so that the soul is stimulated to apprehend the odor of these fumes. Likewise, when something moist and spongy enters the palate, that spirit is impeded, and the soul is stimulated for tasting. Furthermore, the soul uses as an instrument-of-touch the spirit diffused throughout the bone marrow. For when some solid object presents an obstacle to the body, the spirit is impinged upon and somehow impeded; and from here comes a sense of touching.36

Cusanus thus provides a schematic sketch of the sensible Word in fifteenth century piety. This model evaluated the relationship between Word and body in relations to five senses. Even as he articulated this concept, however, several developments contributed to an alternative model and profoundly shaped the notion of the Word in the early Reformation.

4.3 – The Celebration of the Word: Humanist Sacramentality

The first three chapters of this dissertation gestured towards some of these changes. The Reformation appropriated late medieval trends which placed higher value on the direct declamation of meaning through the written and spoken word. To put it in Cusanus’ terms, the more general category of ‘senses’ books’ were rejected in favor of the written word found in actual books. This is not to misconstrue this as a tendency towards de-sensualization. Focus on the sacramentality of the written word rather shifted the religious sensorium away from a five-

36 Idiota de mente, 564-565.
sense model towards a two-sense model. While the lower senses of smell, taste, and touch were de-sacralized, the cultural elaboration of vision and hearing in religious contexts increased.

Developments within humanism at the turn of the sixteenth century accelerated this trend. The label humanism represents a diversity of perspectives and practices from the later middle ages, but if this diversity can be understood as a coherent movement of any kind, it must be as a cultural and educational project. Humanists advocated an educational program centered on the disciplines of rhetoric, grammar, history, poetry and moral philosophy. Culturally, a taste for elegance, neatness and clarity of style and literary form “distinguishes the writings of many, if not all, Renaissance scientists and philosophers.” The study of ancient texts, alongside the disciplines of rhetoric, grammar, history, poetry and morals, were not ends in themselves, but rather means to an end. The end was the “promotion of contemporary written and spoken eloquence….in short, humanism was concerned with how ideas were obtained and expressed, rather than with the actual substance of those ideas.” As an educational project, then, humanism cohered around a celebration of the written and spoken Word. In this context, humanists developed several important tools which centered the written word as the primary locus of the holy.

The most important tool deployed by the educational program of humanism was the principle of ad fontes. The principle of ad fontes gave priority to the written word of antiquity, approached directly as it appeared in its original language rather than through the interpretive

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38 Ibid, 30.
40 Ibid.
lenses of medieval glosses and commentaries. This principle applied to both secular and religious works in classical Greek and Latin, as well as Scripture itself in Greek or Hebrew.\textsuperscript{41}

Humanism also took advantage of the new print technology to make Scripture more widely available for study in its original languages. Alongside the dissemination of Scripture in print, humanists developed a new interpretive apparatus to displace the medieval commentaries and glosses: manuals and dictionaries for classical languages, especially Greek and Hebrew developed into increasingly refined instruments. In the fifteenth century, such instruments had been available only in fragmentary form, and limited in their circulation as manuscripts. The works of several prominent humanists in central Europe changed this at the turn of the sixteenth century. In Greek, the most important advance came in the work of Erasmus. In 1505, he published his \textit{Adnotationes}, which criticized the accuracy of the Latin Vulgate against older Greek texts. His purpose in doing so was to demonstrate the power of philological methods when applied to Scripture. He applied these methods systematically to his edition of the New Testament, published by Froben in Basel in 1516 as the \textit{Novum instrumentum}. With its publication, Erasmus intended to provide an authoritative text of the Greek New Testament by collating different manuscripts from Europe and Byzantium, and produce a new Latin translation alongside it which reflected the original Greek more precisely than the Vulgate. He hoped to offer his educated audience unmediated access to the Word of God, by which he meant not only its content but also its form: through the style of his translation, he aimed to capture the vitality of the original Greek text.\textsuperscript{42} The most significant advances in the study of Hebrew began in fifteenth century Italy, but by the early sixteenth century, the geography had shifted to the Holy

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
Roman Empire and the Swiss Confederacy. In 1505, Thomas Anshelm was the first in Germany to acquire Hebrew typeface. The following year, Anshelm used that typeface to print the first Hebrew work north of the Alps: the *De rudimentis hebraicis* of Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522), the most prominent Christian Hebraist of the period. From 1501 to 1600, Burnett estimates that 52% of all the Hebrew books published for a Christian audience in Europe were published in German-speaking lands. Of the types of Hebraica produced in this period, 44% were grammars, 33% were the Hebrew Bible either in partial or complete form, and 17% were dictionaries, reference- or textbooks. The remaining 5% were a miscellany of Kabbalah, historical writings, and rabbinical commentaries.

The underlying premise of the *ad fontes* movement, especially among northern humanists engaged in the recovery of Scripture in its original tongues, was the power of the Word. Humanists understood this power in sensory terms: the Word was not an abstract and disembodied spiritual force, nor was it simply ‘the Bible’; rather, it was the voice of God speaking, teaching, and commanding. This understanding of the Word was a reflection of the core values placed on rhetorical elegance and clarity. Reuchlin expressed this in his treatise *De verbo mirifico* (*The Miracle-working Word*). Describing the importance of learning Hebrew, he wrote “the language of the Hebrews is simple, pure, uncorrupted, holy, brief, and consistent. It is the language in which God spoke with man, and men with angels face to face rather than through

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an interpreter.\textsuperscript{48} Here Reuchlin projected onto the Hebrew language all the ideals of humanism as an educational project: the language (Latin ‘sermo’ – which could be translated as the Word) was expressively elegant, unmediated and in no need of interpretation: its meaning was transparent to the reader and the listener. He contrasted this with what he perceived to be the purely outward forms of ceremonial life characteristic of contemporary Judaism. These ceremonies were not entirely without value, as they served to increase devotions, but the superior form of worship conveyed through “salutary power of words” had devolved onto Christians.\textsuperscript{49}

This conviction in the Word as self-evident and self-sufficient informed another key principle of the humanist program: that a biblically literate laity was the key to reforming church and society. This position was advocated most forcefully by Erasmus in his \textit{Enchiridion}, which is regarded as one of the most influential humanist works to circulate in Europe in the first decades of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{50} First published in 1503, it was reprinted in 1509 and then again in 1515. This third printing was the most impactful: from 1515-1521 the text went through twenty three editions.\textsuperscript{51} Erasmus’ audience was the educated laity, whom he considered the most important resource of the church. By educated, Erasmus meant primarily alphabetically-literate and reasonably comfortable; he therefore had in mind a predominantly urban laity. The regular reading of Scripture among these segments of society was to form the basis of a new lay piety. He had little patience for ‘common people’ whom he criticized as corrupted, given to superstition, and too easily delighted by the outward ceremonies of the church. In the \textit{Enchiridion}, he argued to his audience that such people should be ignored, as they provided no

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{De verbo mirifico} (1494) in \textit{Reuchlin: Sämtliche Werke}, ed. Widu-Wolfgang Ehlers, vol. 1, part 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996), 162: Simplex autem sermo purus, incorruptus, sanctus, brevis et constans hebraeorum est, quo Deus cum homine et homines cum angelis locuti perhibentur coram et non per interpretam facie ad faciem.”


\textsuperscript{50} McGrath, \textit{Reformation Thought}, 53, 138.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 53.
model for good living. Instead of listening to the truth of the Word, they were those who “in the Platonic cave were bound by their affections, admiring empty images as the truest of things.”

The model of piety suggested by Erasmus was St. Paul, who subtly comprehended the Word through his mastery of languages, and reflected its vitality with the elegance of his pen. This vision of Paul was produced from a reading of the Pauline epistles through the lens of the ancient church fathers Jerome, and especially Origen. Erasmus refuted claim by Jerome that Paul had lacked a sufficient mastery of Greek by reading Paul through the lens of Origen. Under this reading, Paul’s Greek style was perfectly suited to the allegorical mode described by Origen. This mode has its origins in Platonic streams of thought, and served the true meaning of the Word more faithfully than a literal reading. Thus, Paul functioned as a model of learned piety: as the humble follower of Christ who applied his rhetorical skills to the Word in his clear teaching, moral exhortation, and consolation of the suffering.

The humanist celebration of the Word served to separate the written and spoken Word from ‘mere ceremony’ in late medieval sensory culture. The locus of sacramentality centered on the Word, and is an example of what Bossy has called ‘migrations of the holy.’ Whereas Cusanus had placed the written word and ritual in the same overarching category of sensible sources of spiritual nourishment, Erasmus sharply distinguished between the two, and used the written word of Scripture as a basis for his condemnation of ‘external’ ceremonies of the late

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52 Enchiridon (Basel: Froeben, 1535), canon sextus [not paginated]: “Et quoniam ex tempore scribendi aliud ex alio in mente uenit, subtexam et sextam regulam, superioribus quodamodo cognata, tam necessariam ad salutem universis, quam a paucis curae habitam, ea est ut animus ad Christum anhelantis, a vulgi tum factis, tum opinionibus quam maxime dissentiat, nec aliunde quam ab uno Christo pietatis exemplo petatur…Vulgus sunt, quicunque; in specu illo Platonicus uincti suis affectibus, inanes rerum imagines pro uerissimis rebus admirantur…De uulgo autem Christianorum sic existima, nullum unquam fuisse corruptius, ne apud ethnics quidem quantum adopiniones de moribus attinet.”


54 Bossy, Christianity in the West, 153-172.
medieval church. The technical question of whether such things were *adiaphora* to the deeper mysteries of faith therefore went by the wayside. We have already seen a clear example of this in chapter three, in which Erasmus opposed the Word of scripture to incense ritual. To a certain extent, it is true that Erasmus considered the Word properly to be an object of inward spiritual devotion, but as a practical matter, the presence of the Word in the Christian community was both aural and visual. Erasmus thus encouraged readers to think of Christ not as an ‘empty voice,’ but as one teaching charity, simplicity, patience and purity. The devil was anything that turned one away from this voice, and so it was imperative that both the eyes and body be pure: one was to direct one’s gaze “to Christ alone.”

The rhetorical and linguistic capabilities of teachers, of which Paul was a model, were to aid in this process by communicating in as transparent and unadorned fashion as possible the image and voice of the Word. As Erasmus wrote, “the image of Christ is most clearly depicted in the Gospel.” The Word offered a level of totality from which external rituals were excluded. The clarity of the Word provided not merely the physical image of Christ, but also a transparent window onto the innermost part of Christ’s soul, laid open through the practice of devotional reading:

You honor the image of Christ’s face formed in stone or wood, or painted with colors.

With much greater reverence is to be honored the image of his mind, which by the power of the Holy Spirit is expressed in the letters of the Gospels. No Apelles ever thus depicted with brush the lines and figure of the body with their eloquence. The image of the mind appears, namely in Christ, who when he was existing as pure simplicity and

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56 *Enchiridion*, canon quartus: “Christum vero esse puta, non uocem inanem, sed nihil aliud, quam charitatem, simplicitatem, patientiam, puritatem, breviter quicquid ille docuit.”
57 Ibid: “sit oculos tuus, et totum corpus tuum lucidum erit: ad solum Christum tanquam ad unicum et summum bonum spectet.”
58 Ibid, canon quintus: “Expressissima Christi imago in euangelio [est].”
truth, absolutely nothing could be of difference between the archetype of his divine breast \([pectus]\) and the learned image of his speech…so nothing is more similar to Christ than the word of Christ, translated \([redditum]\) from the most holy innermost sanctum of his breast \([pectus]\).\(^{59}\)

The foregoing quotation highlights the relationship of the Word to contemporary sensual ritual in several important ways. First, Erasmus opposed the sacramentality of traditional Christianity, here embodied by the practice of devotion to icons, to the sacramentality of devotional reading of the Gospels. On a sensory level, the act of devotional reading was an affective relationship between the perceiving human subject and perceived Word. In his treatise *De civilitate morum puerilium* (On the Civility of Manners in Children, 1530), he articulated this relationship when he observed that “reading has sharpened seeing, and seeing has enriched reading and writing.”\(^{60}\) Yet the reliability of vision in religious worship was completely contingent upon the objects to which it was directed. Eire has overlooked this important point in his interpretation of Erasmus by claiming that he represents a tendency among humanists to emphasize the utter epistemological alterity of God and consequently reject mediation of sensual worship.\(^{61}\) To be sure, Erasmus believed – with Cusanus – that the truest sense of God utterly transcended human knowledge, but this rather abstruse theological observation had little use in practical worship. Also like Cusanus, Erasmus emphasized the sensual in worship, but his emphasis on the sensual was much more restricted. This sensual restriction nonetheless heightened the sacramental efficacy of the visible Word. Indeed, as we see in the foregoing quotation from the *Enchiridion*,

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\(^{59}\) Honorus imaginem vultus CHRISTI saxo, lignoue deformata aut fucatam coloribus, multo religiosus honoranda mentis illius imago, que spiritus sancti artificio, expressa est literis euangelicis. Nullus Apelles sic effingit penicillo liniamienta [sic] figuramque; corporis, ut in oratone cuiusque; relucet imago mentis, praesertim in Christe, qui cum esset summa simplicitas veritasque; nihil omnino poterat esse dissimilitudinis inter archetypum diuini pectoris et inde ductam [sic] imaginem sermonis. Vt nihil patri similius, quam filius, patris uerbum, ex intimo illius corde promananstita Christo nihil similius, quam Christi verbum de pectoris illius sanctissimi adytis redditum.


other objects of vision typically found in traditional Christian worship, namely those produced by visual artists, were circumspect. By foregrounding the reliability and transparency of the written Word, Erasmus reflected broader cultural concerns of his day regarding the reliability of the sense of sight. As Stuart Clark has recently shown, vision in many contexts in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries “came to be characterized by uncertainty and unreliability.”

This was particularly true of the visual arts, which saw many important technical advances during this period, such as the development of linear perspective. Such advances allowed artists to capture likeness with increasing refinement, yet at the same time incited intellectuals and theologians to consider with renewed urgency the human vulnerability to visual illusion and deception. In this regard, the reliability of the word paintings of Scripture was all the more significant to Erasmus.

The visual Word mediated the divine in a manner distinct from late medieval ritual. This difference is apparent in Erasmus’ choice of the word *redditum* to describe the communication of the Word from within the heart of Christ to the eye of the reader. This terminology is fundamentally different than the imagery more commonly used in the late medieval devotional texts discussed in chapters one and two above. Most commonly in such texts, the Word or love of Christ is described in liquid terms: it is ‘overflowing’ (*überflüssig*) or ‘pouring out’ (*ausgießen*) of his heart onto and into the reader. The use of *redditum* here reflects a much different understanding of the relationship between reader and Word. The power of the naked Word was sufficient and did not require the evocation of meaning through sensory or corporeal

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64 For an overview of imagery of Christ’s heart in fifteenth century Germany, see Carl Richstätter, *Die Herz-Jesu-Verehrung des deutschen Mittelalters*, 2 vols. (Paderborn: Bonifacius, 1919), especially volume two, which covers prayers, poems, and images.
terms. In fact, such tactics were undesirable because they obscured ‘transparent’ representation of the Word.

Devotional reading mediated access to Word not only visually, but aurally as well. A growing body of scholarship has established devotional reading in the time of Erasmus as a practice of reading aloud. Writing and the Word were never far removed from their physical and social contexts. As Erasmus noted in his Adages: “writing is a kind of voice, but somehow it imitates the real voice.” Thus, the work of ‘translation’ of the Word from the heart of Christ to the reader was also speaking clearly and hearing correctly. In her close study of the philological methods Erasmus deployed in the Novum instrumentum, Marjorie Boyle has shown that in translating the Greek logos (word) in the second edition of the Johannine Gospel (1519), Erasmus discarded St. Jerome’s use of verbum in favor of sermo because he believed the more mellifluous sounds of sermo and its declensions would better “persuade the ear to the Christian faith.” Further, in one of his Colloquies between two students, Erasmus drew attention to the value of hearing sermons. One student, Gaspar, states that he prefers to pray silently “with my mind rather than my lips” and that he would rather prefer to read or say the Gospel to himself than listen to a bad preacher. The other student disputes this, claiming that “the living voice is

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more impressive,” a proposition to which Gaspar eventually concedes: “I prefer to listen if the preacher is tolerable.”

The kind of worship conceived of by Erasmus was inseparable from the humanist celebration of the Word in educational and cultural contexts. In the Enchiridion, Erasmus admonished Christian fathers that one of their primary duties was to begin their children’s education as early as possible. He instructed them to keep wanton love songs “from their ears”, not to let them hear their mothers weep over the loss of worldly property, and not to let the children hear fathers wrongfully rebuking or condemning others. As Erasmus explained, nothing settles in the soul quite so deeply and permanently as that heard and learned at the earliest ages. Erasmus provided an overview of his epistemology in his his De ratione studii (On the Rule of Studies, 1512). Like Cusanus, there were two categories of knowledge: that of things, and that of words. Unlike Cusanus, though, Erasmus asserted the primacy of the knowledge of words, even though it was generally accepted that “knowledge of things is the more important.” He wrote that:

the ‘uninitiated’ as they say, while they hasten to learn about things, neglect concern for the word and badly with affected economy, they suffer the greatest loss. Because things are not learned by any other means than through signs of sounds (per uocum notas), one

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69 Enchiridion, canon sextus: “paecipua Christianorum cura hue intendi deberet, ut pueri iam inde ab incunabulis, inter ipsas blanditias nutricum, et parentum oscula, inter literatorum manus, persuasiones imbibant Christo dignas, propter ea quod nihil uel altius insidit animo, uel haeret tenaci, quam quod rudibus (ut iniquit Fabius) annis inditur. Procul procul [sic] ab auriculis infantilibus, amatoriae cantiunculae, quas domi forisque; contillant Christiani, spureiores, quam unquam ethniciorum ulgus recerperit. Non audiant accepta iactura rei materculam eiulam: non amissa sorore, se miseram ac destitutam clamitantem. Non audiant patrem igniam opprobantem ei, qui inuiam non cum foenere retulit…” [emphases mine].
70 Ibidem.
inexperienced with the power of words (*uim sermonis*) is likewise inexperienced with things in all respects: necessarily blinded, deluded, and deranged in judgment.\(^\text{71}\)

Because the word was prior to the thing in Erasmus, hearing and seeing had primacy of place. The method of education according to Erasmus was largely a matter of memorizing through repetition. Languages must be learned through constant aural exposure to good speech, and reading the most refined examples of the written forms of languages. One also had to repeat words, ideas and concepts to oneself aloud.\(^\text{72}\) To supplement verbal repetition, Erasmus recommended surrounding oneself with written words: “Likewise, you will inscribe certain brief but notable sayings such as aphorisms, proverbs, opinions at the fronts or ends of individual books, certain others you will engrave on rings or cups; several others you will paint before doors, and on walls, or even in glass windows, so that nowhere will it not appear to the eyes.”\(^\text{73}\)

The priority of the word also provided the basis for Erasmus’ critique of the broader late medieval Aristotelian system. In his treatise *De pueris instituendis (On the Education of Children, 1529)*, Erasmus described how neglect of verbal expression as the basis of all knowledge and learning had eroded the educational system of late medieval Europe:

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\(^{71}\) The earliest authorized version of *De ratione studii* appeared in the first official edition of his *De copia* (Paris: Bade, 1512). See Craig Thompson, “Introduction,” in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. Craig Thompson, vol. 23, part 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), xliii. Here we refer to a later version from Strasbourg: *De ratione studij, ac legendi, interpretandique auctores libellus aureus* (Stasburg: Knobloch, 1521), fol. A2v:

> Principio duplex omnino uidetur cognitio, rerum, ac uerborum. Verborum prior, rerum potior. Sed nonnulli dum αμίπτοις (vt aiunt) ωοσίμ ad res discendas festinant, sermonis curam negligunt, et male affectato compendio, in maxima incidunt dispensa. Etenim cum res non nisi per uocum notas cognoscantur, qui sermonis uim non calleat, is passim in rerum quoque; judicio caecutiat, hallucinetur, deliret necesse est.


\(^{73}\) Ibid, A4v: Item si quaedam breviter, sed insigniter dicta uelut apophthegmata, proverbia, sententias, in frontibus, atque; in calicibus singularum codicum inscribes, quaedam annulius, aut puculis insculpes, nonnulla pro foribus, et in parietibus, aut uitreis etiam fenestris depinges, quo nusquam non occurat oculis, quod eruditionem adiuuet.
the aim of instruction at the first stage should be to teach children to speak clearly and accurately, a matter in which both parent and nurse share the responsibility. Language, indeed, is not simply an end in itself, as we see when we reflect that through its neglect whole disciplines have been lost, or, at least, corrupted. Think what Theology, Medicine and Law have lost from this cause” (199).

In the *Enchiridion*, Erasmus also argued that the study of natural philosophy must systematically be subordinated to the study of Scripture. Further, he blamed the Aristotelians’ lack of language skills for their inability to address allegory, without which, he argued “scripture is sterile.” As he wrote, the mystery of the Word “can be cold if not spiced by the powers of eloquence and pleasantness of speech.” Erasmus suggested replacing Aristotle with Plato, Dionysius, Origen, and Augustine to correct this: not only because such writers offered a more appropriate hermeneutic for the deciphering the Word, but because stylistically their speech and writing was a ‘clearer’ and more elegant vehicle for communicating. These philosophers were preferable:

not only because they have many opinions completely agreeable to our religion, but also because the form and fashion of their speech, which as I have said is full of allegories, comes nearer to the Word of sacred scripture. It is therefore unremarkable that they have treated more fittingly theological allegories, who by virtue of copious speech were able to enrich and clothe the thing, no matter how barren and frigid.

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74 *Enchiridion*, canon quartus: “Literas amas, recte, si propter Christum. Sin ideo tantum amas, ut scias, ibi consistis, unde gradum facere oportebat. Quod si literas expetis, ut illis adiutus, Christum in arcanis literis latentem elarius perspicias, perspectum ames, cognitum atque; amatum communices, aut fruaris, accinge te ad studia literarum.”

75 *Enchiridion*, canon quintus: “Citra allegoriam sterilis est scriptura.”

76 Ibid: Altera quod non potest non frigere mysterium, quod non eloquentiae uiribus, ac dicendi lepore quodam condiatur.

77 Ibid: At hos posteriores praefert Augustinus, non solum quod plerasque, sententias habent admodum consentaneas nostrae religioni, uerumetiam [sic] quod ipsum dictionis genus figuratum, ut diximus et allegorijs frequens, propius
Erasmus presented himself as rejecting the Aristotelian system, which necessarily included the traditional affective theory of sensing. Yet his own understanding of the physical effect of verbal eloquence on the body of the listener or reader differed very little from the affective model. Erasmus represented himself as recovering the rhetorical tradition of Cicero and combining it with the religious and philosophical traditions of Augustine, Origen, and Platonic thinkers. He perceived these traditions to stand in opposition to the Aristotelianism that pervaded the late medieval church and schools. Mary Carruthers has shown, however, that there was much more overlap and cross-pollination between these two traditions than Erasmus perceived, particularly on the question of rhetoric. Both Cicero and Augustine understood the effect of rhetoric on the body in manner rather similar to affective sensory theories associated with Aristotelianism, as a kind of social-sensory affect on the individual members of the audience produced by the voice of the speaker. Rather than disappearing only to be recovered by humanists in the Renaissance, this understanding of rhetoric actually persisted throughout the Middle Ages. Throughout the Enchiridion, Erasmus had recourse to Augustine’s De doctrina christiana to explain the proper relationship to the Word. As Carruthers explains, Augustine followed Cicero’s example, “playing on a favored debate in ancient rhetoric concerning the relative importance of wisdom and eloquence, Augustine observes that those who speak eloquently are heard more pleasantly (“suaviter”), those who speak wisely are heard more beneficially (“salubriter”).”

He ultimately concludes:

Wisdom with eloquence is best, for there are churchmen who have commented on God’s eloquent words not only wisely but with eloquence. Dulcis eloquentia, verba dulcia, vox suavis are medieval tropes as commonly in use as dulce carmen, and indeed the phrase

accedit ad sermonem sacrae scripturae. Non igitur mirum si commodius tractauerunt allegorias theologicas, qui dicendi copia rem quamlibet, etiam ieiunam ac frigidam locupletare et conuestire poterant.

“voces dulces/suaves” can refer to voices singing or speaking, to the words spoken or sung, and especially to the well-crafted words of oratory. Sweet-talking is “sweet” because it persuades, by reason (one hopes), but essentially persuasion must invigorate the will, enabling it to act.79

By reason of its association with rhetoric, the underlying notion of sensing as an affective relationship between perceiving subject and perceived object was an important dimension of the sacramental efficacy of the Word among humanists like Erasmus. His understanding of the act of sensing differed little from the Aristotelian natural philosophy which he represented himself as opposing. The power of the affective relationship was increased because of its opposition to the broader sacramental world of the late medieval church. Because Erasmus rejected the sensible mediation of the divine through what he thought of as merely ‘external’ ceremonies, sensible mediation through the Word became all the more significant. This was not a de-sensualizing trend, but rather a refocusing and reinforcement of the sensuality of one particular aspect of the late medieval piety: hearing and seeing the Word under the humanist reading became an instrument for opposing and disciplining the unrestrained sensuality of traditional Christianity. By setting up this opposition, the educational and cultural project of humanism as exemplified by Erasmus approached the problem of sensible worship in a manner fundamentally different from Cusanus. Both agreed that ultimate knowledge of the divine was beyond human means, but Cusanus argued that the written word of Scripture and sensible objects of worship, while technically both adiaphora to the deeper mystery of faith, were useful in that they offered two socially distinct cognitive modes of accessing the divine. In the humanist reading of Erasmus, by contrast, neither the Word nor the sensible objects of rituals could be adiaphora in the strict sense of the term: the Word was absolutely central to worship, while external

79 Ibid, 1009.
ceremonies could never be purely neutral or indifferent because they were always already constructed in opposition to the Word.

**4.4 – Ethnography and Idolatry: Sensuous Ceremonies and Unchristians**

A second cultural change in the later fifteenth century further contributed to the construction of contrariety between a fetishized Word and sensual ritual. The development of early ‘ethnography’ in this period is critical to understanding the history of ritual and sensory perception because one of the primary subjects such writings treated was the ritual life of other cultures. Early ethnographic writing emerged as one of the cultural consequences of the 1453 conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul) by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II. Many responses to this event were characterized by dreadful anticipation. Some, especially humanists, perceived the Ottomans as a threat to the cultural heritage of the Renaissance. Most viewed the event through a religious lens, interpreting it as a sign of the Last Days. Alongside this inward, apocalyptic, turn, 1453 also marked the beginning of a significant re-orientation of European culture towards the outside world. Accelerated by the European encounter with the Americas after 1492, the second half of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century was a period in which the European gaze turned outward onto other peoples on an unprecedented scale. The disciplines of geography, cartography, cosmography, and ethnography mapped and described lands, peoples and customs. Aided by the new print technology, the knowledge produced in this

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endeavor reached ever widening segments of society, even in the landlocked German-speaking territories of the Holy Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{82}

While it is not correct to think of these writings as objective ethnography in the modern sense of the word, they made an important break by claiming as sources of authority eyewitnesses or reliable secondhand testimonials.\textsuperscript{83} In Germany, many of the early ethnographic publications were simply digests of letters, reports and travel narratives of Portuguese and Spanish explorers and merchants. Such accounts were of course far from objective, betraying significant religious bias as well as a deference to the authority of tradition represented by ancient Roman and Greek ethnography.\textsuperscript{84} Nonetheless, these sources provide an invaluable source for tracing attitudes towards religious rituals – not just rituals of other cultures, but those of Christendom as well. Tracing the development of ethnography through the 1520s reveals how it profoundly shaped reformers’ attitudes towards the sensuality of ritual behavior. The ethnographic turn in effect held up a mirror to Christians for reflection on their own ritual practices. Reformation attitudes towards ritual and the senses cannot be understood without looking into this mirror.

Carina Johnson has recently placed Cusanus’ \textit{De pace fidei} and in the context of early ethnography.\textsuperscript{85} As we saw above, Cusanus accepted the late medieval notion of rituals as a multi-sensory means for humans to access the divine. This premise is operative in \textit{De pace fidei}.


\textsuperscript{84} Carina Johnson, “Idolatrous Cultures.”
but the dialogue’s central question was whether or not God would tolerate a diversity of rites across the globe. Instead of condemning differences between religions, Cusanus exploited the notion of adiaphora in an attempt to explain the diversity of ritual practice as a product of historical evolution. This diversity traced its origins back to the first human societies who used ritual as a sensible means to comprehend and worship the one God of creation. As humans spread across the globe, practice diversified to reflect particular cultural contexts, but was rooted in worship of the one true God. Cusanus thus wrote: “the varieties of rites will not be disturbing, for they were instituted and received as perceptible signs of true faith. Now, the signs admit of change, though the signified object does not.” At the same time, there was a practical threshold to this permissive position. In dialogue with the Indian, the Word explained that idolatry occurs when devotion is misdirected at the sensible: “Images that lead to knowledge of the things which are admissible in the true worship of the one God are not condemned. But when they lead away from true worshipping of the one God as Sovereign…then rightly the images ought to be broken, because they deceive and turn away from the truth.” Cusanus ultimately believed that the necessity and benefit of sensual worship outweighed the threat of idolatry. Without rituals, he wrote, “faith is dead.”

Justifying Cusanus’ claims about rituals and ritual diversity were novel sources of authority. Cusanus had recourse to scripture throughout De pace fidei, but the dialogue derives its primary sources of authority from its appearance as a neutral, comparative, representation of a diversity of practices and perspectives. The dialogue takes place between the Word of God, the apostles Peter and Paul, and representatives from seventeen cultures, or religious sects: Greek,

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86 Ibid, 602-603.
87 Cusanus, De Pace fidei, 662.
88 Ibid, 642.
89 Ibid, 664.
90 Cusanus, De pace fidei, 669.
Turkish, Italian, Arab, Indian, Chaldean, Jewish, Scythian, French, Persian, Syrian, Spanish, German, Tartar, Armenian, Bohemian, and English. This set western European Christian ritual in a comparative spectrum with other religions, and authorized its interpretation in a new domain in addition to the more traditional spheres of late medieval theology and natural philosophy. These concepts proved deeply influential to other ethnographic projects of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Carina Johnson suggests the neutral description of foreign practices persisted into the 1520s, until the Reformation shifted new critical attention on the relationship between internal faith and external practice. In the sixteenth century, she writes: “descriptions of cultures became freighted with questions of true or false practices and doctrines. Reformation debates on the significance of practices and doctrine reshaped the meanings of idolatry and, consequently, the evaluations of cultures believed to practice some form of it.” Only in the Reformation-era did idolatry in ethnographic writing become “a sign of unreformed religion mired in superstition…interchangeable with human sacrifice and Jewish error.”

Ethnographic writings in Germany from the late 1490s through the 1520s provided comparative descriptions of ritual practices which occasionally appear relatively neutral, but they too were freighted with questions of true and false religion. They do resemble modern ethnographic writing more closely in that they actually used eyewitness accounts or what were considered reliable secondary testimony as sources of authority. Nonetheless, they translated non-Christian ritual practices into a cultural field of experience legible to a European readership, and in doing so express much greater concern with the problem of idolatry in non-Christian ritual practice than Johnson suggests. Further, they overlap with contemporaneous ‘ethnographies’ of Jews which further underscored the threat of error, superstition, and idolatry in foreign rituals.

91 Carina Johnson, “Idolatrous Cultures,” 604-607.
93 Ibid, 609.
Finally, by elevating sensual ritual to the level of discourse, to borrow Bourdieu’s phrase, ethnography revealed dangerous similarities between idolatrous foreign ritual and Christian ritual. Even the Mass, very center of late medieval Christian piety, was reflected in the distorted mirror of ethnography.

In Germany, the earliest and most important example of this paradigm was the *Newe vnbekanthe landte*, a translation of the Fracanzano da Montalboddo’s *Paesi novamente ritrovati*, which was a compilation of letters and reports of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian explorers. The work is divided into five books. Book one includes the letters of Alvise de Cadomosto, focusing largely on the western coast of Africa. Books two and three describe voyages from Lisbon to Calcutta. Book four concerns voyages made for the King of Spain to Western Indies and South America, including summaries of the letters and reports by Columbus and Alonso Niño on Hispaniola and neighboring islands, and Vincente Pinzon on the Amazon. Book five includes excerpts from Vespucci’s *Mundus Novus*, several more reports by other Spaniards in the West Indies, and concludes with a report on Calcutta and surrounding territories by a man identified as Joseph of India. The Nuremberg physician Jobst Ruchamer edited and translated the text into German. As he explained in his preface, he undertook this project to introduce to a German audience the new and unusual lands, creatures, natural wealth, peoples and customs encountered by Europeans in the last decades of the fifteenth century.

The *Newe vnbekanthe landte* claimed authority by presenting eyewitness accounts or reliable second hand testimony as neutral, comparable descriptions. As Ruchamer explained in his preface, the descriptions of unusual practices provided no evidence of cultural superiority or inferiority, but rather were to be viewed comparatively so that people “might inquire and

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95 *Newe vnbekanthe landte*, preface (not paginated).
recognize the great and marvelous wonders of God the almighty, who had created and ornamented the world with so many types of people, lands, islands and strange creatures.”

In the letters and reports, one occasionally encounters explicit appeals to eyewitness authority. Describing the use of salt as a ritual medicine in Mali, Alvise de Cadomosto interjects himself into the narrative to assert eyewitness authority: “such is as I have understood these matters, and thus from creditable sources heard it, so that we might well believe it. And I am also one who has seen and experienced something of the world, and believe this and other things to be true.”

The significance of these claims goes beyond mere rhetorical posturing. The educated German audience for such writings placed a much higher value on what we would today consider objective, neutral reporting than has previously been assumed, and expressed considerable disapproval of sensational representations, particularly with regard to matters of foreign cultural and religious practices.

Despite the appearance of neutrality and eyewitness authority, ritual practices in the Newe vnbekeanthe landte were measured on a scale of idolatry which necessarily interpreted behavior through a Christian lens. The worst offenders were those who fit into the category of ‘heathens’ who worshipped the sensible world and were unable to recognize God. In his discussion of the Canary Islands, Alvise de Cadomosto described the religion of the inhabitants concisely: “they have no faith, and they do not recognize God, but many worship the sun, many

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96 Ibid: Auff das meniglich erkennen vnd erkündigen mochte/ die grossen wunderbarlichen wunder gottes des almechtigen/ der die welte mit so mancherley geschlechten der menschen/landen/jnsein vnd seltzamen creaturen (wie oben angezaygt ist) erschaffen vnd gezyerthe hat/ welches alles vor dyser zeite/ bey der Christenhaythe vnd ynser natione ist vnbekante gewesen.
98 Christine Johnson, “Buying Stories.”
the moon, and others the planets, and they have novel manners in idolatry.”

Above idolatrous heathens were those of a different religion without idolatry, but who also practiced superstitions. Cadomosto describes the inhabitants of the kingdom of ‘Gambra’ in this manner: “The first thing one must know is that their faith is generally without idolatry…they also have great faith in sorcery and other diabolical apparitions, but all recognize God. It is also this way with many of those there who have the faith of Muhammad.”

Finally, there were those who practiced a different faith contrary to the Word of God, but nonetheless “by no means” idolatrous or superstitious. Cadomosto describes the prayer services of the Muslims in Senegal in this manner. Invited by the king of Senegal to attend evening prayers in a mosque, Cadomosto recounts the ritual in close detail, describing the gestures of bowing to the floor and elevating one’s eyes to the heavens in unison. He was careful to note that these people did not practice idolatry or superstition, but when the king asked him his opinion of their worship, he responded that it was false and contrary to true faith. “It would be a good thing to hear the Word of God,” he added, because if it were accessible, many would abandon their old practices and convert to Christianity immediately.

There were also those who did not fit anywhere on the scale of idolatry. This was mostly the case for the peoples of the Americas described in books four and five of Neve vnbeckenthe landte. Columbus was largely silent on the religious customs of inhabitants of Hispaniola. He described one instance in which the people of Hispaniola emulate the Spaniards when they pray

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99 Neve vnbeckenthe landte, A4r: sie haben kein glawben/ erkennen auch got nicht/ Aber etliche anbetten die Sunne/ etliche den Mone vnd die andern Planeten/ Vnd haben newe weyse in jrer abgöterey.

100 Ibid, D1v: Zum ersten zu wissen/ das jr glaube der ist gemaynlich one abgöterey / in mancherlay weyse/ Sie haben auch grossen glauben an zawbereye/ vnd an andere teuffeliche gespenste/ aber alle erkennen sie got/ Es sein auch daselbst etliche die do haben des Machomets gelauben.

101 Ibid, B3r-B4r. Quoted at B4r: “Ich glaub warlichen das man jne gar leychtlichen hette mügen bekeren zum Cristlichen glauben…Vnd ich sagte jme das es ein gut ding were/ zu hören das wort gottes.”
the Ave Maria in the evening, kneeling on the ground while gazing at a crucifix. Columbus used this story to emphasize the gentleness and friendliness of the people of Hispaniola, which he immediately contrasted with the cannibals on a neighboring island. After a detailed description of how they carve up bodies and distribute pieces of the victim, Columbus pauses briefly to comment on their religion: “We were unable to determine or recognize what these people worshipped other than the sun and the moon.”

Describing the people of Capoverde as gentle and good-natured, Vespucci similarly had a difficult time interpreting their ritual behavior due to lack of any familiar points of orientation: “in these matters they maintain no order…thus they have no churches, and keep no laws, and so they are also not worshippers of idols.”

The discussions of the Americas, Africa and India in the Newe vnbekanthe landte drew a clear line between idolatrous and non-idolatrous peoples. Johnson interprets this division simply as a division Europeans perceived between civilized polities and uncivilized peoples. In this interpretation, idolatry functions as a neutral marker for those cultures judged to be ‘civilized.’ I claim here, however, that a more complicated process of cultural translation was at work. In order to locate peoples on the scale of idolatry, Europeans required structures and institutions familiar enough to their own experience of religion. In Africa and India, idolatry was legible because religious practices developed within a structured ritual environment sufficiently similar to that of traditional Christianity. The rites of African Muslims and Indian Hindus unfolded

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102 Ibid, G2v.
103 Ibid, G3r: “Wir mochten nicht wol vernemen oder erkennen/ was dises volcke anbetthe/ dann den himel Sunnen vnd Monde.”
104 Ibid, I3r: “…vn in disen dingen halten sie kein ordenunge Vber das/ so haben sie kein kyrchen/ halten auch kein gesatze nicht/ so sein sie auch nicht anbetter der abgötte.” The same comment appears in a brief pamphlet by Vespucci titled Von der new gefunnden Region (Nuremberg: Huber, 1506), A3v. The pamphlet was reprinted in German many times in the early sixteenth century. See Johnson, “Germany in the Age of Discovery”; Pieper, Die Vermittlung einer neuen Welt.
105 Carina Johnson, “Idolatrous Cultures,” 597-601.
106 I use cultural translation in the broad sense described in Peter Burke and R. Po-Chia Hsia’s introduction to Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) as translation of languages as well as new cultural, social, religious and political concepts.
within a designated sacred space (invariably identified by narrators as ‘their churches’ – *ihre Kirchen*) under sets of rules designating the words, gestures, and multi-sensory objects to be manipulated. These functioned as orientation devices for a European – and in this case German – readership, which encountered the foreign ritual within its own limited field of understanding shaped and determined by the ritual practices of traditional Christianity.

The reports of ‘Joseph,’ a native of India brought back to Portugal, provide a case in point. His reports, printed at the end of the *Newe vnbekanthe landte*, provide detailed and careful descriptions of the practices of both Christians and ‘heathens’ (Hindus) in India. The description of the Indian Christian liturgical year, as well as the number and form of sacraments, is structured around the question of the degree to which practices correspond with those in Europe – whether or not they are “the same as us” (*gleich als wir*) as the reports put it.  

Idolatry serves as the line of division between Christians and ‘heathens.’ As Joseph writes: “one calls heathens those who were there [in India] long ago, and have worshipped the idols, and many kinds of animal.” Joseph includes an explicit discussion of idolatrous practices using his native village of Caranganore as a case study. The description bears striking resemblances to Christianity:

…they offer in their temples the first fruits of the earth, such as figs, raisins, and other things. These heathens worship a single god, who is there the creator of all things, and say that it is one and three. And in its likeness, they have made an icon with three heads and it stands with folded hands. And they call it Tambram, and there is pulled up before this image a curtain which they open; thus do they administer to their idolatry...several of

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107 *Newe vnbekanthe landte*, L2r. In most respects, Indian Christian practices appeared the same, though funeral processions different in that Indian Christians anoint the body with holy water instead of oil, and all Indian Christians receive the sacrament of the Eucharist three times per year.

108 Ibid, K3v: *Die nente man hayden/ die do vor alten zeyten sein gewesen/ vnd haben angebethe die abgötter/ vnd mancherley geschlechte der Thiere.*
them complete their idolatrous worship in this manner: They have ordained several among them for this purpose with trumpets, horns and drums, which are appointed for the occasion in their churches. After this convocation is done, then the priest there, clothed with a great frock, stands at the altar and begins to sing several of their prayers, and then another answers him, and thereafter the people answer with a loud voice. This they do three times. Thereafter a priest goes to a door, naked and wearing on his head a large rose-garland. He has large eyes and two horns were also made, and he carries in his hands two unsheathed swords. He runs then to the same god of theirs, and pulls back the entire curtain before it, and one of the swords he has in his hands he gives to the priest standing over the altar, and thereafter with the other, thus naked, beats himself and gives himself many wounds. Thereafter he runs then bleeding into a fire which is prepared there in the temple, and jumps in and out. Then finally, with wounded eyes, he says that he has spoken with their God, who is pleased by that which we do.  

To understand this extended passage, it is critical to keep in mind its European, and specifically German, readership. Whether or not this represented an accurate description of practices in India

Ibid, K4v-L1r: ...opffern in jren Tempeln die ersten fruchte des erdtrichs/ als do sein feygen Rosein/ vnd ander dinge/ Dise hayden anbethen einen aynigen gote/ der do ist ein schöpffer aller dinge/ vnd sprechen/ Es sey einer vnd drey/ Vnd zu einer gleichnüß sein/ so haben sie gemacht ein bildnuß/ mit dreyen hauften/ vnd stet mit zusammengelegten henden/ Vnd sie nennen es Tambram/ Vnd ist vor disem bilde furgezogen ein furhange / den thun sie auff/ so sie wollen jrer abgöttereye pflegen/ als hernach wirt gesagte. Sie haben auch mancherley andere bildnuß von thieren/ die selbigen anbethen sie aber nicht/ Vnd so sie eingein in jre kirchen, so nemen etliche erdtirch/ vnd legen jne es auf die schaytel des haubts/ etliche nemen wasser/ vnd sie geen des tages drey mal zu kirchen/ das ist/ des morgens/ zu mittage/ vnd des abents/ Darnach so volbringen sie etliche jre gemeyne gotzdienst der abgöterey diser weye/ Sie haben etliche vnther jnen dazu verordenthe/ mit trwmethen/ hörern vnd baucken/ die berüffen sie zu jrer zeyt/ zu jren kirchen/ Vnd so dann sulche berüffluge geschehen ist so ist dann der priester aldo/ geklaydte etwa mit einem grossen kladye/ steet bew dem altare/ vnd anhebet zu singen mancherlay jre gebethe / vnd ein anderer der antworte jme / darnach so antworte auch das volcke mit lawther stimme/ dises thun sie also zu dreyen malen/ Darnach so geet zu einer thüre heraus ein priester/ der ist nackent/ hat auff seynem hawbte einen grossen Rosenkrantz/ vnd hatte grosse augen/ vnd zway hörner sein auch also gemachte/ vnd tregte in den hendten zway blosse schwertas/ der laufft dann gegen dem selbigen jrem gote/ vnd zewchte den gantzen vmbhange darfore hinder sich/ vnd der schwertas eines so er in seinen henden hat/ gibt er dem priester so ob dem altare stet/ darnach mit dem andern schlechte er sich also nuckende/ vnd machte jme selbs vil wunden/ vnd darnach so laufft er dann also blutig in ein fewer/ das aldo berayte ist in dem Tempel/ vnd springte in dem selbigen auß vnd ein/ dann zu letzte/ mit den verwandten augen/ sagte er/ er habe geredte mit jrem gote/ welcher do haben wöl/das wir sulches thun sollen.
as they actually were in the late fifteenth century is less important than the relationship the
description established with audience. The passage established this relationship by
simultaneously manipulating the strange and the familiar, in which the practices appears as a
kind of ‘distorted mirror’ of Christian ritual. The offering of first fruits has parallels to the
gestures of charity, lordship, and deference documented by Virginia Reinburg and Anne Thayer
in their studies of the late medieval Mass.¹¹⁰ The worship of a god who is ‘one and three’ has
clear enough parallels to the Trinity, and the use of a curtain to hide the icon may have even
reminded readers of the reservation of consecrated Eucharist hosts. Yet the attempt to represent
the doctrine of the Trinity with a three-headed icon disrupts and de-territorializes these traces of
familiarity. The musical convocation, communal praying and singing, and vestments of the
priest wearing a rose-garland conjured other dimensions of the familiar ritual environment of
Christianity, though particular instruments – drums, horns, and trumpets – as well as the
nakedness of the priest, his large eyes and two horns, and two swords, returns the ritual to a
foreign space. Finally, the bloodied body of the priest at the culmination of the ritual draws
iconographic parallels to the body of the crucified Christ, the Mass of St. Gregory, and the
moment of Elevation (see chapter one, and figures from chapter one).

It is impossible to determine with certainty whether Joseph intended this interpretation,
but it seems likely for several reasons. As a cultural translator, it would have been incumbent
upon him to make foreign practices coherent to his European audience. As the report indicates,
Joseph was not only Christian, but a Christian priest, and so finding a common vocabulary in
religious symbols would have been an obvious first step.¹¹¹ Moreover, it is quite likely that even

¹¹⁰ Reinburg, “Liturgy and Laity in Late Medieval and Reformation France,” in Sixteenth Century Journal 23, no. 3
¹¹¹ Newe vnbeenhe landte, L1 r.
outside his role as cultural translator Joseph viewed such rituals through a lens inflected with symbols of Christianity, not only because he himself was a Christian, but because as the report notes, he had difficulties making sense of the rites. Following his description of idolatry in his home town, the report added “they have also many other manners of idolatry…[but] because he did not know the language, and because he had not had much contact with the heathens, he was unable to tell us everything.”

Although Joseph of India was a rather unique figure in the history of early ethnography, the strategies of cultural translation he employed were representative of a much broader paradigm. The *Newe vnbekante landte* was reprinted in a variety of expanded forms in the first half of the sixteenth century. In 1532, it was translated into Latin as *Novus Orbis regionum ac insularum veteribus incognitarum* by Johann Huttich with the help of Sebastian Münster. Subsequent Latin editions appeared in Germany in 1537 and 1555. In 1534, Michael Herr translated the expanded 1532 Latin edition into German and published it at Strasbourg, adding the *De orbe novo decades* and *De legatione Babylonice libri tres* of Peter Martyr Anghiera.

The *Newe vnbekante landte* and other ethnographic writings put the travel narratives into a comparative, global context but then added a layer of interpretation which related this context back to the limited field of traditional Christianity.

Evidence from early ethnographic writing on Jews in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries added new dimensions to this paradigm. In the later Middle Ages, myths about Jewish ritual practice had historically served as a contrary foil to Christian ritual, especially the Eucharist. Myths of Jewish host desecration and ritual murder inverted the Eucharist through

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112 Ibid, L1r.
images of childlike figures tortured, chewed and bloodied. Through this imagery, the Jew became a kind of “guarantor of [the Eucharist’s] truth and power, the summoner of its miracles.” By the later fifteenth century, however, several large scale transformations fundamentally changed the nature of relationships between Christian and Jewish communities. The fifteenth century in Germany was a period of mass expulsion for many Jewish communities. These expulsions had implications for the ways in which Germans interacted with Jews and represented them in learned and popular culture. Among intellectuals, expulsions accompanied a paradigm shift in anti-Jewish polemics, more disengaged from actual Jewish life. Whereas Christian intellectuals in other European territories continued to present and engage with the texts of Jewish intellectuals to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian religion to their audiences, German theologians cited their own knowledge of the Hebrew language or their own alleged personal experiences with Jews as sources of authority. Such tactics tended toward mere description as a means of justifying the Christian religion.

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Rubin, “Imagining the Jew,” 207.

A full listing of every expulsion would be too cumbersome, but a selection of examples suffices to underscore the extent of this change. The Jews of Vienna and all of Austria were permanently banished in 1421. Throughout the Holy Roman Empire, other cities and territories mandated expulsion: Trier (1419), Bamberg (1422 and 1485), Würzburg (1422, 1453), Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach (1422, 1489), Cologne (1424, 1480, 1487), Mainz (1429, 1438, 1471), Saxony (1430), Speyer (1438), Bavaria (1438, 1442, 1450), Silesia (1453), Breslau (1453), Liegnitz-Brieg (1453), Hildesheim (1457), Berg (1461, 1476), Passau (1478), Hesse (for the county of Katzenelnbogen, 1484), Oettingen (1488), Mecklenburg (1492), Württemberg (1492, 1498), Pomerania (1492), Magdeburg and Halberstadt (1493), Naumburg (1494), Salzburg (1498), Nuremberg (1498-99), Nördlingen (1504), and Brandenburg (1510). See Dean Bell, Sacred Communities: Jewish and Christian Identities in Fifteenth Century Germany (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 118. Leonard Glick, Abraham’s Heirs: Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 273. Miri Rubin, Gentle Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 116-119, 129-131, 145-154, 173-181, 190-195. Salo Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, vol. 11 (New York: Columbia, 1952-1983), 275-276. Christopher Ocker, “German Theologians and the Jews in the Fifteenth Century,” in Jews, Judaism and the Reformation, 33-65. At 35-36.

Ocker, “German Theologians,” 60-65.

Printing technology intensified focus on Jewish ritual life in the two generations prior to the Reformation by consolidating disparate late medieval ritual murder and host desecration imagery into a single discourse unified across popular and elite culture, learned and oral traditions. Additionally, the new print media registered a qualitative shift in the kind of knowledge it claimed to present. The consolidated discourse of myths, stories, and alleged ‘cases’ of ritual murder which extended back to the twelfth century presented itself as ‘social knowledge’ about Jews, and “acquired the aura of historical truth.”

A string of ritual murder and host desecration cases in northern Italy and southern Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century proved another catalyst for this transformation. In addition to popular print materials – songs, plays, and pamphlets – a variety of sources produced in relation to these cases – including confessions of Jews extracted under torture, protocols of investigations, trial records, city council minutes, correspondence between local and territorial authorities, as well as theological writings – all coalesced around an intensified interest in the logic of Jewish ritual. The most famous of these, the 1475 trial for the ritual murder of Simon of Trent, produced a dossier of more than six hundred folios encompassing the interrogations of nineteen men and four women of the Jewish community of Trent, as well as a flurry of vernacular print materials which circulated across continental Europe.

While the ritual murder and host desecration accusations were of course imagined by Christians, the specific interest in ritual disclosed a relationship to the broader contemporaneous cultural use of ethnography to describe alien cultures. Using torture, Christian magistrates

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119 R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 42
120 Ibid, 42, 46-50. Hsia’s discussion of the *Schedel Chronicle* provides a clear illustration of this consolidation in action.
commanded Jews to describe in precise detail the gestures, objects, prayers and words used
during the ritual performance of Simon’s murder. They went beyond this, however, asking
victims to describe other things, including the liturgy of Passover, passages from the *Haggadah*,
and other Hebrew prayers and curses used by Jews in daily life. 124 In the case of Simon of Trent,
Jews under torture became ‘native informants’ to Christian authorities. As Hsia writes, “merely
confirming the motive and manner of the murder was insufficient; the investigation of Simon’s
death must unlock the door to Judaism and allow for a reconstruction of Jewish rites.”125 Those
interested in Jewish ritual also took a broader ethnographic interest in other foreign cultures.
Albrecht Kunne, for example, who printed the first German pamphlet on the case of Simon of
Trent in 1475, printed another report seven years later comparing the religious practices of Jews,
Turks, and the various sects of Christianity from Europe to India. 126 The ritual murder trials of
the later fifteenth century were part of a larger cultural turn within Christian Europe which
located cultures within a comparative spectrum. This spectrum included not only Christians and
Jews as ‘internal aliens,’ but also the peoples of the Americas, Africa, and Asia. 127

In the first three decades of the sixteenth century, several Jewish converts to Christianity
in Germany produced ethnographies devoted to the rituals and ceremonies of contemporary
Jews. Their status as converts from Judaism afforded them a unique type of authority as ‘native
informants.’ In this regard, they differ from ethnographies of the Americas, Africa and Asia,
written from an outsider’s perspective. Their unique status as native informants gave them

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125 Ibid, 225.
126 The pamphlet on Simon of Trent (*Geschichte des zu Trientermordeten Christenkindes*) was a translation of the
physician Giovanni Mattia Tiberino’s account of the murder. Tiberino had examined the body of Simon, and
alleged that the body had been found in the cellar of a Jew called Samuel. In 1475, Kunne lived in Trent. See Hsia,
“Christian Ethnographies,” 224. In 1482, Kunne reappears in Memmingen, where he printed the deceptively titled
*Nachricht von den Türken* by ‘Jörg von Nürnberg.’ In addition to Turkish customs, the pamphlet described Jewish
customs as well as those of Roman-, Greek-, Armenian-, Nestorian-, Maronite-, Georgian-, and Indian Christians. It
was reprinted in Nuremberg in 1500 by Peter Wagner. See NSB 913, Inc. 53.4”.
privileged knowledge which went beyond the outward, observable form of ritual practice. They had access to a hidden second layer of meaning which only members of the Jewish community could know.\textsuperscript{128} Authors made clear the polemical and missionary intent of their works.\textsuperscript{129} To achieve their missionary goals, authors endeavored to reveal Jewish ritual as superstitious and oriented towards the body and external things. Johannes Pfefferkorn and Anthonius Margaritha exemplified this paradigm. These authors published in German, which meant that like other contemporaneous ethnographic projects discussed above, their audience and impact was not limited to the learned elite.\textsuperscript{130} Also like contemporaneous ethnographies, these authors placed Jewish ritual on a comparative scale of idolatry with Christian practices.

Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469-1522) converted to Christianity in 1504, and a few years later began publishing pamphlets on Jewish ritual life.\textsuperscript{131} These pamphlets endeavored to present Jewish ritual as superstitious and merely pertaining to the body and external things. In his pamphlet on Yom Kippur (1508), Pfefferkorn described the prayers spoken and vestments worn in the synagogue: “everything is done in great piety and devotion. The Psalter is read in great awe by the said representative, according to the plain text, with certain gestures…For they interpret the commandment of Moses literally, when he commanded them to love the Lord with


\textsuperscript{129} Deutsch, “Polemical Ethnographies of Jews.”

\textsuperscript{130} Yaacov Deutsch, “Von der Iuden Ceremonien,” 346. Pfefferkorn’s \textit{Judenbeicht} pamphlet was printed six times in 1508 alone, and translated into Danish in 1516. Von Carben’s work was first published in 1508, and again in 1509, 1511, 1513, and 1550. Margaritha’s work was published twice in 1530, twice in 1531, once in 1540, 1544, and 1561.

all the strength of their body.”132 In his pamphlet on Passover (1509), Pfefferkorn described how Jews only recognized the outward significance of the materials they used to celebrate their “Abendmahl” (Seder). The lamps, rugs, white clothing, red wine, cakes, bitter herbs, and salt water all had inward spiritual meanings which foreshadowed Christ, but Jews failed to see this. As Pfefferkorn wrote, “the Jews are adorned on the body, but we Christians on this Holy Easter day should be adorned in spirit with a clear, pure soul.”133 This ultimately placed Jews in the category of idolators. Admonishing his ‘brother’ Jews to convert to Christianity, Pfefferkorn explained “only we Christians worship the living God of heaven and earth the true messiah, and not wood and stone.”134

Similarly, Anthonius Margaritha’s Der gantz Jüdisch glaub (1530) argued that Jewish ritual pertained solely to the superstitious and external.135 Providing an overview of “all ceremonies which the Jews have throughout the entire year, inside and outside their church,” Margaritha wrote:

this poor people has no consolation in God, other than their works, which nonetheless are of no use and are disposable….almost all their good works, prayer, fasting, stooping, bowing, bending, tithing, lighting candles, special clothes and they like are in good faith, but brotherly love and a good pure heart is far from them, and thus they may content

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133 In disem buchlein vin Jer ain entlichen furtrag, fol. Bv: “seyn die Juden leyplich gezirt. also sollen wyr Cristen auff disse heylige Ostern in dem geist gezeyr seyn. mit cyner claren lawtern seel.”
134 Der Juden-Spiegel, C2r: “wir christen allein den lebendigen got himelreichs vnd erdtreychs den waren messiam anbetten/ vnd nit holtz noch steyn.”
themselves with external, contrived human innovations, but cannot reach true faith and brotherly love.\textsuperscript{136}

Margaritha went on to describe the entire Jewish ritual year in systematic fashion. Like Pfefferkorn, his descriptive focus foregrounded the sensuality of Jewish ritual. His description of the havdalah, the ceremonial closing of the Sabbath, provides an instructive example. The ceremonial implements of the ritual included a large candle, a silver container filled with fragrant spices (incense), and a chalice of wine. The patriarch of the household led the singing of the prayers, lights the candle, censes around the participants with the fragrant spices “for old and young to smell”, pours a portion of the wine onto the floor, takes a drink and distributes the chalice to the family members.\textsuperscript{137} In addition to their ritual uses, Margaritha explained that all of these objects had “many magical uses.”\textsuperscript{138} The wine was rubbed on body parts for protection and the burning candle was carried to all corners of the house for protection against demonic and worldly threats. The fragrant spices had a special use: “As soon as the Sabbath ends part of the soul leaves, and so the human becomes weak and then needs such good-smelling spice in order to strengthen the body again.”\textsuperscript{139} Because Jewish ritual diverted attention away from inward spiritual meaning and focused devotion on outward things, they were both “childish” and

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\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, B1 r-v: Ist nun allhie zûmerckenn/ das dises armes volck kayn trou zû Got hat/ dann jre werck/ die doch kain nutz vnd verwürfflich seynd/ auch ain yeder gelerter wol wayft was wir menschen auß aynger kraft vermügen/ seyndt auch fast alle jhre güte werck/ beten/ fasten/ bucken/ naygen/ tuncken/ zehenden/ liecht brennen/ sondere klayder vnd dergleichen / der recht glaube aber / brüderliche liebe/ ain güts raines hertz/ ist fern von jn/ vnd die weyl sy sich also an den euserlichen erdichten menschen satzung benügen lassen/ künden sye zum rechten glauben vnd brüderliche liebe nit kommen.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid, C2v-C3v. Quoted at C2v.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, C3r.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, C3v: “Möcht nur einer sagen; was mainenn sie damit das sie also zû den gewürtzen riechen/ ist dîß die vrsach…Got der herr..der dem volck so darauff ist die selen gibt (etlich verteutschens ein athem) vnd den geist denen die darauff gehen…Als bald der Sabbath außgee far die ein seele hinweck/ so werd dann der mensch kraftloß darumb brauchen sy solliche wolriechende gewürtz damit den leib wider zûbekrefftigen.”
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idolatrous. The outward sensuality of Jewish ritual also prevented Jews from seeing the truth of Christianity.\textsuperscript{140}

Ethnographies of Jews juxtaposed the Word to such ritual practices. This stems from their polemical and missionary orientation: hearing the pure and clarified Word had the power to correct problematic ritual behaviors. As Pfefferkorn explained, the Jews had not converted to the Christian faith because they had been “robbed of the truth and the holy Word of God which was and still is hidden from them.”\textsuperscript{141} When Pfefferkorn discussed the ‘robbery’ of the Word, he was not referring to an abstract theological concept, but to but concrete physical engagement with the Word, primarily through the sense of hearing. Internal spiritual transformation was a problem of physical access. He thus speculated that if one removed the Word from a group of Christians for an extended period of time so that they “do not hear the Word of God,” it would be likely that “many among them would grow up to be heathens.”\textsuperscript{142} So it was with the Jews, who “never hear the Word of God.”\textsuperscript{143} How could they be expected to grasp the truth of Christian faith? This is an important cognitive distinction that accords with contemporaneous sensory theories: the qualitative properties of external stimuli mattered because they affected the internal intellect and spirit. At the aural level, good sounds would more likely product good internal effects. Pfefferkorn’s prescription for the problem of Jewish conversion was to apply this principle at a structural level: he admonished Christian princes, lords, and learned men to preach more frequently and effectively, using a clear and pleasant voice. He envisioned transforming the soundscape of Jewish daily life. Addressing Christian authorities, Pfefferkorn wrote: “if they are

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\textsuperscript{140} Ibid, D1v-D2v.  \\
\textsuperscript{141} Pfefferkorn, \emph{Der Juden-Spiegel}, D4 v: “Die ander rede damit die Juden verhalten werden nit christen zu werden / ist die beraubung der warheit vnd der heiligen wort gottes welchs vor in verporgen gewest vnd noch ist.”  \\
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid: Ich nim fur mich die versammelung der aller beyligsten stat in christenheyt/ ist sach das sie ein zeyt lang verspert belegt oder sunst gelert leut beraubt were/ vnd das wort gottes nit hören/ furwar es ist gelaublich/ vnd were zu besorgen es solten vil heyden darvnter erwachsen.  \\
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid: “Angesehen nun das die Juden nymmer das wort gottes hören.”
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to hear the Word of God and take the [correct] understanding from it,” then they must be lead by gentle tones and “constant exercise in hearing the Word of God.”

The Jewish case is an especially good example of how ethnographic writing transformed foreign rituals in the popular imagination. The images presented in the ethnographies of Jews were the first opportunity for a German readership to gain first-hand knowledge of Jewish practice not based on prejudices and traditional beliefs. Native informants such as Pfefferkorn and Margaritha, though clearly not neutral observers, presented a different kind of knowledge about foreign ritual practice. This new knowledge revealed that the Jews were not monsters or diabolical spawn children and therefore shared similarities to their Christian observers. Yet Jewish religious practices simultaneously appeared different and strange, and therefore, very distant from their neighbors. The new visibility of Jewish ceremonies cut two ways: on the one hand, they were more subject to Christian scrutiny and therefore more vulnerable to attack. On the other, they in effet held up a kind of ‘distorted mirror’ to Christian practice. As with the descriptions of Hindu practice by Joseph of India, Jewish ritual presented something both familiar and strange. Despite Margaritha’s and Pfefferkorn’s claims that Judaism represented the antithesis of Christianity, there was much more ambiguity when looking at outward ritual practice, at least when presented on the written page. Christian commentators such as the Alsatian Franciscan and Hebraist Thomas Murner (1475-1537) expressed this sentiment. In 1512, Murner published two treatises on Jewish ritual in response to Johannes Pfefferkorn – one on blessings and one on Passover. His detailed description of the Passover Seder largely

144 Ibid, Elr: Also wirt esauch mit den Juden gescheen/ wan sie das wort gottes horen vnd den verstant daraussen nemen/ so werden sie sich ernstlichen durch die pfort der warheyt beschliessen…so wirt in die warheyt senffer thon dan der alzeyt da inne gewest ist vnd das mag nit anders gescheen dan in stetlicher vbung das wort gottes zu horen
accords with the descriptions in Pfefferkorn and Margaritha, though lacks their polemical and missionary thrust.\textsuperscript{147} The treatise also includes a series of woodcuts illustrating the gestures, objects, and words of the ritual [Figs 4.1a-c]. Murner could not help but observe the similarities between the Seder and the Elevation of the Host in the Mass. He writes: “Here he elevates the unleavened bread on high, surrounded by seated spectators and admirers with the greatest devotion; the thing is most similar to the Elevation of the body of Christ, if this comparison may be permitted.”\textsuperscript{148}

Ethnographic writing, therefore, by elevating foreign ritual practice to the level of discourse, raised several important problems within traditional Christian practice. It was apparent from the beginning that stake in ritual was the appropriate relationship between external practice and internal believe. Yet a mediating, sensual device was also clearly necessary for mediating between human and divine. Ethnographic texts tended to describe this device as the Word, which was opposed to the idolatrous and merely external practices of foreign cultures, which did nothing to inform internal faith. Yet ethnographic texts also made clear that foreign practices drew on sensuality in a manner rather similar to Christian ritual. What was to be done? We want to suggest that the early reformers joined together elements of the humanist celebration of the Word and patterns from early ethnographic writing. This determined how they were able to perceive rituals of traditional Christianity, and how they envisioned changing them.

\textit{4.5 – The Fetish of the Word in Reformation Piety: ca. 1518-1525}

\textit{agni pascalis celebrare per egregium doctorem} (Frankfurt: Murner, 1512). The treatise on blessings appeared in German the same year: Murner, \textit{Der iuden Benedicite wie sy gott den herren loben vnd im vmb die speyß dancken} (Frankfurt: Murner, 1512).

\textsuperscript{147} Murner, \textit{Ritus et celebratio phase iudeorum}, 3v-6r.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, 5v: “Hic eleuat panis azimus in altum/ circum sedentibus summa cum deuotione spectantibus/ et admirantibus res similima elevationi corporis xpi si licita sit he comp[ar]atio.”
The trends discussed above coalesced in early Reformation piety to produce a new fetish of the Word. We see the beginnings of this in popular pamphlets and print culture in the years from approximately 1518 to 1525. Previous attempts to analyze these sources have generally focused on the lay reception of the Reformation’s theological or sociological messages. This reading is too narrow, as Scribner suggests. Further, these approaches largely ignore the cultural contexts in which such messages were received. In addition to the theological and social messages of the Reformation, popular pamphlets appropriated patterns from ethnographic writing and humanism to criticise the entire ritual edifice of the late medieval church as well as its underlying intellectual framework. Therefore, when thinking about the Word as a thing in Reformation piety, it is necessary to consider how these overlapping cultural contexts contributed to its reification.

On the question of ethnography, Hsia suggests that interest in Jewish religious practices discloses a form of cultural appropriation of the identity marker “New Israelites” by Lutherans. The evangelical church, in appropriating this marker, was the first to deprive Jews of their claim as the chosen people. This is an interesting interpretation, but there is much more evidence to suggest that Lutherans re-directed the cultural lens developed in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth century ethnographic writing onto the practices of traditional Christianity.

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150 Scribner, *Popular Movements*, 244, identifies the problem lying with six different types of power wielded by clergy: political, economic, legal, social, sexual, and sacred.

Deutsch has suggested the parallels between criticisms of Jewish ritual voiced by Margaritha and Pfefferkorn and Protestant criticisms of Catholic practice. Surveying the period from 1500-1800, Deutsch finds that among Christian authors writing about Jews, Protestants tended to focus more on descriptions of ritual practices than Catholics. Although when turning their attention to Jewish rituals, both groups tended to criticize them as superstitious or idolatrous, the concern appears more prevalent among Protestants. This concern with Jewish ritual among Protestants reflected a tendency to link the ‘merely external’ and sensual ritual practices of Judaism with traditional Christianity.

This pattern was restricted to Judaism. Popular representations of traditional Christian practices and the Word in pamphlet literature of the early 1520s replicate the more general ethnographic patterns discussed above. Pamphlets represented the clear and pure Word in opposition to the practices of traditional Christianity, and associated these practices with external ethnography categories of Jews, Turks, and ‘heathens.’ In 1523, Kaspar Adler of Augsburg published a sermon “On the path to sanctity” which he had preached at Hemmenhofen. Adler described the idolatrous and fallen state of the church in a manner similar to Pfefferkorn’s argument about the aural absence of the Word among Jews: “We all have erred as sheep; each has wandered from the path. For how it has happened now for many years, that from the preaching of heathen and human doctrines, almost the entire flock has fallen from the true, royal

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153 Adler, *Eyn Sermon von der Schul Christi/ darin ein yetlicher leriunger lernet/ wa es im fället an dem weg der sälligkeit/ vn wie wir noch so gar nit Euangelisch seynd/ Geprediget zu Hemenhaufen* (1523). A copy of this pamphlet appears to have been owned by Lazarus Spengler, and is located in StadtAN E1/1731, nr. 44. Pagination marks added later run from the numbers 794-815. A search through the *Zentrales Verzeichnis Digitalisierter Drucke* locates two 1523 editions, one printed by Schürer at Strasbourg and one by Grimm at Augsburg. Online at [www.zvdd.de].
path of faith.” In addition to the church of Rome, other outsiders such as “Turks, Tartars and Jews,” hated the Word of Christ and “avoided it like poison.” He thus admonished “evangelical brothers and sisters” to listen and cleave continuously to the holy Gospel “in hands, in the mouth, eyes, tongue, [and] ears.” An anonymously published Brief Report of a Future Counsel (1522) described the “wretched state of worship in our times” as full of “outward gestures and things” such as “singing, ringing, chiming, howling, censing, stooping, [and] bowing.” Such things were simply “a form and the outward appearance of holiness” and those who relied upon them were partisans of the Antichrist and “heathen tyranny.”

In a 1523 pamphlet, Simon Reuter described how his reading of Scripture had prompted several questions, which he in turn published in order to pose to the clergy of the Church of Rome. On the question of clerical celibacy, he described the accused the Roman Church of adhering to a rule contrary to scripture in a “devilish” or “Turkish” manner. By obstinately adhering to this rule, the Church of Rome had turned away from the “evangelical sunshine or

154 StadtAN E1/1731, nr. 44, 799: “Wir alle haben wie die schaff geirret/ ein yeglicher ist in seynen weg abgetretten. Wie dann yetz leyder durch vil lang jar her geschehen ist/ das auß der predig Heyndischer vnd menschlicher lere/ schier der gantz hauff/ des rechten künigklichen wegs des glaubens gefa let.”


156 Ibid, 802-803: “Nun hört zü ir Euangelische brüder vnd schwester/ denen das heylig Euangeli in henden/ im munt/ augen/ zungen / oren/ stäs klebt/ Ob jr das nit auch schuldig seyt/ in das hertz zü sencken/ vnd ernstlich im glauben bitten/ das es Gott selbs in das hertz wöl pflanten/ dz wir nit wie die gescholten werden/ die das wort gottes in dz gefelst hertz fassen...Darumb bittent das das wort gottes in euch wurtzlen mög. Ein rechter Christ/ muß allen worten Christi steyff vnd vest glauben”

157 Ein kurzer Bericht von einem zukünftigen Konzil (Strasbourg: Knobloch, 1522), [not paginated]: “Truckt der prophet nit klaerlich uus das ellend wesen unserer zeit gottes dinst, der do steet in euesserlichen geperden unnd wesen, singen, clingen, leueten, heuelen, reuechen, bucken, neigen, platten, ruetten, steinhauffen bauwen!...Die selb ist ein gestalt und euesserlicher schein der geistligkeit. Der do steet in solchen zeichen, wie obgesagt, das gesind heysst der antichrist. Die treiben und ubben under dem schein Chist ein heyndischer tyrannischer wesen mit allem weltlichen pracht und wollust”

158 Reuter, Ein Christliche frage Simonis Reuters vonn Schlaytz, an alle Bischoffe vnd andere geystliche auch zum teyl weltliche regenten, Warumb sy doch an priestern vnd andern geystlich geferbten leutten, den eelichen standt nicht mügenn leyden (Bamberg, 1523).

159 Reuter, Ein Christliche frage, fol. A1 v: Frage ich...alle Bischoffe (welche der heyligen schrift so hefftig wider seyn / keyn för gang der selbigenn wollen gestattenn) Warumb sy doch den eelichen standt den priestern vnd andern geystlich geferbten leutenn/ so mit einer ernstlichen meynunge (als were es recht ein teũflische / oder Türkische ordenung oder fundt) verbotten haben vnd noch verbieten”
light” coming from the mouths of evangelical preachers. Similarly, Johann Sonnentaller wrote that “the appearance and signs of the true, old evangelical love, fidelity and truth lived and shined among us as little as among the Turks and heathens.” This was due to all the “human doctrines” and outward innovations of the Antichrist Pope, which included “indulgences…annointings, sacrifices…vigils, masses for the dead” practiced by priests “bestowed with cowls, wearing long coats, special colors, spiritual clothing, anointed with oil, having white choir gowns, holding mass, singing high and reading low, stooping down and up again, piping organs, ringing bells, blessing candles, censing incense, sprinkling water, carrying crosses, flags, golden chalices and silver monstrances.” Haug Marschalck described the abuse of the “living Word of God” by “both Rabbis and Doctors” learned “on paper” (in der geschrifft) yet inexperienced in true human wisdom. In his 1523 Booklet revealing the False Prophets, Hans Greiffenberger argued forcefully:

The kingdom of Christ is not in this world, nor is it in outward things, nor clothing, nor food, nor drinks, but rather it must be within us, inwardly. It is therefore

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163 Marschalck, Eyn Edles schönes lieplichs Tractatlein von de raynen hymliche ewige wort (Verbum Domini) zü lob Got dem Schoepffer Hymels vn Erden zü eren de Christliche diener des Goettlichen worts (Nuremberg: Hölzelt, 1524), fol. B1v-B2r: O du tröstlichs lebendigs Verbum domini/ nun wie haben dir dyse grobe vnachtpare menner zu dysem grossen handel gefallen/ die weder Rab/ Doctor noch in der geschrifft gelert gewest seind/ vnd nit in menschlicher weyßhait erfaren vnd geschicht. Du aber/ du lieplichs/ schöns/ hailigs Verbum domini du woltest selbst in deinen sachen Preceptor/ vnd Schülmayster sein.” This was a very widely printed pamphlet in 1524, appearing in many cities’ printing presses that year.
inward…Therefore, unburden your conscience from such illusions (laruen), or you are no Christian…do not follow the Antichrist and his children, who wish to hang your conscience on clothing, food, and drinks, and special days and times. It is all false. But you say: all the cloisters busy themselves with such things. I answer: God has plenty of people on the earth, who do not belong in heaven. The Turks…the Jews, and all those, who busy themselves with such illusions all go to hell…Therefore dear Christians, if we wish not to err, then we must remain on the path, that is the Gospel. 164

Cultural historians frequently focus on the binary and apocalyptic language of such polemical pamphlets in the early years of the Reformation. 165 As Koslofsky notes, “in reform conflicts of the 1520s all sides used this straightforward imagery of daylight and darkness as good and evil in their writing and preaching.” 166 To be sure, this is an important dimension of these sources, but more interesting is how the cultural context of early ethnography both expanded and limited the range of significance people could attach to these images. Pamphleteers were talking about a cosmic struggle between good and evil, but on a more mundane level, this was a critical discussion about the ritual behaviors of real groups of people. By describing the external

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166 Koslofsky, Evening’s Empire, 20.
practices of alien groups, reformers more effectively centered the Word as the normative locus of Reformation worship.

Additionally, such ethnographic strategies provided a means of criticizing the underlying theoretical framework of late medieval ritual. Jacob Strauss thus began his pamphlet on the Eucharist (1523) by describing how the “miserable Sophists” had for many years plagued the consciences of anguished, pious Christians. Through their teachings, they had transformed the “comfort and sweetness of God” into “terror, fear, and doubt” while at the same time putting great stock in outward rituals, such as the honoring of saints, and instituting “tyrannical, human laws.”

Following these laws, common clergy had become “priests of the idol Baal” which Strauss explained in Hebrew had been called the “hian,” or ‘devourer’ (deuorator).

Who were these ‘miserable Sophists’? In Strauss’ pamphlet, their identity was somewhat hazy, but in other pamphlets we find a clearer identification with Aristotelian philosophy. Balthasar Hubmaier, in his *Eighteen Closing Arguments* (1524), criticized both the ‘illusory works’ (Scheinwerke) of the traditional church – in which he included icons, candles, palms, and holy water, among others – and the teachings of Aristotle, Aquinas, and other scholastics which authorized these practices.

Heinrich Kettenbach, in his *Dialogue with an Old Mother* (1523), addressing the question of “fantasy and superstition,” instructed the old woman to consult the

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‘school of the Apostles’ instead of preachers and teachers who rely on the “heathen philosophy” which “had knocked down and repressed Christ and his Gospel, and installed a fool and his doctrine in place of Christ.” He further cautioned that “the learned preaching of such heathen arts makes heathens [while] evangelical doctrine makes Christians.”

In his 15 Bundgenossen (1521), Johann Eberlin von Ginzburg criticized fasting as without foundation in scripture, and associated it with both Jews and Thomistic doctrine. Further, he warned against bad preachers who could be identified by their references to Aristotle, Duns Scotus, Aquinas, and Bonaventura, among others.

In a series of pamphlets from the early 1520s, Lazarus Spengler of Nuremberg developed one of the most extensive criticisms of the Aristotelian system underlying ritual practices of the late medieval church. In his 1520 Widerfechtung und Auflösung unbegründeter Argumente gegen Luther, Spengler referenced both Judaism and Aristotelianism in his discussion of the traditional church’s orientations towards “external ceremonies.” The notion that these ceremonies had ‘crept over’ into the church through “daily exercises and customs and through Aristotle and other moral philosophers” who had prescribed both church and civic law. Christian “external justification” through ceremonies also shared affinity through Judaism by its strict concern with the ‘dead letter’ of the law of Moses, which was “specified in stone

172 Ibid.
174 Ibid, 130: “Die erst ist ain eusserliche oder außwendige rechtvertigung, allso das der mensch von außwendig durch die werck seiner aigen krefft wurckt, wie dann sind eusserlichen ceremonien und die menschlichen gerechtikaiten, so durch täglich ubungen und gepreuch überkommen und durch Aristotelem und andere sittlich philosophos, deßgleichen die gesetz der kirchen und die burgerlichen gesetz beschrieben werden.”
This orientation towards the external, according to Spengler, overlooked the internal ‘purification of the heart’. The chief problem confronting the evangelical movement was therefore how to get people to focus on the internal. His answer, like other pamphleteers, was to oppose the Word to external practices:

Thus one learns instruction in the faith, that is the Gospel, insofar as it is possible, that is, that it demonstrates to us to retreat into the grace of God and call on God himself as the true school-master; he who writes with the finger of his Holy Spirit his teaching and the Word of life in our hearts, as Peter says to Christ: “Lord, you have the Wort of life.”

Three years later, Spengler returned to the relationship between the Aristotelian system and church ritual. Here he described Aristotelian theologians and philosophers as “heathens,” who had suppressed the Word by advocating the principle *utile propter inutile non debet vitiari* – “that good and the useful should not be made invalid on account of the evil and useless.” In Spengler’s interpretation, the ‘useless and evil’ were the ‘external ceremonies’ of traditional Christianity, which suppressed and obscuring a clear hearing of the Word. The Aristotelians, he claimed, “hated and persecuted” the Word, and “wanted to obliterate the Word of God with a

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175 Ibid, 130: “Und die außwenndige rechtvertigung macht auch das gesetz Moisi, auch die zehen gepott, in die stainin tafeln beschriben, allso das wir ainander auß forcht der poen oder hoffnung konfftiger belonung Got dienen, seinen name nit nützlich nennen, unnere eltern eern, nit stelen, eebrechen etc. Diß aber ist allain ein knechtliche, durch lon erkauffte, gescheinte, zeitliche und menschliche gerechtikait, die zu der konfftigen glori nit furderlich oder dienlich ist...Dann das geschriben gesetz, auch die sittlichen, tugentlichen leer, deßgleichen die eusserlichen ceremonien rechtvertigen oder heiligen den mennscenen gar nit, dann es sind allain puchstaben und geschriben tradition. Und wie vil und hoch die gehallten und gelernt werden, wirdet doch dadurch das hertz nit gerainigt.”

176 Ibid, 131.

177 Ibid, 131: “so lernt die underweisung deß glaubens, das ist das evangelium, wie sie möglich wern, das ist, das sie unns zaigt, zu der gnad Gottes zu fliehen und Got selbs alls den rechten leermaister anzuruffen; der schreibt unns mit dem finger seins heiligen Gaists sein leer und die wort deß lebens in unser hertz, wie Petrus zu Christo sagt: “Herr, du hast worte deß lebens.”


good outward appearance.” Those who truly believed in God “hear his Word and his voice.” The Word, in contrast to external ceremonies, truly had the power to penetrate the body and speak and write directly into the heart:

Now every Christian may easily judge what is the Word of God or human teaching on these assured grounds: in whichever teaching Christ is demonstrated and preached to you, that is the Word of God…but where human teaching, contrived works and sanctimonious appearances for their own sake and use run alongside and next to that, there can be no doubt that this is not the Word of God, but contrived human fables (fabelwerk)…The Word of God alone must speak to the heart, otherwise it is all inconclusive and uncertain, as David says in Psalm 84: “I will hear what God speaks inside me,” and puts in me. The case of Spengler raises several important points relating to the developments we have been discussing. Of the pamphleteers discussed here, Spengler fell at the better educated end of the spectrum alongside Strauss, Hubmaier, Kettenbach and von Günzburg. Spengler was of course the scribe for the city council of Nuremberg, and had spent two years studying law at the University of Leipzig in the late fifteenth century. Although he did not complete his degree, he would have certainly been exposed to the Aristotelianism which pervaded the German educational system at some point during the course of his studies. The variation in education

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180 Ibid, 376: “Welicher aber Got haßt, müß auch sein wort hasen und verfolgen. Wie können wir uns nun rhûmen, das wir Christi schäfellin und nachvolger sein, so wir doch auß keinem güten grund, soner auß einem sondern geschöpfen, heessen gemüt, auch gern das wort Gottes unter einem güten schein außtlichen wolten?”


182 Ibid, 377: Nun mag ein yeder christ leichtlich urteilen, was Gottes wort oder menschenlere sein auß disem unzwelflichen grund: In welcher lere dir Christus furgezeigt und gepredigt würdet, da halt für gewyß, das solichs Gottes wort sey…Wo aber daneben auch menschenlere, erdichte werck, scheinhelykeit, eygener gesuch und nutz mitlauft, da stell in keinen zweyfel, das es nit das wort Gottess, sonder ein erdicht menschlich fabelwerck, derhalben auch einem christen zum hoechsten zu fliehen ist. Gotes wort muß uns allein Got in das hertz sagen, sonst ist es unbeschlossen und alles ungewyß, wie David sagt am 84. Psalm: “Ich wil hören, was Got in mir redt” und mir eingibt.”

levels of pamphleteers is often overlooked in the scholarly literature.\textsuperscript{184} In contrast to his less educated counterparts Greiffenberger, Reuter, Marschalk, and Sonnentaller, Lazarus Spengler represented the opposition clearly referenced the specific connections between the ritual practices of the late medieval church and Aristotelian philosophy. The distinction between \textit{utile} and \textit{inutile}, for example, reflects Spenglers’ understanding of how a thinker like Cusanus reconciled the relationship between the written Word and the ‘senses’ books’ embodied in the ritual practices of the church. Like other pamphleteers, Spengler reflected the ethnographic pattern by attributing a kind of negative ethnicity to ritual practices: through their relationship to heathens and Judaism, they were not merely \textit{adiaphora} as Cusanus would have suggested, but in fact opposed and obscured the normative core of Christianity, that is, the Word.

In the first half of the 1520s, magisterial reformers followed the same popular paradigm outlined above. Luther and Melanchthon both followed the tendency to associate the practices of the church of Rome with external ethnographic categories, they represented the Word as the normative center of Reformation worship in terms based on the cultural and educational values of humanism, and they rejected what they perceived to be the corrosive influence of Aristotelian philosophy on church practice. In his treatise \textit{On Good Works} (1520), Luther provided a fairly systematic critique of the ritual life of the late medieval church. He wrote: “By faith, and by no other work do we have the name “believers in Christ.” For all other works a heathen, a Jew, a Turk, a sinner may also do; but trusting firmly that it pleases Lord God is not possible for anyone but a Christian enlightened and strengthened by Grace.”\textsuperscript{185} Further, the ‘perversion’ of

\textsuperscript{184} This is especially true of Paul Russell, who simply draws an education a distinction between scholars in universities pursuing “self-seeking, socially useless wisdom,” and the perspective of the ‘common man,’ who was only marginally educated and represented coherently by pamphlet literature. See \textit{Lay Theology in the Reformation}, 10-13.

\textsuperscript{185} WA 6: 207: “Von dem glauben und keinem andern werck haben wir den namen, das wir Christgleubigen heissen, als von dem heubtwergk, dan alle andere werck mag ein heyd, Jude, Turck, szunder auch thunn, aber trawenn festiglich, das her got wolgefalle, ist nit muglich dan einem Christen mit gnadenn erleucht unnd befestiget.”
ceremonies to be found in the church in his day originated with the Jews. \(^{186}\) Gathering together “in Church and at the mass,” Luther explained, was the cause of “our foolish sensuality.” This sensuality caused faith to perish, the Word of God to be neglected, and sin to flourish and prevail. Instead of fixing the wretched state of the church, the popes, bishops, priests, and clergy were actually the leaders of the spiritual warfare perpetrated against poor, everyday Christians. They were accompanied in this war by Turks and a diabolical host “just as Judas was the leader of the Jews when they took Christ.”\(^{187}\) Luther contrasted this with his own system, in which faith came solely from reading or hearing the Word:

> you must form Christ within yourself and see how in Him God holds before you and offers you his mercy…Faith therefore does not begin with works, neither do they create it….we never read that the Holy Spirit was given to any one when he did works, but always when men have heard the Gospel of Christ and the mercy of God. From this same Word and from no other source must faith come, today and always.”\(^{188}\)

In a very brief pamphlet from 1522 *On the Difference between Worldly and Christian Piety*, Melanchthon established a similar juxtaposition.\(^{189}\) The outward piety practiced by the Church of Rome was akin to the practices of heathens. To make his point, Melanchthon cited examples

\(^{186}\) WA 6, 213: “Diszer unfug ist im alten testament bedeutet, da die Juden den tempel liessen unnd opffereten an andern orten, in den grunen lustgarten und auff den bergen.” N.b. ‘pleasure gardens’ here is reminiscent of the rosary imagery discussed in chapter two.

\(^{187}\) WA 6: 242: “Das wir der Christenheit unfal, darauf wir zubiten vorsamlet werdenin der kirchen unnd mesz, spoten, lestern und richten, Das macht unserer tolle sinlickeit….Aber das der glaub untergeht, die lieb erkalte, gottis wort nachbleibt, allerly sund uberhand nimpt….Ja Bepst, Bischoff, priester, geistlichen, die dyses geystlichen streytis wider disse geistliche viel mal erger Turcken solten Hertzogen,heubtleut und fenrichen sein, die sein eben selbst solcher Turcken und teuffelisches heres fursten und fugenger, wie Judas der Juden, da sie Christum fiengen.”

\(^{188}\) WA 6, 217: “Sich, alszo mustu Christum in dich bilden und sehen, wie in ym got seine barmhertzickeit dir furhelt…Darumb hebt der glaubnitanen wercken an, sich machen yhnw auch nit, sondern er musz aus dem blut, wunden unnd sterben Christi quellen und fliessen, in wilchem szo du sicht, das dir got szo hold ist, das er auch seinen sun fur dich gibt, musz dein hertz susz und got widderumb holde werden…Alszo leszen wir noch nie, das yemand der heilig geist gebenn sey, wan er gewirckt hat, aber altzeit, wan sie habenn das Evangelium von Christo unnd die barmhertzickeit gottis gehoret. Ausz dem selben wort musz auchnoch heut und altzeit der glaub und sonst nindert herkommen. Dan Christus ist der fels, da man butter unnd honig ausz seugt, wie Moses sagt Deutro. xxxii.”

\(^{189}\) Melanchthon, *Unterschidt zwischent weltlicher und Christlicher Fromkeyt* (Hagenau: Thomas Anshelm, 1522).
from ancient poets describing idol worship among the heathens of Ethiopia and Crete who painted statues of their gods to embody their divine powers. What such heathens failed to see however was that true piety was the Word inscribed in the heart.

The ethnographic paradigm persisted through the first generation of the Reformation at Wittenberg. Luther, for example, was deeply interested in the ritual life of Jews, and read Margaritha’s treatise shortly after its publication. He praised it, recommended it to others, and stated that it confirmed his belief that Jews and Catholics were alike in their superstitious faith in good works instead of the Word. As we saw in chapter three above, especially after the second half of the 1520s, Luther elaborated his depiction of the Jews as ‘enemies of the Word’ in sermons, polemics, and lectures. In 1543, he relied on Margaritha’s ethnography when he composed On the Jews and their Liew. Here he condemned the Jews in the sharpest possible terms, providing graphic allusions to the traditional discourses of ritual murder, well-poisoning, and host desecration, and the popular late medieval imagery of the Judensau. Because of this, Luther argued that Jews “are not even worthy to look on the Bible from the outside, let alone read what is within. You should only read the Bible that lies beneath the tail of the sow, and eat and drink the letters that fall from the same.” Catholics and Jews as common ‘enemies of the Word’ were also reflected in visual culture. Reformation critics enthusiastically drew on traditional late medieval anti-Jewish tropes in polemical woodcuts against the Church of Rome. One of the most powerful illustrations of this tactic appears in a 1545 single-leaf woodcut from the Cranach workshop [Fig. 4.2]. Here, the Pope riding on a sow inverts the

190 Ibid, A2 r-v.
191 Ibid, A3v.
192 Hsia, Myth of Ritual Murder, 151.
194 WA 53: 478: “Pfu…jr verdampten Jüden…Seid jr doch nicht werd, das jr die Biblia von aussen sollet ansehen, schweige, das jr drinnen lesen sollet. Jr sollet allein die biblia lesen, die der Saw unter dem Schwantz stehet, und die buchstaben, so da selbs herausfallen, fressen und sauffen.”
image of Christ entering Jerusalem on an ass. His gesture of benediction with his right hand and the pile of excrement in his left hand reference the rituals of the Church of Rome. The smell of excrement replaces the smell of incense, and arouses the lustful attention of the sow. The title of the woodcut reads: “Fraud, pomp, and superstition give birth to the threefold crown of the Pope.” The accompanying text, written by Luther, describes the scene: “An odor appropriate for the nose of one prone to worship the Pope. It is decreed, [s]he will wretchedly be fed by this food…sows stretch for such excellent offerings.”

Like the ethnographic paradigm, the humanist celebration of the Word persistently remained an important component of worship for reformers. Christian Hebrew and Greek scholarship in sixteenth century Germany grew at a dramatic rate. These scholars’ study of Hebrew “grew out of a commitment to the humanist ideal of a return to the sources (ad fontes) and, in most cases, the Protestant theological doctrine of sola Scriptura.” As Melancthon proclaimed in his inaugural address to the students of Wittenberg in 1518, De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis: “Since theological writings are partly in Hebrew, partly in Greek…we must learn foreign languages lest we go into our encounters with the theologians blindfolded. It is language studies that bring out the splendor of words and the meaning of idioms and…as we turn our mind to the sources, we begin to savor of Christ.”

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196 “Naso dignus odor, Papae qui pronus adorat. Drecrceta [sic], hoc misere pascitur ille cibo. Non sic, o non sic. Moniti meliora sequamur. Distendant tales talia dona sues.” The apparent typographical error ‘Drecrceta’ is quite interesting, as it closely resembles the German ‘Dreck,’ which means filth, or shit. The error may have been intentional, suggesting the word of the Pope to be equivalent to shit.


Melanchthon, Luther also understood the work of theologians and grammarians to complement each other in the endeavor to make the Word clear to all. As Burnett points out, the minutes of the Wittenberg Bible translation committee meetings, which go over in fine detail the excruciating grammatical difficulties of particular verses or even individual words, attest to over twenty years of commitment to the humanist celebration of the Word for religious purposes.\textsuperscript{199}

For Luther and Melanchthon, cleansing both education and worship of all traces of Aristotelianism was also an important part of reform in the first half of the 1520s.\textsuperscript{200} Much of their focus fell on the natural philosophical and moral program of Aristotelian philosophy. In his \textit{Address to the German Nobility} (1520), Luther even went so far as to recommend banning from universities the Aristotelian works the \textit{Physics}, \textit{Metaphysics}, \textit{On the Soul}, and the \textit{Nichomachean Ethics}. In line with humanist values, Luther retained as the only valuable pieces in the Aristotelian corpus the \textit{Rhetoric} and \textit{Poetics}.\textsuperscript{201} In the \textit{Heidelberg Disputation} (1518), Luther argued that all attempts to utilize natural philosophical Aristotelian concepts in theological matters were bound to fail and result in ‘darkness’ and obscurity. Reflecting on the \textit{Heidelberg Disputation} some years later, Luther wrote:

\begin{quote}
The closing statements were thus handled and disputed: first to demonstrate how long and wide the Sophists of all scholastics had mistaken the opinion of Aristotle and inserted wholly their own dreams into the books of a misunderstood Aristotle. Then [to demonstrate] that one, even if we preserve his [true] sense as far as possible…can nonetheless come by no help whatsoever from him [Aristotle], not only in theology or the Holy Scripture, but also in natural philosophy itself. What really could it serve the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{199} Burnett, "Reassessing," 191.
\textsuperscript{201} Salatowsky, \textit{De Anima}, 39-41.
recognition of things, if one babbles over material, form, movement, finitude, and time,
and can use sophistry with words that one has conceived from Aristotle and are
prescribed by him?  

Melanchthon was even more systematic in his rejection of the Aristotelian program in his
inaugural address of 1518. In many ways, this document appears as something of a humanist
manifesto. Melanchthon regarded in influence of Aristotelianism in the late medieval church on
widespread ignorance of the Word because it was based on a neglect of the study of languages,
specifically Greek:

…led either by nature or by love of quarrelling, certain men broke for Aristotle, and
maimed and deformed him, and one who seems otherwise obscure to the Greeks
translated him into Latin in order to cultivate the conjectures of a raving
prophetess…gradually through neglect of better instruction we were deprived of
knowledge of Greek altogether…this came about with Thomas, Scotus, Durandus,
Bonaventure..and others more numerous than the offspring of Cadmea.

Melanchthon linked this ignorance to church ritual, and argued that the rebirth of language
learning could revitalize the ritual life of the church. Relating a story of how the reinsertion of
‘incorrupt letters’ into the ritual life of the ancient church had renewed it and had done much to
“correct the ruined customs of the church, excite the prostrate souls of men, confirm and

\[^{202}\text{WA 5, 377: Hae conclusiones sunt a me tractate ac disputate ut ostenderem primo quam longe lateque ab}
\text{Aristotelis sententia aberrarint omnium Scholasticorum Sophite ac plane sua omnia in Aristotelis non intellecti}
\text{librors invexerarint. Deinde ut, si quam maxime sensum eius teneamus (quamadmodum hic tradidi), tamen prorsus}
\text{nihil adiumenti ex ipso haberi possit non solum ad Theologiam seu sacras literas, verum etiam ad ipsam naturalem}
\text{philosophiam. Quid enim iuvet ad rerum cognitionem, si de materia, forma, motu, finito, tempore nugari et cavillari}
\text{queas verbis ab Aristotele conceptis et prescriptis?}.
\[^{203}\text{Melancthon, Sermo habitus, B1 r: Deinde usu res acta est, incideruntque homines quidam, siue ingeniorum, siue}
\text{amore litium duci, in Aristotelem, eunque mancum et lacerum et qui alias qui Graecis obscurus…similis uidetur,}
\text{Latine sic redditum, ut etiam Sibyllae furentis conjecturas exerescer. Huc tamen incauti homines impegerunt.}
\text{Sensim neglectae meliores disciplinae eruditione Graece excidimus omnino pro bonis non bona doceri coepta. hinc}
\text{prodiere Thomae, Scoti, Durandi, Seraphici, Cherubici, et reliqui, ples numerosior Cadmaea sobole.}
consolidate order.” Melanchthon went on to compare this story with the state of the church in his own day. He argued that the study of letters, especially necessary for understanding purifying the ritual life of the church, had been transformed and corrupted by the innovations of the late medieval scholastics’ “ceremonies, human traditions, decrees, ordinances, chapters, extravangances, and glosses.”

The fetish of the Word in early Reformation piety stood in opposition to this edifice. It was contrary to the foreign practices of traditional Christianity and the Aristotelian theoretical framework which underlay them. Yet this was not an a-sensual Word; rather it was an external force which penetrated the body to write in or on the heart. As Spengler put it ‘spoken into’ or ‘put into’ the body by God or Christ. Understandings of its efficacy were therefore still premised upon an affective relationship between percipient subject and perceived object. To be sure, reformers drew on scripture to support this argument, and it is clear that they perceived the argument and intended it to be perceived as purely biblical. The better educated among them recognized this as a humanist appropriation of the rhetoric of Cicero and Augustine. As we have seen, however, the differences between this and traditional Aristotelian sensory theory were rather insignificant. Further complicating the issue was the depth of influence the late medieval system had on the culture of the unlearned faithful. Reformers were quite aware of this, discussing the corruption of the church by Aristotelians and scholastics as a gradual de-evolution taking place over centuries.

204 Ibid, B2 v: Nam cum ad eam usque aetatem et Philosophia tota Graeca fuisset et sacrorum Latinae literae praeter
Cyprianum, Hilarium, Ambrosium, Hieronymum, Augustinum, nullae insignes extarent et Graecorum usum
urnaculum sacra occidentis magna ex parte eatenus habuissem, fieri non potuit, quin Graecis contemptis, una
quidquid commodi studiis humanis Philosophia confert, confert autem longe plurimum, deinde cura sacrorum
sensim interiret. Hic casus uere Christianos ecclesiae ritus ac mores, ille studia literarum labefactauit. Aequius
forsan alterius ruina ferri potuit. Nam et lapsantes literas incorrupti Ecclesiae ritus facile instaurare poterant et bonis
literis, si quae saluae mansissent, liberuerat ruinosos ecclesiae mores corrigere, animos hominum iacenteis excitare,
confirmare, et in ordine cogere.

205 Ibid, B2 v: At uero siue fato, siue nostro uitiuo euenit, simul bonae literae non bonis, prisca pietas, ceremonijs,
hominum traditionibus, constitutionibus, decretis, capitulis, extravagantibus, glossis…mutata est.
The early 1520s, therefore, were characterized by a fairly systematic and radical rejection of the ritual edifice of the late medieval church and the theoretical framework that underlay it. This early rejection, however, immediately created problems on the question of reforming ritual practice. For all its criticism of Aristotelianism, the reformers offered nothing in the way of a systematic alternative capable of addressing the range of diverse issues that went along with ritual practice. While the normative Reformation definition of sacramentality became much more narrowly focused on the Word, no magisterial reformer advocated the wholesale abandonment of rituals and ceremonies. It was well and good to understand Scripture as means of identifying good and bad examples of ritual, but how were authorities to understand the relationships between participants’ bodies and the structured ritual environment? How did the words, gestures, and objects of these environments affect the senses, body and spirit, and how did these processes of relate to the narrower definition of sacramentality found in the fetish of the Word? Attempts to solve these problems ultimately led reformers back to a reassertion of the same Aristotelian affective sensory theories around which late medieval practice cohered.

4.6 – *The Reformation of Aristotle: The Word & Affective Sensuality in Ritual, ca. 1525-1552*

It is fairly well documented that after the mid-1520s, the Protestant Reformation in Germany became more moderate. There were several reasons for this. First, the image of a systematic break with the Church of Rome depicted in early popular literature had been taken to heart by large numbers of less educated people, and had several major unintended consequences. Iconoclast riots erupted in many locations, including in Wittenberg, and spiritualists such as Andreas Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer pressed for an even more radical dismantling of the ritual edifice of the church. The German Peasants’ War (1525) only further convinced
magisterial reformers that piety needed to be disciplined through proper administration of the Word, and disciplining ritual practice. Further, it was difficult to control the administration of the Word in a predominately illiterate culture.\textsuperscript{206} Literacy probably did rise somewhat in the sixteenth century due the growth of vernacular schools, but this impact was limited to a very narrow segment of society, and overall literacy rates remained quite low, probably below 10\% in most places.\textsuperscript{207} More problematic, at least for the case of Lutheranism in Germany, evidence does not support a causal link between the Reformation and an increase in literacy. Increasing literacy among the population was not a policy among church authorities.\textsuperscript{208} After 1525, Luther and Melanchthon became mostly silent or discouraging on the matter of unmediated engagement with Scripture.\textsuperscript{209} Instead Lutheran policy increasingly advocated for expert guidance and discipline through preaching by authoritative interpreters and the memorization of doctrine through catechesis. Comparing the prefaces of Melanchthon’s \textit{Loci communes} illustrates this transformation. In 1521, Melanchthon exhorted all to read the Bible, writing “there is nothing I should desire more, if possible, than that all Christians be occupied in greatest freedom with the divine Scriptures alone and be thoroughly transformed.”\textsuperscript{210} By contrast, the 1555 introduction to the \textit{Loci communes} proclaimed that “rightly oriented teachers are needed…To clarify and preserve the proper meaning of the words of the prophets and apostles…This should be the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[207]{Ibid, 32.}
\footnotetext[208]{Strauss and Gawthorp cite Luther’s 1524 \textit{Admonition to the Councillors of All German Cities to Establish and Maintain Christian Schools} as evidence of the early Reformation advocacy of universal Bible reading (32).}
\footnotetext[209]{Strauss and Gawthorp, 34.}
\end{footnotes}
purpose of a catechism.” The experience of the Word for most people in normative Reformation worship was therefore an aural one.

Accompanying this conservative swing was a return to Aristotelian physiology and psychology. The Reformation appropriation served to affirm authorities’ faith in the efficacy of their educational and liturgical policies. If most people could not be trusted to read the Word unaided, the physiological force of hearing it was to replace it. Although throughout the early 1520s Melanchthon had been the most determined critic of the corrupting influence of Aristotelianism on church practice, the exigencies of institutionalizing reform led him to change his position. In the 1530s, Melanchthon began a systematic study of Aristotelian physiology and psychology (De anima), complemented by a series of lectures in Wittenberg, explicitly for the purposes of reforming educational and religious practice. As he wrote in 1536:

Those theologians are robbed of a great instrument if they do not know of the most learned disputations on the soul, the senses, the causes of appetites and feelings, cognition, and the will. And he who describes himself as a dialectician acts arrogantly, without knowing those divisions of the causes which can only be taught in physics, and cannot be understood without physics.212

The fruit of these labors was the publication of his Commentarius de anima, first printed in 1540, and then revised and expanded in a second edition in 1552 under the title Liber de anima.213 The Commentarius was the first German interpretation of Aristotelian psychology since Albert the

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212 Corpus Reformatorum 11, 281: “Magno instrumento destitutus est Theologus, qui nescit illas eruditissimius disputationes, de anima, de sensibus, de causis appetitionum et affectuum, de noticia, de voluntate. Et arroganter faciet, qui se profitetur Dialecticum, si nescit illas causarum partitiones, quae traduntur tantum in Physicis, et intelligi non possunt nisi a Physicis.”
213 Salatowsky, 35-39.
Great. Melanchthon’s approach refined and reinforced the affective sensory relationship by integrating Galenic physiology based on more accurate original sources into his interpretation. Melanchthon described how Galen expanded and ‘perfected’ Aristotle’s model:

There is no better author for this part of philosophy, which we call physics, than Galen, who presented the entire physics in a very learned manner in his disputationes, in which he seeks evidence for the power of animate beings, for the causes of generation, of temperaments, the sensory organs, the causes for action in the sensory organs, the causes of sicknesses and their cures, the relationship of qualities, and of the sympathy of many this in nature. Thus, the physics begun by Aristotle was completed by Galen.

Galen’s ‘completion’ of Aristotle’s physiology was fundamental to Melanchthon’s theorizing of a number of concepts. First, spirit became for Melanchthon not an immaterial thing, but a two-fold subtilis vapor (subtle vapor). The spiritus vitales were heated in the blood, and pumped to all parts of the body as small flames, which provided the body with heat and strength to conduct day to day tasks. The spiritus animales were produced by the refinement of spiritus vitales in the ventricles of the brain, and effected the functioning of the senses, internal and external. Together, the spiritus vitales and spiritus animales effected the “important activities [of the body], such as the sustainment of life, nutrition, reproduction, the senses, motion, thought, and the affections of the heart.”

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214 Ibid, 70.
215 CR 3, 493: “Nullus enim extat autor uberior eius partis philosophie, quam Physicen vocamus, quam Galemus, qui universam Physicen eruditissime complexus est in his disputationibus, in quibus quaeerit demonstrationes de potentiis in animantibus, de generationum causis, de temperamentis, de sensuum organis, de causis actionum in sensibus, de morborum et remediorum causis, de qualitatum cognitione, de συμπαθεία plurimarum rerum in natura…Itaque inchoata ab Aristotle Physica, ab uno Galeno absoluta sunt.”
216 Salatowsky, 114-116.
217 CR 13, 88: “Spiritu vitali et animali actiones praeципuae efficiuntur, vitae conservatio, nutritio, generatio, deinde sensus, motus, cogitatio, affectus in corde.”
Melanchthon used this physiology together with the traditional Aristotelian theory of affect as a framework for understanding the interaction between human and Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{218} He explained: “the Holy Spirit is mixed with these spirits in pious people, and thus more brightly gleams through the divine light. Therewith recognition of God is clearer, belief is stronger, and the affections towards God are more ardent.”\textsuperscript{219} More precisely, the \textit{spiritus vitales} \& \textit{animales} were \textit{dwelling places} of the Holy Spirit: “Let us consider that our spirits must be dwelling places of the Holy Spirit, and let us pray to the Son of God, that he himself keep us far from the Devil and pour the Holy Spirit into our spirits.”\textsuperscript{220} This could occur only after an internal process of affective transformation. By definition, affect was a movement in the heart always following an external sensory experience transmitted to the imaginative faculty in the brain, and then to the heart by the \textit{spiritus vitales} and \textit{spiritus animales}. “Thus when we apprehend an object,” Melanchthon explained, “and judge whether it is good or bad, then the affected spirits in cognition bring it to the heart, which, so to speak, is struck, beat and agitated, and either aspires to the object or flees from it.”\textsuperscript{221}

Rather than opposing the Word to the Aristotelian system, Melanchthon sought to integrate it in a manner consistent with Reformation theology. This ultimately served to reinforce the fetish of the Word as the central and normative object of all piety, and mediated salvation through the affective sensual relationship it established with the percipient subject. Melanchthon remained a Platonist insofar as he maintained that universal concepts were in the domain of God and reified in doctrine. At the same time, however, he accepted the axiom for

\textsuperscript{218} Salatowsky, 115: “physiologisch-erkenntnistheorisch Modell.”
\textsuperscript{219} CR 13, 88: “Et, quod mirabilius est, his ipsis spiritibus in hominibus piis miscetur ipse divinus spiritus, et efficit magis fulgentes divina luce, ut agnito Dei sit illustrior, et adsensio firmior, et motus sint ardentiores erga Deum.”
\textsuperscript{220} CR 13, 89: “sciamus, oportere spiritus nostros esse domicilium Spiritus sancti, et oremus filiuj
\textsuperscript{221} CR 13, 128: “Ergo cum apprehendimus obiectum, et iudicamus bonum aut malum esse, spiritus moti in agnitione, feriunt cor, quod quasi icium et pulsatum, cietur, et aut expetit obiectum, aut fugit.”
the practical reason that the only way humans could apprehend universal concepts was first through the sensual mediation of the Word. Like many of his contemporaries, he construed this as either an aural process or a visual process “as a light in the eyes, through which sight occurs, so too is there in the human spirit a certain light, through which we reckon, recognize the principles of knowledge, and judge between good and evil.” Ultimately, internal perception – distinct from external sensation – was visual. For Melanchthon, the fact that humans could only think with images was a mysterious decision made by God, but it helped explain the necessity of both Christ’s incarnation and the Word itself. Mutatis mutandis, the same applied to pedagogy and religious practices: universal concepts had to travel through the senses in order to reach the intellect. The shaping of the mind around evangelical doctrine necessarily implied sensory engagement with the image of God embodied by the Word.

4.7 – Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the question of reformers’ perceptions of the relationship between sensory theory and ritual practice to show that the two-sense model of Reformation piety was ultimately limited and determined by its late medieval context. Several developments shaped the fetish of the Word as it emerged in early Reformation culture. The sensual and sacramental efficacy of the Word in late medieval piety related to many diffuse ritual objects by

222 Salatowsky, 119.
223 CR 13, 144: “Ut igitur lumen est in oculis, quo fit visio: ita in mentibus lux quaedam est, qua numeramus, agnosciumus principia artium, discernimus honesta et turpia. Hanc lucem esse noticias divinitus sparsas in mentibus nostris, recte dicitur, quae qualis lux ist, tunc cernemus, cum archetypum Deum intuebimur. Interea procul considerantes, tamen sciamus has aeternas noticias illustria de Deo et de Providentia testimonia esse, mirando consilio Dei in homines sparsa.”
224 CR 13, 145: “Mirando autem consilio Deus noticias voluit esse imaginates, quia in nobis umbras esse voluit significationes aliquid de ipso. Aeternus pater sese intuens gignit filium cogitando, qui est imago aeterni patris.”
the same affective relationship between percipient subject and perceived object proposed in late medieval theory. Reformers who separated the Word from the ritual practices of traditional Christianity built on two interrelated cultural histories: 1) the celebration of the Word in late medieval humanism, 2) the representation of foreign rituals early ethnographic writing. These histories shaped reformers’ views of the practices of traditional Christianity and their own relation the Word in the early 1520s. Faced with the challenges of institutional reform, the magisterial Reformation re-appropriated and reasserted the Aristotelian theories of the body and soul. This re-appropriation intensified the sacramental efficacy of the Word. This is the extent to which the Reformation constituted a coherent rejection of the late medieval model of sensual piety, at least at the level of theory. At the level of practice, sensing in the early German Reformation remained a difficult problem. In the final chapter, we turn to some of these problems.
Chapter 5:
The Window Hypothesis: *Adiaphora*, Idolatry, and the Sensual Threat of Church Ritual in Reformation Nuremberg

5.1 – Introduction

Chapter four examined the coherence of the Reformation in relation to the late medieval model of sensual piety at the theoretical level. This chapter examines a selection of cases from Nuremberg in which the coherence of sensual Reformation worship was put to the test in practice. As we saw in chapter four, the provision for the sensible in early Reformation worship did not significantly break with the late medieval model, but rather intensified it by focusing on the sacramentality of hearing and seeing centered on the notion of the Word. While reformers in the early 1520s made gestures to break with the late medieval synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian religion, Philipp Melanchthon, arguably the most systematic theorist of worship and education in the first generation of the Reformation, advocated a strong return to Aristotelianism beginning in the early 1530s. In his lectures and writings on Aristotle’s *De anima*, Melanchthon confirmed and re-appropriated the traditional affective sensory theories used by late medieval ritual theorists. And yet, the early years had been decisive in forming new cultural assumptions about ritual practice, at least among the sufficiently educated segments of society. The perceived opposition between the Word and external ceremonies could not be undone. But if the same affective sensory theory governed peoples’ engagement with both categories, both had the potential to affect people in the same manner. Where did one draw the line between idolatry and indifference? Further, how different was Reformation piety from Catholic piety?

Because the Reformation never offered a systematic alternative to the sensory theories of the later middle ages, these questions proved incredibly difficult to answer satisfactorily in
practice. This chapter focuses in on how these challenges shaped two mid-century conflicts in
Reformation Nuremberg. First, it considers controversies over the practice of Elevation in the
Protestant celebration of the Lord’s Supper in 1537 and 1538. Next, it analyzes the 1562-1563
trial of Joachim Heller, the city’s astronomer, who was banished for his beliefs about church
ritual. Both of these controversies, though typically overlooked in the historiographical
narratives of the Reformation in Nuremberg, disclose how sensual worship continued to raise
deep concerns about whether it was safe, or even possible, to draw a line between indifferent
practices, or \textit{adiaphora}, and idolatrous ones. In both of these controversies, concerns about
worship were lodged primarily in the language of vision, but disclosed a more general concern
about controlling the affective relationship between perceiving subjects and perceived objects.
The power of this relationship, it was believed, could easily lead participants into superstition and
the sin of idolatry. We identify this phenomenon as the ‘window hypothesis.’ The window
hypothesis destabilized the category of \textit{adiaphora}: the emerging Lutheran consensus in
Nuremberg generally took a permissive stance towards a wide variety of traditional ceremonies,
deeming them matters of indifference in an ideal, theological sense. Nonetheless, the reality of
worship and its appeal to the senses was a much more complicated matter in practice, and a
number of dissenting voices within early Lutheran culture recognized this. After analyzing how
these controversies demonstrate the limits of the reformation of the senses in the sixteenth
century, the chapter closes by moving beyond these limits to consider briefly the emergence of a
self-consciously Counter-Reformation form of sensual worship among Catholic
controversialists and reformers.

5.2– Adoration & Adiaphora: Achatius Parsberger & the Elevation Controversy, 1537-1538
On 21 December 1537, the preacher in St. Egidien’s, Achatius Parsberger, began a sermon in which he sharply criticized the practice of the Elevation in the churches of Nuremberg. Parsberger had been a rather independent theological voice in the city during the 1530s, and as a result had on a number of occasions come into conflict with the city council and the city’s leading reformers, particularly Andreas Osiander.\(^1\) Parsberger claimed that the Elevation of the Eucharist during the Lord’s Supper was leading to false and superstitious beliefs about the sacrament and the idolatrous worship of the visible object of the bread. These beliefs, he claimed, were widespread among the unlettered segments of society. Thus, the practice ought to be abandoned entirely. The following day, the Nuremberg city council ordered Parsberger to compose a report based on his arguments given in the sermon, and present the report to the chief theologians of the city, who would take into consideration the liturgical changes Parsberger recommended.\(^2\) During their review of Parsberger’s document, Osiander was outspoken, claiming that Parsberger’s liturgical recommendations were tantamount to denying the doctrine of the Real Presence, and even compared the situation to Luther’s conflict with Karlstadt over the Eucharist in the early 1520s. Ultimately, Parsberger’s recommendations were ignored, the practice of Elevation affirmed, and Parsberger was commanded to cease preaching on the matter.

While this episode in the history of the city’s Reformation is commonly overlooked, it sheds light on the coherence of magisterial reformers’ responses to the most central focal point of late medieval sensual piety.

The conflict was rooted in the liturgical controversies of the early 1520s. In Wittenberg, Karlstadt omitted the practice of elevating the Host during the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

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\(^2\) The documents are collected in *Andreas Osiander Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Gottfried Seebass and Gerhard Müller, vol 6: *Schriften und Briefe 1535 bis 1538* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1985), 434-481.
because of its historical associations with sacrifice.\(^3\) On the other hand, the gesture was polysemous, and as we saw above in chapter one, the Elevation was a powerful symbol of the doctrine of the Real Presence, and had historically been one of the most important means of sensual engagement with the Eucharist for the laity. Luther regarded the Elevation theologically as \textit{adiaphoron}, and out of pastoral concerns for strenghtening belief in his teachings on the Real Presence among the unlettered laity, permitted it in evangelical worship.\(^4\) Nonetheless, in churches where the practice of Elevation continued, there was always the potential to inspire superstition and even idolatry among the uneducated participants in the ritual.\(^5\) The range of magical, apotropaic, and miraculous powers associated with ocular communion had been deeply ingrained in late medieval German piety, and these beliefs could quickly lead people into worship of the material objects themselves rather than the Word of God which was supposed to inhere in the elements of bread and wine and guarantee their sacramental efficacy.

In the churches of Nuremberg, the Elevation appears to have survived intact. Circumstances similar to those in Wittenberg appear to have encouraged Osiander and the city council to maintain the practice from an early stage. Although in the early 1520s, Osiander had partaken in strongly condemning the ceremonies of traditional Christianity as merely external and contrary to the Word, by the middle of the decade events had tempered his position.\(^6\) While in the process of leading the city to adopt the Reformation in 1524 and 1525, two cases of spiritualist dissidents, the first of Hans Greiffenberger (whose pamphlets were discussed above in chapter four), and the second of Hans Denck and the so-called ‘three godless painters’ (Georg

\(^3\) Klaus Keyser, “Einleitung: Ratschlag zur Elevation, 1538, Januar 3,” in \textit{Andreas Osiander Gesamtausgabe}, vol 6, 434-436.
\(^5\) Ibid, 434.
\(^6\) For example in his \textit{Grund und Ursach} (1524), Osiander compared the ceremonies of the traditional church with those of ancient Judaism and heathens. In \textit{Andreas Osiander Gesamtausgabe}, in Gerhard Müller, ed., vol. 1: \textit{Schriften und Briefe 1522 bis März 1525} (Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlagshaus, 1975), 175-254.
Penz, Sebald Beham and Barthel Beham) had criticized the very foundations on which church ritual rested. Both Greiffenberger, a painter, and Denck, then master of the school at St. Sebald’s church, made radical arguments against the necessity of the sensible reality of all church ritual, claiming instead that the only direct revelation from the ‘invisible Word’ was the only true source of spiritual nourishment. Reflecting the mystically inclined arguments of Cusanus, Denck even went so far as to claim that along with the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the very written Word of ultimately of no use in mediating the divine.7

In his function as the leading evangelical preacher in Nuremberg, Osiander responded not directly to the case of Greiffenberger, but with an explanation of the causes which led “common unlearned people” into such unbelief.8 The first cause cited by Osiander was diabolical illusion, which could lead people to “throw out the good with the bad.”9 The second cause was that it was difficult, if not impossible, to believe in the doctrine of the Real Presence.10 The third and fourth causes for false belief were that common people simply did not understand the subtleties of the Greek and Hebrew languages in which the Scriptures were written.11 The fifth and final cause was that the Church of Rome had deceived the common people for so long on a daily basis with

7 The key documents for this period, as well as the Greiffenberger case, have been collected in Quellen zur Nürnberger Reformationsgeschichte: von der Duldung liturgischer Änderungen bis zur Ausübung des Kirchenregiments durch den Rat (Juni 1524-Juni 1525), ed. Gerhard Pfeiffer (Nuremberg: Selbstverlag des Vereins fuer bayerische Kirchengeschichte, 1968). For important interpretations of this period see, Adolf Engelhardt, Die Reformation in Nürnberg: neue Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte (3 vols.), vol. 1 (Nuremberg: Schrag, 1936). Gerald Strauss, Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century: City Politics and Life Between the Middle Ages and Modern Times (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976), 154-186. Günter Vogler, Nürnberg 1524/25: Studien zur Geschichte der reformatorischen und sozialen Bewegung in der Reichsstadt (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1982). The materials relating to Denck’s confession as well as his beliefs are edited in Hans Denck Schriften, ed. Walter Fellmann, 3 vols (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 1956-1960). Other relevant materials from the perspective of the city council and the city’s religious authorities can be found in Pfeiffer, ed., Quellen, 38-43, 200-203. The key texts have been translated into English in Clarence Bauman, The Spiritual Legacy of Hans Denck: Interpretation and Translation of Key Texts (Brill: Leiden, 1991).
8 Osiander, Ein kurz begriff der ursachen, so den gemainen ungelerten man das heilig sacrament des altars allain fur wein, prot und nicht fur flaisch und plut Christi zu halten bewegen mochten, samt kurzer anzaigung der schriften, so darwider sein und solchen irthumb prechen und umbstossen (ca. 11 November, 1524). In Pfeiffer, ed., Quellen, 299-301.
9 Ibid, 299: “das auch das gut mit dem bosen werd ausgetilget.”
10 Ibid, 300.
11 Ibid, 300.
its practices and doctrines. It was understandable that common man could no longer believe in anything objective relating to religion. Greiffenberger’s arguments were exemplary of the perspective of the “comman man who no longer trusts in anything.”

Osiander reassured the city council that clear preaching of the Gospel would eventually correct these errors among the common folk, who would be led to firm belief that the Eucharist and its outward signs were instituted in Scripture. He also argued that clear evangelical preaching was necessary because it was primarily belief in the words of the Scripture that made the signs of the bread and wine sacramentally efficacious. To guarantee reliable evangelical preaching in the future, Osiander underscored the necessity of preachers with sound language education capable of understanding the words in their original languages of Hebrew and Greek, which “were clearer than in German.” Only with these structures in place would the common people be able to participate in the Eucharist properly, both spiritually and sensually. There was no such thing as the purely intellectual or spiritual communion described by Greiffenberger: “it must be eaten in its entirety – the divine and the human – that is, the Word and the flesh.”

When he began to draft of liturgical ordinaces and prepare for the first evangelical visitation of Nuremberg and its territories in the second half of the 1520s, the problem of sensual worship forced Osiander into a somewhat awkward position. On the one hand, he had made strong arguments – and continued to make them – that associated the category of ‘ceremonies’ with mere externality, sensuality, and unchristian groups in opposition to the Word. On the other

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12 Ibid, 300: “doch ob disem artickel so fest halten, die sonst kainer warhait achten, wirt es bei dem gemain man, der in nichts mer trauet.”
13 Ibid, 300.
14 Ibid, 300-301: “Wann wir aber den worten nicht gelauben, os ists kain nutz, wie auch Paulus sagt: Wer das unwirdig nymbt, der nymbt in das gericht, darumb das er nicht unterschieden den leib des herrn. Wan es dan nur wein und prot wer, so wurde Christus gesagt haben, das prot ist kain nutz und nicht das flaish ist kain nutz.”
15 Ibid, 301.
16 Ibid, 301: “Nicht das ainer sprech: ich iß die wort gaistlich durch den glauben und laß das flaish faren, es muß je alles geessen sein, das gottlich und das menschlich, das ist das wort und das flaish.”
hand, a purely spiritualist approach was useless on questions of ritual practice. Moreover, his arguments about the spiritual eating of the Eucharist through the Word had little purchase for a population which was largely illiterate. Images and gestures such as the Elevation, which had been so apparently effective at inspiring devotion among unlearned people for centuries, could play a useful role. Osiander followed the example of other magisterial reformers by relegating the practices to the category of *adiaphora* on the core aspects of the Christian faith.

Nevertheless, this was never really a satisfactory solution because, as Osiander well recognized, these sensible practices frequently opened the door to problems that truly were anathema to true Christian faith. There were many examples of images which “one worships and burns candles before; also those that demonstrate nothing from scripture but rather only contrived legends.”

In was incumbent on authorities to guard against such images as “idolatry and false preaching.” Further, Osiander stipulated, the same teaching applied to the “custom in presenting the holy sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.” The abuses that arose around the Elevation specifically caused many authorities to forbid the practice. In neighboring Brandenburg-Ansbach, it had been abandoned in 1530. When charged with composing a single church ordinance for both Nuremberg and the territories of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Osiander in 1533 provided neither a direct prohibition nor endorsement of the Elevation. Thus in the hands of

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17 See especially his “Gutachten über die Zeremonien,” in early February of 1526, in *Osiander Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 2, 242-287; his “Kirchenordnungsentwurf” of 1528, in *Osiander Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 3, 505-519; the articles of the 1528 visitation of Nuremberg’s territories, in Idem, 123-180; his recommendations for the visitation to the city council (1528), in Idem, 181-186; the Brandenburg-Nuremberg Visitation Ordinance (1528), in Idem, 187-248.
18 *Osiander Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 3, 164: “aber die pild, die nichts nutz sein, dann das mans anbett und lichtlen davor prennnt, auch die, die nichts aus der schrifft, sonder nur ertichte legenden anzaigen, istdie oberkeit als wol shuldig abzuthun, als abgotterei und falsche predig zu weren.”
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid: “Auch zu erforschern und ze leren gleichen geprauch in raichung der heiligen sacramenten, der tauf und nachtmals.”
22 For documents relating to the preparation of the 1533 ordinance, see *Osiander Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 4, 219-256. For the ordinance, see *Osiander Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 5, 37-177.
Osiander, the liturgical policy of Nuremberg in the early years of its Reformation offered a rather incoherent response to the central focal point of late medieval sensual piety.

Achatius Parsberger’s arguments responded to and criticized this lack of coherence by focusing sharply on the sensual appeal of the Elevation and the dangers it posed. On 28 December, 1537, Parsberger composed and submitted his report on the sermon he had given on the 21st of that month. Parsperger explained that his sermon had begun with a discussion of the doubtful Thomas of the Bible:

St. Thomas had according to outward sight not professed to more than the humanity of Christ risen from the dead. But the divinity, which he did not see with bodily eyes, he believed in his heart and professed with his mouth, speaking: “My God,” and thus through faith allotted the highest divine honor to Christ and worshipped him.”

After this, Parsberger admonished “the simple” people against adoration of the visible host, which was “idolatry without a doubt” and as evil a sin as worshipping the devil himself. By contrast, he explained that the proper adoration of the sacrament was wholly dependent upon full faith in the words of Christ: “This is my body, this is my blood,” and the highest feeling of gratitude and praise for God and the satisfaction of all sin through the blood and body.

Where had the practice of the Elevation originated, and why did it have such potential to lead people into idolatry? The simple people, Parsperger claimed, were not quick enough to separate adoration of the divine from adoration of the sensible. The church of Rome had exploited this,
emphasizing the power of the Elevation to confuse people, seduce them, and divert their attention away from the Word. Among the simple people of the newly Protestant community, centuries of papal deception still inhered in their bodies, seducing them by the power of the gesture that viewing the Host was a sufficient form of communion, and discouraged them from true communion by eating. The visual power of the Elevation remained compelling even among some of the educated members of society. Indeed, although the Reformation had eliminated many other idolatrous and superstitions practices, the lingering practice of Elevation had increased its power among the people.

As Parsberger explained, at the heart of the sacramental efficacy of the Elevation lay the continuing perception of an affective relationship between the beheld and the beholder. Parsberger thus remarked that he commonly heard uneducated people describe their experience of the human and divine in the Eucharist simply by stating “I have seen our Lord today.” Further, the Elevation continued to “give rise to manifold false thoughts and idolatry, namely that the simple people believe that if they see this sacrament, they will have no tooth or eye pain on that day, and more luck than usual, as well as others, and others.” On this particular issue, Parsberger accused Osiander of failing to prohibit the Elevation while simultaneously acknowledging the problems attendant upon the practice:

27 Ibid, 467.
28 Ibid, 467: “und damit zu der thur aus und will nit essen des Herren leib noch trinchken sein pluet, ist der ursach den ainfertigen eben wie den papisten, das in das aufheben in dem nachtmal allerpersst ist, fragen nichtz nach dem befele chri.”
29 Ibid, 467: “So ist auch solich aufheben pef den gelerten fur guet geacht”
30 Ibid, 468: “Nun ist ye nach altem mysprauch das aufheben allain ursach, das dise anpetung erhalten und ym volkh gesterkht wierdt.”
31 “Predigtbericht,” 467: “denn wieol im wort prot und khälich warlich der leib und pluet Christi werde ausgetaylet, so sech man doch da weder gothait noch menschat, wie sy doch sagen dy ainfertigen: “Ich hab heut unseren Herren gesehen.”” Keyser in his footnotes indicates that this last line is underlined for emphasis in the original document.
32 Ibid, 468: “Und wachsen daraus andere manicherlay falsche gedenckhen und abgotterey, nemlich das dy ainfertigen glauben, wann sy diß sacrament sehen, es thue in denselben tag khain zan oder aug we oder werden desselben tag dester mer gluckhs haben etc.”
So too is such abuse contrary to our church ordinance, which thus proclaims: “that in
several places, they have a special devotion for the sacrament, so that they look upon it,
and one should for the sake of their fantasy keep the holiest sacrament in the old usage
and make a spectacle of it. These people however have no true faith, because their
devotion rests on disobedience, for Christ did not say: “come and see”, but rather: “take
and eat.” [And] this is our own church ordinance!  

Several days after Parsperger had submitted his report, the leading theologians of the city,
accompanied by the church superintendants Hieronymous Baumgartner and Georg Volckhamer,
gathered to review the document. All were in agreement with Parsberger on the point that
Christ’s divinity and humanity were both to be worshipped, and not the physical elements of the
sacrament. Nonetheless, the theologians argued that Parsberger’s arguments threatened the
Reformation in the city with a slippery slope. If Parsberger’s liturgical changes were
implemented, it would lead to a different kind of idolatry – denial of the doctrine of Real
Presence – “which Luther, as Andreas Osiander pointed out, had disputed with such great
industry and earnestness.” Oslander further drew attention to the fact that Luther had been of a

33 Ibid, 468: “So ist auch solicher mißbrauch wider unser khirchenordnung, dy also lautt: “Das in ettlich dichten, sy
haben ein besondere andacht darzue, so sy das sacrament ansehen, und man soll umb yeres gedichtz willen das
allerheyligst sacrament ym alten misprauch behalten und ein schau spill daraus machen. Dyse aber haben khain
rechten glauben, dyeweyll yer andacht auff ungehorsam steet, dann Christus hat nit gesprochen: Khumbt her und
schauet, sonder: Nemet hin und esset. Das ist under khirchenordnung.” Cf. the wording in the original
Kirchenordnung: “Deßgleichen thun auch die, so das heylig sacrament gar nicht empfahen, sunder nur anschauen
und darnach darvonlaufnen und diichten in dann, wie sie ein besundere andacht darvon empfahen, und wollen
derhalben, man sol umb solchs ires gedichts willen das allerheyligst sacrament im alten mißbrauch behalten und ein
schau spil daraß machen. Die soll man unterrichten, das es kein gutter grund sein könn, dieweyl es auff dem
gehorsam steet, dann Christus hat gesprochen: “Nemet hyn und esset”; und nicht: Kumbt her und schauet. Wer nun
die wort und einsatzung Christi für augen helt, wie alle christen zu thun schuldig sein, der wird gewißlich seine
gedanken zuruckschlagen und im gehorsam Christi bleyben, das ist, mer auff Christus befelch dann auff sein
ungewise andacht sehen.” Quoted in Osiander Gesamtausgabe, vol. 5, 140-141.
34 “Ratschlag zur Elevation, 1538 Januar 3,” in Osiander Gesamtausgabe, vol. 6, 436-441. The theologians were:
Osiander (preacher, St. Lorenz), Friedrich Pistorius (abbot, St. Egidiens), Hektor Pömer (provost, St. Lorenz);
Dominicus Schleupner (preacher, St. Katharina); Wenzeslaus Linck (preacher, Heiigen Geist Spital); Thomas
Venatorius (pastor, St. Jakobs); Veit Dietrich (pastor, St. Sebalds).
fleiss und ernst disputiert hab.”
mind to do away with the Elevation until the Karlstadt affair. Karlstadt’s argument against the Elevation had been that it was a necessary part of the mass as a sacrifice. Further, according to Wenzeslaus Link, preacher in the Heiligen Geist Spital, everyone in the city well knew that the Elevation was a human work, but it had not been forbidden by God, similar to vestments, altar clothes and other similar things, which one used with other ceremonies, and were also free to maintain or not.” If the Elevation were “unchristian and against the Word of God, as Parsberger wished, it must follow that everything else used for ceremonies was also idolatrous and misleading.” This, however, was simply a “childish” position to hold.

All participants therefore agreed to re-affirm the teaching on the Elevation as adiaphora: “with regard to the Elevation, they all profess that it is a free thing, because it may be well maintained or abandoned without harm or advantage to conscience or the Word of God.”

Further, the theologians all recommended that Parsberger be barred from further preaching on the matter. As Linck pointed out, there was already a high degree of such “fanaticism with the sacrament” among people in the city. It was thus necessary to stamp out this error before further disturbances occurred. The city council followed these recommendations, issuing the following day a mandate commanding Parsberger to cease preaching on the Elevation.

This however was not the end of the matter. In the following weeks, discussions continued. All the major theologians apparently considered the matter of great significance.

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36 Ibid, 440.
37 Ibid, 439: “und ander dergleichen ding, die man mit andern ceremonien darzu gepraucht und auch frey zu hallten sein oder nit.”
38 Ibid, 439: “die elevation uncristlich und wider Gottes wort, wie Baschperger will, sein sollt, so muest volgen, das das ander alles auch abgӧttisch und verfürisch were, was sonst für stick und ceremonien darzu gepraucht werden, das aber kindisch zu gedencken, zu geschweigen, zu reden und zu predigen sey.”
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid, 439: “der elevation halb bekennen sy all, das es ain frey ding sey; darumb es on schaden und nachtayl des gewissens und wort Gottes wol gehalten oder abgestellt werden mueg.”
41 Ibid, 441.
42 Ibid, 437.
because of a perceived threat by Anabaptist and Zwinglian conspiracies among the city populace.\textsuperscript{43} Much of the concern centered on problems of the sensible in worship, above all the idea that Parsberger had overemphasized the division between the sensible and the divine in his arguments. On these grounds, Osiander began to depict Parsberger’s thought as having more in common various heretical Christian sects, and somewhat surprisingly, non-Christians. “Such heresy is easily condemned,” he wrote, “and is a proper Anabaptist and Nestorian, indeed a Jewish and Turkish position, when one says that one shall worship no creature.”\textsuperscript{44} Osiander argued that fully separating the sensible from the divine was “not only unfaithful, but also completely impossible.”\textsuperscript{45} If this were to happen “we would not be able to keep the Gospel, nor baptism, nor the Lord’s Supper, nor Christ. It would all have to be done away with, as it happened in Turkey.”\textsuperscript{46} The sensible was therefore necessary for the purposes of worship. Osiander was skeptical of Parsberger’s argument that the Elevation would lead into idolatry because of the mediating influence of hearing the Word:

“For how could a Christian be so reckless, as if he were a half-fool, that when he believes the words “This is my body,” he worships the pure, clean bread and not to a much greater degree the body and blood of Christ, which by means of the words of Christ who is the truth and cannot lie, is professed there, and he with the spiritual eyes of faith sees, whether or not he sees with the bodily eyes?”\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{43} “Gutachten zur Elevation, zwischen 4 Januar und Februar 16,” in \textit{Osiander Gesamtausgabe}, vol. 6, 453-466.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 464: “solche ketzerey pillich verdambt ist, und ist ein rechte widertaufferische und nestorianische, ja ein judische und turkische red, wan man sagt, man soll kain creatur anpeten. Dann diser irthumb hat gemacht, das Juden Juden geblieben und bose christen und ketzer Tücken worden sein” (464).
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 458: “Wann sich ymand ergert, da er sich nicht ergern soll, so soll man im mit rayner lehre helfen und nicht mit abstellung der ding, daran er sich ergert. Wir wurden sonst weder euangelion noch tauff, noch abentmal, noch Christum konnen behalten. Es muste alles abgethon werden, wie in der Turkkey geschehen ist.”
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 457: “Dann wie konnt doch ein christ so unbesonnen sein, wann er gleich ein halber narr were, so er den worten glaubt, “Das ist mein leib,” das er das pur, lauter prot anpetet und nicht vilmer den leib und das blut Christi, die er vermöeg der wort Christi, der die warhait ist und ye nicht liegen kann, da sein bekennet und mit den geistlichen
Further, it was ultimately impossible to separate the divine from the sensible, and so Parsberger’s claim that simple people too slow to separate worship of the sensible from worship of the divine was simply irrelevant. Osiander supported this argument by showing how scripture argued against the separation of Christ’s divinity and humanity: “the Holy Spirit in the Holy Scripture clearly attests to exactly the opposite, maintaining, as John in the first chapter of his letter speaks: “We have heard, seen with our eyes, and touched with our hands, the Word of life.”

The Elevation controversy of Achatius Parsberger demonstrates how the problem of the sensible in worship contexts generated conflict within early Lutheran culture. Both Parsberger and Osiander understood the appeal of Reformation ritual in its sensible appeal to church-goers. Parsberger argued that the Elevation was dangerous because it commonly gave rise to superstitious beliefs and even the sin of idolatry. This was by virtue of its sensual reality: the affective relationship between ritual participants and the elevated Host did not inevitably cause idolatry, but it always possessed the power to do so, and in Parsberger’s experience tended to generate idolatry, superstition and abuse. There were good reasons for this, as Parsberger pointed out. The Catholic Church had dedicated centuries of pastoral energy to establishing the sensual power of the elevated Host. Meeting the Elevation as a pastoral challenge militated against the possibility that the Elevation could be adiaphoron. The sheer power of the Elevation – arguably the focal point of late medieval sensual piety – could never be a matter of indifference. Osiander and the leading theologians of Nuremberg were able to argue that the Elevation was adiaphoron, although they did not reject that it established a powerful sensual

augen seines glaubens sihet, ob ers gleich mit leiblichen augen nicht sihet? Dieweil es aber nicht allain unglaublich, sonder auch schier unmoglich ist, wissen wir nymand zu wehren noch in zu entschuldigen, das er nicht fur ein lautern Zwinglianer gehalten werd, dieweil er so hefftig streitet wider das anpeten des prots”
48 Ibid, 463: “bezeuget der heilig Gaist in der heiligen schrifft in dem, das er klarlich das widerspill durchaus und aus helt, als Johannes in seiner epistel am 1. cap. spricht: “Wir haben gehört, mit unsern augen gesehen und mit unsern henden betastet das wort des lebens.”
relationship to worshippers. Rather, they acknowledged and even embraced the importance of the sensible in ritual. They differed from Parsberger was on the question of what spiritual effects this relationship could produce. Osiander and other leading reformers were confident in the power of the Word as a bulwark against the sin of idolatry. In part, this was clearly a product of the history of liturgical change in the city’s Reformation. The spiritualist controversies of the mid-1520s had disposed the Nuremberg authorities to advocate for their own liturgical policy in binary terms of practical sensuality disciplined by the Word against idealistic spirituality with impractical emphasis on maintaining pure doctrine. As we will see below, differences of opinion on the potential effects of sensible ritual continued to generate conflict in Reformation Nuremberg as the century progressed. These conflicts, while emerging from the local political and theological milieu of Nuremberg, also reflected deeper cultural issues.

5.3 – Adiaphora & Idolatry: Joachim Heller & Gnesio-Lutheranism, 1562-1563

The trial and expulsion of Joachim Heller provides a useful case in point. From 1543, Heller had served as Rector of the Egidiengymnasium, professor of Mathematics and the city’s official astronomer. On the first day of June, 1563, he was banished from Nuremberg.49 The council justified its decision on the grounds that he had stepped outside his appropriate ‘office’ by engaging in theological debates. As the city’s official astronomer and mathematician, Heller

49 “Bericht Joachim Hellers verhandlung belangend [1564].” The report is one among many compiled in a massive dossier on the trial of Heller, located in the Bayerische Staatsarchiv Nuremberg. Hereafter abbreviated as StAN. See StAN, Rep. 15a, A-Akten, S.I.L. 182, nr. 2. First 25 items in the dossier were number by the city Ratschreiber; however, there are also several hundred pages of unnumbered letters, Fragstücke, pleas, testimonies, and inventories that are not numbered, including the above mentioned “Bericht.” None of the individual items in the dossier are paginated. Pagination marks that follow are my own. Further, it should be noted that the only prior scholarly references to this dossier cite an outdated archival signature: StAN Rep. 15a, A-Akten, S.I.L. 102, nr. 1. See Karl Schornbaum, “Die brandenburgisch-nürnbergsiche Norma doctrinae 1573,” in Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte [Hereafter ARG] 19 (1922), 161-193. Citation at 181. Item: Bartlett Russell Butler, “Liturgical Music in Sixteenth-Century Nürnberg: A Socio-Musical Study” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1970), 343-344. This signature is no longer valid.
had violated the Pauline principle *in qua quis vocatione vocatus est, in ea ambulet.*\(^5\) Above all, however, it was the content of what Heller debated which led to his expulsion: specifically what he said about church rituals. In its concluding report on the trial, the city council condemned Heller’s beliefs in a manner reminiscent of condemnations of foreign practices discussed above in chapter four. He was judged a “defiler of blood…an anti-Christian spirit, a Turkish spirit, a false spirit, a lying spirit, a cunning spirit, [and] a haughty spirit.”\(^5\)

Why was Heller’s perspective so troubling to authorities? These were some of the same men who had examined Parsberger in 1537-1538: the aging Hieronymus Baumgartner and Georg Volckhamer headed the investigation. Unlike Parsberger, who ultimately was allowed to resume his preaching duties in St. Egidien’s, Heller and his entire family were permanently banished from the city.\(^5\) During the trial, which began in the middle of December 1562 and lasted six and a half months, the city council discovered he was an ardent supporter of the theologian Matthias Flacius (1520-1575), the leader of the so-called “Gnesio-Lutherans” (Genuine or Authentic Lutherans).\(^5\) Heller rejected the more moderate Lutheran position on church rituals articulated by Philipp Melanchthon in response to the Augsburg *Interim* (1548); the position officially held by the city council and pastors of Nuremberg. This position considered external rituals as mere *adiaphora*, or matters of indifference, which had no bearing on the central religious issues of faith and justification.\(^5\) Heller, by contrast, followed the Flacian argument that *adiaphora* by definition ceased to be indifferent when coerced by an external authority.

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\(^5\) “Bericht,” fol. 3r.
\(^5\) “Bericht,” fol. 1r-v.
\(^5\) Ibid.

As we saw above, controversies over *adiaphora* in Nuremberg revolved around questions of the sensual. This paradigm persisted into the early confessional era. While previous interpretations to this period have developed principally along theological and political lines,\(^{55}\) the trial of Joachim Heller demonstrates that there was much more at stake. This controversy went beyond how the imposition of such rituals and objects violated concepts such as Christian freedom, and addressed how rituals physically affected the body, and in turn, had the potential to shape the spirit. Heller and leading Gnesio-Lutherans understood the threat of *adiaphora* in terms of their capacity to affect the body and psyche primarily through the medium of vision, and applied this understanding specifically to how peoples’ bodies related to their structured ritual environment. The trial of Heller therefore spilled out of its local contexts into the deeper and wider currents of the late medieval culture of the senses. Thus it provides another useful example for evaluating the coherence of the Reformation’s relationship to this culture of the senses.

Although Heller had left Nuremberg an enemy of Melanchthon and the so-called “adiaphorists” on the city council, these same men had once held him in high esteem. Born in Weissenfels around 1518, he had studied mathematics and languages in Wittenberg in the 1530s. When the Nuremberg city council began to seek a new Rector for the *Egidiensgymnasium* in 1543, Melanchthon wrote a series of recommendations for Heller, praising his intelligence and enthusiasm, but also expressing some concern for his young age.

On 25 January 1543, Melanchthon wrote to Veit Dietrich, then pastor of St. Sebald’s:

> We have several youths learned in virtue and doctrine, but because of their age do not yet seem appropriate to the tasks. The highest talent is in Joachim of Weissenfels, who shall be sent to you, but I would prefer someone of a more mature age. He promises to come to you, if everything is in order to do so at this point. And if you wish him to come, indicate this in the next letter.

In another letter on 26 March 1543, Melanchthon confirmed that Heller was en route to Nuremberg, and asked Dietrich to help him adjust to his new surroundings once he arrived.

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56 Weissenfels is approximately 40 kilometers southwest of Leipzig. The first biographical reference to Heller can be found in Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universallexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 12 (Leipzig, 1752), 1287. For slightly a slightly more detailed sketch, see Robert Eitner, “Heller, Joachim,” in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* 11 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humbolt, 1880), 694. The most complete information can be found in Irmgard Bezzel, “Joachim Heller (ca. 1520-1580) als Drucker in Nürnberg und Eisleben,” in *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 37 (1992), 295-330.


58 Melanchthon, *CR* 5, no. 2628 (25 Jan 1543): “Vito Theodoro, Norimbergae…Dei beneficio iuvenes habemus, virtute et doctrinae instructos, aliquot, sed propter aetatem nondum videntur idonei functionibus. Optimum ingenium est in Joachimo Wissenfelsensi, qui ad vos proficiscetur; sed vellem aetate robustiori esse. Is promisit se ad vos profecturum esse, si res est integra adhuc. Et si voles, eum venire, signifiquis id proximis literis.”

The proceedings of the city council first mentioned him as Rector of the *Egidiensgymnasium* on 21 May, 1543.\(^6\)

It seems Heller’s youth and enthusiasm aided his rapid rise. By 1546, he had already taken over the duties of Professor of Mathematics from Johannes Schön, thereby also becoming the city’s official astronomer and inheriting the library of Johannes Müller of Königsberg, better known to posterity as Regiomontanus (1436-1476).\(^6\) In this capacity, Heller dedicated himself to editing several texts by medieval Arabic and Jewish astronomers, and producing annual calendars and *prognostica* for the city.\(^6\) In 1551, he set up a small printing press, which he used to print other astrological materials, as well as the occasional political pamphlet. It appears that his activities with the printing press led him to neglect his teaching duties in the *Gymnasium*. As a result, the city council removed him from his position as Rector in 1556. He remained Professor of Mathematics and city astronomer until his banishment in 1563.\(^6\)

In 1562, the investigation into Heller’s beliefs began in the home of Michael Graf, a citizen of Nuremburg. According to Heller’s initial testimony, the catalyst for the trial was a series of ‘musical gatherings’ in Graf’s home. Such gatherings took place in the evening, and were often attended by Heller, Graf’s wife, and others such as Clement Stephani, the cantor of the *Heiligen-Geist Spital*. The music often devolved into religious debates. During one such episode, Stephani defended the liturgical music of the Catholic church, whereupon Graf, a supporter of Flacius, accused Stephani of being a papist, arguing that every aspect of the

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\(^6\) StAN, Repertorium 60a, Ratsverlass 21 May 1543.
\(^6\) See appendix B for a list of his publications, alongside the inventory of his library. Most notably Albohali’s *Astrologi antiquissimi ac clarissimi de ivdiciis natuittatum* (Nuremberg: Johann Berg & Ulrich Neuber, 1549), and the writings of Masa’allah Ibn-Atari in three volumes (Nuremberg: Johann Berg & Ulrich Neuber, 1549).
Catholic liturgy, including its music, led to idolatry. According to his own testimony, Heller on the same evening engaged in a separate debate about the adoration of the Eucharist, a practice he sharply condemned as popery.\textsuperscript{64}

Initially, there appears to have been some uncertainty about Heller’s actual position among his accusers, who identified him as both a Flacian and a papist. Heller testified before the city council that he had engaged in debates on the Eucharist with Johannes Mullner, the chaplain of the \textit{Heiligen Geist Spital}, in which Mullner derided him as a Flacian.\textsuperscript{65} Mullner confirmed and defended his position in two subsequent testimonies before the city council.\textsuperscript{66} The council thereafter sought the opinion of the city’s leading theologians: Moritz Heling, the pastor in St. Sebald, and Johannes Schelhammer, the pastor of St. Lorenz. Heling, a staunch Melanchthonian, concluded that Heller was thoroughly Flacian on a number of issues, including the Eucharist, the Gospel, good works, and free will. He claimed Flacius and his followers did not pay the Eucharist its due reverance, mocking it as a “Gauckelspiel.”\textsuperscript{67} Johannes Schelhammer, however, reached a very different conclusion, condemning Heller as “very papist” in his beliefs about the Eucharist. Schelhammer accused Heller of upholding the doctrine of transubstantiation because he refused to acknowledge “that in the Lord’s Supper two things remain and are: an earthly thing, that is the bread and wine, [and] a heavenly thing, that is the body and blood of Christ.”

Schelhammer criticized Heller’s position as arrogant and making a pretense of knowing better than Paul and even Christ himself.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} StAN, Rep. 15a. S.I.L. 182, nr. 2, item no. 1: “Bericht und relation Joachim Hellers (15 Dec 1562).”
\textsuperscript{65} Item 1 in the dossier: “Relation vnd bericht M. Joachim Hellers in Causa Sacramenti” (15 December 1563).
\textsuperscript{66} These are items 2 and 4 in the dossier.
\textsuperscript{67} Item 5 in the dossier: “macht er aus dem Sacrament nur ein gauckhelspiel, vnnd gespott.”
\textsuperscript{68} Item 6: Testimony of Schelhammer (no date): “Vnd ist Heller he gar papistisch, da er mich verdammet, als solt ich recht haben vom abendmal, da ich Irenei Sententiam vnd spruch verteidige, das im Abendmal zwey ding bleiben vnnd sind, ein irdisch, das ist brot vnnd wein, ein himlischs/ der leib vnnd blut Christi, vnnd spricht es sey nur der leib da, will es den Heller besser machen vnd wissen dem Christus vnnd paulus.”
In the face of these accusations, Heller consistently defended his position as orthodox Lutheran, grounded solely in the Word of scripture and the writings of Luther. In his first testimony in December of 1562, he distanced himself from the doctrine of transubstantiation, which he condemned as a diabolical incursion which “befouled” and “flung filth upon” the Word of Christ.\(^6^9\) To adhere to the Word was to “stand in fear and in the hand of God, in pure doctrine, and with Doctor Luther.”\(^7^0\) Testifying on 19 May 1563, Michael Graf claimed that Heller had argued against the position of Melanchthon and ‘adiaphorists,’ claiming that his own position “alone adheres to the writings of Luther…and the Augsburg Confession and Schmalkaldic Articles.”\(^7^1\) Similarly, in a letter to Bartholomäus Schober, another citizen of Nuremberg and fellow Gnesio-Lutheran, Heller described their struggle in terms of contrariety, arraying the Word of God and the writings of Luther against the ritual innovations of “Adiaphorists,” “Anti-christians” and papists:

The books of Luther, a Holy Man of God, shall remain especially dear to us, so that we might protect and guard ourselves against the Antichrist and his Adiaphorists, [and] flee the abomination of the idolatrous Mass…one shall give witness to the writings of Luther and others against the impiety of *adiaphora*…adiaphorists are Anti-Christian, they teach against Christ and defend errors which Christ from his own Word expressly condemns.\(^7^2\)

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\(^6^9\) Item 1: “damit der teufel die heylig einsatzung vnd wort Christi zubesudeln vnd zubeschmaissen…wie dann der Boesse gayst allweg allen Kerzen solliche vngehenne, vnnerstenddtliche wort eingespeiet hat.”

\(^7^0\) Ibid: “inn den forcht Gottes vnd rainer lehr, doctoris Lutheri, Inn sollich sachen zupleyben.”


\(^7^2\) “Joachim Heller an Bartholomäus Schober,”: “Luthers dess Mans Gottes Bücher sollen vns sonnderlich darumb lieb sein, das wir vns vor dem Antichrist vnd seinen Adiaphoristen hüten vnd bevahren kummen, velliehe den greuel der Abgӧttischen Mess…man schon der schrifften Lutheri vndnd anderen, so wider die Adiaphorica impietatem stehn Zeugkhmus gibt…Adiaphorististen sunndt Antichristisch, *docent contra christum et defendunt errores, quas Christus ex eius verbum expresse damnat.*”
While Heller consistently declared his own Lutheran orthodoxy, the proceedings of the trial established a fairly unambiguous connection with Flacius. In addition to the eyewitness testimonies, letters, and the opinions of the city’s leading theologians, an investigation of Heller’s personal library yielded four letters written by Flacius. Three of the letters were addressed directly to Heller. The fourth was a circular jointly written by Flacius and Nicolaus Gallus (1516-1570), addressed to Heller and four other Nuremberg citizens, including preachers in the city’s Frauenkirche, St. Lorenz, and the chapel of St. Egidien. In addition to distributing anti-Interim pamphlet literature in the city, these men had secretly lodged Flacius in their homes on several occasions. It is therefore clear from the trial that Heller was part of a network of well-educated individuals actively engaged in subverting Melanchthonian orthodoxy, and by extension, the authority of the city council. It is not clear precisely how many people in Nuremberg actively participated in this network, or were sympathetic to Flacian positions, but members on the city council as well as Moritz Heling perceived it to be a fairly large number.

By the end of his trial, Heller was forced to submit to the judgment of the city council, admitting that he had been from a very young age weak to the temptations of false doctrines. On 19 May, 1563, shortly before his banishment, Heller pleaded for amnesty. He promised henceforth not to “spar or dispute” with the city’s authorized preachers and pastors on matters of religion, and to acknowledge their authority as well as the authority of the city council publicly.

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73 The Sendbrief is the final item in the dossier. The address reads: “Reuerenda et Clarissimis viris D. Hieronymo Besoldo, Michaeli Bixlero, et Conrado Klingebeckio concionatoribus in ecclesia Normibergensi. D. Michael Rotingo et Joachimo Hellero artium et philosophice professoribus, dominus et amicis obseruandis.” Prior to his appointment, Besold had in acted as a church superintendent in the 1550s, and in 1560-61, helped conduct the second ecclesiastical visitation of Nuremberg’s rural territories. See Karl Schornbaum, “Besold, Hieronymus” in Neue Deutsche Biographie 2 (1955), 179.
74 Heller confessed to this on 17 March 1563. See Item 20: “Fragstuckh auf Joachim Heller, 15 March, 17 March, 24 March, 3 April, 28 April, 1563.” These interrogations were conducted by the leading architects of the 1560-1561 rural visitations, including Hieronymous Baumgartner, Joachim Haller, Georg Volckhamer, and Paul Behem.
75 Schornbaum, “Norma doctrinae.”
76 Item 21 (Heller’s testimony from 15 March 1563).
on such issues. Further, he promised not to engage in private debates, leaving religious matters
to those authorized by the city council, and concerning himself only with matters appropriate to
his station in life as the city astronomer.\textsuperscript{77} Despite this gesture of contrition, the city council
opted for expulsion. After his banishment, he spent the rest of his life in Eisleben, where he
continued to print astrological materials. He died there in 1590.\textsuperscript{78}

Now that we have established some of the basic details about Heller and the case, how do
we interpret their significance? There have been two prior scholarly treatments, and both
reference the case only in passing. The first is a 1922 article by Karl Schornbaum. Schornbaum
saw the case as indicative of a growing religious rift between the conservative, predominantly
Melanchthonian, patricians in control of the city council, and the broader city populace, which
from the 1550s to the early 1570s increasingly favored more severe forms of Lutheranism
advocated by the likes of Flacius.\textsuperscript{79} The resolution of the Heller trial reflected the city council’s
political strategy: internally, the council desired to maintain religious and social order.
Externally, it perceived a threat to its relations with other territorial authorities.\textsuperscript{80} A dissertation
by the musicologist Bartlett Russell Butler offers a similar interpretation. As Butler writes, the
trial:

\textsuperscript{77} Item 22: “das er hinfüro weiter nicht gedicht, die angefangene Religionssachen wider die Herren predicanten
zufechten noch zudisputieren, auch sich weder mit Inen noch mit anderen leuten darüber der Religionshalben,
dieweil er vermerckt, das ein erbar Rath dessen ein vngefallen wug, weder haimlich noch öffentlich in kain
disputation mehr einzulassen, sondern sich diser ding, was sein ampt vnd beuelch nicht beturff ganzlich
zuenthalten, allain das er dannoch von Inen hinfüro auch vngedirrt vnnd unangefochten pleiben möcht Er wolt auch
dise alberait angefangene disputation oder Irrung mit den predicanten einen E. Rath Im thun vnnd lasssen gantzlich
hanngesetze haben.

\textsuperscript{78} Bezzel, “Joachim Heller als Drucker,” 295-330.

\textsuperscript{79} Schornbaum, “Norma doctrinae,” 175: “Seit der Zeit des Interims war es in Nuernberg auf kirchlichem Gebiete
nie mehr zur Ruhe gekommen, insbesondere seitdem einer der echtesten Schueler Melanchthons Mag. Moriz Helig
zum Prediger bei S. Sebald und “vordersten” Geistlichen ernannt worden war (1555). Ihm gegeneuber neigten Mag.
Hier. Besold, Prediger zu. heil. Geist, zuletzt Prediger bei St. Lorenz, Georg Klingenebeck, Prediger bei St. Aegidien,
und Michael Pesler, Prediger bei St. Marien immer mehr zu den Lutheranern von Jena. Auch die Gemeinde nahm
regen Anteil an diesen theologischen Streitigkeiten. Die Patrizier standen mit verschwindenden Ausnahmen auf
Seite Helings; unter den Buergern aber hatte Flacius treue und opferwillige Anhaenger.”

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 187 ff.
…was eroding Melanchthon’s humane and moderate influence; it was undermining the
peace and unity of the churches and thus endangering the social order; and by calling in
question the theological stance of Nürnberg, it was weakening the status of the city under
the Augsburg Peace both legally and in the eyes of the emperor.\(^{81}\)

Butler’s analysis of how the conflict was resolved follows his larger argument about the
liturgical policy of the Nuremberg city council following the Reformation. In some regards,
Nuremberg was somewhat unique in the degree to which authority over the liturgy was
centralized in the hands of the city council. Nonetheless, Butler argues that the council
consistently deferred to political conditions and adopted a policy designed to create an
appearance of unity, both before the emperor and other Protestant communities. In this case, the
leading members of the city council cooperated with the principal theologians of the city to
produce a statement on the most serious issues raised by the trial. Baumgartner, Haller and
Volckhamer consulted with Heling and Schelhammer to produce the Deklarationsschrift, which
took a strongly Melanchthonian tone. “On questions of adiaphora,” Butler explains, “it placed
the power completely in the hands of the Council de jure.” The city council ordered it to be
accepted by all the clergy and rectors as the official position of Nürnberg, and forbade discussion
of its articles in public and private. This was a tactical move whereby “the Council could
demonstrate the religious unity and orthodoxy of Nürnberg and…protect its status as a legitimate
member of the Augsburg Confession.”\(^{82}\)

The interpretations of both Schornbaum and Butler fit within an explanatory paradigm
developed in the historiography of the Augsburg Interim and its so-called Wirkungsgeschichte.
Following the defeat of Protestant forces at the battle of Mühlberg on 23 April 1547, the

\(^{82}\) Ibid 346-347.
Schmalkaldic War came to a conclusion and Charles V convened a Diet at Augsburg (1548). The articles produced during this Diet centralized important aspects of imperial government, but also produced a controversial church ordinance which became known as the Augsburg Interim. The party of Melanchthon accepted the Interim to end persecution of the Lutheran church, but this meant allowing for the re-introduction of traditional practices into the church as stipulated by the Interim. The Melanchthonian solution was to classify such things as adiaphora, and in such matters, it was permissible to obey secular authorities. Unfortunately, Melanchthon and his followers failed to specify precisely which practices were in fact adiaphora, which immediately created a problem for large numbers of Lutherans. Most notably Matthias Flacius and a growing circle of theologians and intellectuals in the city of Magdeburg violently rejected and opposed the position of Melanchthon and ‘adiaphorists’ in a flourishing of printed works in the late 1540s and 1550s.⁸³

Previously, historians have interpreted the Interim and reactions to its legislation primarily in terms of theology and politics. This paradigm has its origins in the nineteenth century, going back as far as Leopold von Ranke, and is often identified as the ‘confessional’ interpretation. As Luise Schorn-Schütte has pointed out, this basic framework persists in the most recent German scholarship, with theology and politics constituting the normative categories of analysis for the period from the Interim to the Formula of Concord (1577).⁸⁴ Viewed through

the lens of Charles V’s imperial politics, the specific articles of the *Interim* were not designed to address the current political conditions of the late 1540s, but rather reflected the continuity of Charles V’s imperial politics from the beginning of his reign.\(^8^5\) In this regard, Charles hoped to use liturgical policy as a means “to extend and strengthen the structures of imperial domination” and return Germany to the old faith.\(^8^6\) The first article of the *Interim* church ordinance thus stipulated that all the “old ceremonies” of the church, such as the sacrament of baptism, exorcism, the use of chrism, “and others” were to be retained.\(^8^7\) Other articles stipulated the reinstitution of the old practice of the Mass, and called for the return of “altars, priestly vestments, ecclesiastical equipment, banners, likewise crosses, candles, and icons” as well as the “rest of the ceremonies of the sacraments, according to the prescription of the old agendas.”\(^8^8\)

Opponents of the *Interim*, by contrast, articulated a “countervision” focused on “faith and scripture, placing liturgy at the service of the believing individual and minimizing the power of institutions to mediate holiness.”\(^8^9\) Theologically, reactions among Protestants were characterized by a high degree of local variation dependent upon individual authors and genres – whether people were writing theological opinions, polemical broadsheets, confessional, apologetic or consolation literature affected the specific content of reactions. Despite this diversity, reactions shared important commonalities. While the *Interim* represented continuity

\(^1^9^1\) 210. Charles Arand, “The Apology as a Backdrop for the Interim of 1548,” 211-230. For her own part, Shorn-Schütte suggests that a traditional intellectual-historical approach offers the most promising grounds for updating the historiography of the Interim.


\(^8^6\) Rein, “Faith and Empire,” 46-47.


\(^8^9\) Ibid, 71.
with imperial politics, for evangelicals it was experienced as a deep-reaching break with implications for doctrine, ritual life, and the very constitution of the church. People experienced this break by placing the events of the *Interim* onto an historical continuum of confessional struggle and martyrdom accompanying the true church from the beginning of time until the Last Judgment. By doing so, opponents of the *Interim* fell back on a notion of history bound up with apocalyptic imagery, which Luther had already shaped in his lifetime. The *Interim* generation took it over as an example, adjusted it to contemporary concerns, and intensified it.⁹⁰

These are useful points for framing the Heller case. Faced with the veritable liturgical assault embodied in the *Interim* program, Lutherans frequently interpreted their situation in apocalyptic terms. This historical narrative was an important means of dealing with the ritual concessions made by Melanchthon. This suggests that resorting to the category of *adiaphora* was insufficient and unsatisfactory for many Lutherans. Why was this so? As we suggested above with the Parsberger case, it was rooted in the persistent notion of a sensually affective relationship which mediated between subject and object in ritual practice. The division between Melanchthon and those who accepted the ‘adiaphorist’ position on the one hand, and those who rejected it and tended to identify themselves as ‘Gnesio-Lutherans’ (authentic Lutherans) was determined by how one understood the potential for idolatry and superstition embedded in the sensuality of ritual. Even after the Peace of Augsburg (1555), which had affirmed the rights of lords to determine religious practice in their own territories, the threat of sensual ritual persisted.

Let’s return to the origins of the investigation, in the home of Michael Graf. Specifically, we are interested Graf’s argument with Clement Stephani about church music, in which he

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claimed that every aspect of the Catholic liturgy led to idolatry.\textsuperscript{91} Heller reported he had said nothing like this on that particular night, but other evidence from the trial reveals his position on adiaphora followed the logic of Graf’s argument. In his testimony from 19 May, 1563, for instance, Graf claimed that Heller had stated he would never recognize the “adiaphoristic corruptions” to the liturgy because doing so would lead to the “error,” superstition, and idolatry of ‘popery’ (“Bapsthumb”).\textsuperscript{92} This pattern persists throughout the evidence gleaned from the investigation. Heller’s most extensive discussion of adiaphora can be found in his letter to Bartholomäus Schöber. Here he wrote that adiaphora would be used to deceive Christians, and falsify religion. Therefore, Heller argues, “adiaphora are inimical to the cross of Christ, for the Adiaphorists make adiaphora, yet in the case of confession, they have no place.”\textsuperscript{93}

There are several points to take away from the foregoing evidence. Heller’s final point is precisely the central position of Flacius on adiaphora, although here Heller cites only Luther’s writings as a source.\textsuperscript{94} Flacius articulated the problem of adiaphora thus:

All ceremonies and rites, as much as they are indifferent in their nature, cease to be adiaphora if they result in coercion, false claims that they belong to worship and are compulsive, in denial, or inducement to sin, or if they present an evident occasion for impiety, if they completely fail to edify in any way, destroying the Church instead, or if they become an insult to God.\textsuperscript{95}

Unfortunately, Heller, like Flacius, was frustratingly imprecise about specifically which ritual practices or objects he meant in his condemnations. Only on one occasion did he mention a few

\textsuperscript{91} StAN, Rep. 15a. S.I.L. 182, nr. 2, item no. 1: “Bericht und relation Joachim Hellers (15 Dec 1562).”
\textsuperscript{92} Item no. 18, “Testes Michael Graf.”
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, fol. 12: “Adiaphorica inimicitia crucis christi, dann wie die Adiaphoristen Adiaphora machen, in casu confessionis, da sie khein stat haben.”
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, fol. 13: “die selben schriften schuueten auch vnser kirchen.”
\textsuperscript{95} Flacius, \textit{Regula generalis de Adiaphoris}, A1: Omnes caeremoniaie et ritus, quantumuis sua natura indifferentes, desinunt esse Adiaphora, cum accedit coactio, opinio cultus et necessitatis, abnegatio, scandalum, manifesta occasio impietatis, et cum quocunque demum modo non aedificant, sed destruunt Ecclesiam, ac Deum contumelia afficiunt.
specifics, including “lights, altar decorations, vestments, [and] songs.” Nonetheless, this brief list ends with the catch-all “et cetera.”\textsuperscript{96} This was a common pattern in the Gnesio-Lutheran pamphlet literature. There appears to be little agreement from one author to the next as to the classification of particular objects and practices as \textit{adiaphora}. It can be traced back to Luther himself in some respects. In 1540, Luther composed a pamphlet titled \textit{A Writing of the Theologians at Wittenberg to the Preachers of Nuremberg on the Question of Unity between Evangelicals and Papists}, which Flacius edited and re-published in 1549.\textsuperscript{97} Here Luther described the primary division between the two parties arising from the Augsburg Confession in 1530 on two chief issues: doctrine, and the controversy over unnecessary outward ceremonies. In general, Luther avoided specific examples, instead offering a blanket condemnation of those ceremonies which are “spectacles” and “abuses.”\textsuperscript{98} When he did mentions specifics, he provides examples such as blessings, vestments, fasting, special readings, but often ended these lists with expressions such as “and the like.”\textsuperscript{99}

At first glance, the lack of precision appears strange: if \textit{adiaphora} were so threatening, one might expect a higher degree of precision in identifying them. What I claim here, however, is that the specific material objects and practices implied by \textit{adiaphora} are less significant than contemporary cultural assumptions about the interactive process between the body and material world. The argument against \textit{adiaphora} is only fully coherent if we take into account these assumptions. When we consider the above statements of Graf and Heller, the primary danger of \textit{adiaphora} was the affective relationship they established with the body, which had the potential to lead the heart to idolatry. As Heller explained, vision primarily mediated this relationship. In

\textsuperscript{96} Item no. 1, “Bericht und relation,”
\textsuperscript{97} Luther, \textit{Eine schrifft// der Theologen zu Wittenberg an die Prediger von Nürnberg//anno 1540 von der vereinigung der Euangelischen mit den Papisten} (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1549).
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, A6 v – A7r.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid, A8r-A9r: “…sind in den Kirche etliche Gotselige Lectiones/ kleidung/ vnd dergleichen.”
his letter to Schober, he formulated his argument by bringing together Scripture and understandings of epistemology and physiology. Quoting John 1:9, he contrasted adiaphoristic error, deception, and foolishness with the "true light which illuminated all people." When in the face of adiaphora, true Christians "must look to the light and the truth alone, otherwise they themselves will be infiltrated [eindringen werden] by idols." The sin of idolatry, according to Heller, was a problem of faculty psychology, specifically the faculty of "human fantasies," or imagination.¹⁰⁰

Heller’s arguments against adiaphora disclose several important relationships to the history of the senses in the sixteenth century. First, and most obviously, the Johannine metaphor of light in contrast to the forces of darkness was by the sixteenth century a well-established rhetorical pattern in religious and political discourse. It built on the notion of contrariety, and was commonly applied to groups and individuals deemed socially and morally inferior, above all witches and religious outsiders.¹⁰¹ Heller’s selection of this particular passage is significant, however, for the affective visual relationship it posits between subject (believer) and object (light). In the Johannine Gospel, there are fifteen references to light.¹⁰² Most refer to Christ

¹⁰⁰ Item no. 21, “Heller an Schoeber,” fol. 3: “Jenes ist Irrthumb, voll aber daneben den Adiaphoristischen schriften nit Vnrecht. Vnnd den anderen so dawider sindt auch nit recht geben, so veren bede tail mit Inen zufrieden. Jn das muess Ich gleiche vol zusehen [at this point in the letter, Heller makes a footnote, which reads] Einer ist allain die warhait, vnnnd alle die derselben hengnus geben, sind desselben diener, vnnnd mehr nicht, wir von Johanne geschriben steeet Hon erat. Ut lux sed ut testimonium perliberet de lumine. Erat lux vera quae illuminat omne hominum. Drumb gilt hie recht dieser nirens[?], vnnnd gut vndterschied zuhalten, es sehet das liecht vnndt warhait, welche fuer sich selbs einig vnwandelbar bleibt, nit auf den zeugn, sonnder die Zeugen, sovil derselben immer sein, muessen allain auf den liecht vnnnd der warhait besehen, oder do sie sich an stat desselben eindringen werdens Gӧtzen. Vmb der warhait willen, sagt er, thue ers, Gleichsam kaine der warhait nicht Zeugnus geben werden allain Inn dem namen, der allain die warhait ist, vnnnd das leben, wie er selbs spricht, vnnnd nicht In namen der menschen, dann wo das geschiht werden auch Inn der warhait personalia gesetzt, vnnnd die ehr, so Christo allain gepuert, dennmenschen zugelegt, Gleich ir der eben so vol ein Idolatria ist, der einen goetzen oder menschen das vatter vnsser, welchs Christus selbs gelernt hat, betet, als der do samst ein annder menschlich fantasien oder andacht darfuer plappert.”


¹⁰² John 1:4: “the life was the light of men”; John 1:5: “and the light shineth in the darkness”; John 1:7: “to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe”; John 1:8: “[he] was sent to bear witness of that Light”; John 1:9: “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”; John 3:19: “light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light”; John 3:20: “every one that doeth evil hateth the
metaphorically as a light. This particular passage is unique in that it explicitly represents the affective relationship between human and light through the verb ‘illuminate.’

Secondly, this same affective visual relationship informs Heller’s statement on the infiltration of idolatry and fantasy. As Stuart Clark has shown, the problem of idolatry in the sixteenth century was fundamentally bound to traditional Aristotelian physiology and psychology. This meant that while Protestants could understand images and other ceremonies as theologically neutral, or adiaphora, neutrality in practice was impossible because as sensible ‘things’ they by definition affected peoples’ bodies. Everyone well knew that

“They were not just the objects of external vision or constructed only in the external world. The human mind made its own internal pictures as part of the normal processes of perception and understanding: mental imaging was nothing less than essential to thought…the human imagination became not only the inspiration for outward idolatry but an idolater itself. Indeed, the entire vocabulary of visual transgression could be applied to its workings, and that of iconoclasm to avoiding them.103

The relationship between adiaphora and idolatry articulated by Heller, and indeed by Parsberger before him, therefore reflected wider transformations in the culture of vision in the sixteenth century. Central to these transformations was a fundamental re-evaluation of the faculty of imagination, alternatively identified with the Greek phantasia, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Most late medieval theories posited a correspondence of five internal senses

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which processed data taken in by the five external senses. Beginning with Pico della Mirandola and other theorists strongly influenced by Neoplatonism, this arrangement declined, and the faculty of imagination subsumed all the functions of the internal senses. At the same time, theorists conceived of the functioning of imagination primarily as a visual process to the exclusion of the other senses.

This re-evaluation of the imaginative faculty had a two-fold effect: on the one hand, scientific debates paid more attention to the material power of the affective visual relationship. At the same time, few questioned the axiom, originating with traditional Aristotelian faculty psychology, that the imagination specifically was quite unreliable and subject to corruption. Imagination’s tendency towards delusion was conceived primarily as a visual problem. Delusion arose from internal or external factors. Internally, mental or physical illnesses were primary causes. The imagination was especially vulnerable to external visual threats, especially the influence of angels, demons, and magic. The tradition of witchcraft inaugurated by the *Malleus maleficarum* formed the foundations of external visual threats to the imagination, presenting an extensive typology of demonic delusion derived from Aquinas and Johannes Nider’s commentaries on the Ten Commandments. This tradition originated in the decades

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104 Clark, *Vanities*, 43.
105 Hieronymus Nymann (d. 1594), for example, a member of the medical faculty at Wittenberg, dedicated considerable energy to questions of the psychosomatic interaction of images with the body. Specifically, he was interested in several questions: why did continuous gazing at red fabric produce flushing in the skin? Why did watching someone yawn or urinate produce the compulsion to do the same? See Clark, *Vanities*, 45.
106 Clark, *Vanities*, 45-46: Another of Aristotle’s universally cited maxims was that while the external senses generally did not err, or erred only to the least possible extent, the imagination most definitely did. ‘Imaginations,’ he stated bluntly, ‘are for the most part false.’ Aristotle’s association of this falsehood with the combining and separating role of the imagination was widely adopted in the Renaissance period...when divorced from natural reality and done at the mind’s pleasure it was arbitrary and scientifically misleading. The synthetic likenesses that resulted were purely the work of imagination (phantasia)...to offset any confidence in the imagination’s ability to transmit reliable images of absent things, there were serious anxieties about its capacity to mislead or deceive.
107 Clark, *Vanities*, 46-47.
108 Ibid, 41.
109 Kramer and Sprenger offered five types of delusion: 1) ‘artificial trickery’ essentially the same as that used by human conjurors and jugglers; 2) a ‘natural method’ of hiding objects of vision or confusing their appearance;
before the Reformation, but as Clark points out, the development of a Protestant tradition “made no essential difference to the way demonic deception of the senses was allowed for and discussed, although it did increase the intensity of the debate considerably.”

Given this history, it is not surprising to find that the Reformation program aimed not only at images and idolatry, but at each of the central aspects of late medieval visual piety, especially the adoration of the Eucharist during the Mass. Across confessions, arguments against the Mass cast transsubstantiation as a visual lie, frequently comparing it with the delusion and trickery of demons and human deceivers, jugglers and magicians. Indeed, in learned discourse categories of human and demonic delusion were often hardly distinguishable, with words such as praestigiator, praestigiatrix, prestiges, magis, magica, and in German Gauckelwerk and Gauckelbuben used interchangeably. As Clark rightly points out, “the Protestant campaign against the Mass – like the parallel one against relics – was not a devaluation of the senses at all but instead a blunt reassertion of the value of sensory evidence against a doctrine that seemed radically to undermine it.” As we saw with the case of Parsberger above, the value of sensory evidence in the Lord’s Supper was the axiomatic concern.

Heller’s trial also reveals how arguments against the “abomination of the Mass” expressed concern with its sensual presentation. The central problem Heller perceived with the Mass was how it encouraged adoration of the Eucharist. In his testimony, Heller related a question posed to him by Johannes Mullner. Mullner had asked Heller if he would prefer the

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3) simulating the appearance of someone or something; 4) confusing the organ of sight itself; 5) disturbing the humors, thereby effecting a transformation in the forms perceived by the sense and imaginative power. See Clark, Vanities, 131.

10 Ibid, 127.
11 Ibid, 162.
12 Indeed, these categories were often hardly distinguishable, with words such as praestigiator, prestiges, magis, and in German Gauckelwerk and Gauckelbuben used interchangeably to refer to human and demonic agents.
13 Ibid, 78-111.
14 Ibid, 187.
Papist form of the Eucharist “with transubstantiation,” which he reasoned would necessitate the adoration of the Sacrament. In his response, Heller criticized transubstantiation as a diabolical lie which led people into the error of adoring outward things (eusserlichen Sachen). He framed his argument with the biblical story of David gazing at the body of the bathing Bathsheba. The story, he claimed, provided a good example of the universal “bodily weakness” (leibs schwachait) for outward things. He correlated this with “animalistic blindness, certainty, and impudence beating in the heart” which was so powerful that it even dominated the internal affections of King David. Heller set this against the Word, concluding that although Christ “should and wants to be adored according to his Word and commandment, in the most worthy Sacrament of the body and blood of Chirst we have no such commandment or Word.”

5.4 – The Window Hypothesis

For Heller, the theology of transubstantiation and its practical expression in the adoration of the Eucharist were problematic precisely because of the vulnerability of human physiology and epistemology. His comments therefore disclosed the consistent application of a sensual theory of ritual practice to both Eucharist adoration and other practices deemed adiaphora by more moderate reformers. The affective relationship established between the objects of the structured ritual environment and the bodies of participants was simply too dangerous to permit: it could quickly lead the heart into the sin of idolatry. This potential for idolatry in the sensual simply dissolved the category of adiaphora in practice. We will tentatively label this argument

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115 “Relation vnd bericht”: “mit der Transsubstantiation vnd Abettung des Sacraments, dann so das brot Leib Christi wirdt…so muss je nach papistischen maynung, alsspaldt die verwandtlung gestehen ist dann Christi leib vnd blut, im brot vnd weinn…da muess er angebetet werden.”
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid: “Christus soll und will angebetet werden, nach seinem wort vnd beuelch. Im hochwirdigen Sacrement dess leibs vnd bluts Christi, haben wir kainen beuelch noch wort.”
the window hypothesis, for two reasons. First, the metaphor underscores the medium of vision. Second, it reflects the specific language used by opponents of adiaphora. As Heller explained in his criticism of Adiaphorist innovations to the rite of the Eucharist, if “one opens the window to the devil even in the slightest degree, there he breaks through completely.”

This parallels his letter to Bartholomäus Schöber on the “infiltration” of idolatry into the hearts of Christians, grounded in the materiality of ritual practice.

It is not unique to Heller or the Nuremberg Gnesio-Lutherans. Rather, the window hypothesis originates with Flacius in the immediate aftermath of the Interim. He first formulated the term “Mitteldingfenster” in his 1549 pamphlet, *Ein buch von waren vnd falschen Mitteldingen*. Here and in other pamphlets from this period, Flacius argued that adiaphora falsified the Christian religion, and that their re-introduction into the church would “open the window to the Babylonian whore and her beastly consorts.”

In subsequent pamphlets, Flacius more clearly framed the window hypothesis with reference to the identity of the Babylonian whore and her consorts. He thus began another 1549 pamphlet, *Against the INTERIM, Papist Mass, Canon, and Master Eisleuben* by comparing the ritual measures introduced by the Interim to the “idolatry of the Jews” he had read about in the Scriptures. As with arguments against incense detailed in chapter three, Flacius deployed

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118 Item no. 1, “Bericht,” fol. 17: “wo man dem Teuffel nur ain klains gutzerlain auftut, da bricht er von stundt an, ain ganntz fenster ein.”
120 Ibid, 84-85.
121 Flacius, *Klerliche Beweisung*, A2 r: “die fenster auffthun vnd sich zu der Babilonischen hure vnd ihrem Thier gesellen.” In several other pamphlets from the same year, repeats the argument using the window metaphor, but replacing the Babylonian whore and her beasts with the Antichrist, the Pope, the Devil, and the whole of the Catholic Church. See *Erklerung der schendlichen Suonde*, B1v-C1r; *Eine Christliche vermanung*, C2r.
Paul’s letter to the Hebrews in his argument against the idolatrous practices of the Jews, extending it to both ‘papists’ and ‘adiaphorists’:

as in Paul’s letters to the Galatians, Hebrews, and otherwise in several other places, according to which it has long been taught that all ceremonies and figures of the Old Testament were abolished, so that we receive Christ himself even more. So I would like to hear from the Papists and the Interimists, on which grounds or appearances from Holy Scripture do they wish to introduction again into the church such outward ceremonies, sacrifices, and services, of which Popery was full?  

The Mass was “pure idolatry” and “contrary to the Word of God.” Flacius criticized Catholic arguments for the Mass based on ceremonies described in the Old Testament. These descriptions referred “not to the future sacrifice of the Papists, but rather to the present, those already practiced by the heathens” and “Jewish priests who falsified the Word of God.” In the 1550 pamphlet *A Christian Admonition to Resilience in the True Pure Religion of Jesus Christ, and in the Augsburg Confession*, Flacius repeated the argument that *adiaphora* opened the window to Papism, and by extension the Devil. He derided adiaphorists as Epicureans with confused senses, and compared them not only with Papists and Jews, but also Turks and “all the Godless, who scorn and deprecate us, our Gospel, and thus God’s name.”

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124 Ibid, A3 v.

125 Ibid, A3v: “nicht vom zukuenfftigen Opffer der Papisten/ Sondern von kegenwertigen/ die bereit die Heiden thaten/ zelt also die Geistliche opffer der Judischen Priester/ die gottes wort falschten/ vnnd vntreulich lereten.”

126 Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung Matthie Flacij Jlyrici zur bestendigkeit/ inn der waren reinen Religion Jhesu Christi/ vnnd inn der Augspurgischen Confession* (Magdeburg: Lotter, 1550), C2 r.
In *adiaphora*, Flacius also perceived a connection to the Mass via the window hypothesis: he argued that Melanchthon himself made this point, showing that “all the current business” about *adiaphora* “was nothing other than a colored appearance, through which the papist Mass and all of Popery is re-established.”¹²⁷ Indeed, Flacius appears to have considered *adiaphora* as part of the structured ritual environment that made the Mass idolatrous and contrary to the Word. Borrowing from Luther the term “spectacle-Mass,” Flacius argued that traditional Mass was clearly something “other than Communion, and is against God’s Word, for one practices a Spectacle-mass, and makes an ape’s game of the sacrament.”¹²⁸ Flacius supported his argument by provided a brief list of things which differentiated the “Spectacle Mass” from communion, including the use of vestments, the praying of the Divine Office, vigils, Masses for the dead, and the invocation of saints, among others.¹²⁹ Such things were deceptions of Antichrist and the Devil, and always led to idolatry.¹³⁰ Because of their affective power, “one must not prevent and do away only with abuses, but rather also the ceremonies themselves in order that godless worship is not strengthened.”¹³¹ In its fullest articulation, then, the window hypothesis established the Mass and *adiaphora* as diabolical visual threats, contrary to the Word, and associated with the practices of an array of ‘anti-Christian’ ethnographic categories, above all Jews, Turks, and Catholics.

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¹²⁷ Ibid, D2 r: “Eben dasselbige zeigt an der Traum Philippi von den Fenstern/ mit seiner ausslegung/ das all jtzige hendel nichts ander sein; denn nur ein geferbter schein/ dadurch die Papistische Mess/ vnd das gantze Babstumb widder angerichtet werde.”

¹²⁸ Flacius, *Wider den ausszug// des Leipsischen Interims/// oder das kleine Interim* (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1549), A4 v: “Darumb ist die Messe ein ander ding/ denn die Communion, vnd ist widder Gottes wort/ das mann also ein spectakelmess anrichtet/ vnd mit dem Sacrament affenspiel treibet.”

¹²⁹ Ibid, B1 r.

¹³⁰ Ibid, B2 r.

¹³¹ *Ein Christliche vermanung*, C4 r: Darzu ists auch Gottloss vnd verflucht/ das sie die Teuffels lere vom verbot der speyse widerumb auffrichten/ viewol sie es mit Sophisterey lindern. So ists auch Gottlos/ das sie die andern Papistische Caeremonien vnd gebreuche widerumb auffrichten. Recht spricht die Augspurgische bekentnis/ Man muss nicht allein die missbreuche verhueten vnd abthun/ Sondern auch die Caeremonien selbsts das nicht die Gottlosen Gottesdienst bekrefftiget werden.
Variations on the window hypothesis appear in virtually all of the anti-Interim pamphlet literature of 1549-1552. Over the course of the 1550s, and into the 1560s, it became a structuring element of Gnesio-Lutheran arguments about church ritual.\textsuperscript{132} Nikolaus von Ambsdorff, for example, argued that the ceremonies of the Catholic Mass re-introduced into Lutheran services were contrary to the Word, and would eventually result in the destruction of the church, because they “have a great appearance and prestige, filling the ears and eyes, so that the heart is drawn to them, and catch the eye of the crowd, forgetting the sound of the Word, and

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\item See Matthias Flacius, \textit{Wider den Schmöden// Teuffel/ der sich jzt abermals in eich//hen Engel des liechtes verkleidet hat/ das// ist wider das neue INTERIM} (Magdeburg: Michael Roedinger, 1549), A4v-B2v; \textit{Wider Das// INTERIM// Papistische Mess/ Canonem/// vnd Meister Eissleube/// durch Christianum lau///terwar zu dieser zeit nütz//lich zu lesen} (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1549), A2r-A3v; \textit{Wider den ausszug// des Leipsichen Interims/// oder das kleine Interim} (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1549), A2v, A4v-B2r; \textit{Eine schrifft Ma./Flacij Ilyrici widder ein rech///epicurisch buch/ darin das Leiptzische INTERIM verteidiget wird// sich /// zu hueten fuer den verfelschern} (Magdeburg: Lotter, 1549); \textit{Klerichte beweisung das alle die jenig/// welche die schrifften widder das// Interim vnd Mittelding feil zuhaben vn[n]// zu lesen verbieten...Christum...selbs//verfolgen/ geschrieben zur warmung an all//le christen...durch matthiam flacium///Jlyricum} (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1550), A2r-A4r. B3v: \textit{Erlcherung der schendlichen Suonde der jenigen/ die durch das Concilium/ Interin/ vnd Adiaphora von Christo zum Antichrist // fallen/ aus diesem Prophetischen gemeide/ des 3. Eliae seliger gedechnis. D. M. Luther genomen durch M. Fl. Jlyyr} (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1550), B1r-B2r, B4r-C1r; \textit{Ein Christliche vermanung Matthie Flacij Jlyrici zur bestendigkeit/ inn der waren reinen Religion Jhesu Christi/ vnd inn der Augspurgischen} (Magdeburg: Lotter, 1550), C2r-v, C4r-D2r, E2 r. See also Nikolaus von Amsdorff, \textit{Dass Doctor Martinus kein Adiaphorist gewesen ist, und das D. Pfeffinger und das buch on namen ihm, gewalt und unrecht thut} (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1550); \textit{Deren zu Magdeburgs so widder die Adiaphora geschrieben haben ihres vorigen schreibens beschluss auff der Adiaphoristen beschuldigung vnd lesterung die zeit jhrer belagerung vnd jzt zum teil neulich vnter diesen friedshandlungen wider sie ausgangen} (Magdeburg: Lotter, 1551); \textit{Das in der Scrifft ausdruecklich verkuendigt is, das die Roemische Kirche vom Christlichen glauben abfallen, Christum vnd sein Wort verleugnen vnd verdammen sol} (Jena: n.p., 1555); \textit{Horas canonicas in Klöstern und Stifften singen und gebotene Adiaphora halten, ist eben so wol Abgötterey, als die schentlichs te Opffermesse} (Jena: Thomas Rhebart, 1563). See also Nikolaus Gallus, \textit{Norma simul et praxis constituendae religionis} (Regensburg, 1563), E4v ff; \textit{Confutationes etzlicher gegenwertiger Secten und Curruptelen} (Jena, 1563), A1r-A3v; \textit{Kurtze Bekandtnuss der Diener des Evangelii, inn der Kirchen zu Regenspurg, von gegenwartigen Streit-Artickeln} (Regensburg, 1562), B1r-B2r; [with contributions from Flacius, Aurifaber, Johannes Wigand, Anthonius Otto, and Mattheus Judex]. \textit{Von Irrthumen und Secten Theses und Hypotheses: das ist gemeine erwiesene Sprüche auff gegenwertige Zeit und Händel gezogen zu Erhaltung wares Verstands unser christlichen Augspurgischen Confession und Absonderung der Secten diser Zeit nötig} (Regensburg, 1558); \textit{Fürnemste Adiaphoristische jrhthumen/ der waren Religion Verfelschungen vnd Ergernissen/ aus jren eigenen Schriften vnd handlungen trewli vnd zusammen gezogen} (1558); \textit{Von der Papisten Tauff/ vnd andern Caeremonien oder Kirchendiensten...} (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1550); \textit{Gegenbericht auff/D. Pfeffingers vnd der Adiaphoristen gesuchte glosen bey ihr Liepzigsch Interim} (Magdeburg, 1550); \textit{Eine Disputation von Mitteldingen und von den itzig Verenderungen in Kirchen, die christlich und wol geordent sind} (Magdeburg: Roedinger, 1550); \textit{Antwort auff den brief etlicher Prediger in Meissen von der Frage, ob sie lieber weichen, denn den Chorrock anziehen sollen} (Magdeburg, 1550).
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paying it absolutely no heed.” If the practices of the traditional Mass were re-instituted, true faith derived from the Word would be abandoned, replaced with belief in the efficacy of celebrating Holy Days and hearing Masses. From here, Ambsdorff believed the true church would quickly deteriorate into the idolatry and abominations of Papists and Jews. Nicolaus Gallus made similar arguments in his pamphlets, and re-iterated this point in the circular letter we wrote with Flacius, later found in Heller’s possession during trial. Here, he altered the window metaphor slightly, claiming that *adiaphora* served the devil by creating a breach in the spiritual “wall” of the true church, thus paving the way for his entry.

In the Gnesio-Luthern window hypothesis, we confront how the relationship between physiology and religion complicated the problem of idolatry. In contrast to the discussions of idolatry discussed in chapters three and four, Gnesio-Lutherans more systematically linked idolatry to vision specifically. As Marina Miladinov points out, the problem of images and idolatry occupied much of Flacius’ discussion of *adiaphora.* Flacius generally deferred to Luther’s position on images as “books for the ignorant,” condemning iconoclasts alongside Anabaptists, unruly peasants, and Sacramentarians as inventing and conjuring “deformations of the Christian church and falsifications of faith.” Yet his toleration of images was tentative and contingent: “as long as they do not cause idolatry or tell false and godless stories…but here too

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133 Ambsdorff, *Horas canonicas* B2 v: Denn jre Ceremonien vnd Kirchen geprenge/ haben ein grossen schein vnd ansehen/ fuellen die Oren vnd Augen/ damit sie die Hertzen an sich ziehen/ das man mit hauffen drauff felt/ das die Leut des Worts vergessen/ vnd gar nicht achten/ vnd den Glauben verliesen/ wie mit dem herrlichen geprenge der Messe geschehen ist/ das jeder man meinte wer die Feste des jars vber feirte/ vnd Messe hoerte/ der were ein guter Christ/ ob er gleich nicht ein wort vom Glauben an Christum wueste.

134 Ibid.

135 “Sendbrief,” not paginated: “Do hat gewisslich der Teuffel einen greulichen einbruch jnn die gaistliche mauer vnd festung einer kirchen gethan.”

136 Miladinov, “Mittelding or Idolatry?”

one should keep the measure.”138 The images remaining in the church nonetheless posed a continuous problem because they were not merely neutral objects, but rather always potentially threatening through the visually affective relationship they established with the human subject: “Objects move the senses, [and] what one sees, to that he is disposed.”139 Because of this, once images were removed from churches, they were not to be returned: “if one puts the removed images back to their places, they will cause the same abuse as before and many will practice their iniquity on account of them, as we often read in the Scripture.”140

While the window hypothesis reflected fundamental aspects of Lutheran cultural history in the immediate wake of the Interim, it built on a theory of vision and sensing with a genealogy extending back to ancient Greece. Flacius admonished guarding against adiaphora because the godless used them to appeal to the eye and deceive. This practice, Flacius claimed, was based on a principle originally identified by Plato: “That which one sees (one is obliged to say) moves him more than that which he hears. So says Plato as well.”141 This particular reference to Plato is somewhat puzzling, although it is clear that he differed very little from other ancient and medieval theorists on the specific question of vision as an affective relationship between subject and object. The affective relationship persisted in other ancient philosophical, medical, and

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138 Ein Buch von waren vnd falschen Mitteldingen, K i: Bilder (so fern sie zu keiner Abgötterey vrsach geben/ oder falsche vnd Gotlose historien vorstelln) möchten vielleicht in Kirchen geduldet werden/ weil sie dieselben ein wenig zieren/ vnd die vnerfarnen leren vnd erinnern. Doch solt man hierin auch eine mas halten/ denn es were besser das man die lebendigen Tempel Gottes/ denn die steinerne Tempel/ mit solcher vnkost schmückte.

139 Ein Buch von waren vnd falschen Mitteldingen, K ij: “Denn wie man sagt/ Obiecta mouent sensus, was man sihet/ da wird man verstürtz auff.”

140 Sendbrief einer Christlicher Person/ welche mit auff dem Landtage zu Leiptzig bey den Handlungen gewesen/ deshalb an einen guten Freundt geschrieben (1549), H iij: “Wenn man die abgethane bilder widerumb auffrichtet/ so werden sie eben zu dem misbrauche komen wie zuoer/ vnd werden viel leut nach jhnen hurerei treiben/ wie die Schrift sehr oft meldet.” The pamphlet was publish anonymously, but Miladinov convincingly argues that Flacius or Flacius in cooperation with his circle of followers at Magdeburg produced this text. See Miladinov, “Mittelding or Idolatry?,” 90-91.

141 Erklärung der schendlichen Suonde, B4v-C1r: Mann mag sagen was mann will/ so ist furwar nutzlich/ das mann nicht allein mit worten/ sonder auch mit gemelden/ die grosse mannigfaltige Gottlosigkeit vnd schande des abfals von Christo zum Antichrist allen menschen fur die augen halten. Was einer sihet (pflegt man zusagen) das bewegt jm mehr denn was er hoeret. So sagt auch Plato.
geometrical traditions. The theory was refined by the medieval Arabic philosophers Al-Kindi, Al-Hacen, and Avicenna, and communicated to the University of Paris in the thirteenth century. The most important theoreticians of vision, including Roger Bacon (d. 1292-94) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), assumed that sensation shaped the intellect, and simultaneously emphasized the human soul as an active subject of cognition. By the fifteenth century, this was a basic component of the scientific understanding of vision across Europe.

Vision as an affective relationship also appeared in late medieval theories of religious ritual, and was especially important with regard to the Mass and Eucharist, as we saw above in chapter one. Religious images were supposed to reciprocate the viewer’s gaze. According to Michael Camille, this was the structuring principle of late medieval religious practice. At the same time Bacon and Aquinas developed their theories, “theologians begin to use species and perspectivist theories to explain supernatural events, such as transubstantiation images related to the mass, which emphasize the viewing subjects’ relationship to the objects of sense in this most important of all sensory experiences for Christians.” Yet hovering behind these experiences

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142 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 1-17.
was always the threat of idolatry. In reality, sanctioned religious imagery was often no different from idols; rather, this polemic stemmed in large measure from anxieties internal to Christian culture. This in turn led Christian image makers to project their fears of idolatry onto traditional enemies of the faith: namely heretics, Jews, and Muslims. This projection authorized and helped define a whole spectrum of images with the Mass and the Eucharistic Host as its center of gravity. In this regard, the window hypothesis of Flacius and the Gnesio-Lutherans, was particular expression of a more general cultural paradigm in late medieval Europe.

For the case of Heller specifically, it also seems likely that his educational background also shaped his articulation of the window hypothesis. As we saw in chapter four above, Melanchthon systematically pursued questions of human psychology and physiology for the purposes of education and worship. Heller attended the University of Wittenberg during this period, and the inventory of his library confirms that he owned copies of both the original text of Aristotle and Melanchthon’s commentary on it. It seems likely that this model of vision would have constituted an important part of his mental equipment during his tenure in Nuremberg. Further, Heller owned Al-Hazen’s *De aspectibus*, a key text in the development of late medieval affective theories of vision. As Lindberg points out, Al-Hazen’s account of vision made important advances over the ancient Greek model by refuting the Platonic extramission theory of vision. By removing this component, Al-Hazen technically weakened the formulation of vision as a reciprocal and affective relationship between subject and object. Nonetheless, mid-sixteenth century European intellectuals, following their late-medieval predecessors, erroneously

understood Al-Hazen as reconciling Platonic extramission with Aristotelian intromission. Although fifteenth and sixteenth century philosophers and theologians spent considerable energy elaborating on the subject of vision, the affective relationship remained a guiding assumption across confessions well into the seventeenth century. Heller was no exception, stating that the “light of reason” of Islamic and ancient Greek philosophers had applicability in matters of theology and religious piety. Because he had no alternative theory of vision, Heller lacked the conceptual tools for imagining a different relationship between the body and ritual practice. In this context, the rejection of adiaphora and adoration of the Eucharist was a more intellectually consistent position. The position of Melanchthon, by contrast, generated intellectual dissonance, and indeed left the window open to a real physical threat.

To conclude this section, it is worthwhile to consider the cases of Heller and Parsberger in relation to the question of the overaching coherence of the reformation of the senses. In both cases, the axiomatic concern of dissenters was the potential spiritual effects embedded in the sensual relationships of ritual practice. Also in both cases, this concern was articulated primarily in the language of vision, though the arguments of dissenters clearly relate to more general questions about the senses in religious practice discussed above. The late medieval theories of sensing which had once informed the practices of traditional Christianity had now been applied in the context of intra-Lutheran disputes, complicating arguments about matters of indifference in ritual practice. Because rituals were by definition sensible practices, they too by definition generated affective relationships between the bodies of participants and their structured

151 Item no. 1, “Bericht,” fols. 7-8.
environments. Even the most sophisticated theological argument for *adiaphora* did not alter this concrete reality. Rituals could produce positive effects, if governed by the disciplining force of the Word, as Osiander suggested. Just as likely, or perhaps more likely, however, the sensuality of ritual produced negative effects. As Parsberger, Heller, and Gnesio-Lutherans argued, the potential for idolatry and superstition inhered in the sensuality of the practice itself, and they were much less optimistic about the power of the Word to militate against this potential. The coherence of the reformation of the senses therefore lay in the persistence and intensification of traditional, late medieval theories of sensing. We saw the beginnings of this intensification in chapter four. In this chapter, we identified the limits of its coherence in debates about *adiaphora*.

How does this relate to the historiographic narratives of sensory reformation? It is best here to turn again to Scribner, who suggested that the sacramental gaze eventually gave way to a didactic or ‘theological gaze’ characteristic of Reformation piety.152 Scribner ascribed the emergence of this new mode of sensuality to technical and technological developments of the fifteenth century, such as lens technology, the rise of Baconian optics, and the emergence of linear perspective in visual art.153 These developments attuned culture to new values of objectivity and naturalistic representation, which subverted the traditional ‘sacramental gaze.’ Scribner writes:

> more naturalistic representation lessened the power of the gaze and enabled the objectifying glance, creating the emotionally distanced ‘cold gaze.’ The image could provide information dispassionately, without arousing any sense of personal involvement.

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It is this ‘cold gaze’ which provides the basis for an act of non-sacramental, didactic seeing that characterized many pious images in the Reformation tradition. The gaze became a ‘theological gaze,’ in which contemplation of the image of Christ crucified was not so much to involve the viewer emotionally with the image, but to remind him or her of a doctrine.’\textsuperscript{154}

Part of Scribner’s argument is valid, but only in considering normative theological statements made by magisterial reformers. All images in Luther’s reading, as well as other reformers such as Andreas Osiander in Nuremberg, were technically \textit{adiaphora} to the extent that they had no bearing on the core issues of salvation. At the level of practice, however, the question became much more complicated, as we have seen above. The main reason for this was the persistence, rather than the decline, of traditional affective theories of sensing, in this case vision. The persistence of these theories meant that no images, words, gestures, or objects within the structured ritual environment could be neutral, and indeed often had the potential to mediate damnation, not divinity, by causing the sin of idolatry. Further, there is not really any evidence to suggest a connection between the technical and technological developments discussed by Scribner (and others) and the decline of traditional modes of sensing, although this is an interesting and intuitively persuasive hypothesis on first reading. As we have seen in chapter four and in this chapter, the refinement of the science of sensing ultimately served to focus and intensify the significance of affective sensing in ritual practice. Melanchthon achieved this in his studies of Aristotle’s \textit{De anima}, and Joachim Heller represents the practical application of traditional sensory theory to the problem of \textit{adiaphora} and idolatry.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid, 123.
Before concluding, we must also briefly set the developments we have been discussing in the context of the role of the senses in Counter Reformation worship. As we noted above, Charles V had attempted to use ritual and liturgy as a tool of political and cultural domination. Commentators have described this strategy as “essentially medieval” in its orientation, but this does not pay enough attention to the function of language in this particular context. The liturgical ordinance attached to the Interim was rather a quintessentially Counter Reformation expression of sensual piety. While scholars in the recent past have tended to favor the term Catholic Reformation because it relates the sixteenth century Catholic Church to a longer and deeper history of reform and renewal, the term fails to capture several characteristics unique to Catholicism which cohered only in response to the Protestant Reformation. By presenting itself as ‘reintroducing,’ and ‘re-accustoming’ worshippers to a set of ‘old’ practices in a uniform manner, the liturgical ordinance of the Interim drew on a narrative of loss and attained to a ritual coherence that had simply not been present in the pre-Reformation church. This narrative became the structuring principle for how Catholics came to understand the provision for the sensual in worship in the wake of the Reformation.

In examining Catholic controversialist writings, it is clear that they too based their arguments for traditional rituals and liturgical practices on the same affective model of vision. In Germany, the humanist Georg Witzel (1501-1573) provided the most systematic articulation of this position. Witzel had studied briefly with Luther at Wittenberg in 1520, and in the same year was ordained as a priest. Celibacy in particular proved a challenge, and he converted to the Lutheran cause in 1525. On the recommendation of Luther, he was appointed pastor in Niemegk

(near Wittenberg), where he served until 1531. In 1531, after several years of careful study of the writings of the Church Fathers and Erasmus, Witzel resigned his post, returned to the Church, and publicly broke with Luther. He devoted the remainder of his life to producing an impressive body of liturgical histories of the church, in which he disputed Lutheran and Gnesio-Lutheran positions on ritual. In these writings, Witzel was primarily concerned with re-unifying the church through liturgy and ritual. He frequently quoted Lactantius on this issue: “the only catholic church is that which retains the true form of worship. To these belong the source of truth; this is the house of faith, the temple of God.”

Methodologically, Witzel’s work reflects the influence of humanism. Witzel was deeply influenced by Erasmus, but differed sharply in his approach to the ritual life of the church. Erasmus generally saw excessive ceremony and argued for simplification of practices in favor of engagement with doctrine through individual reflection on the written Word. Witzel, by contrast, was motivated by the narrative of loss in the wake of the Reformation, and used the


157 The most important was his monumental five volume *Typus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, which he constantly revised. It was printed many times in Mainz and Cologne in the 1540s and 1550s, the most complete edition appearing in 1559: *Typus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, 5 vols (Cologne: Quentel and Calenius, 1559). His liturgical works very numerous, and here we include only a small sampling of the most important: *Von den Eucharisty oder Meß, nach Anweisung der Schrift und der ältesten schrifterständigen h. Lehrer* (Leipzig, 1534); *Von Beten, Fasten und Almosen, schriftlich Zeugniß Georgii Vicelii* (Eisleben, 1535); *Catechismus ecclesiae* (Leipzig, 1536); *Methodus concordiae ecclesiasticae post omnium sententias a minimo fratre monstrata non praescripta* (Leipzig, 1537); *Formulae precationum aliquot Evangelicarium* (Mainz, 1541); *De Ceremoniis antiquae Ecclesiae* (Mainz, 1542); *Der heiligen Messen Brauch, wie er in der alten Kirchen vor tausend Jahren gewesen* (Cologne, 1551); *Onomasticon ecclesiae: Die Taufnamen der Christen, deutsch und christlich ausgelegt* (Mainz, 1541); *Ritus baptizandi* (Mainz, 1541); *Ecclesiastica Liturgia, Wie sich der gernein Christen Lay der Latinischen Missen zur besserung sein selds gebrauchen kunde: Der grosse Katechismus* (Mainz, 1545); *Liturgia S. Basilii Magni, nuper e tenebris eruta et in lucem nunc primum edita* (Mainz, 1546); *De traditione apostolica et ecclesiastica, daß die katholische Kirche Christi nicht allein was in der h. Schrift steht, sondern auch was sie bei den heiligen Vättern und ältesten Concilien göttlichs und löblichs funden, zu Gottes Dienst und Ehre ordentlich brauchen und beständiglich behalten möge* (Cologne, 1549); *Vom Canon der lateinischen Messe* (Cologne, 1549); Publicum ecclesiae Sacrum von der Wahrheit der altkirchlichen Liturgia und Opferung d.i. katholischer Messen wider den Matthiis Illyricus zu Magdeburg (Cologne, 1551).


tools of history to make a positive argument for ritual life. In his *Typus Ecclesiae*, he traced the development of the Mass from the earliest times to the sixteenth century, drawing on descriptions of liturgies from Western Europe by a wide variety of authors such as Justin Martyr, Ambrose, Tertullian, Lactantius, Amalar of Metz, Rhabanus Maurus, and Bernard of Clairvaux. He compared these descriptions with a diversity of liturgies from Byzantium, Armenia, Ethiopia, and the Iberian peninsula, and was especially sensitive to the local variation in ritual practice.\(^\text{160}\)

Witzel used the sophisticated tools of humanism to construct a coherent picture of sensual worship in the church from its beginnings to contemporary times. He found evidence for incense, rosaries, adoration of the Eucharist, and seasonal blessings all in the ancient church. In the *Typus Ecclesiae*, he identified evidence in the apostolic church for contemporary ritual practices around the Eucharist. He cited the description of the Mass according to Saint Dionysius:

First, the highest priest or archbishop spoke the holy prayer over the altar, and then began to cense throughout the whole of God’s house. Thereafter when he came again to the altar, he began to sing Psalms, together with the whole Choir. At the same time, the servants read the holy Scripture in orderly fashion…after this, because God’s praise was before sung by the Choir, the foremost priests brought the bread and the chalice, and laid them on the Altar. Then the bishop spoke the holy prayer, and proclaimed peace to all the saints….when they had washed their hands, the bishop stood in the middle of the altar, and the priests together with only the best servants stood around him. Then he spoke the blessing over the sacrifice, and consecrated it. Thereafter he no longer kept it hidden, but let it be seen, and honorably display the divine sacrifice. Thereafter, he turned to receive

it, and also admonished the others to receive it. Finally, when he had received it, and
given it to the others, he gave thanks to God and concluded the sacrament.\textsuperscript{161}

In another section titled “On the Ceremonies of the Old Church,” Witzel found further evidence
of incense rituals in the writings of St. Basil, Justin Martyr, and John Chrysostomos.\textsuperscript{162} In this
section, he also described the ancient use of vestments, church ornaments and jewelry, relics, the
burning of candles, the veneration of images, and seasonal blessings.\textsuperscript{163} In his discussion of
“Fasts, Prayer, and Alms,” he identified the historical origin of the rosary:

One reads of the old Christians, especially of the Hermit Mose [sic], that he sometimes
prayed to God 300 times a day, counting such as a tribute to the Lord God, and in order
that he would not err in counting, he gathered together many little stones, and with each
prayer, he would toss one of the stones away. So writes Sozomenus; from here the
Paternoster stones or beads have their origin.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{161} Witzel, \textit{Typus Ecclesiae}, vol. 1 (Cologne: Quentell, 1559), C3 r: Also hat man das Sacrament/ oder heilige
MISSA/ zur Apostel zeit gehalten/ nach der beschreibung S. Dionysij: Zu erst thut der obrist Priester oder Epischof
das heilig gebete vbern Altar/ vnd hebt denn an zu reuchern durchs gantz Gotts ha[?]s?. Darnach wenn er widder
zum Altar kompt/ faht er an Psalmen zu singen/ sampt dem gantzen Chor. Auff dasselbig lesen des diener die
heilige Schrift ordenlich. Wenn diss geschehen/ so treibet man auss dem Tempel die Catechumener/ Energumener/
vnd Penitenten/ dass allein darin bleiben/ die diss zu sehen vnd empfahen wirdig seyn: Darumb etliche der Diener
an den verschlossenen thuern stehen/ etliche thun sonst etwas. Nach disem / weil zuuor Gottes lob vom Chor
gesungen/ so bringen die fuernemisten Priester brot vnd den kylch/ vnd legens auff den Altar. Hierzu thut de
Epischoff das heilige gebete/ vnd verkuediget allen den heiligen fried. Vnd wenn sie sich alle vntereinander
erguesst haben/ werden die heiligen/ so in Christo Schlaflassen / verzelet. Wenn sie nu jre hende gewaschen/ tritt
der Epischoff mitten an den Altar/ vnd Priester sampt den besten Dienern stehen allein vmbher. Als denn spricht er
das lob vbers Opffer/ vnd conficiert. Darnach helt ers nicht mehr verdeckt/ sondern lests sehen/ vnd zeigt
ehrwirdiglich das Goettlich Opffer. Demnach keret er sich/ dasselbig zu entpfahen/ vnd vermanet auch die andern/
dasselbig zu empfahen. Zu letzt wenn ers empfangen/ vnd anden geben hat/ thut er Gott die dancksagung/ vnd
beschleust das Sacrament.”

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, L1 v: “Die Ceremony der Thurification ist alt/ wie droben aus Dionysio gehoeret. S. Basilius gedenckt
dieses auch in Gord. Martyren/vnd S. Chrisostomus in seiner Liturgy oder Miss.”

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, M1r-N1r.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, N1 v: “Man lisset von alten Christen/ sonderlich vom Eremiten Mose/ dass er zuweilen auff einem tag 300.
mal zu Got betet/ zalet solchs Gott dem Herren als einen Tribut (hos periphoron, sagt der Griech) vnd domit er der
zale halben nicht irre wuerd/ name er so viel gesamler steinlin bey sich vnd so offt er ein mal gepepet/ so offt warff
er der steinlin eins von sich. Diss schreibt Sozomenus lib.6.cap.29. Hiraus solten wol die Pater noster steinlin oder
koerner jren vrspung haben
Witzel claimed that such rituals were practiced in this manner in the Greek church since the time of Dionysius, and that the restoration of these practices would bring about the necessary reformation of public worship and ultimately, the reunification of the church.165

What was at stake in Witzel’s liturgical histories? As he explained, the ultimate goal was to restore all of the ancient ceremonies of the Church was so that it would “be seen as an image of wonderous beauty, in order that it may win [back] the heartfelt love of those who regard it.”166 While the image of the church naturally affected the viewer physically and emotionally, but like his Reformation counterparts discussed above, Witzel was careful to distinguish this relationship from the perceived magic and superstition characteristic of non-Christian practice. Witzel’s liturgical histories in many ways found their material counterpart in what Jeffrey Chipps-Smith has recently identified as the practice of ‘sensuous worship’ employed by Jesuits as a pastoral and missionary tactic in the latter half of the sixteenth century.167 In Counter Reformation Germany, the Jesuits built on late medieval understandings of the use of images in worship, but were the first to apply theoretical understandings in a systematic way. They assembled particular theories of iconography, physiology and memory to conceive of the church as a total work of art.168

There are still other examples to consider. The Biberach manuscript, with which we began this dissertation, was composed only after the Reformation had taken place in that city. Since the nineteenth century, this document has been considered an ‘unmediated’ representation of the state of the ritual practice before the Reformation. Scribner relied heavily on it in his

165 Ibid, C3r-C4r.
166 Georg Witzel, Typus Ecclesiae Catholicae, F1 v.
168 Ibid, 200.
analyses of late medieval piety. The depth of sensuous detail provided by the anonymous author encompasses virtually every physical form of late medieval sacramentality, from prayer books, to rosaries, to incense, the Elevation, benedictions, candles, bells, holy water, chrism oil, among countless others. Yet the author produced this document in the same context, and at roughly the same time (late 1530s), as Witzel had begun writing his liturgical histories. Moreover, the narrative of loss noted above clearly governs the Biberach manuscript. Many of the descriptions of practices, words and objects are punctuated with the refrain “as we had in the old, true faith.”

How are we then to regard the depictions of sensual ritual in the Biberach manuscript, or in Witzel’s liturgical histories for that matter? A full answer to this question would require another complete study, but we can draw out some points germane to the argument of this dissertation. By drawing attention to the aspects of worship that had been lost – the rosaries, the incense, the prayer books, and others – these writers articulated the perception that the Protestant Reformation had had a very real and material impact on the role of the senses in religious ritual. As we have seen in the foregoing chapters, the changes wrought were far from uniform and consistent, and oftentimes they were much less dramatic than either Catholic controversialists of the sixteenth century or modern historians have suggested. Nonetheless, the sense of loss conveyed in these writings underscores the fact that such changes were indeed deeply significant.

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Conclusion: Sensory Depth and Coherence

To conclude, let’s return to the problems of depth and coherence. With regard to the senses, historians of the Reformation have generally accepted, either explicitly or implicitly, one of two narratives. The first narrative is one of Reformation as de-sensualization: the depth of late medieval churchgoers’ engagement with ritual was rather superficial and sensual in an unrestrained, anarchic way, and the Reformation cohered in its rejection of that sensuality. The second, more recent narrative, has focused on the sense of sight both before and during the Reformation. Scribner’s argument for a transition from a late medieval ‘sacramental gaze’ to a Reformation ‘theological gaze’ encapsulates this narrative.1 While the latter represents an advance over the former, both tend to re-inscribe problematic assumptions into their answers to the questions of depth and coherence.

On the issue of depth, both the de-sensualization narrative and visual narrative have overlooked a whole range of experiences upon which peoples’ engagement with late medieval ritual was built. The depth of fifteenth century churchgoers’ engagement was not limited to their comprehension of the theological or social message of ritual, nor its visual medium. As chapter one demonstrated, fifteenth century appealed in a phenomenological manner to the sense of taste. People approached the Eucharist of the late fifteenth century not simply by gazing at it as an object of desire, but also through prayers which described it as a sweet taste in the mouth.2 This most central object of devotion articulated phenomenologically various aspects of taste experience in daily life and culture.

2 In addition to Scribner’s work on the subject, see more recently Sarah Stanbury, The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
The depth of late medieval ritual went beyond just taste. As chapter two demonstrated, intersensorial devotion was an important dimension of ritual practice. Analysis of the rosary, the most important object of devotion after the Eucharist, revealed the contours of intersensorial devotion. In its very materiality, it appealed to all the senses in a disorderly but ritually efficacious manner. As an assemblage of texts, beliefs, practices and material objects built on historical layers of culture, the rosary by the end of the fifteenth century was not only widely popular, but quintessentially a German form of devotion. The modern prayer form we recognize today first emerged in Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century, although the material culture to which it was attached differed significantly. Promoted by the Confraternity of the Rosary first founded at Cologne in 1475, the rosary enjoyed widespread popularity among both males and females by the end of the fifteenth century. In addition to its religious uses, the multi-sensory properties of the rosary reflected parallel uses in medicine, fashion, and other quotidian contexts.

In chapter three, we also saw how smell mediated peoples’ engagement with church ritual. The history of ritual incense demonstrates how church ritual appealed to participants by exploiting the apparently universal human associations between olfaction, boundary demarcation, and transition. In practice, fifteenth century incense use varied from location to location, but not in such a degree as to obscure family resemblances within these variations. Theologically, incense was associated with the sacrifice of the mass, the seasonal blessings of the objects in the liturgical year, and evening Vespers, which served to mark the transition from day to night. In each ritual context, the association between olfaction and transition added a layer of depth that escaped capture in language or text. Like the rosary, ritual incense also shared many
parallels with the use of fragrances in daily life, many of which had to do with boundary
demarcation and transition.

Turning to the problem of coherence, we note several things. In the historiographical
narrative of de-sensualization, the Reformation has appeared as an agent of intellectualization or
de-sensualization, focusing devotion on the underlying message of ritual and religion. The
coherence of the Reformation emerged in its break with the sensuality of late medieval
Christendom and its closer proximity to a somehow ‘less-sensual’ modern West. This plots the
Reformation on a progressive narrative that the West has told about itself since the nineteenth
century. As sensory anthropologists point out, the ‘here and now’ of Western modernity has
been constructed as a-sensual and intellectual, in contrast to the ‘then and there’ of everything
and everyone else: the pre-modern past, as well as the ethnographic non-Western subject. 3
The very beginnings of this narrative have their origins in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth
centuries. In chapter four, reformers opposed the notion of the Word to the merely external
ceremonies of foreign groups and traditional Christianity. Although what they meant by the
Word in this context was far from a-sensual and purely intellectual, it was later interpreted as
such by modern historians. This however did not mark the beginnings of de-sensualization, but
rather an intensification of late medieval sensual piety around the object of the Word. This
marked the beginnings of a shift in the sensorium, and the fetishization of the Word in late
medieval culture.

As we saw above in chapter one, reformers appropriated a different model of prayer
ascendant in the later Middle Ages, which ultimately displaced the taste phenomenological
model found in fifteenth century prayer books. This alternative model focused on prayer as a

3 David Howes, Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory (Ann Arbor: University of
Michigan Press, 2003), esp. 4-7.
verbal conversation with God and critical reflection on one’s own moral standing vis-à-vis the Word of scripture. In chapters two and three, we saw how the reformation of the Rosary further intensified this paradigm. Reformers condemned rosaries on material grounds for distracting people from the words of prayers, cultivating a false appearance of piety, and seducing people to commit the sin of idolatry. Reformers bolstered their arguments by associating the rosary with socially inferior subjects. Whereas the late medieval rosary had been an object of devotion for all, the early Reformation produced it as a mere toy or bauble of women, children and fools. A similar pattern occurred with incense.

Reformers de-sacralized incense by associating it with the external category of idolatrous heathens and Jews. Also through its theological association with sacrifice, incense became opposed to the idea of the Word. This process of de-sacralization was a gradual, but clearly articulated in the sermons, lectures and pamphlets of early Reformers. It is much more difficult to evaluate the impact at the level of practice, both with regard to incense and the rosary. The transformation of incense into idolatry was paralleled by a gradual and quiet abandonment in practice resulting from the seizure of liturgical equipment by secular authority. No official prohibition of incense use appears in any of the evangelical church ordinances of the sixteenth century, but authorities tended to follow the policy of seizing all unnecessary liturgical furniture for the benefit of the community, and maintenance of the church and its personnel. By virtue of their construction from precious metals (usually silver), they were a relatively fungible form of wealth. In some instances, they were stored away, under the custody of secular authorities. In others, such as in Nuremberg, they were eventually liquidated for profit. The rosary is perhaps even more complicated because it was generally not church property, but an object of personal devotion. Even after the Reformation, people continued to hold onto their rosaries, although the
specific reasons for doing so are not clear. Nonetheless, rosaries were fairly unambiguously prohibited from normative reformation worship, which suggests that they too were de-sacralized.

The narrative of the theological gaze in the Reformation presents problems as well. As chapter four demonstrated, the Reformation model of piety shifted from a five sense model to a two-sense model focused on devotion to the Word. Trends in humanism and early ethnographic writing intensified the fetish of the Word. It is true that the Reformation ‘way of seeing’ held out the possibility of using images for didactic purposes, at least normatively speaking. It is not true however, as Scribner suggests, that this way of seeing displaced or solved the problem of traditional affective, sacramental seeing. The history of the reception of traditional Aristotelian natural philosophy among reformers reveals that the sacramental efficacy of the Word was authorized by the same affective theories of sensing that framed the five sense model of late medieval devotion.

Further, as shown in chapter five, the persistence of traditional theories of sensing continued to generate conflict and division among educated urban Lutherans in the mid-sixteenth century. Far from articulating an indifferent or dispassionate gaze, the Reformation’s intensification of affective sensory theories meant that no act of sensing could ever be indifferent. The Nuremberg cases of Achatius Parsberger (1537-1538) and Joachim Heller (1562-1563) demonstrate what I have called the ‘window hypothesis,’ that lingering cultural assumptions about the affective power of the sensual meant that religious ritual always already posed the threat of leading people into superstition and idolatry, and that this threat was a real cause of division within early Lutheran culture. The window hypothesis further calls into question the idea of a coherent Reformation break with late medieval sensual piety. The most we can assert is a reformation of the senses which shifted the sensorium in the direction of
normative devotion in two modes of sensory perception rather than five. Yet the perception that a reformation eliminated sensual worship writ large was a powerful one, even in the sixteenth century. As chapter five closes, we see the emergence of narrative of sensory loss within Catholic culture in Germany: before the Reformation, the church ‘had five senses,’ to paraphrase the anonymous Biberach author. After the Reformation, worship was senseless.
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Appendix A: Regression Analysis of Late Medieval Cookbooks, ca. 1350-1600

Table 1.1: Progression of Time & Raw Number of Recipes Containing Sugar

Table 1.1: Statistical Relationships:
Correlation coefficient (r): .64263585
Coefficient of determination (r^2): .412980836

Table 1.2: Progression of Time & Raw Number of Recipes Containing Honey

Table 1.2: Statistical Relationships
Correlation coefficient (r): -.552701138
Coefficient of determination (r^2): .305478548
Table 1.3: Number of Recipes Containing Honey & Number of Recipes Containing Sugar

Table 1.3: Statistical Relationships
Correlation coefficient(r): -0.499632588
Coefficient of determination (r^2): 0.249632723

Table 1.4: Total Number of Recipes & Number of Times Sugar Prescribed

Table 1.4: Statistical Relationships
Correlation coefficient(r): 0.311814489
Coefficient of determination (r^2): 0.097228275
Table 1.5: Total Number of Recipes & Percentage of Sugar Prescribed

Table 1.5: Statistical Relationships
Correlation coefficient(r): .908613974
Coefficient of determination (r^2): .825579354

Table 1.6: Total Number of Recipes & Percentage of Honey Prescribed

Table 1.6: Statistical Relationships
Correlation coefficient(r): -.460811345
Coefficient of determination (r^2): .212347096
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Appendix B: Analysis of Rosary Descriptions Sample, 1362-1662

Table 2.1: Raw Numbers and Percentages of Rosary Ownership (Identity Unconfirmed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Unidentified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1362-1465</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1475-1520</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1525-1575</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1577-1662</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Raw Numbers (1362-1662)</strong></td>
<td><strong>397</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>247</strong></td>
<td><strong>742</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % (1362-1662)</strong></td>
<td><strong>53.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.3%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Raw Numbers and Percentages of Rosary Ownership (Identity Confirmed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1362-1465</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1475-1520</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1525-1575</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1577-1662</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Raw Numbers (1362-1662)</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total % (1362-1662)</strong></td>
<td><strong>55.1%</strong></td>
<td><strong>44.9%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.3: Material Construction – Rosary Beads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bead Material</th>
<th>1362-1465</th>
<th>1475-1520</th>
<th>1525-1575</th>
<th>1577-1662</th>
<th>Total Raw Numbers (1362-1662)</th>
<th>Total % (1362-1662)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amethyst</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone/Ivory</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnelian</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalcedony</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garnet</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass/crystal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet-stone</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>21.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl/mother of pearl</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver/Gold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (aloe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (boxwood)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (cedar)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (ebony)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (“fragrant”)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (oak)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood (“speckled”)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.4: Material Construction – Rosary Attachments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Type</th>
<th>1362-1465</th>
<th>1475-1520</th>
<th>1525-1575</th>
<th>1577-1662</th>
<th>Total Numbers (1362-1662)</th>
<th>Total % (1362-1662)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Agnus Dei</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisamapfel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crucifix</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death’s Head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewel/Precious Stone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialized</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tassel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Appendix B Sources Referenced

Published Sources:


*Archival Sources:*

StadtAN, B 14/III, Inventarbücher, Nr. 11, fols. 166r-171r.

StAN, Rep. 44e, S.I.L. 131, no. 10.
Appendix C: Images

Figure 1.1: Wolf Traut *Mass of St. Gregory* (Nuremberg, 1510)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33783&einfach=traut&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0

Image:
Figure 1.2: Breslau Master, *Rosary with Mass of St. Gregory* (Breslau, 1500)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33843&einfach=Breslau&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0
Image:
Figure 1.3: Erhard Schön, Rosenkranz mit Gregorsmesse (Idea fidei Catholicae) (Nuremberg, 1515)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33876&einfach=erhard+schoen&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0
Image:
Figure 1.4: Agricola Altar (Abenberg, Kloster Marienburg, 1513)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33739&einfach=agricola&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0
Image:
Figure 1.5: Adelheit von Frauenberg at Mary’s Breast
Source: NSB, Cent V 10a, fol. 38v
Image:
Figure 1.6: *Mass of St. Gregory from Stundenbuch für St. Maximin* (Cologne, 1505)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: [http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33265&skip=0&einfach=stundenbuch&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0](http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33265&skip=0&einfach=stundenbuch&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0)
Image:
Figure 1.7: Mass of St. Gregory Altar Screen (Braunschweig, 1506)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33254&einfach=braunschweig&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0
Image:
Figure 1.8: *Altar of the Three Kings with Mass of St. Gregory* (Lower Saxony, 1490)  
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom  
URL: [http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33310&-skip=40&einfach=tafelmalerei&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0](http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33310&-skip=40&einfach=tafelmalerei&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0)  
Image:
Figure 1.9: Henning von der Heide, *Fronleichnamsretabel* (Lübeck, 1496)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: [http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33318&-skip=20&einfach=skulptur&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0](http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33318&-skip=20&einfach=skulptur&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0)
Image:
Figure 1.10: *Mass of St. Gregory from Missale Itinerantium* (Cologne: Heinrich Quentell, 1480-1500)  
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom  
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33667&einfach=quentell&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0
Figure 1.11: Meister von Zwolle, *Mass of St. Gregory Engraving Broadsheet* (1466-1500)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: [http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33558&einfach=zwolle&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0](http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de/objektanzeige.php?ID=33558&einfach=zwolle&currentQuery.x=0&currentQuery.y=0)
Chapter 2 Figures

Figure 2.1: *Thronende Gottesmutter im Rosenkranz Aus der Nürnberger Dominikanerkirche* (ca. 1490)
Source: GNM, Inv. Nr. PLO. 227/228
Figure 2.2a-b: Veit Stoss, *Englischer Gruß* (1518). Source: Lorenzkirche, Nuremberg (author’s photos).

Figure 2.2a:
Figure 2.2b: *Englischer Gruß*, detail.
Figures 2.3a-c: *Triptych with the Crucifixion of Christ* (Late 15th century).
Source: GNM, Painting gallery, catalogue number 562
2.3a
Figure 2.4a-b: *Rosenweydin Memorial*, Lorenzkirche Nuremberg (1514)
Source: Lorenzkirche, Nuremberg (author’s photo).

2.4a:

2.4b: Memorial detail
Figure 2.5: Jakob Elsner, *Portrait of the 28 year old Nuremberg Citizen Jörg Ketzler* (1499)
Source: GNM, on loan from the Bavarian State Painting Gallery, inv. nr. Gm. 884.
Fig. 2.6a-b: Hans Pleydenwurff and his Workshop, *Winged Altar: Saints Dominic and Thomas Aquinas* (1460/65).
Source: GNM, Inv. nr. Gm. 129/130

2.6a: [Image of Winged Altar: Saints Dominic and Thomas Aquinas]

2.6b: [Image of detail from Winged Altar: Saints Dominic and Thomas Aquinas]
Figure 2.7: Amber Rosary with Bisamapfel attachment and Silk Tassel (ca. 1500)
Source: Cologne Archdiocese Museum, *Special Exhibition on 500 Years of the Rosary* (1975) (Exhibit number B 38).
Figure 2.8: Ivory Rosary with Heart of Jesus and Agate Rosary with Dominic and Magdalena of Pazzi Medallions (both from Cologne, 17th century).
Source: Cologne Archdiocese Museum, *Special Exhibition on 500 Years of the Rosary* (1975), [Exhibit numbers B 13 & B 15].
Figure 2.9: Ivory Rosary with Death’s Head, Dominic and Rosalia medallions, Signs of the Five Wounds of Christ, Nails and a Chalice
Source: Cologne Archdiocese Museum, *Special Exhibition on 500 Years of the Rosary* (1975), [Exhibit number B 55]
Figure 2.10: Psalter-form Rosary, coral, two gilded silver filigree pearls, the Arms of Christ in Gold, golden filigree cross with attached pearls.
Source: Cologne Archdiocese Museum, *Special Exhibition on 500 Years of the Rosary* (1975), [Exhibit number B 67].
Figure 2.11: A Paternoster’s Workshop
Source: NSB, Amb. 317, fol. 13r.
Figure 2.12: Bartholomäus Bruyn, Double Portrait of a Patron and Patroness (Cologne, 1501)
Source: Deutsches Dokumentationszentrum für Kunstgeschichte: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg [online]
URL: http://www.fotomarburg.de/
Figure 2.13: The Mass with Onlookers
Source: *Spiegel der Tugend und Ersamkeit* (Basel: Michael Furter, 1493).
Figure 2.14: The Mass with Onlookers 2
Source: *Spiegel der Tugend und Ersamkeit* (Basel: Michael Furter, 1493).
Figure 2.15: Hans Schäufelein, “Die Kommunion” (Augsburg, 1513). Source: GNM, Inv. Nr. HB 10166 (Graphic Collection).
Figure 3.1a-b: Festive Tapestry (1495).
Source: GNM, inv. nr. 4968 (on loan from the Ernst von Siemens Art Trust).
Figure 3.1a: Tapestry detail

Figure 3.1b: Tapestry detail
Figure 3.2: Bernt Notke, *Gregorsmesse* (Lübeck, 1470-1480)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de
Figure 3.3: Prayer book of Claus Humbracht (1500-1508)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de
Figure 3.4: Prayerbook of Anna and Jakob Sattler (Nuremberg, 1515-1525)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de
Figure 3.5: Albrecht Dürer, *Gregorsmesse* (Nuremberg, 1511)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de
Figure 3.6: Bartholomäus Bruyn, *Gregorsmesse* (Cologne, 1515)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: [http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de](http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de)
Figure 3.7: Gregorsmesse (Lower Saxony, 1519)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de
Figure 3.8: Gregorsmesse mit Ablas (Augsburg, 1476)
Source: Mass of St. Gregory Image Database, University of Muenster, Research Group for Cultural History and Theology of the Image in Christendom
URL: http://gregorsmesse.uni-muenster.de
Figures 4.1a-c: Celebration of the Seder
Source: Thomas Murner, *Ritus et celebratio phase iudeorum: cum orationibus eorum et benedictionibus mense ad litteram interpretatis; cum omni observatione uti soliti sunt suum pasca extra terram permissionis sine esu agni pascalis celebrare* (Frankfurt: Murner, 1512).

Figure 4.1a:
Figure 4.2: Single-Leaf Print, Cranach Workshop, 1545 (1609 reprint).