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“Invectivity” and Interpretive Authority: Religious Conflict in Kilian Leib’s *Annales maiores*

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Abstract: The article analyses forms of invective speech in a historiographical work composed during the first half of the sixteenth century. The *Annales maiores* of the Augustinian canon Kilian Leib are not only an eminent source for the perception of the Reformation transformations in southern Germany, but also offer exquisite insights into anti-Reformation patterns of thought and writing of an intellectual and pastor. The article argues that by analysing “invectivity,” the character of Leib’s annals can also be understood more precisely: as private chronicle that formed its contribution to the formation of confessional identities.

Keywords: historiography, Kilian Leib, Martin Luther, humanism, Catholics, invectivity

In about 1505, an Augustinian canon read an astronomical-astrological book that he would later attribute to Johannes Regiomontanus. The celestial constellations predicted for the year 1524 were to remain particularly memorable to him, for they foretold such a fundamental change that he could hardly adequately put it into words. He simply lacked a modern concept of transformation, which would probably be appropriate to what this canon sought to express.¹ According to his self-testimony, he could not get this out of his head, but it only became clear to him fifteen years later, in 1520, when Martin Luther’s three “essential writings” were

¹ See e.g., Michael Wolf, “Transformation als Systemwechsel – eine modelltheoretische Annäherung,” in *Transformation und Interdependenz: Beiträge zu Theorie und Empirie der mittel- und osteuropäischen Systemwechsel*, ed. Arndt Hopfmann and Michael Wolf, *Politische Soziologie* 12 (Münster: LIT, 1998), 39–64, here 41–42. Transformation is defined here “(a) as an intentional process carried out by actors, (b) as the simultaneous occurrence of several interdependent processes which affect the social system as a whole and not just one of its subsystems, such as the economic or political system, (c) as a finite but open-ended process which, if successful, leads to the establishment of new coherent structures which are capable and sufficient to compensate for any functional disturbances that occur in such a way that the new type of system achieves stability.”

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published, so that our canon gained clarity: at this point, he felt an ecclesiastical coup being instigated, which the preachers appointed in the larger cities then promptly and enthusiastically carried out.

1 A Historiographer of His Time

This canon was the long-time prior of the Augustinian canons' monastery of Rebdorf at the gates of the bishop's town of Eichstätt, Kilian Leib. He himself informs us about his biography in brief:² Leib was born on 23 February 1471 in Ochsenfurt, where he also attended primary school. After a short stay at the Latin school in Schweinfurt, we find him in Eichstätt from 1486 on. In the same year, he entered the Augustinian canons' monastery of Rebdorf, where he remained – apart from a brief episode as prior of the monastery of Schamhaupten – for the rest of his life. In 1503 he became prior of Rebdorf and led the convent for half a century, until his death on 16 July 1553. He became acquainted with the elites of the empire in 1515 at the latest, when the convent hosted Emperor Maximilian and representatives of the Franconian Imperial Circle.³ In 1530 he took part in the Diet of Augsburg and in 1546 he gave the opening speech at the second Religious Colloquy in Regensburg.⁴ Leib maintained close contact with the Eichstätt bishop Gabriel von Eyb,⁵ and also held the cathedral dean Johann von Wirsberg in high esteem. In the world of humanist scholarship, Leib corresponded with famous contemporaries, including

2 In the preface to his *Annales maiores*. The author of these lines is preparing a complete critical edition and translation of the *Annales maiores* that meets modern requirements. For the time being the text can be found in: “Chiliani Leibii [...] Historiarum sui temporis ab An. MDII ad An. MDXLVIII annales,” ed. Andreas Felix Oefele, *Beyträge zur Geschichte und Literatur vorzüglich aus den Schätzen der pfalzbaierischen Centralbibliothek zu München*, vol. 7, ed. Johann Christoph von Aretin (Munich: Lindauer, 1806), 535–60, 621–68; vol. 9 (Munich: Lindauer, 1807), 1012–51; Ignaz von Döllinger, ed., *Beiträge zur politischen, kirchlichen und Cultur-Geschichte der sechs letzten Jahrhunderte*, vol. 2 (Regensburg: Manz, 1863), 445–611. Most recent for his biography: Christoph Fasbender, “Leib, Kilian,” in *Deutscher Humanismus 1480–1520: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Franz Josef Worstbrock et al., vol. 2 (Berlin and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2013), 31–52.

3 The account of this event is found in a Latin *sermo* by the Augustinian canon Balthasar Boehm († 1530), see Karl H. Keller, *Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Eichstätt*, vol. 2, *Aus Cod. st 276–Cod. st 470*, Kataloge der Universitätsbibliothek Eichstätt 1,2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 183–84.

4 See Lothar Vogel, *Das zweite Regensburger Religionsgespräch von 1546: Politik und Theologie zwischen Konsensdruck und Selbstbehauptung*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 82 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 320.

5 See Josef Deutsch, *Kilian Leib, Prior von Rebdorf: Ein Lebensbild aus dem Zeitalter der deutschen Reformation*, Reformationgeschichtliche Studien und Texte 15/16 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1910), 33–34.

Jakob Wimpfeling, Johannes Eck, Johannes Cochlaeus, Willibald Pirckheimer and Johannes Reuchlin.⁶ While the latter is today considered the most famous Hebraist of his age, he himself called Leib the better of the two – maybe in topical modesty.⁷ Kilian Leib left behind a considerable oeuvre of letters, sermons, controversial theological, exegetical and pastoral writings, historiographical works and several smaller writings on a wide variety of topics, small parts of which were printed during his lifetime, others only later.⁸

Two historiographical works by Kilian Leib have survived but have received little attention in research so far: while the *Annales minores* are limited to regional news and are therefore not to be taken into account here,⁹ the *Annales maiores* may be considered the main work, in which events of this “stormy century”¹⁰ are both reported and commented on; the reporting period covers the years 1502–1549. As one might expect, a certain focus is on news from Eichstätt and Franconia, whereas events from the rest of the Empire and other European territories are summarised in less detail and in a highly selective manner. In his preface to the *Annales maiores*, Leib not only offers the aforementioned autobiographical note, but also mentions two other aspects to classify his work. Firstly, he emphasises the importance of oral tradition for his historiography: as prior of his monastery he had much contact with people from various classes, selecting from the wide variety of news the accounts most worthy of being handed down. Of course, Leib obviously also integrated several reports about events in geographically more distant regions he had learned about from pamphlets.¹¹ This brings us to the second aspect, the function of historiography. For Leib is not committed to a “medieval” ideal of

6 This emerges from the edition of his letters: *Kilian Leibs Briefwechsel und Diarien*, ed. Joseph Schlecht, Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte 7 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1909). On the discussion of the term “scholar” see Anja Kürbis, “Die Theologen [...] die Gelehrten”: Ein Beitrag zur Gelehrtenkultur des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Intellektuelle in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2010), 33–52.

7 See Reuchlin’s letter to Leib from late 1519, in *Briefwechsel*, ed. Schlecht, 6.

8 Deutsch, *Kilian Leib*, 54–79, 133–81 is still fundamental. More recent perspectives are to be found in Bernward Schmidt and Simon Falch, eds., *Kilian Leib (1471–1553): Prediger – Humanist – Kontroverstheologe*, Katholisches Leben und Kirchenreform im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung 80 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2020).

9 Kilian Leib, “Annales minores,” ed. and trans. Konrad Vollmann, *Ellinger Hefte* 9 (1999), 8–28 (based on Joseph Schlecht, ed., “Die kleinen Annalen des Kilian Leib, Priors zu Rebdorf,” *Sammelblatt des historischen Vereins Eichstätt* 2 [1887], 39–65).

10 The quotation “saeculi tumultuantis” comes from the preface: Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 538.

11 This remains the task of the critical edition of the *Annales maiores* prepared by the author. Vincenzo Pimpinella’s speech at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 e.g. was taken from: *Vincentii Pimpinelli Archiepiscopi Rossanensis Oratio Augustae habita xii Kal. Iulii MDXXX* (Augsburg: Weißenhorn, 1530) (VD16 P 2779 or 2780).

universal historiography, but – in the sense of Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele – to a more “secular” humanist one.¹² He writes history materially not as part of salvation history, but as a pedagogical collection of *exempla* for the instruction of posterity; consequently, Leib cites the *locus classicus* for his views, namely the preface from Livy’s *Ab urbe condita*.¹³ That notwithstanding, in a formal sense his salvation-historical perspective shines through again and again.¹⁴ It is also noteworthy that Leib neither writes contemporary history in the true sense of the word as an account of the “epoch of those living with us,”¹⁵ since he neither offers a chronicle of his monastery nor goes far back into the past. According to several interspersed notes, he wrote the first part of the *Annales maiores* in 1528¹⁶ and a further part in 1533.¹⁷ When asking about the function of this historical work this aspect must be taken into account.

2 “Invectivity” in Historiography

Those who expect Martin Luther to appear for the first time in Leib’s annals in 1517 will certainly be disappointed, for Leib only goes into more detail about Luther’s career and character on the occasion of the Diet of Worms in 1521. Leib had undoubtedly become aware of Luther’s appearance and his theology by the beginning of 1518 at the latest, but it is only the “finale” of the heresy trial that evidently elevates the *causa Lutheri* to the rank of something worthy of history. At the same time, this is already connected with an evaluation of the following events, since it was precisely the Catholic party that pressed for the enforcement of the Worms Edict against Luther and above all his followers, but could not prevail with it. The Worms Edict was thus, in a sense, the beginning of the group formations that were to trigger the great religious transformation process called the

12 See Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele, “Theologie und Historie: Zur Interferenz zweier Wissensgebiete in Reformationszeit und Konfessionellem Zeitalter,” in *Kommunikation und Transfer im Christentum der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Irene Dingel and Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele (Mainz: von Zabern, 2007), 129–56.

13 Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 535–36.

14 For more details see Matthias Pohlig, “Was ist Heilsgeschichte? Formen und Funktionen eines Deutungsmusters in Spätmittelalter und Reformation,” in *Geschichtsentwürfe und Identitätsbildung am Übergang zur Neuzeit*, ed. Ludger Grenzmann, Burkhard Hasebrink, and Frank Rexroth, vol. 1, *Paradigmen personaler Identität* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 54–77.

15 This is the classic definition given by Hans Rothfels, “Zeitgeschichte als Aufgabe,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 1 (1953), 1–8, here 2.

16 Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 537–38; Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 9, 1022.

17 See Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, 541. The entries for the other years differ qualitatively from this, so that they would have to be questioned separately with regard to writing and editing. Another writing phase can be documented for 1547, see Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, 610.

Reformation – in this respect, Leib’s account appears justified at least from a more recent perspective.

This impression is underlined once again by the fact that Leib does not give a lecture on the events in 1521 but begins with an anecdote: at dinner in a patrician society in Nuremberg, the enthusiasm that Luther had aroused among the people in Worms is discussed, and Leib, as an out-of-town guest, is asked for his opinion. He replies that all those involved in this matter should strive for moderation as well as the necessary reforms for the benefit of the Church and peace. He is contradicted by Willibald Pirckheimer, whose answer is quoted in German: “No, the disorder amongst us will not have to be remedied by order, but by disorder.”¹⁸

The fact that Leib imposes little rhetorical moderation on himself becomes clear in his characterisation of Luther, in which one finds several familiar stereotypes – not for nothing does he refer to Johannes Cochlaeus, among others, who had a decisive influence on the image of Luther among contemporaries and in posterity.¹⁹ A few essential aspects may be mentioned briefly: Luther was not only hounded by a demon in his youth, but still has dealings with the devil; this widespread image of Luther can be found in many contemporary polemics.²⁰ Luther’s promotion to doctor of theology was only (financially) possible because his religious superior Staupitz embezzled money from a fellow brother. This defrauded confrere subsequently described Luther as haughty, presumptuous and devious – making himself, of course, Kilian Leib’s mouthpiece.²¹ And Leib can be even rougher on Luther, for it appears to Leib that Luther “was born to sow strife, to nourish discord, to cause unrest, fights and murders.”²² The fact that Luther

18 “Nain, die unordnungen, so undter uns sayen, die werden mit kainer ordnung, sunder mit unordnungen muessen gebessert werden,” Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 662. On the changeable relationship between Leib and Pirckheimer, which also depended on their respective attitude towards Luther: Emil Reicke, “Neues von Kilian Leib, seine Beziehungen zu Pirckheimer und Luthers Aufenthalt in Nürnberg 1518,” *Beiträge zur Bayerischen Kirchengeschichte* 16 (1910), 122–37.

19 Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 663. See Franco Motta, “The Capture of the Minotaur: The Luther of Catholic Controversialists,” in *Martin Luther: A Christian between Reforms and Modernity (1517–2017)*, ed. Alberto Melloni, vol. 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 713–40.

20 See Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 663. Up to the year 1528, in which the passage in question was written, this motif is found, for example, in Johannes Cochlaeus, *Wider die Reubischen und Mordischen rotten der Bawren [...] Antwort Joannis Coclei* (Cologne: Quentel, 1525; repr. Dresden 1527) and in Johann Hasenberg, *Ad Luderanorum famosum libellum recens Wittenbergae editum responsio* (Leipzig: Lotter, 1528) (VD16 H 711). Possibly dependent on Cochlaeus is Paul Bachmann, *Ein Maulstreich dem lutherischen lügenhaften weyt auffgesperreten Rachen...* (Dresden: Stöckel, 1534) (VD16 B 20). Furthermore: Petrus Sylvius, *Luthers und Lutzbers eintrechtige vereinigung* (Leipzig: Blum, 1535) (VD16 P 1310). See also Cora Dietl’s contribution to this volume.

21 Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 664.

22 “ad serenda dissidia, ad nutriendas discordias, ad ciendum turbas, pugnas et neces natus esse videtur,” Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 666.

raises the “weapons of invective” against the clergy and the pope is still a rather harmless reproach.²³ For “the heresiarch Luther encouraged the whole class of laymen or common people to wash their hands in the blood of the clergy and to dip them in it so that they oozed.”²⁴ Moreover, Luther is characterised as a *sex maniac* and consequently, his followers and preachers are no better – Leib describes them as adulterous lechers.²⁵ And of course, the Peasants’ War is also ultimately attributed to Luther’s appearance – a standard argument of Luther’s opponents.²⁶ All this ultimately corresponds to the techniques of character assassination that the Wittenberg party had already tried out and perfected on Johannes Eck since the Leipzig Disputation.²⁷

It should not go unmentioned at this point that Kilian Leib refers in similar images and comparable vocabulary to a Catholic clergy that does not correspond to a clerical ethos and is guilty of a multitude of serious offences: Leib lists greed for money, neglect of prayer and sexual debauchery. With regard to the latter, Leib does not diagnose any difference between Lutheran and Catholic clergy, yet he claims that the former consider themselves holy because they are formally married.²⁸

23 “Lutheri vel discipuli vel fautores, ad Blasphemiarum arma proruerunt conspiracius et quisque ut potuit vel voce vel stilo in Papam et in Ecclesiasticos deseuit,” Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 666.

24 “Heresiarcha Luther omne Laicorum populariumve genus hortabatur in Ecclesiasticorum cruore lavare atque madidare manus,” Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 666.

25 “Ad hoc constituuntur illi sacerdotes et Monachi Lutherani, apostatae, Veneris captivi, libidinum servi, sordidis contaminati connubiis, ut publicis concionibus sancta virginitate execrata votorum transgressionem et contemptum atque profanas nuptias laudent, suadeant, predicent,” Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 9, 1013.

26 This opinion is clearly expressed in Kilian Leib, “Vom Ende und der Frucht der Aufruhre und Empörungen des Pöbels und gemeinen Volks wider die Obrigkeit,” in *Flugschriften gegen die Reformation (1525–1530)*, ed. Adolf Laube, vol. 2,1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000), 142–48. See Kilian Baur, “Jenseits der reformatorischen Öffentlichkeit? Kilian Leibs Flugschrift zum Bauernkrieg,” in *Kilian Leib (1471–1553)*, ed. Schmidt and Falch, 45–74, here 64; for a more general perspective see Mark U. Edwards, Jr., “Lutherschmähung? Catholics on Luther’s Reponsibility for the Peasants’ War,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 76 (1990), 461–80.

27 See Scott Dixon and Anita Traninger, “Character Assassination in Reformation Propaganda,” in *Routledge Handbook of Character Assassination and Reputation Management*, ed. Sergei A. Samoilenko (New York: Routledge, 2019), 337–51.

28 “Ingens censuum atque reddituum exigendorum studium, at non tanta circa psalmos devote canendos intentio. Luxus vero et scortantium ita vulgata est intemperantia, ut Lutherani fidefragi sacrificuli ecclesiasticorum comparatione se sanctos existiment, quod ipsi non cum scortis, ut putant, sed cum uxoribus libidinantur, excecati scilicet a Daemone, ut, quod plures inter catholicos sacerdotes male certe et cum dedecore faciunt, ipsi addito periurio, inobedientia, temeritate atque haeresi bene se ac sancte facere iactitent,” Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 463.

In the good historiographical tradition, Leib does not only obviously judge on his own but lets others utter some evaluations. For example, he gives a detailed account of the Sack of Rome for the year 1527, but before that he has a certain Battista da Siena appear, who is described as a beggar wrapped in torn clothing. On both Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday, during the papal masses, he is said to have climbed to an undefined elevated place in St. Peter’s Basilica and railed against the lifestyle of the pope and the cardinals.²⁹ But since the Romans were still doing well at that time and considered themselves as safe, they thought they did not have to pay attention to the words of the penitential preacher, Leib continues, and one may certainly understand that he implicitly evaluates the Sack of Rome as a divine judgement.³⁰

Even before that – as an introduction to his description of the Peasants’ War – Leib had reported on intolerable conditions in Rome,³¹ on the clergy’s addiction to ostentation and extravagance, greed for money and all kinds of vices; people no longer believed in sin or considered nothing to be sinful except not having money at one’s disposal.³² And this attitude had spread from Rome to Germany, so that collecting money and dealing with venal ladies had become more important for the clergy than singing psalms. Even more: the unwillingness to reform presents itself as a contradiction to the will of God in the Holy Scriptures, and thus as sinful. But even if one consults secular philosophy, the picture does not improve, as a glance at the writings of Plato, Thucydides, Aristotle and Sallust shows.³³

Leib uses the example of Balthasar Hubmaier in 1528, when introducing Anabaptism, to show how the lax and disorderly lifestyle of a cleric can turn into Reformatory activities. Leib knew Hubmaier from his time as pastor at Ingolstadt Cathedral and described him as “always intent on innovations and factions, and

29 Similar events are reported by Andreas Lanceolinus, “Eroberung Rom durch Keyß. Maiestat kryegß volck Anno. xxvij. Durch Andream Lanceolinum erstlich in latin und folgens durch Hen. von Eppendorff verteütscht,” in *Römischer Historien Bekürtzung* [...], ed. Heinrich von Eppendorff (Strasbourg: Schott, 1536), 128 (VD16 E 1848); Giovanni Antonio Pecci, *Notizie storico-critiche sulla vita e azioni di Bartolomeo da Petrojo, chiamato Brandano* (Lucca: Benedini, 1763), 42–45.

30 For related assessments of the Sack of Rome from the perspective of Church reformers (esp. Jacopo Sadoletto): Volker Reinhardt, *Blutiger Karneval: Der Sacco di Roma 1527 – eine politische Katastrophe* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009), 101–8.

31 Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 463–64.

32 “Audiebam non ego tantum, sed vulgus omnis ab iis, qui Romae fuerant, quanta illic esset omnis vitae et rerum, imo vitiorum licentia, quanta ecclesiasticorum divitae et luxus, quam illic venalia omnia, quam inessaturata pecuniarum et habendi cupiditas, et quod pene ibi nullum vel nihil existimatur esse peccatum, quam non habere pecunias,” Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 463.

33 Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 464–65. Leib returns to these thoughts in a letter of 4 March 1546 to Johann Hoffmeister, see *Briefwechsel*, ed. Schlecht, 56–57.

also notorious for his dealings with prostitutes.³⁴ As cathedral preacher in Regensburg, Hubmaier was behind the expulsion of the city's Jews; some years later, in Waldshut, he developed into a despiser of the Eucharist and an Anabaptist. The appearance of the Anabaptists, in turn, speaks to the fact that one heresy generates others and shows how the heresies fight each other. Leib sees the city of Augsburg as an inglorious proof, whose policy of the "mild and middle way" led to religious arbitrariness: there were as many heresies as streets there, Leib says.³⁵ In the style of late antique and medieval Christian historiography, the death of two Reformation preachers is reported: Johannes Oecolampadius committed suicide with poison in Basel, while Konrad Sam from Ulm suffered a stroke and "swallowed his blasphemous tongue."³⁶ Both types of death reflect the lifestyle of the followers of the Reformation: suicide, as a rejection of one's own life given by God, stands for an extreme form of sin and distancing from God, and choking on one's own tongue as a mirroring punishment for false and lying preaching.³⁷

And the Pack Affair of 1528 could also be assessed accordingly: the Saxon councillor Otto von Pack, on a diplomatic mission to Hesse, had tried to fuel the belief in an imminent war between the religious parties and in this way trigger a "pre-emptive strike" by the Lutheran party. The intrigue was uncovered by a journey of the Hessian Landgrave Philip to his staunchly Catholic father-in-law Duke George of Saxony and Otto von Pack was punished by death. Nevertheless, Landgrave Philip and the Elector Johann of Saxony had already begun military armament, so that war could by no means be ruled out.³⁸ Leib, however, presents the events that brought the empire to the brink of a religious war somewhat differently: with him, all the developments are part of efforts by the Lutheran

34 *Briefwechsel*, ed. Schlecht, 516: "humili statura, superbo corde, nigricanti colore, sacrae theologiae professor, novitatum semper et factionum studiosus, ac scortorum consuetudine notabilis erat."

35 See *Briefwechsel*, ed. Schlecht, 517, where Leib reports on Eitelhans Langenmantel and his Reformatory activities: "Sed nihil horum Augustanis curae fuit, apud quos, cum Luthericolae essent, tot fere haereses, quot plateae erant [...]." On Augsburg's religious policy see Rolf Kießling, "Eckpunkte der Augsburger Reformationsgeschichte," in *Im Ringen um die Reformation: Kirchen und Prädikanten, Rat und Gemeinden in Augsburg*, ed. Rolf Kießling, Thomas Max Safley, and Lee Palmer Wandel (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica-Verlag, 2011), 29–42.

36 *Briefwechsel*, ed. Schlecht, 581. According to Luther, the devil had driven Oecolampadius into desperation (just like Emser): Martin Luther, *Von der Winckelmesse und pfaffen weihe* (Wittenberg: Schierlantz, 1534), C^v (VD16 L 7234).

37 See Vera Lind, *Selbstmord in der Frühen Neuzeit: Diskurs, Lebenswelt und kultureller Wandel am Beispiel der Herzogtümer Schleswig und Holstein*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 146 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 26–39. For a medieval example of the heretic as suicide, see Hans-Henning Kortüm, *Menschen und Mentalitäten: Einführung in Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2015), 329.

38 See Kurt Dülfer, *Die Packschen Händel: Darstellung und Quellen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1958).

sovereigns to expand their territories at the expense of ecclesiastical dominions. In particular, the Landgrave of Hesse is in focus, because, according to Leib, he extorted a peace treaty with the bishoprics of Mainz, Würzburg and Bamberg, making him richer by a total of 100,000 florins.³⁹ Accordingly, the heading above this section also reads “Hessi contra Episcopos molimina.”⁴⁰

But – as Leib includes in asides – the Saxon Elector and other supporters of Luther are “seduced by the heretics, bewitched and full of complacency.”⁴¹ It is precisely in small literary forms that Leib makes his points against Luther and the Reformation party. In 1533, for example, he reports that fiery dragons were seen in the sky above the Franconian town of Hilpoltstein, which belonged to the Electorate of Saxony, and that rain of fire fell over Trüdingen in the Margraviate of Brandenburg-Ansbach – both were Lutheran territories, which of course need not be mentioned.⁴² Finally, Leib hands down a distich of his own, not high poetry, but nevertheless fitting for our topic:

Luther told Zwingli: stop uttering crooked assertions.

One raven told the other: refrain from being that black.⁴³

Basically, then, the arsenal of invective rhetoric at Kilian Leib’s disposal is comparable to that of Luther.⁴⁴ One finds ironic or mocking remarks, (semi-)fictional speeches and anecdotes, the construction of contrasts, allusions to the Bible and the creation of biblical parallels, sexual allusions or stigmatising epithets for Luther and his followers, but also extremely concise tracts on controversial theological issues.⁴⁵ Admittedly, Leib refrains rather consistently from scatological and animal comparisons. He obviously did not want to play on the coarse register that Thomas

³⁹ See Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 521–22. The connection between Pack and Hessian religious policy is also made in Johannes Cochlaeus, *Commentaria de actis et scriptis Martini Lutheri Saxonis* (Mainz: Behem, 1549), 185–86 (VD16 C 4326).

⁴⁰ Not included in Döllinger’s edition, but to be found in the underlying partial autograph in the manuscript Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 199, 138^r.

⁴¹ “Sic modo Saxoniae Dux aliique circumventi ab haereticis et fascinati sibique placentes concilium renuerunt [...],” Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 583.

⁴² Such anecdotes possibly originate from Leib’s lost *Facietiarum honestarum liber*, which has survived only in part; see Deutsch, *Kilian Leib*, 180.

⁴³ “Luther ait Zwinglo, desistat dicere prava. |Corvus ait corvo, desinat esse niger,” Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 583. On this also Deutsch, *Kilian Leib*, 181.

⁴⁴ See Gerd Schwerhoff, “Radicalism and ‘Invectivity’: ‘Hate Speech’ in the German Reformation,” in *Radicalism and Dissent in the World of the Protestant Reform*, ed. Bridget Heal and Anorthe Kremers (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 36–52.

⁴⁵ It remains to be examined to what extent Leib might have made use of Johannes Eck’s *Enchiridion locorum communium*.

Murner and Martin Luther, for example, masterfully knew how to use.⁴⁶ Despite all the disparagement of his opponents, the tone in the *Annales maiores* is therefore far less coarse than in the pamphlets of Luther and other contemporaries; this also applies, incidentally, to Leib's probably most polemical writing, *Luthers Bad und Spiegel* (1526).⁴⁷ Instead, Leib sometimes shows off his humanist education, as in the distich quoted above, in the references to ancient philosophy and historiography mentioned above, or in his assessment of the Reformation events as "a Phlegethon of lusts, a Kokytos of disobedience, an Acheron of strife and divisions, a Styx of the worst licentiousness and turpitude, and whatever other infernal and hellish rivers there are."⁴⁸ Such – admittedly isolated – remarks show that Leib knew how to use the tradition of humanist invective, for which, in addition to insulting, it is precisely the display of one's own erudition that is indispensable.⁴⁹ Leib must also have been aware that the faecal and the crudely coarse could be included in humanist invective – one need only think of the *Eckius dedolatus*, probably to be located in Nuremberg, and which leaves hardly anything out in this respect.⁵⁰ However, one may also assume that he deliberately did not want to cross certain boundaries, so that his decision not to ridicule his opponent all too obviously may have been a conscious one.⁵¹ For since the invective can be seen both as a "competitive medium of comparison" and "agonal competition [in a] humanistic intellectual community," as well as producing a mocking and laughing community, it may have seemed appropriate to Leib exactly not to follow the rules of the Lutherans' game.⁵² Precisely by not accepting the invective competition, he implicitly succeeds

46 See the essays by Cora Diel and Isabelle Stauffer in the present volume.

47 See Bernward Schmidt, "Humanistische Kontroverstheologie? Rezeption und Originalität in *Luthers Bad und Spiegel*," in *Kilian Leib (1471–1553)*, ed. Schmidt and Falch, 113–31.

48 "voluptatum Phlegeton, inobedientiae Cocytus, dissensionum secessuum Acheron, pessimae liberatis ac flagitiorum Styx, et quidquid vel Tartareorum atque infernalium fluviorum," Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 663.

49 See Uwe Israel, Marius Kraus, and Ludovica Sasso, "Einleitung," in *Agonale Invektivität: Konstellationen und Dynamiken der Herabsetzung im deutschen und italienischen Humanismus*, ed. Uwe Israel et al., *Das Mittelalter 17* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2021), 1–13, here 9–10. In general: Johannes Helmuth, "Streitkultur: Die 'Invektive' bei den italienischen Humanisten," in *Die Kunst des Streitens: Inszenierung, Formen und Funktion öffentlichen Streits in historischer Perspektive*, ed. Marc Laureys and Roswitha Simons, *Super alta perennis: Studien zur Wirkung der Klassischen Antike 10* (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2010), 259–93.

50 See Israel et al., "Einleitung," 12.

51 On the humanist invective, see the essay by Dröse and Kraus in this volume.

52 Israel et al., "Einleitung," 10. On the connection of laughter, distance and community in historiography, see also Gerrit Walther, "Das Lächeln der Klio: Über die Formen des Lachens in der europäischen Geschichtsschreibung," in *Valenzen des Lachens in der Vormoderne (1250–1750)*, ed. Christian Kuhn and Stefan Bießenecker, *Bamberger Historische Studien 8* (Bamberg: Bamberg University Press, 2012), 53–70.

in distinguishing himself from the Lutheran insulting community. At the same time, certain demands on his own behaviour enable him not to become the target of his own criticism of the clergy and not to lose his respectability as a critical observer of his time.

Admittedly, the Catholics did not equal the evangelicals in quality or quantity: the Protestants were much better in the art of defamation, and not least because they had learned how to insult so well in the vernacular.⁵³ But at least in Leib’s case, it can be assumed that there were reasons to limit the use of invective.

3 Comparison as an Invective Form

One technique, however, deserves special attention at this point, namely comparison. This method of disparagement has recently received some attention in cultural-historical discourse, with explicit reference to disputes in the field of religion.⁵⁴ For the area of late medieval Church reform and Reformation, closer explorations in this field undoubtedly represent a research desideratum,⁵⁵ especially when it is taken into account that the polemics of the sixteenth century were based on a “polemical archive” that had been developed since the Middle Ages.⁵⁶

The corresponding possibilities of invective comparison were also used by Kilian Leib in his *Annales maiores*, in particular by bringing Luther’s supporters and Jews into a corresponding context. For although Leib was a widely recognised and esteemed Hebraist, he made no secret of his anti-Jewish resentments⁵⁷ and used the

53 Dixon and Traninger, “Character Assassination,” 347.

54 Christina Brauner, “Polemical Comparisons in Discourses of Religious Diversity: Conceptual Remarks and Reflexive Perspectives,” *Entangled Religions* 11, no. 4 (2020); Christina Brauner and Sita Steckel, “Wie die Heiden – wie die Papisten: Religiöse Polemik und Vergleiche vom Hochmittelalter bis zur Konfessionalisierung,” in *Juden, Christen und Muslime im Zeitalter der Reformation*, ed. Matthias Pohlig, Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 219 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2020), 41–91.

55 See Brauner and Steckel, “Wie die Heiden,” 64. Overview of late medieval reform ideas: Klaus Unterburger, “‘Reform der ganzen Kirche’: Konturen, Ursachen und Wirkungen einer Leitidee und Zwangsvorstellung im Spätmittelalter,” in *Reformen in der Kirche: Historische Perspektiven*, ed. Andreas Merkt, Günther Wassilowsky, and Gregor Wurst, *Quaestiones Disputatae* 260 (Freiburg: Herder, 2014), 109–37.

56 Brauner and Steckel, “Wie die Heiden,” 67–68.

57 That he was not alone in this is shown, apart from other sources, by a letter from the Augsburg canon Konrad Adelman to Leib dated 17 July 1539 (*Briefwechsel*, ed. Schlecht, 35–36). In it, Adelman thanks Leib for his treatise on the Messiah, in which the latter had exposed the *perfidia Judaeorum*, and wishes for the conversion of the Jews to Christ. But in Nuremberg, too, there is a firmly anchored Antisemitism as a political baseline of the city, which was able to spill over into other cities, see David H. Price, “Continuities in Anti-Judaism: Reassessing the Nuremberg Banishment from the Perspective

Jews as a means of polemics against Luther. This can be seen, for example, in the entry for the year 1520, where the consequences of the destruction of the synagogues of Regensburg (1519) and Weißenburg (1520) are reported, at the place of which churches dedicated to St. Mary were built in both cities.⁵⁸ It is not the destruction of the synagogues and the expulsion of the Jews, however, that Leib disapproves of, but the fact that the worship of Mary established in place of the synagogues collapsed after only a few years under the influence of the “hound of hell” Martin Luther.⁵⁹ At this point, the subtext should be noted, as by paralleling Jews and Lutherans with regard to their position on Mary, the Mother of God, Leib tacitly posits the denial of Jesus’ messiahship by both.

The entry for the following year, 1521, with its detailed characterisation of Luther, brings further parallels, especially with regard to the reading of Scriptures: no less inquisitive than the Lutherans, the Jews also read the books of the Law, but they did not find Christ in them; for their reading was aimed at denying Christ, not finding him. The letter kills, Leib states, but the kingdom of God does not consist in speaking and reading alone, but in active virtue.⁶⁰ Implicitly, this takes up a common accusation in Catholic controversial theology, according to which Luther’s doctrine of justification generally and sweepingly rejects good works and thus deprives ethical action of its justification.⁶¹

Leib adopts a similar line when he compares the Sadducees of the second century B.C. with the Lutherans of his time.⁶² Since the Sadducees taught that the soul dies with the body, they had thrown the principle of reward and punishment after death overboard, which at the same time meant that there was no longer any guarantee for moral action. As the word “Sadducee” can be translated as “justified,” this already suggests a parallel to the Lutherans, who also saw themselves as justified

of Albrecht Dürer and His Generation,” in *Juden, Christen und Muslime im Zeitalter der Reformation*, ed. Pohlig, 157–79.

58 See Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 655–57. For Regensburg see Veronika Nickel, “Gewalt und Repression gegen die Regensburger Juden bis zu ihrer Vertreibung 1519,” in *Jüdische Lebenswelten in Regensburg: Eine gebrochene Geschichte*, ed. Klaus Himmelstein (Regensburg: Pustet, 2018), 81–91. For Weißenburg see Moritz Stern, “Die Vertreibung der Juden aus Weißenburg 1520,” *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* 1 (1929), 297–303; Karl Ried, *Die Durchführung der Reformation in der ehemaligen freien Reichsstadt Weißenburg i.B.* (Munich: Datterer, 1915).

59 “Martini Lutheri Tartarei canis suasu,” Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 656.

60 Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 9, 1014–15.

61 See David Bagchi, “Catholic Theologians of the Reformation Period before Trent,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 228–29.

62 Leib refers to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, see Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 467–68. On the invective quality of biblical interpretations, see also the essay by Tarald Rasmussen in this volume.

and especially enlightened. Furthermore, the Sadducees prided themselves on disregarding the words, orders and teachings of the Fathers and in this way became a refiguration of the Lutherans: for, according to their understanding, all theologians from the Church fathers onwards had erred, while they alone interpreted the Holy Scriptures in an unadulterated way.⁶³

Leib is particularly explicit on the occasion of the desecration of hosts with subsequent miracles in Berlin (1510)⁶⁴ and Tulln (1522).⁶⁵ The latter is of particular interest to our context, as Leib goes into greater detail: the Jews accused of sacrilege were imprisoned, but the richer ones bribed their way out of prison. A poor Jew is left behind, who confesses that he had stabbed the host with a knife; as a result, a stream of blood poured out of the host. Leib admits to his readers that he has fundamental reservations in the face of such miracle reports, but takes the accused Jew, of all people, as a witness: for he had not only confirmed the truth of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist through the miracle, but had also converted to Christ and been baptised. Even when the crowd thereupon demanded pardon for the Jew and the judges offered him a quicker death, he declined all this and requested for himself the torturous death penalty in fire. In contrast to many other reports, Leib lists some of his informants by name: the Eichstätt Dominican Johannes Fischer (Piscatoris), the judge Johann Stempfel from Tulln and the Weißenburg citizen Johannes Agricola, as well as an unnamed man from Donauwörth.⁶⁶

In the end, Leib demonstrates two aspects with this *exemplum*, which is backed up by a series of witnesses: firstly, the truth of the Catholic doctrine of the permanent and real presence of Christ in the consecrated host, which was denied by many Reformers; secondly and mainly, however, that Luther’s disciples were not more worthy than their teacher himself; he explicitly names Karlstadtians, Oecolampadians and Zwinglians and, despite all rejection, also explicitly excludes

63 “Decretum quippe apud Lutheranos erat, prorsus nullis pontificum constitutionibus obtemperare, nihil facere nihilque vitare, nisi quod evangelii aut apostolorum receptissimis jussum esset vetitumque scriptis atque doctrinis. Sic olim Sadduceaei Judaeorum pessimi faciebant [...] patrum traditiones abominati, sola ea, quae per Moysen jussa fuerant, doceri debere. Non quod ipsi sacras observarent leges, cum pessimi, truces, inhumani et haeretici essent; negabant etiam mortuorum resurrectionem, quod et sacer evangelista testatur,” Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 467.

64 Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 7, 556. Leib may have known the report on the events published in 1510: *Ein wunderbarlich geschichte. Wye dye merckischen Juden das hochwürdig Sacrament gekaufft und zu martern sich understanden* (Nuremberg: Hölzel, 1510) (VD16 W 4596). Further editions were printed in Leipzig by Landsberg, in Munich by Schobser and in Mainz by Schöffner. See Price, “Continuities,” 165.

65 Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 9, 1052–54.

66 See Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 9, 1053–54.

Luther.⁶⁷ So while conversion to Christianity is possible for the Jews, the Reformers take the opposite path and deny Christ just like “hardened” Jews.

Several comparisons can be found in the long chapter on the Peasants’ War in 1525. Leib describes the destruction of images and libraries by the peasants as “like Jews raging against our shrines,” and adds remarks on overcoming the Old Testament ban on images in Christianity. And again, the subtext is decisive: the Reformation criticism of image worship is a throwback to pre-Christian times!⁶⁸

To a lesser extent, but just as clearly, Leib also relates the typological use of the Jews to the contemporary Catholic clergy. For the latter should have recognised the signs of the times and come to a self-correction, theologically speaking: repentance would have been necessary to escape visitation by diabolical powers that came with the Reformation. But just as the Jews of the Old Testament did not listen to the prophets, the majority of the contemporary clergy was also incapable of interpreting its situation and acting accordingly. In this respect, the criticism of cult which was expressed by the Old Testament prophets equally applies to the vices, reprehensible conduct and lax administration of the contemporary clergy.⁶⁹ Consequently, non-Lutheran priests are more hated by contemporaries than the Jews.⁷⁰

To recapitulate, Leib uses various modes of comparison in his *Annales maiores*: the classification of the Jews serves to distinguish himself from Luther and the Reformers or also from the clergy in need of reform. Here, the two comparable entities, Luther or his followers and the Jews, are placed next to each other on an equal footing and compared, with Kilian Leib’s dogmatic or reformist views forming the respective criterion, the *tertium comparationis*.⁷¹ One may feel

67 Through this history it becomes obvious, “quam nequiores sint etiam Iudeis et quam insanissime insaniant insani ac furentes Carolstadiani, Oecolampadiani et Zwingliani Heretici, Lutheri impissimi doctoris iniquissimi discipuli et iniquissimi patris impiissima soboles, qui, quod nec ipse scelerum sator et author Luther audet, audent negare sub sacramento altaris, hoc est, Eucharistia Christi nostri salvatoris esse corpus et sanguinem,” Aretin, *Beiträge*, vol. 9, 1054. Implicitly, therefore, it is clear that Leib knew of Luther’s adherence to the doctrine of the Real Presence and his differences with the Upper German Reformers. On this Gordon A. Jensen, “Luther and the Lord’s Supper,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Lubomir Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 322–32.

68 “Confractae Christi sanctorumque imagines ac insanientium in sacra nostra Iudaeorum more confossae, dissectae, trucidatae, bibliothecae insignis codices conscissi, discerpti in fontemque deiecti, discussae praeciosae fenestrae diripiendi plumbi gratia, epotum vini plurimum nec effusum minus,” Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 481. See also Heribert Smolinsky, “Reformation und Bildersturm: Hieronymus Emsers Schrift gegen Karlstadt über die Bilderverehrung,” in *Reformatio ecclesiae: Festschrift für Erwin Iserloh*, ed. Remigius Bäumer (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1980), 427–40.

69 With reference to Malachi 1 and Micah 3, see Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 464.

70 Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 467; at 475, the monks are considered “plus quam lupi [...] odiosi et execrabiles.”

71 See Brauner, “Polemical Comparisons,” 34.

reminded of the medieval practice of deriving new heresies from older ones.⁷² The story of the sacrilege of the host in Tulln should be regarded as a special case, since it is no longer a matter of merely comparing units of the same order, but the converted Jew represents a third option. This demonstrative contrasting of actually incomparable groups of people signals – precisely because the result is less clear – the taboo-breaking of the Reformers all the more drastically: they have left true Christianity.⁷³

4 Invectivity in the Service of the Narrative

It is to the credit of recent cultural-historical approaches that dispute, insult and disparagement may be considered a full-fledged object of study in historical research and are no longer frowned upon. Theology has a harder time with such approaches insofar as current ecumenical sensitivities and uncertainties overshadow and influence theologically interested historical research. Against this background, there are already references in mid-twentieth century research to how awkward and distasteful invective speech was considered to be. Joseph Lortz, for example, provides the following testimonial:

In spite of invective and coarseness, there was no real bite in the Catholic attack – except in the case of Murner. And so, on the Catholic side, coarseness became a real evil, and damaged the Christian spirit. It became so much a habit, that its absence was regarded as sheer dissembling. [...] It is true that Catholic coarseness in this period – like Luther’s, and like most theological anger in all ages – was rooted deeper than in mere personal passions. As a rule, however, dogmatic intolerance was marred and devalued by personal resentment. Cochlaeus went so far along this path that he could not look for courteous response from the heretics, nor did he show courtesy to them. He directly damaged Christian charity and also what small prospects there were of making any impression at all upon his opponents. Here we see the vast problem for Christian anger: how to maintain missionary zeal in face of passionate indignation. In those days little attempt was made to seek the erring in love, while feeling violent animosity towards error. The damaging quality of such invective was felt in those days, although it was frequently excused in Catholic writings.⁷⁴

⁷² See Brauner, “Polemical Comparisons,” 45.

⁷³ See Brauner and Steckel, “Wie die Heiden,” 57–58.

⁷⁴ Joseph Lortz, *The Reformation in Germany*, trans. Ronald Walls (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), 188–89. It is characteristic of Lortz’s point of view that he speaks quite naturally of the Reformers (and implicitly of the fellow Protestants of his time) as “heretics” and “erring.” His merits in the renewal of the Catholic image of Luther, which are certainly to be acknowledged, must also be seen against this background, see Bernward Schmidt, “Katholiken und die Reformation: Überlegungen zu einer ökumenisch interessierten Reformationsgeschichtsschreibung,” *Catholica (M)* 72 (2018), 273–89, here 275–78.

However, Gerd Schwerhoff (following the line of Heiko Augustinus Oberman) has noted for the insults uttered by Martin Luther that they lead into the midst of the Reformation, which is why this side of Luther must be taken seriously against the background of his social environment and his theological self-understanding.⁷⁵ It is precisely this, though, that led Heinz Schilling to interpret Luther's insults as "inner-worldly punishment," which – according to his theology – does not interfere with the relationship between God and mankind.⁷⁶ Now, it is certainly not only for Luther that one can state that "invectivity" leads into the core of his self-understanding as a theologian, professor and believing Christian, but also for Kilian Leib and several other of Luther's opponents.⁷⁷

Undoubtedly, some passages in Leib's *Annales maiores* meet a fundamental criterion of invective:⁷⁸ They are likely to negatively influence the social status of those invected, i.e. to discredit the Reformation party. Admittedly, "invectivity" remains a double-edged sword for Kilian Leib: by criticising the Reformers or some members of the Catholic clergy, he must at the same time avoid being suspected of the other extreme; his position between the Reformers on the one hand and a saturated clergy oblivious to duty on the other can be strengthened by a rhetoric of disparagement, but it can also always be endangered.⁷⁹ Therefore, at this point we must ask about the social function of a chronicle, such as the one Kilian Leib undertook, which was written parallel to the events or with only a slight time lag. It is undoubtedly part of the struggle for the authority to interpret events. For the disputes were not only about enforcing or preventing certain forms of theology, worship, church and social life, but especially about the fundamental legitimacy of these changes. Here Leib not only offers an interpretation, he wants to establish interpretive authority in the sense of the "personal ability to influence the interpretations of others through one's own offers of interpretation" and in this way legitimise one's own religious party or delegitimise the other.⁸⁰ The interplay between Leib and other authors and their texts would be worth a separate study,

75 See Schwerhoff, "Radicalism and 'Invectivity'," 52; Constance M. Furey, "Invective and Discernment in Martin Luther, D. Erasmus, and Thomas More," *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005), 469–88, esp. 472–78.

76 Heinz Schilling, *Martin Luther: Rebell in einer Zeit des Umbruchs* (Munich: Beck, 2012), 533.

77 See the example of Eisengrein in Antje Sablotny's article in this volume.

78 Generally on this: Dagmar Ellerbrock et al., "Invektivität – Perspektiven eines neuen Forschungsprogramms in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften," *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 2 (2017), 2–24.

79 See Furey, "Invective and Discernment," 471.

80 See Heiner Hastedt, "Was ist 'Deutungsmacht'? Philosophische Klärungsversuche," in *Deutungsmacht: Religion und belief systems in Deutungsmachtkonflikten*, ed. Philipp Stoellger, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 63 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 89–101, here 94. See also Ellerbrock et al., "Invektivität," 12.

for Leib not only takes his cue quasi programmatically from Livy and possibly often from Cochlaeus as far as theology is concerned, but also provides (under the year 1521) an entire list of authors who wrote against Luther: John Fisher, Henry VIII of England, Josse Bade, Johannes Eck, Johannes Cochlaeus, Hieronymus Emser, Thomas Murner, Johannes Findling and Caspar Schatzgeyer.⁸¹ By naming reliable authors for his readers, he classifies his own work and presents, as it were, a community of interpreters whose interpretations can be accepted without hesitation. Conversely, Leib refers selectively to Reformation writings, to which he reacts more or less explicitly: Luther’s glosses on the translation of the New Testament and writings on the Peasants’ War and eventually a “certain writing” by the Saxon Elector and the Hessian Landgrave against the *Reichskammergericht* (Imperial Chamber Court).⁸² Leib thus does not react directly to the Reformer’s construction of a conception of Reformation history, but in a more general sense to a developing Reformation narrative. Against this background, we may understand Leib’s historiography at first and quite simply as a contribution to a Catholic group identity.

Of course, it must also be taken into account that Leib not only distances himself from Luther and his followers, but also (admittedly to a lesser extent) expresses harsh criticism of a Catholic clergy in need of reform. If one disregards the aforementioned threat of divine punishment and call to repentance by the Old Testament prophets, Leib’s criticism is not so much situated in the context of apocalyptic ideas,⁸³ but in the context of late medieval criticism of the clergy, which is to be distinguished from a fundamental anti-clericalism.⁸⁴ So is Leib jumping on a bandwagon, so to speak, with his critique of the clergy? This would be supported by the observation that Leib refers to anti-Lutheran authors but not to the reform documents of the 1520s and 1530s.⁸⁵ In any case, Leib took the more common

⁸¹ See Aretin, *Beyträge*, vol. 9, 1025.

⁸² “scriptum quoddam,” Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 469, where Leib directly quotes Luther’s gloss on Matt 17:25–26, *WA DB* 6 (1906), 80; Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 490 (though it is not clear whether Leib is referring to the famous writing *Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der andern Bauern* or to the subsequent epistle with which Luther justified his stance); Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 606, with reference to Johann Friedrich of Saxony and Philipp of Hesse, *Ausschreiben an alle stende des Reichs jnn der Christlichen Religion aynungs vorwandten nahmen. etc. Die beschwerung des Kayserlichen Cammergerichts belangende* (Wittenberg: Rhau, 1538) (VD16 S 986), which appeared in various places in 1538 and 1539. It is possible that Leib only noticed one of the later editions.

⁸³ See Dixon and Traninger, “Character Assassination,” 342. See also the remarks on anticlericalism in the context of Luther’s interpretation of the Book of Daniel in the article by Tarald Rasmussen.

⁸⁴ See Thomas Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Reformation* (Frankfurt/Main and Leipzig: Insel, 2009), 69–70.

⁸⁵ See *Acta Reformationis Catholicae Ecclesiam Germaniae Concernentia Saeculi XVI. Die Reformverhandlungen des deutschen Episkopats von 1520 bis 1570*, vol. 1, *1520 bis 1532*, ed. Georg Pfeilschifter (Regensburg: Pustet, 1959).

position that reform of the Church and the clergy was unquestionably necessary, but that it should be achieved within the system and that in order to achieve such a reform, one should not run after Luther.⁸⁶ In this respect, Leib's criticism of the clergy marks his double demarcation – as can be seen particularly impressively in the comparisons with the Jews. It remains questionable, however, whether an anti-Reformation criticism of the clergy could have a similar identity-forming and group-building effect as Reformation anticlericalism precisely because of its inherent double rejection. In addition, there was the danger that possible readers of the *Annales maiores* would perceive Leib's criticism of the clergy, but then evaluate it as evidence of the corruption of the papal Church and judge Leib's partisanship as inconsistent.

However, this already addresses a central point for the concept of invectivity, namely the reception of the disparaging words. For the disavowal, compromising and ridiculing of the persons attacked only succeeds in the long term if it remains in the communicative or even cultural memory. That is why, in addition to the reviled person, an audience is always addressed, “which should not simply take note of such vituperation, but become a party to it by ridiculing or ostracising the stigmatised.”⁸⁷ The recipients are now faced with the decision whether to side with the author or with the insulted – or in the special case of the quoted distich: whether to join the author (and other readers) in a “laughing community.”⁸⁸ Ideally, the audience would not only take in the invective speech of an author, but also recognise the (at least partially) underlying “polemical archive.” For research, this means the task – still to be fulfilled – of working out intertextual references and naming Leib's sources.⁸⁹ But what can we find out about Kilian Leib's audience?

86 See Christoph Volkmar, *Reform statt Reformation: Die Kirchenpolitik Herzog Georgs von Sachsen 1488–1525*, Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation 41 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

87 Marina Münkler, “Invektive Verkörperungen: Luthers metonymischer Körper in anti-reformatorischen Invektiven,” in *Körper-Kränkungen: Der menschliche Leib als Medium der Herabsetzung*, ed. Uwe Israel and Jürgen Müller (Frankfurt/Main and New York: Campus, 2021), 296–334, here 298. See also Ellerbrock et al., “Invektivität,” 8–10; Stefan Bauer, “The Uses of History in Religious Controversies from Erasmus to Baronio,” *Renaissance Studies* 35 (2021), 9–23, here 13.

88 See Arnold Becker, “Die humanistische Lachgemeinschaft und ihre Grenzen: Hutten, Erasmus und ihr Streit über die ‘Epistolae obscurorum virorum’,” in *Valenzen des Lachens in der Vormoderne (1250–1750)*, ed. Christian Kuhn and Stefan Bießenecker, Bamberger Historische Studien 8 (Bamberg: Bamberg University Press, 2012), 165–86.

89 See Gerd Schwerhoff, “Invektivität und Geschichtswissenschaft: Konstellationen der Herabsetzung in historischer Perspektive – ein Forschungskonzept,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 311 (2020), 1–36, here 13.

At this point, therefore, the sources may claim their right of veto in a very fundamental sense, for Leib’s *Annales minores* have survived in only one manuscript,⁹⁰ the *Annales maiores* in eight manuscripts from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth century, including a partial autograph and a hand copy of the Rebdorf subprior.⁹¹ One might on the one hand doubt if speaking of interpretive authority – not to mention the establishment of a narrative – on the basis of this relatively narrow and exclusively handwritten tradition was adequate. On the other hand, one might also argue that the personal side of interpretive power certainly does not depend on how many people deal with the author’s interpretive offer. In an extreme case, it seems conceivable to speak of interpretive power if Kilian Leib persuaded just a single contemporary to accept his interpretation. In this perspective, invectivity is not an end in itself, but a decisive part of the rhetorical means and persuasive strategies of the historian Kilian Leib.

Furthermore, it should be taken into account that Leib’s *Annales maiores* cannot be regarded so much as scholarly historiography, but might rather be ascribed to the genre of chronicles popular in the Early Modern Period. Such a chronicle can be defined as “a text resulting from an act of literacy by someone who decides that he is well suited to keep a record of events in his surroundings, who believes that these events are worth recording, and that the best way to structure this information is to do so chronologically. Such chronicling could be done retrospectively and so be primarily historical. Yet in the Early Modern Period a much greater number of chroniclers [...] also, or mainly, recorded the events of their own lifetime and wrote what Germans call *Zeitgeschichte*.”⁹² Moreover, “chronicling was very much a contemporary, local and a manuscript affair.”⁹³ Leib,

⁹⁰ Diözesanarchiv Eichstätt, Hs. 57 (Codex Münch).

⁹¹ Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 199 (partly autograph) and Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Rep. III.132 (Prior’s hand copy, contrary to the information given by Fasbender not an autograph). Three copies from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are likely to have been made for reasons of regional or historiographical interest. A complete compilation of the known manuscripts can be found in Fasbender, “Leib, Kilian,” 42, as well as at <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/4983> (accessed 24 March 2022).

⁹² Judith Pollmann, “Archiving the Present and Chronicling for the Future in Early Modern Europe,” *Past and Present Supplement* 11 (2016), 231–52, here 235.

⁹³ Pollmann, “Archiving the Present,” 235. This aspect needs further in-depth studies comparing various contemporary chronicles, e.g. the chronicles of the monastery of Kaisheim and the city of Donauwörth by the Cistercian monk Johann Knebel, *Die Chronik des Klosters Kaisheim, verfasst vom Cistercienser Johann Knebel im Jahre 1531*, ed. Franz Hüttner, Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart 226 (Tübingen: Literarischer Verein in Stuttgart, 1902; Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg, Cod. III.2.2ⁿ 18 (urn:nbn:de:bvb:384-uba002022-0); see also Erik Beck et al., “Altgläubige Bistumshistoriographie in einer evangelischen Stadt: Die Konstanzer Bistumschronik des Beatus Widmer von 1527: Untersuchung und Edition,” *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 157 (2009), 101–89.

too, wrote his *Annales maiores* not as an official history of his monastery or of the Church in Eichstätt, but as a rather private enterprise that was continued and supplemented in various stages. Also because of this openness to additions and revisions, such early modern chronicles were rarely printed, but more often shared and passed on in private.⁹⁴

How exactly the readership of Leib's *Annales maiores* was composed and with what interest they read the text, however, must remain an open question for the time being.⁹⁵ For as long as the provenances of the individual manuscripts are not precisely clarified, it will hardly be possible to say anything substantial here, since we have only very limited access to the audience beyond the Rebdorf convent. If, however, we see "invectivity" merely as a means to the end of establishing interpretive authority, the problem of lacking access to Leib's audience becomes relative.⁹⁶ For chronicling as well as historiography, due to their long-term perspective, are not (or not primarily) about communication among those present, nor even necessarily about communication with contemporaries. In Kilian Leib's case, this is also evidenced by the later copies of his *Annales maiores* from the late sixteenth to the eighteenth century (for example in Augsburg, Strasbourg and Pommersfelden). Regardless of how far back in time one reads the *Annales maiores*, the reader is always in the role of an "arbiter" who must judge Leib's position between the Reformers and the Catholic clergy,⁹⁷ and who ultimately – if they follow Leib – becomes part of a community of memory.⁹⁸ Of course, the question of Kilian Leib's *ratio scribendi*, his intention, is not unaffected by these considerations. Leib's entire controversial theological oeuvre reveals an interest in not reacting to Luther's and his followers' latest writings, but in addressing fundamental and longer-term issues: for example, a general (polemical) justification of why Luther should be considered a heretic or a reflection on the causes of heresy in general. This naturally applies to a "contemporary" chronicle to an even greater extent: Leib used the possibilities of the

94 See Pollmann, "Archiving the Present," 237–38. Due to this "private" tradition, the contingencies and coincidences of tradition must also be included in the historical consideration of the *Annales maiores*.

95 See also Hans-Gert Roloff, "Der 'gemeine Mann' und die lateinische Konfessionspolemik: Probleme literarischer Rezeption im 16. Jahrhundert durch Übersetzungen," in *Kleine Schriften zur Literatur des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Christiane Caemmerer, Chloë 35 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2003), 287–301.

96 See Schwerhoff, "Invektivität und Geschichtswissenschaft," 12–13.

97 See Pollmann, "Archiving the Present," 244.

98 See Günther Lottes, "Stadtchronistik und städtische Identität: Zur Erinnerungskultur der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt," in *Stadtgeschichte, Basistexte Frühe Neuzeit 4*, ed. André Krischer (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2017), 167–77.

genre to present not only a collection of “true” knowledge,⁹⁹ but also an interpretation of the Reformation that was valid in the long term, thus contributing to the formation and inner strengthening of a Catholic denominational group in a sustainable, lasting way and far beyond his own lifetime.

⁹⁹ See Pollmann, “Archiving the Present,” 249.