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RECENZJA

LUTHERUS HONORANDUS, NON ADORANDUS?
REFLEXIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT
OF MARTIN LUTHER'S ICONOGRAPHY
AFTER READING THE BOOK, *MARTIN LUTHER:*
*MONUMENT, KETZER, MENSCH**

Among the numerous artworks by the German Academic painters, which 'recount' the Lutheran reform of the Church, a particularly interesting and inspiring message is carried by the work of Karl Schorn (1800–1850), depicting Pope Paul III (Alessandro Farnese, 1468–1549) while viewing the portrait of Martin Luther (1483–1546) in the company of his nephew Alberto Caetani and Cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470–1547).¹ This nineteenth-century canvas makes us realise that, although Luther's theological ideas were known throughout the entire Christian world, very few people actually had had an opportunity to meet their author in person. Luther spent almost the entire 'heretic' period of his life in Wittenberg, a city located in the Saxon province, whose population barely exceeded two thousand inhabitants. In the first half of the sixteenth century its young university attracted relatively few students, and Luther only a few times participated in assemblies

of German nobility.² Therefore, the acquaintance of the man who had upset the entire Church was made almost exclusively through his portraits, both painted and written. These images usually fairly faithfully reproduced the external traits of Luther's physiognomy, but overemphasised the characteristics of his personality, thus imposing on the viewer and reader specific judgements of the role of this theologian in the history of Christianity.³ Therefore it is not surprising that also his portrait incorporated in Schorn's painting had a similar function. This likeness is an almost identical copy of Luther's well-known portrait painted by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), which shows the Reformer wearing a black gown and a biretta. However, it differs from its model in the arrangement of Luther's left hand, supporting the Bible, and of his right, shown in the gesture reminiscent of blessing. Thus, Schorn made the Reformer look like Christ, apparently intending to demonstrate, through this almost blasphemous gesture, that Luther had been the true disciple and follower of the Saviour⁴, a fact that was particularly telling when his image was being viewed by the pope, whom the Wittenberg theologian and the majority of supporters of the Reformation considered to be Antichrist.⁵

* *Martin Luther, Monument, Ketzer, Mensch. Lutherbilder, Lutherprojektionen und ein ökumenischer Luther*, ed. by A. Holzem, V. Leppin, C. Arnold, N. Haag, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2017. The title of the present review paraphrases the formulation by which Martin Luther defined the proper way of addressing the Virgin Mary in the Protestant Church. See P. HRACHOVEC, 'Maria honoranda, non adoranda. Studia k poznání role obrazů a umělecké výzdoby v luteránském kostele éry konfesionalizace', in *In puncto religionis. Konfesní dimenze předbřlohorské kultury Čech a Moravy*, ed. by K. Horníčková, M. Šroněk, Prague, 2013, pp. 240–241.

¹ A.O. ILG, 'Zur Vorstellung Lucas Cranachs des Älteren als Lutheri Herzensfreund', in *Martin Luther, Monument*, pp. 161–162 (as in note*).

² H. SCHILLING, *Martin Luther: Rebel in an Age of Upheaval*, trans. by R. Johnston, New York, 2017, pp. 91–115. S. REIN, J. SCHILLING, *Wittenberg. Orte der Reformation*, Leipzig, 2017, *passim*.

³ R.W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther. The Image of the Reformer in Early Modern Germany', *Past and Present*, 110, 1986, pp. 38–68.

⁴ A.O. ILG, 'Zur Vorstellung', pp. 162–163 (as in note 1).

⁵ M. LUTHER, P. MELANCHTHON, *Passional Christi und Antichristi*, Strassburg, 1521; P. HERMS, *Offenbarung und Glaube. Zur Bildung*





1. Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Younger, *Portrait of Martin Luther*, woodcut, c. 1560. After M. Treu, 'Luther zwischen Kunst' (as in note 9)

The confrontation of Paul III with Luther's portrait was most likely Schorn's own *licentia historica*, but attempts at bringing the Reformer to life by means of his likenesses were fairly frequent in various European countries in the sixteenth century. One of such images was owned, for example, by Cardinal Bembo; another was executed by Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1557) on the commission of Giovanni Battista Tristano in Venice.⁶ In the images of Luther disseminated throughout Europe specifically defined patterns, so it seems, were consistently repeated: he was shown either as a great reformer of Christianity or as a very dangerous heretic. In this way, a fairly diverse iconography of Luther developed, whose elements were

presented in various exhibitions and discussed in art-historical studies.⁷ But, for a long time, no attempts have been made at a comprehensive treatment of the topic and establishing a typology of Luther's likenesses. The latter challenge was taken up only by the authors of art-historical essays included in the volume entitled, *Martin Luther: Monument, Ketzer, Mensch. Lutherbilder, Lutherprojektionen und ein ökumenischer Luther*, published under the editorship of Andreas Holzem, Volker Leppin, Claus Arnold and Norbert Haag, to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.⁸

The present review will deal mainly with the study by Martin Treu, included in the aforementioned book, which indicates the main subjects in Luther's iconography that appeared in the early modern period and in the nineteenth century.⁹ While discussing other papers, I shall concentrate above all on facts that help to better understand the origins of and the message carried by the most important iconographic formulas indicated by Treu. I also intend to consider the relevance of Treu's compilation and, if needed, supplement it with additional items.

The crucial role in recording the appearance of Martin Luther in various periods of his life was played by Lucas Cranach the Elder, a painter active in Wittenberg. Numerous studies dealing with the relationship of these two men emphasised their 'cordial friendship', which, according to Anja Ottilie Ilg, resulted in the fact that mainly bust portraits of Luther were picked up from Cranach's extensive *œuvre* for deeper analysis, since they were believed to represent a faithful likeness not only of Luther's physiognomy, but of his psychological features as well, with which the painter, as his close friend, must have been well acquainted. Relatively less attention has been devoted to Cranach's official portraits of Luther, which had played a much more important role in shaping his iconography.¹⁰ The Wittenberg painter repeatedly, in numerous paintings and propagandistic prints, represented a full-figure image of the sturdily built Luther dressed in an ample gown and

des christlichen Leben, Tübingen, 1992, pp. 82–100; M.U. EDWARDS JR., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, Minneapolis, 2005, pp. 90–96.

⁶ M. FIRPO, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici. Il mondo di Lorenzo Lotto tra Riforma e Controriforma*, Rome, 2001, pp. 3–4.

⁷ See, for example, *Kunst der Reformationszeit*, ed. by K. Flügel, R. Kroll, Berlin, 1983; *Martin Luther und die Reformation in Deutschland*, ed. by G. Bott, Nuremberg, 1983, *passim*; G. SCARVIZZI, *Arte e architettura sacra. Cronache e documenti sulla controversia tra riformati e cattolici (1500–1550)*, Rome, 1982, pp. 53–73; *Brennen für den Glauben. Wien nach Luther*, ed. by R. Leeb, W. Öhlinger, M. Vöclka, Vienna, 2017, pp. 284–291. Numerous examples of Luther's likenesses have been assembled in the compilation: M. LUTERO, *Opere scelte*, ed. by P. Ricca, vol. 1–12, Turin, 1988–2008.

⁸ A. HOLZEM, V. LEPPIN, 'Lutherbilder, Lutherprojektionen und ein ökumenischer Luther. Katholische und evangelische Entwürfe Martin Luthers in Früher Neuzeit und Moderne', in *Martin Luther. Monument*, pp. 7–9 (as in note*).

⁹ M. TREU, 'Luther zwischen Kunst und Krempel. Wie populär war und ist ein populäres Lutherbild?', in *Martin Luther. Monument* (as in note*), pp. 407–448.

¹⁰ A.O. ILG, 'Zur Vorstellung', pp. 162–177 (as in note 1).

boots, holding a book in his hands.¹¹ Such a distinctly dignified likeness of the Reformer was further validated by his tomb monuments: a memorial brass (which made its way to the university church in Jena) and a painted memorial portrait in the Castle Church in Wittenberg.¹² But, as stated by Treu, the key role in the dissemination of images of this type was played by a woodcut executed by Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515–1586) around 1560 [Fig. 1].¹³ The heroic aspect of this representation, emphasised by the arcade framing Luther's figure in the woodcut, contributed to the fact that it was repeated in numerous monuments to the theologian¹⁴, and recently also in a plastic figurine, included in a set of the Playmobil toys manufactured by the Geobra Brandstätter company on the occasion of the Reformation jubilee.¹⁵

Protestant theologians proclaimed unanimously that Luther in his lifetime was a device in God's hands, and was used by the Almighty to renovate the Church.¹⁶ This conviction had led them to employ, after Luther's death, his appropriately devised image to corroborate and disseminate the reform initiated by him. Thus, by appropriately exhibiting his chosen traits or underscoring such of his actions that in the best way supported the 'propagandistic line' of the new confession, he was soon turned into an 'elusive mythical figure' or 'the Luther of historians'. The Catholics responded by exaggerating the vices and misconducts of the Reformer.¹⁷ Such a narration of Luther was particularly conspicuous in artworks, in which – because of the medium's inherent quality of condensing the message it conveyed – the content could not be attenuated, even by means of smallest nuances, as it sometimes



2. Hans Troschel the Younger, Broadsheet commemorating the centenary of the Reformation, copper engraving, 1617. After M. Treu, 'Luther zwischen Kunst' (as in note 9)

might have been the case in the works of theologians and historians.

Frederike Nüssel has demonstrated in her extensive study that the importance of Luther in the history of Christianity was related by Protestant authors mainly by naming him a new prophet. Such a designation had appeared in the circles of theologians associated with the Marburg's Herrgotts Kanzlei, who, at the turn of the 1550s tried to substantiate the conviction that Luther's theological works were the only valid formula of interpreting the Gospels, and one that should be upheld by all supporters of the Reformation. The vision of Luther, a prophet enlightened by the Holy Ghost, who faithfully conveyed Divine teachings to people, had become the foundation of Lutheran orthodoxy which crystallised after numerous theologians and pastors had signed the Formula of Concord in 1577.¹⁸ According to Treu, this vision found a particularly meaningful expression in a print executed by the Nuremberg artist Hans Troschel the Younger (1585–1628) on the occasion of the Reformation anniversary in 1617 [Fig. 2]. It shows the four pillars of the Reformation: the Electors of Saxony, Frederick III the Wise (1463–1525) and John Frederick I the Magnanimous (1497–1560), as well

¹¹ F.N. NÜSSEL, 'Prophet oder Werkzeug Gottes? Zum Lutherbild in der frühen lutherischen Orthodoxie', in *Martin Luther. Monument*, p. 11 (as in note*).

¹² K. HEGNER, 'Lucas Cranach d. J., Bildnis Martin Luthers in Ganzfigur, 1546', in *Kunst der Reformationszeit*, p. 420 (as in note 7); A. ARNOLD, 'Die Luther-Memoria, ihre konfessionsspolitische Inanspruchnahme. Veränderung und Rezeption: Epitaphgestaltung im Umfeld der Wittenberger Universität', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, 38, 2011, pp. 79–80, 91–97.

¹³ M. TREU, 'Luther zwischen Kunst', pp. 411–413 (as in note 9). See also R.W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', pp. 54–55 (as in note 3).

¹⁴ W. WEBER, 'Luther-Denkmäler. Frühe Projekte und Verwicklungen', in *Denkmäler im 19. Jahrhunderts. Deutung und Kritik*, ed. by V.E. Mittig, V. Plagemann, Munich, 1972, pp. 185–200; C. THEISELMANN, *Der Wormser Lutherdenkmal Ernst Rietschels (1856–1868) im Rahmen der Lutherrezeption des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main, 1992.

¹⁵ 'Plastik-Luther. Reformator ist die erfolgreichste Playmobil-Figur der Geschichte', *Berliner Zeitung*, 20 June 2017 (on-line, <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/panorama/plastik-luther-reformator-ist-die-erfolgreichste-playmobil-figur-der-geschichte-27828574> [accessed on 24 Oct. 2017]).

¹⁶ F.M. NÜSSEL, 'Prophet', pp. 16–18 (as in note 11).

¹⁷ J.M. TODD, *Luther. A Life*, London, 1982, pp. XV–XIX.

¹⁸ F.N. NÜSSEL, 'Prophet', pp. 11–31 (as in note 11).



3. Hans Baldung Grien, *Martin Luther Enlightened by the Holy Ghost*, woodcut, 1531

as the theologians: Luther and Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), standing around the Ark of the Covenant on which the book with the Word of God is spread open. All these men are enlightened by the light of the Holy Trinity depicted by means of God's name inscribed in Hebrew, the Dove of the Holy Ghost, and an image of the crucified Christ. Yet, Luther has been distinctly set apart from the group, as only he responds to God's enlightenment with a clear gesture, in that he is pointing with his right to the inscription in the book reading: *Verbum Domini manet in aeternum* (1 Pet., 1, 25), adopted as the motto of the Reformation.¹⁹

Treu's opinion that Troschel's widely disseminated print had played a key role in establishing the iconography of Luther as a new prophet seems to be very pertinent. Nevertheless, one should also note much earlier works in which distinct suggestions of such a mode of representing the Reformer had appeared.

According to Heinz Schilling, Luther firmly believed he was a new prophet. Although he never dared to call himself one in his writings²⁰, he did not protest, either, when the introduction to an edition of his writings, published in Basle in 1518, claimed that 'many consider [him] a Daniel sent at length in mercy by Christ to correct abuses

and restore a theology based on the Gospel and Paul'.²¹ Distinct hints to such a conviction were also cropping up fairly early in works of art originating in Luther's immediate milieu, that were used to disseminate his reformist ideas. As early as 1521 Hans Baldung Grien (1484 or 1485–1545) executed a woodcut in which the Wittenberg theologian is shown with the Dove of the Holy Ghost hovering over his head and filling him with light that seems to form a halo around his head [Fig. 3].²² Equally eloquent is the depiction of Luther in the altarpiece in Sts Peter and Paul church in Weimar, painted after his death by Cranach the Elder [Fig. 4]. Its central panel shows St John the Baptist and Luther standing side by side at the foot of the crucified Christ. The Precursor is pointing towards Christ, apparently saying: 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (J 1, 29), while Luther, who, through the painting's composition was made equal to him, with the same gesture indicates in the Bible the words uttered by the Baptist.²³

Luther declared that the mission of prophets was not only to convey the proper teachings of God, but to care about the correct celebration of God's worship as well.²⁴ The Reformer ascribed to himself enormous credit in that regard, a fact that was fully acknowledged also by his disciples.²⁵ This conviction found a special expression in a memorial painting in the *Bekenntnisbild* [confession image] type, hung over Luther's grave shortly after his funeral. In the centre of this painting, whose appearance has been preserved in a print by Lucas Cranach [Fig. 5] the Younger, Luther was shown standing in a pulpit. With the condemning gesture of his left arm, the Reformer seems

²¹ Quoted after J.M. TODD, *Luther*, p. 147 (as in note 17).

²² P.K. SCHUSTER, 'Luther als Heiliger', in *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst*, ed. by W. Hoffmann, Munich, 1983, pp. 152–155; K. HOFFMANN, 'Martin Luther unter der Taube', Hans Baldung Grien', in *Martin Luther und die Reformation*, pp. 222–223 (as in note 7).

²³ C. HECHT, 'Bildpolitik im Weimar der Reformationszeit. Das Cranach-Triptychon in der Weimarer Stadtkirche St. Peter und Paul', in *Bild und Bekenntnis. Die Cranach-Werkstatt in Weimar*, ed. by F. Bowski, H. T. Seemann, T. Valk, Göttingen, 2015, pp. 55–74.

²⁴ M. LUTERO, 'Giudizio di Martin Lutero sulla necessità di abolire di messa privata (1521)', in *idem, Messa, sacrificio e sacerdozio (1520–1521–1533)*, ed. by S. Nitti, Turin, 1995 (M. Lutero, *Opere scelte*, 7), pp. 170–173.

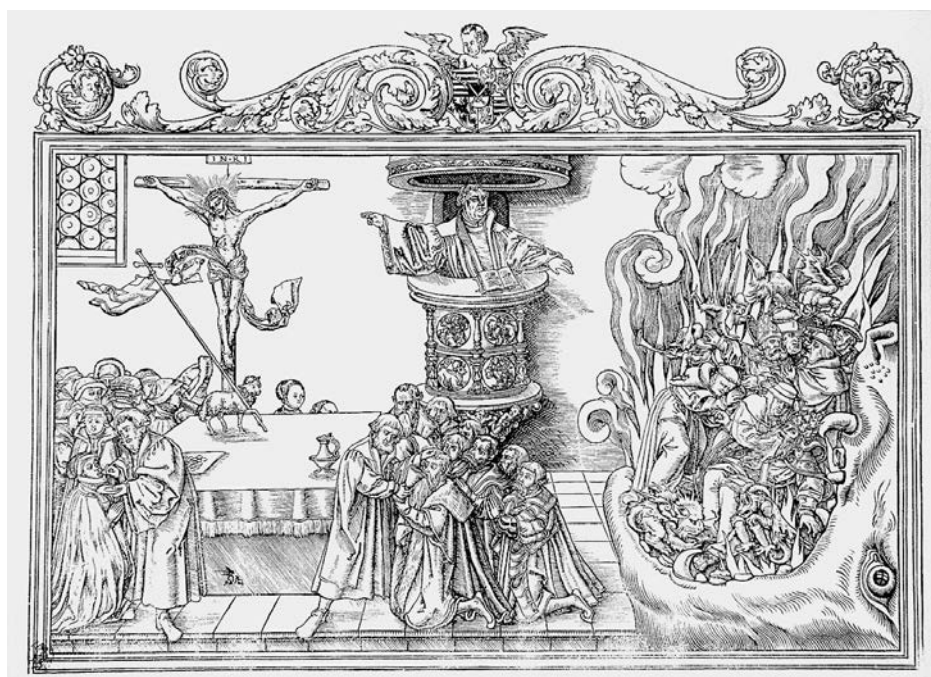
²⁵ R. KOLB, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero. Images of the Reformer, 1520–1620*, Grand Rapids, 1999 (unpaginated digital edition, available at: <https://books.google.pl/books?id=3cIhZn1gYeYC&lpq=PT1&ots=bfl-wJqfIX&dq=Kolb%2C%20Martin%20Luther%20as%20Prophet%2C%20Teacher%2C%20and%20Hero.%20Images%20of%20the%20Reformer&pg=PT12#v=onepage&q=Kolb,%20Martin%20Luther%20as%20Prophet,%20Teacher,%20and%20Hero.%20Images%20of%20the%20Reformer&f=false>, access: 15.10.217); chapter: *Description of Luther as Apostle, Evangelist, and Prophet*.

¹⁹ M. TREU, 'Luther zwischen Kunst', pp. 413–415 (as in note 9).

²⁰ H. SCHILLING, *Martin Luther*, pp. 341–380 (as in note 2).



4. Lucas Cranach the Elder, Altarpiece in St Peter and Paul's church in Weimar, tempera on panel, 1455.
Photo: P. Krasny



5. Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Younger, reproduction of Martin Luther's Memorial Plate in the Castle Church in Wittenberg, copper engraving, after 1546



6. Portrait of Martin Luther with a Swan, copper engraving, c. 1620. After M. Treu, 'Luther zwischen Kunst' (as in note 9)

to be sweeping the pope, Roman Catholic cardinals, bishops, clergy and monks – who deserve eternal condemnation for having disfigured and blemished the original simplicity of Christian liturgy – into the yawning, flaming chasm of Leviathan's mouth. Luther's raised right directs the viewer towards the depiction of the Lord's Supper celebrated in the proper, 'apostolic' way, which was restored thanks to him.²⁶

The images of Luther introduced into churches shortly after his death were most likely not intended to propagate his cult, unlike devotional images of saints in the Catholic Church. Even the presence of his image in the Weimar altarpiece should not, in the light of his teachings, have provoked such practices, since in his dissertation, *Wider die himmlischen Propheten, von den Bildern und Sakrament* [*Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of*

Images and Sacraments], published in 1525, Luther wrote that Christian altarpieces must not be objects of veneration, but – being especially eloquent testimonies of faith – they should rather instruct the faithful.²⁷ Therefore the images of recently deceased or even still living persons depicted in altarpieces were not considered by Lutherans as a manifestation of worship of these persons, but as a means of contemporisation of the pastoral message conveyed by the paintings.²⁸

The cult of Luther was more likely provoked by the dissemination of his 'individual images' which, since the second half of the sixteenth century had been hung both in private homes and in churches, mainly as a sign of affiliation with the Lutheran community of the inhabitants or users of these buildings.²⁹ A majority of these representations were 'copies' of portraits by Cranach (a fact that was sometimes recognised in the inscriptions accompanying the images)³⁰, but some were reminiscent of the Catholic images of saints. According to Treu, the most widely disseminated example of such an innovation was the image of Luther with a swan at his feet [Fig. 6]³¹, inviting associations with representations of numerous saints accompanied by animals as their attributes. This composition was suggested by Luther himself who, in one of his table talks, recorded in 1531, said: 'The saint Hus had made a prophecy about me, when in a letter sent from his prison cell [in Constance] to Bohemia he wrote that he was going to suffer being roasted as a goose (the word *hus* means goose in Czech), but in a hundred years the voice of a swan would be heard, who would explain the will of God.'³² This rather gruesome concept, showing Luther as a superior and more efficient continuator of the reform initiated by Jan Hus (1369–1415) who was martyred at the stake, must

²⁶ G. SCAVIZZI, *Arte*, pp. 64–65 (as in note 7); H. MAI, 'Die Spendung des Abendmahles in beiderlei Gestalt durch Luther und Hus', in *Kunst der Reformationszeit*, p. 421 (as in note 7); C. PAPINI, 'Commento alle illustrazioni nel testo', in M. Lutero, *Messa*, pp. 381–382 (as in note 24); A. ARNULF, 'Die Luther-Memoria', pp. 78–79 (as in note 12).

²⁷ M. LUTHER, *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments* (digitool.library.mcgill.ca/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=113831&local_base=GEN01-MCG02 [accessed on 24 Oct. 2017]), paragraph 70.

²⁸ F. BÜTTNER, 'Argumentatio' in Bildern der Reformationszeit. Ein Beitrag zur Bestimmung argumentativer Strukturen in der Bildkunst', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 57, 1994, no. 1, pp. 24–25; A. ARNULF, 'Die Luther-Memoria', pp. 102–106 (as in note 12). An interesting instance of such a contemporisation, used in order to defeat Luther and his teachings, is a painting by Barthel Bruyn the Elder, *The Temptation of Christ*, in which the Satan has the facial features of the Reformer of Wittenberg and is wearing his characteristic gown. See C. HECHT, 'Gegen die Reformation – katholische Kunststiftungen in den ersten Jahrzehnten', in *Kunst und Konfession. Katholische Auftragswerke im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung 1517–1563*, ed. by A. Tacke, Regensburg, 2008, pp. 87–88, Fig. 7.

²⁹ R.W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', p. 55 (as in note 3); H. SCHILLING, *Martin Luther*, pp. 507–508 (as in note 2).

³⁰ M. TREU, 'Luther zwischen Kunst', pp. 410–411 (as in note 9).

³¹ Ibidem, pp. 415–417.

³² Ibidem, p. 415. See also R. W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', pp. 57–58 (as in note 3).



7. Portrait of Martin Luther with a Crucifix, oil on canvas, 2nd half of the 17th c., St Magnus church in Kempten. Photo: Michał Kurzej

have appealed to Luther's disciples, since they repeated it in their sermons³³ and managed to have it illustrated in both prints and paintings that were hung in churches, in locations which before the Reformation had been reserved for the representations of saints, such as the backs of seats in the stalls of the Brüdernkirche in Brunswick.³⁴

Treu's remarks on the adaptation of schemes characteristic of Catholic depictions of saints for Luther's iconography may be supplemented by the bust-length (or, less frequently, full-length) images of the Reformer in adoration of the Crucifix or directing the beholder to it, that were widespread in the seventeenth century [Fig. 7].³⁵ Although this way of representing Luther was obviously based on his ardent veneration of the crucified Christ³⁶, it also revealed a surprising coincidence, both in the idea and in composition, with the representations of the most



8. Portrait of Martin Luther Surrounded by Scenes from his Life, copper engraving, 1730. After M. Treu, 'Luther zwischen Kunst' (as in note 9)

important Counter-Reformation saints: Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556), Pope Pius V (Michele Ghislieri, 1504–1572), Charles Borromeo (1538–1584), and John of the Cross (1542–1591), which were widely disseminated within the Catholic Church.³⁷ It should be noted that the propagation of images showing Luther with the crucifix coincided with attempts undertaken by evangelical writers at presenting the Reformer as a 'new saint'.³⁸ This observation does not permit us to see in these developments a cause-and-effect association, but it allows us to pose a question whether the 'hagiographisation' of Luther's iconography

³³ S. HOLZ, 'Der gepredigte Luther. Vorbild der evangelischen Konfessionalisierung', in *Martin Luther. Monument*, p. 70 (as in note*); H. SCHILLING, *Martin Luther*, p. 509 (as in note 2).

³⁴ R.W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', p. 57 (as in note 3); R.W. SCHILLING, *Martin Luther*, pp. 509–510 (as in note 2).

³⁵ R.W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', pp. 38–39 (as in note 3). One of such images, that survived a fire of a house at Artern in 1634, was considered to be miraculous. See *ibidem*, pp. 38, 41.

³⁶ J. WOLFF, *Metapher und Kreuz. Studien zur Luthers Christusbild*, Tübingen, 2005; A.E. MCGRATH, *Luther's Theology of Cross. Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough*, New York, 2011; J. VOKOUN, *Luther. Finále středověké zbožnosti*, Prague, 2017, pp. 173–178.

³⁷ U. KÖNIG-NORDHOFF, *Ignatius von Loyola. Studien zur Entwicklung einer neuen Heiligen-Ikonographie im Rahmen einer Kanonisationskampagne um 1600*, Berlin, 1982, s. 69; M. HANKUS, 'Niepołomska vera effigies św. Karola Boromeusza', in *Święty Karol Boromeusz w Kościele powszechnym, w Polsce, w Niepołomicach*, ed. by P. Krasny, M. Kurzej, Cracow, 2013, pp. 47–58. For the similarities between the 'hagiography' and iconography of Luther and of the saints of the Counter-Reformation period, see R. W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', p. 67 (as in note 3).

³⁸ R. W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', pp. 66–67 (as in note 3); A. ANGENEND, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, Hamburg, 2007, p. 258.



9. Gustav Ferdinand Leopold König, *The Funeral of Martin Luther*, steel engraving, 1847. After M. Treu, 'Luther zwischen Kunst' (as in note 9)

resulted merely from a more or less conscious appropriation of Catholic models, or whether it may be seen as an attempt at commemorating the Reformer in keeping with the evangelical concepts of saintly life and the importance of saints in the Church's pastoral work.

According to Luther and the teachings of the Evangelical Church developed under his influence, saints should not be venerated, but – as stipulated by the Augsburg Confession of 1530 – be presented to the faithful, 'so that we may follow their faith and good deeds in our own callings in life'.³⁹ The emergence of prints and paintings representing glorious episodes from Luther's life should be

considered, then, as a very conspicuous manifestation of the 'hagiographisation' of his iconography. As Treu's research has demonstrated, such subject matter became widespread in Luther's iconography in the eighteenth century, mainly thanks to prints, such as for example the copper engraving from 1730, which shows Luther's portrait surrounded by scenes from his life [Fig. 8].⁴⁰ The compositional formula of the engraving obviously alluded to prints depicting Catholic saints, along with scenes representing their good deeds and the miracles worked by them, executed in the Netherlands and Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, often as a means of disseminating the cult of newly canonised saints.⁴¹

The biographical aspect of Luther's iconography culminated in a series of forty steel engravings illustrating episodes from his life, published by Gustav Ferdinand Leopold König (1808–1869) in 1847.⁴² There appeared iconographic solutions known from Catholic depictions of saints – such as the scene of the wedding of Luther and Katharina von Bora (1499–1552), evidently 'likened' to numerous representations of the marriage of the Virgin and St Joseph; an image of the Reformer kneeling at the feet of the crucifix like that of St Dominic in the fresco by Fra Angelico (Guido di Pietro da Mugello, 1395–1455)⁴³ or the scene of the veneration of Luther's body, just like that of many beloved saints, by his disciples and the simple folk [Fig. 9].⁴⁴ Particularly popular was the steel engraving representing Christmas in Luther's home (Fig. 10), which clearly followed the iconographic formula of the 'Let the little children come unto me' scenes, developed by Luther and Cranach the Elder.⁴⁵ The print showed the Reformer as a paragon of a loving Christian father, thus casting him precisely in the role of an 'evangelical saint', as stipulated by the Augsburg Confession.

In stark contrast to the progressing affirmation of Luther's image, undertaken by the evangelicals, was the

³⁹ *The Unaltered Augsburg Confession A.D. 1530*, trans. and historical notes by G. L. Thompson, Milwaukee, 1984, p. 13; A. RÖDER, 'Luther, der Bildersturm und die "wahre" Heiligenverehrung', in *Heilige: die lebendigen Bilder Gottes*, ed. by M. Pohlmeier-Jöckel, Hamburg, 2002, pp. 25–39; C.P. HEMING, *Protestants and the Cult of the Saints, 1511–1531*, Kirksville, 2003, pp. 63–65; A. ANGENEND, *Heilige*, pp. 257–258 (as in note 38).

⁴⁰ M. TREU, 'Luther zwischen Kunst', pp. 423–425 (as in note 9).

⁴¹ See U. KÖNIG-NORDHOFF, *Ignatius von Loyola*, pp. 121–133 (as in note 37); R. KNAPIŃSKI, A. WITKOWSKA, *Polskie Niebo. Ikonomia hagiograficzna u progu XVII wieku*, Pelplin, 2007, *passim*.

⁴² G. KÖNIG, *Dr. Martin Luther, der deutsche Reformator in bildlichen Darstellungen*, Marburg, 1847. See also A. O. ILG, 'Zur Vorstellung', pp. 181–183 (as in note 1); M. TREU, 'Luther zwischen Kunst', pp. 434–436 (as in note 9).

⁴³ See W. HOOD, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, New Haven, 1993, pp. 149–158.

⁴⁴ See P. KRASNY, 'Like Ancient Bishops, Patriarchs and Doctors. Próby reform obyczajów pogrzebowych i sposobu przedstawiania pogrzebów świętych w okresie potrydenckim w świetle "True Relation of Last Sickness and Death of Cardinal Bellarmino" Edwarda Coffina SJ', in *Studia nad sztuką renesansu i baroku*, vol. 9: *Ceremonia i obyczaj w XVI–XVIII wieku*, ed. by J. Lilejko, I. Rolska-Boruch, Lublin, 2008, pp. 273–303.

⁴⁵ See C. OZAROWSKA-KIBISH, 'Lucas Cranach's Christ Blessing the Children. A Problem of Lutheran Iconography', *The Art Bulletin*, 37, 1955, no. 3, pp. 196–203.



10. Gustav Ferdinand Leopold König, *Celebrating Christmas in Martin Luther's Home*, steel engraving, 1847. After M. Treu, 'Luther zwischen Kunst' (as in note 9)



11. *Satire on Expelling Lutherans from Bohemia*, copper engraving, 1620s. After M. Treu, 'Luther zwischen Kunst' (as in note 9)



12. Erhard Schön, *Devil's Bagpipe*, woodcut, c. 1530

tendency to deprecating him as much as possible, by writers and artists associated with the Catholic Church.⁴⁶ According to Treu, such actions acquired a rather pedestrian form under the influence of the Catholic polemicist Johannes Cochläus (1479–1552) who, in order to denigrate Luther in the eyes of the folk, bluntly and coarsely mocked his obesity, which the Reformer developed in the early 1530, as an evidence that he had not been leading an ascetic life, as would have been proper for a ‘man of God’, who renounced the world.⁴⁷ There is no doubt that both Luther’s late portraits by Cranach and his posthumous likeness disseminated in print very faithfully presented his enormous corpulence.⁴⁸ So, all the Catholic artists had to do was to make sure that the beholders did not overlook this fault. Thus, for example, the author of the print commemorating expulsion of Lutherans from Bohemia after the battle of White Mountain, discussed by Treu, showed Luther carrying his fat stomach in a wheelbarrow [Fig. 11].⁴⁹

⁴⁶ W.H.T. DAU, *Luther Examined and Reexamined: A Review of Catholic Criticism and a Plea for Revaluation*, St Louis 1914, p. 115; J. VOKOUN, *Luther*, pp. 227–231 (as in note 36).

⁴⁷ M. TREU, ‘Luther zwischen Kunst’, p. 421 (as in note 9). On the interpretation of Luther’s obesity in anti-Protestant Catholic literature, see W.H.T. DAU, *Luther*, chapter 2 (as in note 46).

⁴⁸ K. HOFFMANN, ‘Totenbildnis Martin Luthers, Lucas Cranach d.J., Werkstatt’, in *Martin Luther und Reformation*, p. 437 (as in note 7).

⁴⁹ M. TREU, ‘Luther zwischen Kunst’, pp. 419–420 (as in note 9).

It is worth noticing that Luther’s fat head appeared in anti-Protestant art immediately after it had acquired such a form in reality. In Erhard Schön’s woodcut, published around 1535, Luther’s head serves as the bag of the bagpipe on which the devil plays his blasphemous music, picking out the tones on the pipe protruding from the Reformer’s nose [Fig. 12].⁵⁰ All Catholic prints published during the last twenty-five years of Luther’s life ostentatiously exhibited his fat face and his enormous stomach, often shown as overflowing the belt or girdle encircling the friar’s habit which Luther had so notoriously dishonoured.⁵¹

Sometimes, however, the authors of anti-Protestant iconography searched for more sophisticated solutions, aimed at presenting Luther not merely as one of the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose god was their stomach (Phil. 3, 18–19). By means of certain likenesses, they tried to persuade the viewers that Luther was, as the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) stated, an arch-heretic who had herded larger numbers of faithful out of Christ’s true Church than any other dissenter.⁵² Such actions were undertaken, for example, by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597) who, in his *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane*, published in 1582, wrote that Luther ‘should be depicted as a black wolf dressed in a friar’s habit, which will demonstrate his monstrous transformation’ of a devout Hermit of St Augustine into a horrible enemy of the Church.⁵³ This concept was, so it seems, a reversed adaptation of a motif appearing in Lutheran anti-Catholic prints in which the pope was frequently depicted as a wolf, in a tiara and pontificals, menacing the flock of Christ [Fig. 13].⁵⁴ Sometimes also minor priests and members of religious orders were portrayed as wolves wearing cassocks or habits.⁵⁵

I am not aware of artworks which realise Paleotti’s instructions, but I can indicate other instances of depicting Luther in Catholic art in a similar way to that in which evangelical artists portrayed the pope and his clergy. The papists did not have qualms about showing Luther being

⁵⁰ K. HOFFMANN, ‘Mit der “Verteufelung” des Gegners soll auch die eigene Teufelsangst überwunden werden’, in *Martin Luther und die Reformationszeit*, p. 239 (as in note 7); R. ZELLER, *Prediger der Evangelismus. Erben der Reformation im Spiegel der Kunst*, Regensburg, 1998, p. 63.

⁵¹ K. HOFFMANN, ‘Martinus Luther Siebenkopf, Hans Brosamer, 1529’, in *Martin Luther und die Reformationszeit*, pp. 227–228 (as in note 7).

⁵² P. WALTER, ‘Der Ketzer Luther. Robert Bellarmin und die Kontroversliteratur’, in *Martin Luther. Monument*, pp. 42–60 (as in note*).)

⁵³ G. PALEOTTI, *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane*, ed. by S. Della Tore, G.F. Freguglia, Vatican City, 2002, p. 160.

⁵⁴ ‘Die päpstlichen Wölfe, Johann Schöffer, 1521’, in *Brennen für den Glauben*, p. 291 (as in note 7).

⁵⁵ See K. FLÜGEL, ‘Zwei Wölfe, als Kleriker und Mönch gekleidet, zereissen ein Schaf’, in *Kunst der Reformationszeit*, pp. 377–378 (as in note 7).



13. *The Roman Wolves*, woodcut, 1521

thrown to hell or as dwelling in the infernal regions. Particularly malicious in this regard is a painting by Egbert Heemskerck the Younger (1634–1704), which depicts Luther entering hell, mounted on a grotesque skeleton-monster, at the head of a throng of his followers [Fig. 14]. The main reason for this upside-down triumph is indicated by a daemon hovering in the air with a book of Luther's heretic teachings.⁵⁶ However, such works must be considered marginal in Luther's iconography, because after his death Catholics fairly quickly adopted a *damnatio memoriae* strategy towards his images⁵⁷, an attitude, incidentally, recommended by Paleotti as the most suitable way of handling heretics, and one that had been practised already in the first centuries of Church's history.⁵⁸ It maybe therefore assumed that in the re-Catholicised areas they destroyed mainly images that celebrated the German heretic⁵⁹ and did not intend to replace them with such that

criticised him, as these would have inevitably perpetuated Luther's 'disgraceful' memory.

The title of Treu's article suggests that Luther's historical iconography is a bit jumbled, which may result from the fact that it is not easy to decide whether Luther's celebratory likenesses should be considered sacred images of a 'man of God' or lay portraits of an outstanding individual.⁶⁰ Nor are we sure whether they were intended only to preserve the memory of Luther who consistently maintained that such was the only acceptable function of images in a Christian community.⁶¹ Yet, substantial evidence suggests that certain representations of the 'new prophet' were supposed to entice a sort of reverence for him, which sometimes verged on the 'papist idolatry', so severely criticised by Luther.⁶² Aware of these tensions, Treu has constructed a cogent preliminary classification of Luther's representations. Obviously, it still has to be supplemented with new groups of images and particular iconographic formulas should be illustrated with new examples, a task I have undertaken in the present paper. But the general

⁵⁶ The painting, dated to c. 1700, is currently on show in the exhibition *Luther und die Deutschen* (4 May – 5 November 2017) held in Wartburg Castle at Eisenach. See *Luther in der Hölle. Spottbild der Gegenreformation*, Wartburg Stiftung in Eisenach.

⁵⁷ M. ŠRONĚK, *De sacris imaginibus. Patroni, malíři a obrazy před-bělohorské Prahy*, Prague, 2013, pp. 57–70.

⁵⁸ G. PALEOTTI, *Discorso*, pp. 158–159 (as in note 53).

⁵⁹ Such measures had been taken in Tirol and the vicinity of Regensburg, among others. See R.W. SCRIBNER, 'Incombustible Luther', pp. 61–62 (as in note 3).

⁶⁰ M. TREU, 'Luther zwischen Kunst', pp. 407, 447–448 (as in note 9).

⁶¹ M. LUTHER, *Against the Prophets*, paragraphs 70–75 (as in note 27); See also S. MICHALSKI, *Reformation and the Visual Arts. The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe*, London and New York, 1993, pp. 41–42.

⁶² See S.G. SCAVIZZI, *Arte*, pp. 53–54 (as in note 7); S. MICHALSKI, *Reformation and the Visual Arts*, pp. 68–70 (as in note 61).



14. Egbert Heemskerck the Younger, *Martin Luther in Hell*, oil on canvas, c. 1700, *Musée international de la Réforme* in Geneva. Photo: Nationale Sonderausstellung 'Luther und die Deutschen'. Wartburg Stiftung in Eisenach, Pressemitteilung, 25.04.2017

structure of the classification of Luther's iconography proposed by Treu will serve as an excellent tool for ordering the apparently jumbled material and at the same time will inspire to undertake further studies on representations of the Reformer in art. Such studies will surely be helped by other articles contained in the book under discussion, featuring analyses of *Lutherbilder* produced by theologians, preachers, historians or filmmakers, which, in turn, must have exerted profound influence on painters and sculptors as well as their patrons.

While studying Luther's iconography, it is worthwhile, I think, to transcend the pictorial material from the lands of the Holy Roman Empire and analyse also the images of the Reformer executed in other countries, especially in the Scandinavian kingdoms, where Lutheran Reformation had been established particularly firmly and significantly influenced the early modern artistic culture of

the region.⁶³ Numerous art-historical studies that have appeared in various places on the occasion of the fifth centenary of the Reformation⁶⁴ will surely provide new material which will not only augment our knowledge of Luther's images developed in Germany, but will also allow to confront this image with its other renderings, produced outside of the Reformer's fatherland.

⁶³ M. SCHWARZ LAUSTEN, *Reformationen i Danmark*, Copenhagen, 2011, pp. 9–10, 208–210.

⁶⁴ See, for example, C. BACH-NIELSEN, *Fra jubelfest til kulturår – danske reformationsfejringer gennem 400 år*, Aarhus 2015; M. SCHWARZ LAUSTEN, *Luther og Danmark i 500 år*, Copenhagen, 2017.