

Preaching  
and Confessional  
Culture in Early  
Modern Germany.  
Catholic Sermons  
between 1650 and  
1800

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Проповеди  
и конфессиональная  
культура в Германии  
раннеמודерного  
периода.  
Католические  
проповеди в 1650–  
1800 гг.

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Abstract

With the Council of Trent, Catholicism defined itself for the first time as a confession with distinct identifying features. In order not only to create but also to maintain such a Catholic Confessionalised identity, Catholic preachers needed to react to contemporary settings and currents as well as to fixed points of reference, as represented by the decrees of Trent. The scope provided by the Trent decree on preaching, “super lectione et praedicatione,” was so wide that, based upon it, individual ideas could be constructed about what constituted a “good” sermon. This can be seen in the various hermeneutics of the Council that developed up to the 18th century, and the associated post-Tridentine practices of piety, which are commonly grouped under the terms “Baroque” and “Enlightenment.” This article, which analyses sermons from the perspective of aesthetics of production and reception, is nonetheless able to show that along with Baroque and Enlightened piety, Jansenist influences also coexisted, something which has hardly been appreciated so far in research. At the same time, the preachers and the audiences

do not seem to have understood the complex network of variously coded elements of Catholic confessional culture as a contradiction: the pastoral strategies of Catholics from the years 1650 to 1800 seem rather not to have been characterised by wave-like motion, with specific extensions on the ritual-sensual or rational-iconoclastic levels, as has been assumed in research. Such asynchrony can also be recognised in textual samples drawn from the Russian Orthodox history of preaching.

#### Keywords

sermon, aesthetics of production/reception, Council of Trent, Confessionalisation, Jansenism, Enlightenment

#### Резюме

Триденский собор способствовал самоопределению католицизма как конфессии с особыми отличительными признаками. Для того, чтобы не только создать, но и поддерживать такую католическую идентичность, католические проповедники должны были реагировать на современное им окружение и тенденции развития, равно как и на отправные позиции, зафиксированные в Триденских постановлениях. Область, охваченная декретом Триденского собора о проповедях “*super praedicatione*”, была настолько широка, что, опираясь на нее, можно было выстроить индивидуальные представления о том, что именно составляло “хорошую” проповедь. Это можно видеть по различной интерпретации Собора вплоть до XVIII в. и связанным с ней посттриденскими практикам благочестия, объединяемых обычно под названием “барочных” и “просвещенческих”. В настоящей статье, где проповеди исследуются с точки зрения их создания и рецепции, тем не менее можно показать, что с барочными и просвещенческими практиками соседствовали и янсенистские влияния, — чему предыдущие исследования практически не уделяли внимания. В то же время проповедники и их аудитория, очевидно, не видели в комплексе разнонаправленных элементов католической конфессиональной культуры противоречий. Пастырские стратегии католиков 1650–1800 гг., в частности, не характеризует, как принято считать в историографии, волнообразный ритм, с соответствующими ответвлениями в ритуально-сенсуалистскую или рационально-иконоборческую сферу. Подобную асинхронность можно также обнаружить по образцам текстов, представляющих историю проповедничества в русском православии.

#### Ключевые слова

проповедь, эстетика создания/восприятия, Триденский собор, конфессионализация, янсенизм, Просвещение

Lower Franconia at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century was an agricultural world in which, for centuries, the rhythms of life had been largely determined by the seasons. In the Franconian imperial circle, a set liturgical calendar of feast days and celebrations dominated, lending everyday Catholic life its routine. In the middle of this living environment, a Benedictine father called Albert Melchior was active. He came from Haßfurt am Main and was sent as a priest primarily in village churches.

Presumably it was these pastoral experiences which, in 1722, caused him to compose a work that has been neglected by researchers, entitled *Einfaches Bauren-Concept* (Simple farmers' concept) [MELCHIOR 1722], which contained 101 "short and simple sermons" for the rural population. Based on the title and the structure of the collection, a basic type of church congregation can be identified which functioned as a target group and hence, in turn, is likely to have had an influence on the form of the sermons. According to the subtitle, Melchior wished to warn the rural population against "rampant vices" and, instead, help them to gain the "necessary virtues." This protection and care for the moral stability of the collective group are apparently responsibilities assumed by the priest: around the tree on the frontispiece there is a cleric in the posture of teaching, standing in front of a group of members of the rural population. He encourages steadfast modesty and speaks to the rural population at eye level, not from the pulpit. They are apparently not meeting in the church, which can be seen in the background, but on a field. In accordance with this context, the individual sermons contained in the volume have titles written above them which are drawn from real life, such as "Cultivate your field properly." They refer to topics including moral education, justification, working morale, etc., which we commonly attribute to the Catholic Enlightenment. However, many of the sermons are emblematically constructed and hence still point unambiguously to the period of Confessionalisation. According to Gottfried Bitter, this kind of emblematic sermon is characterised by the mobilisation of polyhistoric, universal knowledge of the time: in the style of the *sermo humilis*, Melchior often refers to agricultural knowledge such as correct crop management, but does not order such practices stringently [BITTER 1997: 271].

For instance, in the eleventh sermon of the volume, which is intended for the fifth Sunday after Epiphany, the key topic is the parable of the "weeds among the wheat." This lemma is supplemented by a *subscriptio* in the form of a motto: "The enemy sows weeds among the wheat" (Mt 13:25). Against the background of this motto, Melchior extends the logic of the parable by drawing comparisons, among other things, with gardeners who plant thistles among the flowers and shepherds who leave the wolf among the lambs. This is a pastoral strategy that attains its goal through its proximity to real life, the richness of its imagery, the connection of quotes from Scripture with natural science (agriculture) and sometimes also with current political events [BITTER 1997; FISCHER 1952].

The normative demands of school poetics, derived from the example of the literature of antiquity, were abandoned by Melchior—at least at first sight; instead, the gift of imagination and fantasy seem to have been a prerequisite for a good preacher [BREUER 1997; O'MALLEY 1995: 121]. The abundance of images and allusions in the sermon was intended to direct the imagination of

the church [BREUER 1997] and thus to become itself an inner image for the listeners [BERNS 2000].

I chose Melchior's *Bauren-Concept* as an introduction to this article in order to show that in this collection of sermons, the approaches that anticipate an enlightened, virtuous "Education of the Human Race" (Lessing) are found in one and the same text specimen alongside elements of the emblematic sermon, as it was known in the Confessional period. A look at the index of the *Bauren-Concept* supports this postulation: if we look through the entries in this index, we find an apparently Enlightened Christocentrism, which exhorts one to lifelong self-education and reasonable behaviour, alongside a Baroque piety towards Mary, which is fed primarily by the accentuation of the virginity of Mary and her immaculate conception. When I write in the following sections about Catholic sermons between Confessionalisation and Enlightenment, I would ask readers to keep in mind conceptions of sermons such as those of Melchior. The integration of various cultures of piety displayed in these works seems to me to be absolutely characteristic of the period between 1650 and 1800.

## I. Sources and Methodology

My sources come from the former central library of the Bavarian Capuchin province, where there are stored more than 33,000 sermon volumes from the period up to 1800 alone. However, the purpose is not specifically to provide a piety-related contribution to the history of the order of the Capuchins—especially since studies on this topic already exist [THIESSEN 2002; ILG 2007]. The inventory of the Bavarian province also includes sermons of the Benedictines, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Cistercians. However, even secular priests, on whose collective biography there is hardly any information, acted as authors or compilers of sermons. The place of printing of the sermons ranges from Frankfurt to Vienna, and so it is not only a broadly understood "South German" area of investigation which is covered, but above all those regions which are consistently the subject of research on the Catholic Enlightenment (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria). Through this broad access, a restriction to the "great" figures of the league is avoided, and room is left for differences. In the years 1999 and 2000, the sermons were transferred by the University of Eichstätt from the central library of the Capuchins to Altötting [LITTGER 2000; IDEM 2003], but to date they have received only little attention from scholars, despite the fact that two-thirds of the inventory is already electronically catalogued. In order to avoid despairing at the mountains of archives, of course restrictions had to be made for this article. Hence, in order to assume with some assurance a widespread pastoral, popularising effect, I am concentrating exclusively on German-language sermons, and not those in Latin. The focus of the following pages is, first, on so-called sermon collections, such as Melchior's *Farmers' Concept*, which were

Albert Melchior, *Einfaches Bauren-Concept, Das ist: Kurtze und Einfältige Predigen, Auff jeden Sonntag und Feyertag mit einer Predig ausgetheilt.* [Simple Farmers' Concept: Short and Simple Sermons, a Sermon for Each Sunday and Feast Day.] Würzburg, 1722, Shelfmark: 04/1 AÖ 4828.



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composed for a particular clientele (for instance, the rural population) on a particular occasion, and then, like a tract, published in a collection. A relevant criterion for their structure may be (but is not necessarily) the connection with the church year and the corresponding pericopes of the Gospel: here there is an overlap with the so-called *Predigtpostille* (sermon notes). Another factor for the inclusion of a collection of sermons may be the systematic penetration of a particular thematic area, such as that of the Good Shepherd and His sheep, or of the priest and his parish, as is the case for Kayserstuell's *Schaafschwemme* [The washing of sheep].

An investigation of sermons should not be limited to a description of their content nor should it, from an ethnological perspective, make inferences on day-to-day culture on the basis of admonitions and moral didactics [MOSER-RATH 1991; WELZIG 1981; IDEM 1995], which can hardly succeed in being ultimately true. It appears more worthwhile to place the focus on individual and collective practices which are connected with the reading of and listening to sermons. Reconstructing these modes of reading or listening to sermons and revealing the underlying forms of sense-producing actions, as well as displaying their dependence on the psychological dispositions of the related actors, intellectual experiences, and social milieus [CHARTIER 1990: 7–24], is admittedly easier said than done. Only in the rarest of cases is it possible to speak about the effect of sermons, as for the 17th and 18th centuries there are no *rapportationes*, i.e., notes on the reactions of the listeners during the sermons, a practice that is familiar in Italy [MICHELSON 2013]. If a focus is to be placed on the interaction with the parish, which is to be deduced from the printed sermon, then the aesthetics of production and reception, originating from literary analysis, offers a way forwards: the preacher and the audience together form a community of shared experience, and as early as the production of the sermon, the preacher takes into account the fact that the parish will derive symbolic meanings from what is heard [SEMSCH 2005]. A perspective shown by the sermon will always be co-determined by the images in the imagination of the listener. The preachers bring about a “film before the film” [BERNS 2000] in the listeners, or a “cinema in their head.” Hence, each text requires an implicit or “imagined” reader [LENTES 2002]. This perspective has not yet been explored in church history research on sermons.

## II. Sermons of the Baroque or of Confessionalisation

The impulses of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) developed into the so-called Catholic Reform and Counter-Reformation, as can be read in every introduction to church history. The first term refers to a self-examination of the church through inner renewal, and the second refers to its self-assertion in the battle against Protestantism as a result of this inner renewal.

The pivotal point here was the correct preservation of spiritual offices. After all, it was difficult to know where to begin reforming given the considerable gaps in the education of the clergy; the experience of mixed religiosity without knowledge of the correct handling of rituals, liturgy, catechesis, and performance of the sacraments; the small size of a specialist library which, around 1600, still consisted of between two and six books for a simple curate; and the highly rudimentary reception of the decrees of the Council of Trent.

Hence particular care was taken initially to provide an appropriate education for the clergy, whose obligation of pastoral activity—spiritual guidance—and whose activity of proclamation (this is where the sermon comes in) were now strongly emphasised (session of 15 July 1563). On pain of church punishments, the obligation to preach was reinforced. According to the Council decree “*super lectione et praedicatione*” a sermon, which was to be brief and comprehensible in its expression, should have an instructive and cautionary character: vices are to be avoided and virtues to be striven after [CONCILIUM TRIDENTINUM 2002]. In order to check that the reforms decreed were properly put into practice, regular visits and clergy assemblies were stipulated at the level of the dioceses (11 November 1563), although these doubtless took place much less frequently than the cycle determined by the Council stipulated. However, here too it was the case that the successful reception of the Council took several centuries. The reforms which were introduced were implemented very slowly, as evidenced by the case of Albert Melchior from Lower Franconia, who was mentioned at the beginning of this study.

An essential topic of the Trent Reform can therefore be seen in an intensified, sustainable conveying of the contents of faith to all groups. There was awareness that in the sermon as a medium—as *the* connection between the clergy and the laypeople—the central services of communication took place. The preacher was to take care of the internalisation and canonisation of the contents of faith, and in his sermons had to ensure the formalisation of the *recta intentio* [HOLZEM 2004: 239]. In an act of commitment, the believers were not just supposed to be able to recite what they had heard, but also were able to implement the messages preached in real-life religiosity.

From the rather general stipulations of the Trent Decree, in the post-Council years a series of differentiated tasks developed. The inspiration here was given by the Ciceronian teaching of *decorum*, which, together with the Ignatian *applicatio sensuum*, stands for a commentary of the times that was mediated by images. Events from secular history were connected with their interpretations in terms of the history of salvation. The perspective of the enduring validity of the events within this history of salvation removes the differences in time and blurs the boundary between biblical events and the present.



The strengthening of religion in everyday life, according to the theory of the sermon, was to be attained via the incorporation of many everyday ideas and practices. The priest occupied a kind of middle ground: he stood between the life worlds of his parish and the church; he was fully integrated into local communal life and, at the same time, was the official representative of the truths of faith [THIESSEN 2012: 432]. What then was the image which presented itself to the commentator of the times or preacher?

The dispute with the Reformation, the experience of the Thirty Years' War, natural catastrophes which led to crop failures, and many other things led to the creation of a form of piety which was characterised by the consciousness of the limited nature of man and his indebtedness towards God [KRANEMANN 2013]. At the same time, it was possible for this to be combined with a perceptible joy of life. Sensual and sensuous experience promoted a purposeful staging of the corporality of the human [IBID.], and feeling and emotion were confronted by a knowledge of the limited nature of perishable earthly existence. It was a "Pastoral Theology of Fear and Hope" in the best sense [DELU-MEAU 1990].

This specifically Catholic way, to the modern era [HERSCHE 2006: 937–943], was also reflected in the space of the church. In the context of the sacralisation of day-to-day life, which Catholic Confessionalised piety carried out with success, particularly in the South German and Austrian area, Baroque churches and their fittings were understood as concrete places of salvation, as crystallisation points of the history of salvation [HAWEL 1987: 295]. The ceiling paintings suggested a place where heaven was open, allowing free communication between humans and God [ANGENENDT 1994: 246]. The relics and saints that were displayed further strengthened this function as a place of mediation of grace. Hence the Baroque church space may be described as the throne room of Christ; the liturgy, and hence also the sermon, set the stage for the presence of Christ. The focus was on piety relating to the Passion and on veneration of the Eucharist, which became particularly dominant for the interpretation of the atoning death and sacrifice of Christ. In this way, the Confessionalised pastoral practice functioned "to a considerable extent in materialised silent aesthetic messages," through which the "new verbal elements of faith practice, the confessional and the pulpit, were embedded in this symbolic texture" [PFISTER 2002: 140f.].

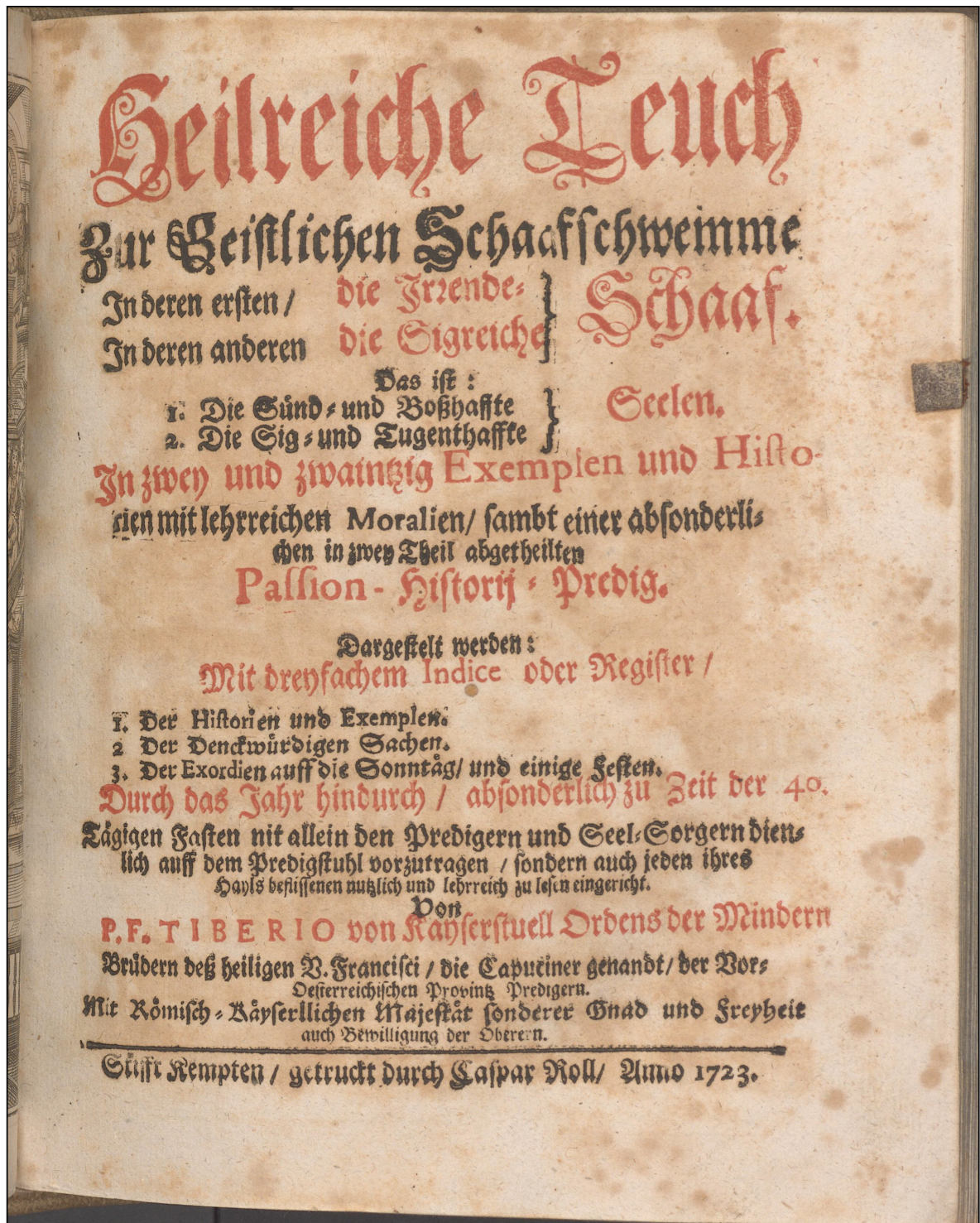
Behind this view of piety is the Tridentine ideal of the priest as the *pastor bonus*—more precisely, the correct, uniformly executed rite which had to prove itself to be worthy of holy things. The Tridentine ideal is governed by a strict regularity in execution. For we should not be deceived: behind the cascades of rhetorical torrents of words there is often a strictly analogical composition of textual references from the Bible and Patristics. Borrowing from Baroque

theatre, the preacher and audience often acted as if they were in a “holy game” with each other [BITTER 1997]. The sermon they heard was intended to warn, comfort, strengthen, and prepare the soul, as well as demanding that Christians fulfilled their duties. The printed sermons circulating at this time were not only used by the minister as a background and as inspiration, but, for those who were able to afford them, they served as edifying reading or even provided sought-after material for the father of the house, to be read out loud [EYBL 1982: 44–85].

An example of the ideal of the *pastor bonus* is represented by the collection of sermons which appeared in 1723, *Pool of Salvation for the Spiritual Washing of Sheep* by the Capuchin Tiberius von Kayserstuell. The striking frontispiece is immediately eye-catching. At first glance the scene might seem to be overwhelming in detail, like a children’s game in which a hidden object needs to be discovered in the picture, however, the image presents a clear perspective, formed from bottom to top. With reference to John 5:1–18 we see the Biblical background of the Temple of Jerusalem with its five pillars in the entrance area, and to the north of it there is a pool called Bethesda. Bethesda can mean both “sheep gate” and “house of grace.” Here, according to the New Testament, Jesus heals a lame man on the Sabbath, and in this *Stagnum Salomonis*, in the Pool of Solomon, according to the Old Testament, the sheep selected for ritual sacrifice had been purified previously. Kayserstuell also uses this background to herald a process of sanctification in his collection of sermons: the wandering sheep need to become victorious, and the sinful souls need to transform into virtuous souls. As a *pictura* the Capuchin father, whose order was well known in the 17th century for popular sermons [SCHNEYER 1968: 278], chose a practice which was known in the early modern period: sheep washing, in which shepherds made sheep swim through rivers or pools several times in order to purify their wool. The person responsible for the purification of their soul is the *pastor bonus*, who meets us as a preacher in the right-hand half of the image and attends to the souls entrusted to him in his church.

Through the *inscriptio* “Pool of salvation for the spiritual washing of sheep,” even the theologically uninformed reader will at least be able to understand the middle part of the image, the Old Testament purification of the sheep, and, thanks to the explanatory words and the title engraving, will be able to equate this with a process of purification of the soul. The religious expert will, moreover, be able to recognise the parallel made between the sheep washing and the New Testament healing of the lame, on the far left, with the Post-Tridentine preaching scene on the far right. The minister, as Kayserstuell says, continually watches over the members of his church, knows its members comprehensively and thoroughly, and is responsible for their mistakes before God as if they were his own [KAYSERSTUELL 1723: ivf.].

Tiberio von Kayserstuell [OFMCap], *Heilreiche Teuch Zur Geistlichen Schaafschwemme*  
[Pool of Salvation for the Spiritual Washing of Sheep], Kempten, 1723, Shelfmark: 04/1  
AÖ 1347.



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Anyone who, like numerous authors of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, understands the Catholic Baroque sermon as a “low point” [KEPPLER 1892: 118] in the entire history of homilies has understood very little [STINGEDER 1920: 149]. It is not the case that an external formalism spread at the cost of the spiritual content. Rather, the Baroque mode of proclamation offers a universal knowledge of time, in order to use all senses equally to display the logic of faith to the understanding and the heart.

### III. Jansenian Tendencies as an Intermediate Impulse

The period between 1650 and 1800 has perhaps also been a dark spot in German-language research on Catholicism; this is because little is known to date about the influence of Jansenism, which originally came from France, on preachers of Germany, Austria, and German-speaking Switzerland. Jansenism dates back to Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638), the Bishop of Ypres. In 1640 a book written by him about the Augustine teaching of grace was published posthumously [JANSEN 1640], in which Jansen, drawing on the church fathers, taught that man has no influence of his own on his redemption, but instead is entirely dependent on the divine will of grace. For Jansenism the basic sinfulness of the human is the decisive criterion; man is always characterised by his weakness and dependence on God [BENDEL 2007: 152f.].

For Jansenists, nothing was more urgent than the desire to put God in a gracious disposition. Preachers, as experts in religious knowledge, therefore had a double function from the beginning in Jansenism, as they themselves were susceptible to sin, and thereby shortened the communicative distance between man and God, even making direct contact with the intangible, transcendent power superfluous. At the same time, however, they could also intercede for the individual sinner [SCHUCHART 1972].

This strong argumentation with the need for grace, which presumably developed through the constant confrontation with Reformational counterparts, did not mean a retreat into the world, but an organisation within the world. Eloquence, as it was maintained above all by the Jesuits, drawing on rhetoric from antiquity, was now seen as a sign of human weakness, even as a gateway for the sin of pride [SAUGNIEUX 1976: 1–6]. In the sense of the moral rigour [HERSCHE 1977] propagated instead in the collections of sermons, the idea was to take into consideration almost every situation in life and to have the appropriate, relevant sermon for each situation. Emphasising the early church, and with the necessity of regular confession, listening to the sermons was not under any circumstances to become a mechanical act, but instead believers were to accept God’s will with a pure, humble, and eager heart. One example showing how such an ascetic attitude could be expressed in sermons is also to be found in Kayerstuell’s *The Washing of Sheep*, which oscillates between Confessionalised and Jansenian piety:

. . . Jesus Christ bore everything with patience and longsuffering, with which virtue he gave you, my Christian, a hearty example—if your enemy or someone else attacks your honour, you should not hate him, persecute him, disgrace him, mock him, nor [should you] seek revenge on such people, nor bear a grudge, nor make them your enemy or slander them. No, but according to the example of Christ, you should with patience and mildness pass on your suffering to God, complain of it to him and speak to him of it. You are allowed to protect your honour, which people are trying to take from you, but without anger and without revenge. Just as the man of God’s heart, David, did [. . .]. Also learn yourself, according to the example of the gentle David, to suffer patiently, yes, according to the glorious example of Christ, when persecuted learn to pray for your enemies. In this way, everything will turn towards your current and eternal honour and glory [KAYSERSTUELL 1723: 434].

In this radical, conscious, earnest listening there is already common ground with the impending Enlightenment, and in the ideal of a priest as a shepherd who tirelessly works for his sheep we see common features with the Confessionalised sermon. Jansenists—above all the followers in their centre, the Port Royal des Champs monastery close to Versailles—however, consisted primarily of educated members of the French upper classes, which again forms a contrast with the Enlightenment. The image of humans held together by the Enlightenment was directed towards education of the people, and was characterised by postulates of equality. In contrast to this, Jansenism, despite all of its orientation towards the “common man,” was ultimately based on a theory of election [HERSCHE 1977: 372; 393].

#### IV. Sermons of the Enlightenment Period

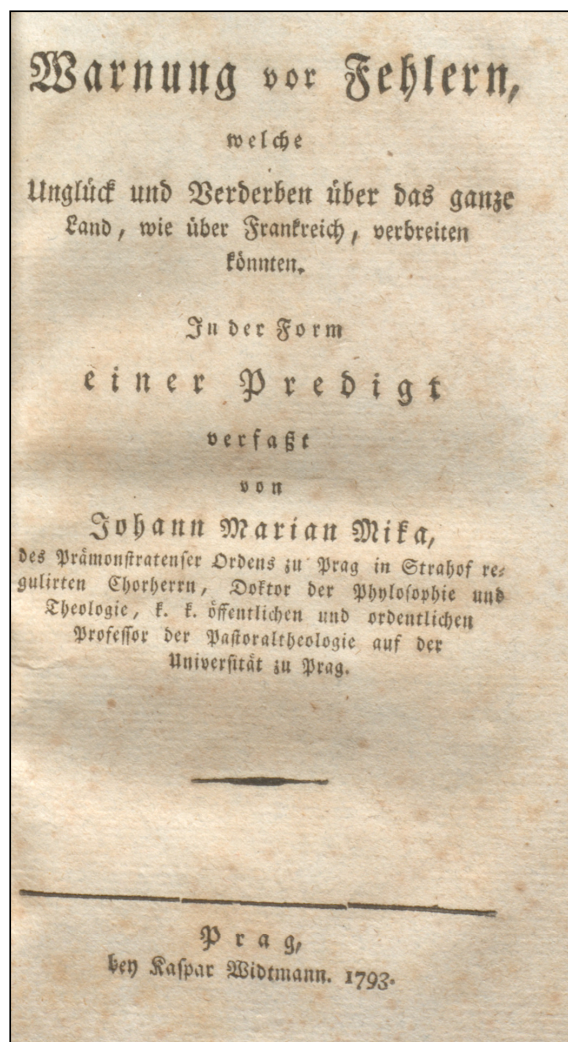
Those theologians who had committed themselves to Enlightenment patterns of thought criticised piety practices of the period of Confessionalisation and tried to attain a new theology and liturgical practice in the realm of the church. The Catholic Enlightenment, which according to Klueting is to be periodised approximately from 1740 up to the Secularisation of 1803 [KLUETING 1993], spoke to the believers of an intellectual foundation for faith, and hence set new dimensions to the religious living environment. Enlightened Catholicism had its expression in a return to consideration of the Holy Scripture and the church fathers, instead of dogmatics and casuistry; liturgically, in the place of the Baroque staging of the mass, there was a rejection of such “enchantment of the world,” which only promoted superstition [NEUVILLE 1787: 439]. Instead, the sermon was to be used for instruction and edification, and the overall target was a penetration of the Catholic faith according to reason, in the sense of the improvement of the heart. The happiness of humans, in this world and the next, could be named as a goal. “What was meant by this was a state in which the different parts of the

Enlightened Catholic understanding of the body and the soul were harmonious with each other to such a high degree that in people's inner worlds a happy emotional state was already possible" [HANDSCHUH 2014: 216].

The focus of my remarks in the final few pages will be a sermon by the Prague pastoral theologian Marian Mika. In 1793 Mika published a sermon with the title *Warning Against Errors which could Spread Catastrophes and Destruction across the Whole Country, as in France* [MIKA 1793]. From its outward appearance alone, the change is noticeable from the large, weighty collection of postils of Albert Melchior or Tiberio von Kayserstuell to the sermon of Mika, which has been kept simpler and refers to a specific event. The question of Mika's topic is quickly answered: the turmoils of the French Revolution, which were seen as arising from a deification of philosophy and which threatened to spread over to European countries outside of France, for him were nothing other than signs of a "disordered" mode of life: the individual is dissatisfied with his societal status and rebels against authority. The background for him is apparently the letter to the Romans (Rom 13:1–7) in which Paul recommends a clear subordination of Christians under worldly rulers, as the latter, and societal order in general, is divinely ordained and hence unchangeable. Mika wishes to describe to his "reasonable" readers the depraved behaviour of the revolutionaries in popular, generally comprehensible language, not in the tone of a bitter reprimand, but with a mild depiction of the French, carried by love of his neighbour, and to compare it with biblically legitimised faithfulness to the monarchy. As an ideal state form, as is made sufficiently clear in his sermon, Mika envisaged absolutist monarchism propagated with Josephinism arranged by the state church. His sermon is decidedly not directed towards the general public, which, through a precise description of the revolutionary vices, would presumably only be encouraged to imitate such vices.

The desire for maintenance of the internal order of society corresponds, in Mika's work, in a particular manner with the external arrangement of his sermon, which he understands as quite pragmatic, simple moral instruction. Baroque allegorical interpretations, additive construction principles, and fanciful, imaginative communication between the ingenious preacher and the excited audience [BREUER 1997] are no longer Mika's concern. He describes the "external arrangement" of his sermon itself as "systematic," as pastoral experience taught that only a regularly arranged sermon led to success. There followed—similarly to a rhetorical *dispositio*—the "skeleton of the whole sermon," which, together with the preamble, takes up 22 of a total of 150 pages of the whole presentation and is structured up to the ninth (!) level (RomanIII. LargeA.Arabic3.Delta.Arabic3.d.Beta.c.Arabic1). In the sermon itself, a precise system of footnotes is included, further reinforcing the impression of a scientific order. If one takes a look at the *Tabellarischen Grundriß der in deutscher*

Johann Marian Mika, *Warnung vor Fehlern, welche Unglück und Verderben über das ganze Land, wie über Frankreich, verbreiten könnten* [Warning against errors which could spread catastrophes and destruction across the whole country, as in France], Prague, 1793, Shelfmark: 041/1 AÖ 4380.



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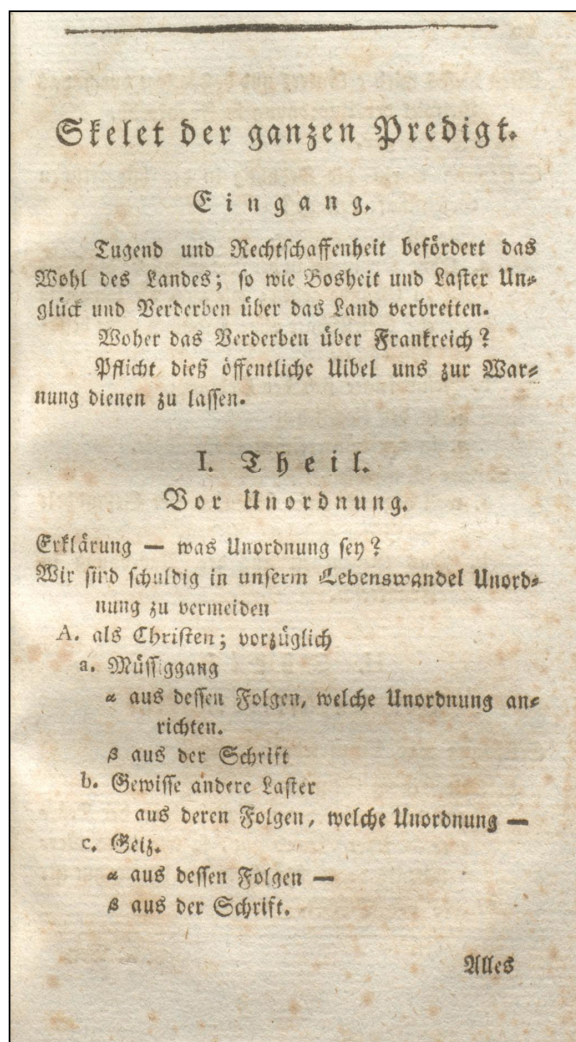


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*Sprache vorzutragender Pastoraltheologie* (Tabular overview of pastoral theology to be presented in the German language) by Franz Stephan Rautenstrauch (1777) [ZOTTL, SCHNEIDER 1987: 27–34], which circulated widely at the end of the 18th century, it becomes clear where Mika apparently gained the idea for such a finely sculptured structure.

As should be apparent from the preceding remarks, preachers such as Mika no longer saw themselves as being subject to the Tridentine ideal of the *pastor bonus*. Instead they understood themselves as interpreters [KRAUSE 1965: 36] with the responsibility of “enlightening” central truths of the faith virtually



casuistically [BAUMGARTL 2004: 54]. As becomes apparent here, the Enlightenment in Catholic Germany, perhaps unlike Protestantism, was generated not as an academic theology, but as a pastoral reform movement which was genuinely directed towards mediation—an enlightenment of the people in the truest sense of the word, the ideas of which were to reach as many people as practically possible. In this way, preachers and liturgists of the time understood themselves as disseminators who passed on their expert knowledge to the church and who trained themselves continuously. They communicated with each other across an extended journalistic landscape and the so-called pastoral conferences [KRANEMANN 2016A: 377]. It is not by chance that the beginnings of an independent theological discipline called liturgics lie in the Enlightenment [IBID.: 367]. As binding principles of the liturgy and the sermon were their accordance with scripture, their inerrancy, and the appropriateness towards the divine dignity: the whole human was to be offered to God [IBID.: 374]. What was of decisive importance was that now the people—not only the celebrating priest—understood the service and its pastoral situation, its “Sitz im Leben.” The dialogue of the sermon was here no longer a fictitious one understood as a parlour game, as in the times of Confessionalisation. Sermons were no longer intended to impress the listeners with an all-too-sensuous emotion-grabbing which sometimes even contradicted reason, but rather, in the simple style of the apostles, were to proclaim the word of the scriptures—no more, but also no less [BÜTTNER 1998: 168].

The pastor, as an expert in the conveying of enlightened theology, was to allow himself to be led by pastoral cleverness and not to bring about any escalations in conflict by insensitively condemning Baroque forms of piety. Instead, a gradual, communicatively mediated work of persuasion was to be carried out with respect to this. What was intended was a gradual transition of the old Confessionalised into the new Enlightened Catholic piety [HANDSCHUH 2011: 158]. Most preachers between 1650 and 1800 were therefore not agents in the sense of an implementation of religious norms from “above” to “below,” but relatively conciliatory mediators between the laypeople and the sacred [THIESSEN 2012: 447].

## V. A Comparison with Russian Orthodox Sermons

In the comparison between the German-language Catholic and Russian Orthodox history of sermons in the early modern era, startling similarities can be found, even if they are asynchronous to some extent. Since other articles within this issue of the journal are devoted to dealing with the sermon in a Russian Orthodox context, the following section is accordingly restricted to a few remarks, which admittedly are from the perspective of a Catholic church historian. While the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 heralded the end for the time being of the wars of religion in Europe, and the German empire was divided up along confessional lines, at the same time in Russia there was a religious

vacuum. The arising of an absolute monarchy and the definitive establishment of serfdom, as well as the form of liturgy introduced in 1652 by the patriarch of the time, Nikon, which ended in a division of the Orthodox Church in 1666, demanded new reflection on “how to preserve a virtuous life in the face of the moral temptations of court life and great wealth, the temptations of avarice and pride” [BUSHKOVITCH 1992: 175]. A form of religiosity designed to answer these questions, and which now entailed more than mere liturgy, spread out following the top-down model, from the elite of society to the social classes outside of the court culture. A key role was played here by the Zealots of Piety, who were very close to Tsar Alexei I (1629–1676), and who had existed since the 1630s. Via the confessor of the tsar, Stefan Vonifatiyev, this group was able to exercise direct influence on church politics—all the more so after Alexei had fallen out with Nikon. Their demand for a rebirth of the “genuine” Orthodox faith allowed them to become the true power within the Russian Orthodox Church. “In the course of the century, with the decline of monasticism and the increasing restrictions on the popular miracle cults, preaching seemed to be stepping in to provide the needed religious guidance” [BUSHKOVITCH 1992: 175]. The contents of the sermon were now aligned above all towards morality and virtue. Parallel influences, for instance from the Ukrainian Baroque with its metaphorical expressions, its syllogisms, and so forth were not at all able to change this didactic impulse. Among other things, in close combination with the state, people turned with care towards the poor—long before Catholic sermons in the Enlightenment period were to declare this one of their dominant concerns. With this virtuous turn, the great topic of the European Enlightenment, the way was cleared for the reforms of Peter the Great (1672–1725).

As Igor Smolitsch displayed in his voluminous two-tome *Geschichte der russischen Kirche 1700–1917* [History of the Russian church, 1700–1917] [SMOLITSCH 1964; IDEM 1991], it was above all the Holy Synod, which was set up under Peter I in 1721 according to the German Lutheran example, that brought about a comprehensive clerical reform and which attached great value to the sermon, which, however, was oriented along the lines of state politics. Here there are unmistakable similarities with the Council of Trent and its significance for the Roman Catholic area. The reign of Catherine II (1729–1796) further constructed enlightened absolutism and promoted Latin humanism [OKENFUSS 1995]. “Sermons on Education” or “on the Usefulness of Learning,” as held for instance by Metropolitan Platon (1737–1812), were the logical consequence. His way of reading the Bible readily matched that of the Catholic Enlightenment: “the meaning of the biblical text, including opaque passages, should be clearly explained [. . .] apparent contradictions should be reconciled by comparing parallel passages. [. . .] Platon stresses the importance of extracting moral lessons from study of the Bible” [KIMERLING WIRTSCHAFTER 2013: 18f.].

However, the Russian “flirtation” with enlightened ideals proved not to be very long-lasting [OKENFUSS 1995: 234]. The laws decreed by Peter the Great, primarily against the Old Believers, hollowed out the societal position of the Russian Orthodox Church [FREEZE 1977], so that a new generation of preachers made a break with the hitherto close relationship with the state. A new preaching style was crystallised, one which was no longer top-down but bottom-up, and which, apart from a few exceptions, came from the married, i.e., secular, clergy. Studies on representative Russian Orthodox preachers in the second half of the 19th century, such as Bishop Theophan the Recluse (1815–1894), Archbishop Ambrose (Kliucharev; 1820–1901), and Archpriest John Sergiyev of Kronstadt (1829–1908), show that they loaded their texts with a combination of spiritual teaching, apologetics, and mystagogy [FELMY 1972]. In particular, Theophan’s interpretation of the preacher as a spiritual father (in Russian, *pastyr' dobryj*) is similar to the Tridentine ideal of the *pastor bonus*. However, there is one significant difference: Theophan is not concerned with incorporating his observations of social reality or the everyday experiences of his audience. Instead, in his sermons, the state of people’s souls, the virtuous feelings of the religiously directed soul, appear to be the foundation and the point of departure. The soul is surrounded by the unalterable nature (according to Theophan) of the Orthodox faith, which resists all contemporary currents.

## VI. Conclusion: Different Arrangements of Religious Knowledge

With the Council of Trent, Catholicism defined itself for the first time as a confession with distinct identifying features. In order not only to create but also to maintain such a Catholic Confessionalised identity, it was, however, necessary to react to contemporary settings and currents as well as to fixed points of reference, such as those represented by the decrees of Trent. At the same time, the decrees of the Council itself, and their reception, must not be limited to an anti-Protestant emphasis, but instead the church assembly’s potential for reform, in particular reform of concrete pastoral care, must be acknowledged. This much is not disputed. This role of Trent can also be confirmed for this article on Catholic sermons: the Council was a pastoral reinforcement insofar as, on the basis of the very brief decree “super lectione et praedicatione,” it stimulated reflection about what constituted a good sermon. The stipulations themselves remained imprecise: first, a sermon was to be preached using an easily understandable, brief manner of speaking, and second, it was to have a teaching and warning character. Put more clearly, this meant that vices were to be avoided and that virtues were to be striven after.

However clearly Trent distanced itself from the doctrines of the Reformers, the reform decree relating to the sermon can be read in an open manner. For all of the preachers analysed here could subscribe to the attributes mentioned

above. What is more, the latitude provided by Trent was so great that, based on it, individual ideals of a “good” sermon could be constructed. In the same way that the liturgical reform after Trent did not generate “the” unitary celebration of the mass (contrary to a long-established assumption in liturgical research), in the sermon there was also a distance between Tridentine stipulations and the latitude available *in situ* [KRANEMANN 2016B]. With respect to liturgy, Trent had determined the words and the actions, but had left great flexibility and variability in the setting [STRINGER 2005]. Instead of a uniform top-down reception, a co-existence of highly varied receptions of the Council’s regulations can be assumed. The Council Fathers were concerned first of all with removing shortcomings in pastoral care. The boundaries of what could be said from the pulpit were clearly regulated insofar as any action against Catholic tradition could endanger the proper veneration of God and, hence, the attainment of grace: “They reformed, according to their own self-understanding, not according to the criteria of time, but according to the authoritative tradition, without specifying clearly which tradition was meant in individual cases” [KRANEMANN 2016B: 314].

The hermeneutics of the Council, which were developed up to the 18th century, and the associated practices of piety are generally grouped under the terms “Baroque” and “Enlightenment.” However, this article has been able to show that alongside Baroque and Enlightened piety, there were also Jansenian influences, something that has scarcely been appreciated in research to date. If one follows the innovative concept of the Tübingen church historian Andreas Holzem, even the concept of Confessionalisation is to be understood very widely, and is applicable in various shades and nuances from 1550 to 1850. The Catholic Enlightenment would then, for instance, be a form of Confessionalisation, in which specific needs of the Catholicism of the time were fulfilled [HOLZEM 2015: 12–32]. Drawing such a long line unmistakably has a price: if one decides in favour of such continuity, then such apparent differences as the definition of the Enlightenment as the “Anti-Baroque” [HERSCHE 2006: 960] and the transformation of the Catholic culture of piety from the (figuratively speaking) Baroque shrine to Jansenian Bible reading would be declared to be mere superficial processes. With such an assumption of continuity religious knowledge was only arranged differently, but what took place over the space of 300 years was the constant battle for the formation of religiously constituted groups. The two archives of knowledge, Confessionalisation and Enlightenment, are not separated by a hiatus, but rather are characterised by a pastorally motivated, flowing and gradual transition. Hence one could speak of the development and manifestation of a particular Catholic “Confessional culture.” The concept, on the one hand, includes the normative stipulations of the Council of Trent, but, on the other hand, equally emphasises the contextual and ephemeral nature of contemporary Catholicism [WASSIŁOWSKY 2016: 28].

At the same time, the preachers and the listening audience do not seem to have seen a complex of variously coded elements of Catholic Confessional culture as constituting a contradiction: the pastoral strategies of Catholics of the years from 1650 to 1800 seem precisely not to have been characterised by wave-like movement, with respective specific extensions on the ritual/sensual or rational/iconoclastic levels, as described by Peter Hersche [HERSCHE 2016: 499–503]. Instead, for the Catholic Confessional culture or society, between the Baroque and the Enlightenment there is a confirmation of the differentiation between a distinct profile, as determined by Trent, and its soft formulation [WASSILOWSKY 2016: 28]. For this reason, it is impossible to make too stark a contrast between time periods, as is encountered in many encyclopaedia entries on Catholic sermons: confusion is caused by differentiating between a Confessionalised sermon, on the one hand, and an Enlightened sermon, on the other hand, as well by using terms such as “no longer” or “not yet.” Clearly, contemporaries were well able to tolerate the plurality of cultures of piety, and did not see them as being agonistic to each other. Instead, a normalising and stabilising force was gained through pastoral plausibility: anything was retained which successfully led to a particular behaviour as a result of hearing (or reading) the sermon. This success was proved if a spiritual implementation of the contents preached took place in education and ways of life, and hence validity was ascribed to the listeners for inward and outward practice of belief [HOLZEM 2015: 342]. In other words, it was a question of how the new regulations established or the old regulations reiterated by the Council of Trent were acted out *in situ*. Religious knowledge is formed in a critical discourse and must be kept plausible. It is precisely at this point that the sermon connects normative tradition with societal dynamics. Preaching is a process of carrying out this permanently necessary transformation within a constant process of transfer. Religious knowledge in the sermon is constantly transformed, and the world must constantly be reordered in its current situation through faith. The composing of a sermon involves a kind of “trial and error” procedure, but not a conscious decision to detach the Confessionalised stock of knowledge from the Enlightened stock, or even to create a hiatus to create a hard line of demarcation. Rather, a particular kind of thought dominates little by little—the years between 1650 and 1800 on the Catholic side were a period of transition, similar to the slow formation of confessional landscapes which has been described for the Reformation period. The sermon culture within German Protestantism can be described as being at least as varied, something which can only be indicated briefly within this article. However, in order to discover dynamic trends in Protestant sermons which are not tied to periodisation schemes, it would be necessary to widen the temporal perspective further, beyond the Reformation period to the periods normally described as Orthodoxy, Pietism, and Enlightenment.

Let us extend our perspective once again: interestingly, in this juxtaposition of different preaching styles, parallels can be drawn with the Russian Orthodox history of sermons. With a certain amount of asynchrony, which has to do with the differing political conditions in the two realms, similar ideals expressed by preachers can nonetheless be observed: the figure of the spiritual father, for instance as embodied by Theophan the Recluse, is similar in many ways to the *pastor bonus* of the Council of Trent. Conversely, in the 17th century in Russia the Zealots of Piety were already propagating an idea of preaching which, in its close dependency on the state as well as its emphasis on morality, social care, and virtue, is reminiscent of the European Enlightenment of the 18th century. This article therefore also aims to be a plea to take greater consideration of transnational perspectives in historical sermon research.

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