

“Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophecy”: Visions, Apocalypticism, and Gender in Strasbourg,  
1522-1539

by  
Christina Moss

A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfilment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
History

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2019

© Christina Moss 2019

## **Examining Committee Membership**

The following served on the Examining Committee for this thesis. The decision of the Examining Committee is by majority vote.

External Examiner

**DR. JOHN ROTH**  
Professor of History

Supervisor(s)

**DR. GRETA KROEKER**  
Associate Professor of History

Internal Member

**DR. TROY OSBORNE**  
Associate Professor of History, Dean of Conrad Grebel  
University College

Internal-external Member

**DR. ALICIA BATTEN**  
Professor of Religious Studies and Theological Studies

Other Member(s)

**DR. PETER GODDARD**  
Associate Professor of History

### **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of my thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that this thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## Abstract

This study examines the life and work of Lienhard and Ursula Jost, two peasant religious visionaries active in Strasbourg between 1522 and 1539, in the midst of the religious turmoil of the early Reformation. The Josts were illiterate, but, through their association with the Anabaptist preacher Melchior Hoffman, they were able to reach an audience not only in Strasbourg, but also in the Low Countries. Hoffman produced two editions of the Josts' visions and prophecies: one printed in Strasbourg in 1530, which contained only Ursula's visions, and one printed in Deventer in 1532, which included the prophecies of Lienhard and a second, expanded edition of Ursula's visions. The Josts' visions and prophecies provide a rare opportunity to hear the beliefs, concerns, and ideas for reform advanced by illiterate early modern peasants and recorded by a sympathetic—rather than a hostile—scribe. This dissertation uses these sources to analyze the lives and prophetic careers of the Josts both before and after their encounter with Hoffman, the late medieval religious milieu in Strasbourg that gave rise to them, their interactions with Strasbourg's religious and political authorities in the first decades of the Reformation, their relationship to early modern apocalypticism, and the gendered and class-based dimensions of their lives and thought.

This study finds that the non-textual forms of late medieval spirituality that were prevalent in Strasbourg deeply shaped the Josts—though they were not necessarily conscious of this impact. Their visions and prophecies contain themes and ideas also present in works of religious art in the Strasbourg Cathedral and in sermons by the renowned Strasbourg preacher Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510). The Josts also displayed an affinity for aspects of Protestant thought, and Lienhard, in particular, hoped to cultivate the city's reformers and magistrates as allies, though he was ultimately unsuccessful in this task. The strongest current that ran through the Josts' writings, however, was their distress at the oppression of the poor—with whom they identified personally—and their apocalyptic conviction that they were on the cusp of a new era, in which God would finally right the wrongs the powerful had inflicted on the vulnerable for so long.

## Acknowledgments

My advisor, Greta Kroeker, championed me wholeheartedly and consistently from my arrival in Waterloo and made me a better scholar and teacher in every way. Wherever I end up, I hope to be as good a mentor as she is. I am also grateful to the members of my committee—to Troy Osborne and Peter Goddard for their invaluable advice and guidance throughout the planning and writing of this dissertation and to John Roth and Alicia Batten for their feedback and expertise in this crucial last stage. Many thanks as well to Arnold Snyder, who first convinced me to study Ursula, and to Jonathan Green, who alerted me to the survival of Lienhard's visions in 2014 and generously shared research materials and a then-unpublished article with me. Moreover, I extend my gratitude to Marc Lienhard and Mathieu Arnold, who kindly met with me in Strasbourg to discuss the Josts (and Reformation-era Strasbourg more generally).

I have been fortunate to work with an abundance of great mentors, both in Waterloo and in Fredericton. Thank you in particular to Steven Bednarski, Gary Waite, Rusty Bittermann, Robin Vose, and Janet Mullin—for the reference letters, for the guidance in writing applications and navigating academia, and for deepening my love of history. I also wish to thank my fellow tri-University doctoral students Marian Toledo and Andrew Moore, who understand all the good and the bad of the past several years better than anyone else. Thank you for being great colleagues and friends. I wish you every success and happiness in what comes next.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the work of so many others who made the process of researching, writing, and defending a dissertation (all while first TA-ing and then teaching courses) so much easier for me: the archivists at the Archives de la Ville et de l'Eurométropole de Strasbourg, the administrative assistants (past and present) at the department of History and Conrad Grebel University College, and the great librarians of the tri-University group, particularly those from the Milton Good and Dana Porter libraries. They do their jobs excellently, and without them I could not do mine. I am likewise grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the University of Waterloo for their financial support of my research.

Thomas and Katherine Brady were incredibly generous with their library and with their contacts in Strasbourg, and I am deeply appreciative. Many thanks also to Mme Monique Fuchs and her family and to the whole congregation of the Église Évangélique Mennonite de Strasbourg-Illkirch, who were so welcoming to me during the months I spent there doing research and made me feel a little less far from home.

Far too many friends and family to name have come alongside me since I began this degree in 2014. I particularly wish to thank my parents, John and Ulrike Entz, my siblings Johanna Hiltz and Philipp and Rachelle Entz, my parents-in-law Kevin and Connie Moss, my dear friends Emily Johnson-Tracy, Jessica Windsor, Kandace Boos, and Bekah Smootenns, and the many other great friends I made through Lamplight Church Kitchener-Waterloo and Stirling Avenue

Mennonite Church. Thank you for asking me how research was going (but not too often) and for all your emotional support throughout this process. It can often be isolating and lonely, but thanks to you I have always felt surrounded and supported.

And, of course, first, last, and always, all my love and thanks to my husband Aaron, who has shared my joys and talked me off of several ledges over the course of this degree. He has borne cheerfully with my prolonged absences for research travel and has shouldered more than his share of the housework whenever I stared down the barrel of a deadline, all while completing his own doctoral degree. Aaron, I love you, and I'm excited for what comes next.

## Table of Contents

Examining Committee Members.....	ii
Author’s Declaration.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two: The Josts Before Melchior Hoffman, 1522-1529.....	16
Chapter Three: The Josts after Melchior Hoffman, 1529-1539.....	51
Chapter Four: Medieval Strasbourg: The World that Shaped the Josts.....	87
Chapter Five: The Josts and Strasbourg Political and Religious Authorities’ Response to Dissent, 1522-1539.....	117
Chapter Six: The Josts and Early Modern Apocalypticism.....	162
Chapter Seven: Gender, Class, and Prophecy in the Josts’ World.....	193
Chapter Eight: Conclusion.....	229
Bibliography.....	232
Appendix A: A Translation of the 1532 Deventer Edition of Lienhard’s Prophecies and Ursula’s Visions.....	246

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 1532, as he travelled the Low Countries and made converts, Melchior Hoffman published a collection of two different writings using the press of the Deventer printer Albert Paffraet. These writings were not the work of Hoffman himself—though he served as their editor and added forewords of his own. Rather, they were the visions and prophecies of a married couple: Lienhard and Ursula Jost of Strasbourg, the city where Hoffman had completed his transition from Lutheran lay preacher to Anabaptist apostle. The Josts were prophets, whose utterances Hoffman considered as valuable as those of the biblical prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah. For Hoffman, the Josts' very existence as prophets validated his belief that he lived in the Last Days and that, as proof, God had raised up a new generation of prophets. Hoffman considered the Josts' writings a valuable resource for discerning the future and hearing and understanding the will of God in turbulent times.

For modern historians, the Josts' visions and prophecies are valuable in a different way. As an illiterate peasant couple, the Josts were unable to commit their ideas to writing without assistance. Most sixteenth-century Europeans in the Josts' social situation left only the barest traces in the historical record unless they made trouble, and when they did their words were usually filtered by hostile interpreters such as court scribes. In Hoffman, however, the Josts found a supportive editor and enthusiastic disseminator of their words. He assisted them in committing their prophecies and visions to writing in as sympathetic a light as possible. The result is a rare 63 pages of printed text detailing aspects of two illiterate peasants' lives, experiences, and ideas in their own words, which provides an opportunity to examine how two relatively ordinary—notwithstanding their propensity for visions—people without an established



mechanism to directly influence their local church or government, thought about God and the world around them in the midst of the upheaval of the Reformations.

## **Historiography**

The Josts featured only very briefly in broader regional studies; the second volume of the Protestant pastor Timotheus Wilhelm Röhrich's *Geschichte der Reformation in Elsass, und Besonders in Strasburg (History of the Reformation in Alsace, and Especially in Strasbourg)* mentioned Lienhard and Ursula in conjunction with Hoffman. He dismissed them as mentally ill but emphasized the confidence Hoffman placed in their prophecies.<sup>1</sup> Röhrich also focused specifically on Anabaptists in Strasbourg in his 1860 *Zeitschrift für die Historische Theologie (Journal of Historical Theology)* article "Zur Geschichte der Strassburgischen Wiedertäufer in den Jahren 1527 bis 1543: aus den Vergichtbüchern und Andern Archivalischen Quellen" ("Towards the History of the Strasbourg Anabaptists in the Years 1527 to 1543: from the Protocol Books and Other Archival Sources.") He divided Strasbourg's Anabaptists into "simple or moderate Anabaptists," "speculative Anabaptists," and "fanatical Anabaptists and prophets" and placed the Josts firmly in the latter category.<sup>2</sup>

Another pastor writing half a century later, Camill Gerbert's *Geschichte der Strassburger Sectenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation, 1524-1534 (History of Sectarianism in Strasbourg in the Reformation Era, 1524-1534)* mentioned the 1530 publication of Ursula's visions and the fact that Martin Bucer considered the Josts mad (and pointed to Lienhard's forced hospitalization

---

<sup>1</sup> Timotheus Wilhelm Röhrich, *Geschichte der Reformation in Elsass, und Besonders in Strasburg, Zweiter Theil* (Strasbourg: Friedrich Karl Heiß, 1832), 92; 103-105.

<sup>2</sup> Timotheus Wilhelm Röhrich, "Zur Geschichte der Strassburgischen Wiedertäufer in den Jahren 1527 bis 1543: aus den Vergichtbüchern und andern archivalischen Quellen" in *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie* 30 (1860): 10; 25.

as evidence).<sup>3</sup> The Josts also featured in the 1905 doctoral dissertation of the Dutch Mennonite historian and theologian Abraham Hulshof, entitled *Geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinden te Strasbourg van 1525 tot 1555 (History of the Anabaptists in Strasbourg from 1525 to 1555)*. Hulshof drew heavily on Röhrich's work, as well as that of Hoffman's biographers Friedrich Otto zur Linden and W. I. Leendertz, to tell the story of Hoffman and his associates. He acknowledged Lienhard and Ursula as the best-known of the Melchiorite prophets and emphasized the high esteem in which Hoffman held their prophecies—or, in Hulshof's words, their “dreams and fantasies”—to the point that he considered them equal to Isaiah and Jeremiah.<sup>4</sup>

More recent surveys of the Reformation in Strasbourg have often said little about the Josts. They appeared only briefly in the Johann Adam's 1922 *Evangelische Kirchengeschichte der Stadt Strassburg bis zur Französischen Revolution (Evangelical Church History of the City of Strasbourg to the French Revolution)*, who noted the publication of Ursula's visions and mentioned visions from Lienhard in 1537 that featured brutal repression of Melchior Hoffman.<sup>5</sup> Miriam Usher Chrisman's 1967 monograph *Strasbourg and the Reform; A Study in the Process of Change* made no mention of them at all and Lorna Jane Abray's 1985 study *The People's Reformation: Magistrates, Clergy, and Commons in Strasbourg, 1500-1598* contains one sentence which mentions the Josts as visionaries with sectarian ties—an appropriate proportion of a study as wide-ranging as Abray's, and evidence that Strasbourg loomed far larger in the Josts' story than the Josts loomed in it.<sup>6</sup> Even some studies focused specifically on Anabaptism and sectarianism in

---

<sup>3</sup> Camill Gerbert, *Geschichte der Strassburger Sectenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation, 1524-1534* (Strasbourg: Heitz & Mündel, 1889), 145.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Hulshof, *Geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinden te Strasbourg van 1525 tot 1555* (Amsterdam: J. Clausen, 1905), 117.

<sup>5</sup> Johann Adam, *Evangelische Kirchengeschichte der Stadt Strassburg bis zur Französischen Revolution* (Strasbourg: J. H. Ed. Heitz, 1922), 204; 211.

<sup>6</sup> Lorna Jane Abray, *The People's Reformation: Magistrates, Clergy, and Commons in Strasbourg, 1500-1598* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 172.

sixteenth-century Strasbourg, such as Robert Kreider's 1955 *Church History* article "The Anabaptists and the Civil Authorities of Strasbourg, 1525-1555" and George Henry Krahn's 1969 dissertation "An Analysis of the Conflict Between the Clergy of the Reformed Church and the Leaders of the Anabaptist Movement in Strasbourg, 1524-1534" make no mention of the Josts at all.

The Josts did, however, make brief appearances in the first edition of George Huntston Williams' *The Radical Reformation*, which acknowledged the impact of their prophecies on Hoffman and on the Melchiorites in the Netherlands.<sup>7</sup> The third edition, drawing primarily from Deppermann's biography of Hoffman, significantly expanded its account of the Josts' prophecies and inexplicably assigned a death date of 1530 to Ursula.<sup>8</sup> Williams also suggested that the Josts had an impact that went beyond Melchiorite circles: he pointed out that Franz Lambert of Avignon, who spent time in Strasbourg while the Josts were active, later wrote positively about the role of prophecy in the church and suggested that he had heard them prophesy.<sup>9</sup> Lambert's definition of prophecy, however, is far more compatible with magisterial formulations of prophecy that defined the role of the prophet primarily as clear and correct interpretation of Scripture rather than predicting the future or communicating new revelations, and it seems unlikely that he would have considered the Josts model prophets.<sup>10</sup> John Derksen's 2002 monograph *From Radicals to Survivors: Strasbourg's Religious Nonconformists over Two Generations, 1525-1570* likewise drew heavily on Deppermann's biography of Hoffman, as well as the printed primary sources

---

<sup>7</sup> George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 263; 293.

<sup>8</sup> See particularly George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth-Century Journal Publishers, 1992), 392-392; 520-522. This death date is impossible since the second edition of Ursula's visions shows her to have been alive at least as late as 1532.

<sup>9</sup> Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 520.

<sup>10</sup> Gerhard Müller, *Franz Lambert von Avignon und die Reformation in Hessen* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1958), 143-145.

found in the four Alsatian volumes in the *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer* series in its treatment of the Josts, which wove them into the story of the Strasbourg Melchiorites from Hoffman's publication of Ursula's visions in 1530 to Lienhard's 1539 recantation.<sup>11</sup>

One of the most fruitful sources of scholarship on the Josts has been biographies of Melchior Hoffman. Hoffman's earliest biographer Barthold Nicolaus Krohn, writing his *Geschichte der Fanatischen und Enthusiastischen Wiedertäufer vornehmlich in Niederdeutschland: Melchior Hofmann und die Secte der Hofmannianer* (*History of the Fanatical and Enthusiastic Anabaptists Primarily in Lower Germany: Melchior Hoffman and the Sect of the Hoffmanians*) in 1758, drew on Martin Bucer's anti-Hoffman polemic and the Dutch Anabaptist Obbe Phillips' recantation for his picture of the Josts, whom he described as out of their wits and a cautionary tale for the church to guard against fanaticism.<sup>12</sup> Hoffman's next biographer, the Dutch Mennonite W.I. Leendertz, writing in 1883, was also dismissive of the Josts. Leendertz not only consulted sources in Strasbourg, but located the copy of the first edition of Ursula's visions housed at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, and his assessment of the visions was less than favourable. It was difficult, he began, when it came to these prophets and prophetesses, "to tell whether they were crazy or not;" to this point, he made note of Lienhard's forced hospitalization.<sup>13</sup> Leendertz deemed it "incomprehensible" that Hoffman should have perceived "God's words" in "these incoherent visions" and emphasized the fact that Hoffman had denied Ursula's ability to

---

<sup>11</sup> John David Derksen, *From Radicals to Survivors: Strasbourg's Religious Nonconformists over Two Generations, 1525-1570* (Goy-Houten, Netherlands: Hes & de Graaf Pub., 2002), 69-70; 116-120; 124; 153.

<sup>12</sup> Barthold Nicolaus Krohn, *Geschichte der Fanatischen und Enthusiastischen Wiedertäufer vornehmlich in Niederdeutschland: Melchior Hofmann und die Secte der Hofmannianer* (Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1758), 272-274.

<sup>13</sup> W.I. Leendertz, *Melchior Hofmann* (Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1883), 172; 280.

interpret these visions in his afterword.<sup>14</sup> He also noted how Hoffman employed Ursula’s visions in service of his celestial flesh Christology.<sup>15</sup>

The next biography of Hoffman—by Friedrich Otto zur Linden—appeared only two years later, in 1885. Zur Linden deemed it unnecessary to worry about the “reality” of Lienhard and Ursula’s visions, but described them as “the unhealthy expression of a raving, turbulent inner life.”<sup>16</sup> Ursula’s visions, which he had read and briefly excerpted, he dismissed as “the senseless monstrosities of a disordered, unrestrained imagination.”<sup>17</sup> Concerning Lienhard, Zur Linden acknowledged that his prominence in sixteenth-century Melchiorite circles was undisputed, but noted just how little had survived in the historical record about the man and his life; the primary facts Zur Linden noted were his forced hospitalization and his identification of Strasbourg as the New Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> Zur Linden also appended the text of a Strasbourg document that listed errors in various Melchiorite works, including Lienhard’s prophecies. Among the errors listed were the identification of Strasbourg as the New Jerusalem and source of the 144, 000 apostles, and the rejection of both Lutheranism and Zwinglianism’s claims to possess the true Gospel.<sup>19</sup> A third book on Hoffman from the same press as both Leendertz and Zur Linden’s biographies appeared in 1954: Peter Kawerau’s *Hoffman als Religiöser Denker (Hoffman as a Religious Thinker)*, which suggested that Hoffman, who saw himself as Elijah, may have considered Lienhard Jost to be Enoch, the second witness of Revelation.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Leendertz, 174; 176.

<sup>15</sup> Leendertz, 257.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Otto zur Linden, *Melchior Hoffman, ein Prophet der Wiedertäufer* (Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1885), 203.

<sup>17</sup> Zur Linden, 205.

<sup>18</sup> Zur Linden, 310-311.

<sup>19</sup> Zur Linden, 449.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Kawerau, *Melchior Hoffman als Religiöser Denker* (Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1954), 108.

Klaus Deppermann's 1979 biography *Melchior Hoffman: Soziale Unruhen und Apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation* (*Melchior Hoffman: Social Unrest and Apocalyptic Visions in the Age of Reformation*) provided an account of the Josts that became the principal secondary source for subsequent historians. In Deppermann's account, the Strasbourg prophets—foremost among them Lienhard and Ursula—played a pivotal role in Hoffman's story: they brought his apocalyptic expectation to new heights and became the source of the violent tendencies within North German and Dutch Melchioritism. Ursula's visions “[showed] a deadly hatred of existing society and a readiness to deploy violence.”<sup>21</sup> On Lienhard's visions—which he, along with Hoffman's previous biographers believed to be lost—Deppermann cited the excerpts found in the *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*: Lienhard considered the Strasbourg reformers “the worst Antichrists since the time of the apostles” and anticipated a coming cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil centered on Strasbourg, the new Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup> Under the influence of the Strasbourg prophets, he concluded, “militant-activist elements entered into Hoffman's previously cautious apocalypticism.”<sup>23</sup> The new fervour the Josts introduced into Hoffman's thought had consequences beyond Strasbourg, as the Josts' Dutch Melchiorite readers translated their apocalyptic hopes into action.<sup>24</sup>

As interest in women and the Reformation grew in the latter half of the twentieth century, Ursula's existence as a female prophet garnered some interest. Miriam Usher Chrisman's 1972 article on “Women and the Reformation in Strasbourg” included a page on Ursula and Barbara Rebstock's prominence as prophets in Melchiorite circles and emphasized the respect they

---

<sup>21</sup> Klaus Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman: Soziale Unruhen und Apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 184.

<sup>22</sup> Deppermann, 184-185.

<sup>23</sup> Deppermann, 193.

<sup>24</sup> Deppermann, 181.

commanded from Hoffman himself as well as ordinary Melchiorites.<sup>25</sup> Lois Barrett's 1992 dissertation on Ursula's visions—the first academic work to focus specifically on Ursula—noted the fact that her visions were the longest extant writing by a sixteenth-century Anabaptist woman. Even more importantly, however, Ursula was not just any Anabaptist woman, but one whose visions and ideas had considerable influence on the founder of one of the primary branches of sixteenth-century Anabaptism.<sup>26</sup> Barrett's dissertation took issue with Deppermann's description of the Josts as fomenters of violence. Instead, she argued, Ursula belonged to an apocalyptic tradition informed by “the Anabaptist-Mennonite ethic of establishing the reign of God nonviolently.”<sup>27</sup> The purpose of her visions, according to Barrett, was not to call believers to arms in order to bring about the new heaven and new earth, but rather to exhort them to wait patiently for God's justice and to follow the narrow way of nonviolence.<sup>28</sup>

Parts of Barrett's dissertation research (including her translations of Ursula's visions) formed the basis of her chapter on Ursula and Barbara Rebstock, the preeminent Strasbourg prophetesses, in the 1996 collection *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*. This chapter in turn formed the basis of the extended discussion of Ursula in Kirsi Stjerna's chapter “Prophets, Visionaries and Martyrs” in her 2009 survey *Women and the Reformation*.<sup>29</sup> Stjerna also drew comparisons between Ursula and the medieval woman mystics who had preceded her, noting in particular Ursula's active pursuit of visions in contrast to medieval

---

<sup>25</sup> Miriam Usher Chrisman, “Women and the Reformation in Strasbourg, 1490-1530.” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 63 (1972): 160.

<sup>26</sup> Lois Barrett, “Wreath of Glory: Ursula's Prophetic Visions in the Context of Reformation and Revolt in Southwestern Germany, 1524-1530” (PhD diss., The Union Institute, 1992), 17.

<sup>27</sup> Barrett, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Barrett, 276-277.

<sup>29</sup> Kirsi Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009): 17-22. Stjerna also extensively cited Miriam Usher Chrisman and Cheryl Nafziger-Leis' chapter in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women* on the Strasbourg publisher Margarethe Prüss who, along with her husband Balthasar Beck, published the 1530 edition of Ursula's visions.

women's self-descriptions as passive receptacles of divine communications.<sup>30</sup> Barrett's research also informed John Derksen's section on Ursula in his 2014 article in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* on "Voice, Leadership, and Influence Among Spiritualist and Anabaptist Women in Strasbourg, 1525-1570," which reiterated her argument that Ursula's visions served to help her readers cope non-violently with the crises of the age in which they lived.<sup>31</sup> My own 2013 MA thesis on Ursula re-examined her visions in light of the contrasting portrayals provided by Deppermann and Barrett and concluded that Ursula's visions remained ambiguous on the subject of violence committed by the elect—they were neither the bloodthirsty text described by Hoffman nor, as Barrett argued, a pacifist text.<sup>32</sup>

Historians of the Melchiorite movement from Krohn to Deppermann and Barrett accepted the claim that the visions of Lienhard Jost were no longer extant. Even as recently as 2015, in her monograph *Polemik in den Schriften Melchior Hoffmans: Inszenierungen Rhetorischer Streitkultur in der Reformationszeit* (*Polemic in Melchior Hoffman's Writings: Productions of the Culture of Rhetorical Debate in the Reformation Era*), Kerstin Lundström repeated the assertion that Lienhard's visions had not survived.<sup>33</sup> In fact, however, a copy of the 1532 edition of Lienhard's prophecies, coupled with a revised and expanded second edition of Ursula's visions, had survived in the Austrian National Library in Vienna. In 2010, Andrew Pettegree and Malcolm Walsby included this edition (listed as NB 17281) in their index of Netherlandish books anterior to 1601, and it has also been listed in the *Verzeichnis der im Deutschen*

---

<sup>30</sup> Stjerna, 19-21.

<sup>31</sup> John Derksen, "Voice, Leadership, and Influence Among Spiritualist and Anabaptist Women in Strasbourg, 1525-1570" in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 88:4 (October 2014): 433.

<sup>32</sup> Christina Moss, "An Examination of the Visions of Ursula Jost in the Context of Early Anabaptism and Late Medieval Christianity" (MA thesis, University of Waterloo, 2013), 70-72.

<sup>33</sup> Kerstin Lundström, *Polemik in den Schriften Melchior Hoffmans: Inszenierungen Rhetorischer Streitkultur in der Reformationszeit* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2015), 215. The Josts do not figure prominently in Lundstrom's monograph.



*Sprachbereich Erschienen Drucke der 16. Jahrhunderts (Index of Sixteenth-Century Printed Works that Appeared in German-Speaking Regions)* as XL 156 and in the *Universal Short Title Catalogue* as USTC 441159.<sup>34</sup>

Jonathan Green brought the survival of Lienhard's prophecies to the attention of Reformation historians in his 2015 *Sixteenth-Century Journal* article "The Lost Book of the Strasbourg Prophets: Orality, Literacy, and Enactment in Lienhard Jost's Visions."<sup>35</sup> In his article, Green examined the development of the illiterate Lienhard's relationship to the written word, from initial suspicion and claims of its inadequacy to an acceptance of its usefulness.<sup>36</sup> Green also examined the myriad ways in which Jost physically enacted his prophecies, from running through the streets naked to rituals he performed with food during his incarceration.<sup>37</sup>

The prophecies of Lienhard Jost, which contained far more biographical details than Ursula's visions, added new details about their lives to the record and corrected some misconceptions that had taken hold in the scholarship on the Josts. Of particular interest was Lienhard's occupation; while Röhrich and Gerbert referred to him as a day labourer, Chrisman, Deppermann, and Barrett identified him as a butcher on the basis of the sources collected in the first two volumes of the Alsace *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*.<sup>38</sup> Lienhard's account of finding work as a woodcutter and Hoffman's description of Ursula as a *bawren weiblein* (little

---

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Pettegree and Malcolm Walsby, *Netherlandish Books: Books Published in the Low Countries and Dutch Books Printed Abroad Before 1601* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 753; Jonathan Green, "The Lost Book of the Strasbourg Prophets: Orality, Literacy, and Enactment in Lienhard Jost's Visions" in *The Sixteenth-Century Journal* 46:2 (Summer 2015): 313 fn 1.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Green, "The Lost Book of the Strasbourg Prophets: Orality, Literacy, and Enactment in Lienhard Jost's Visions" in *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 46:2 (Summer 2015): 313-329.

<sup>36</sup> Green, 326-329.

<sup>37</sup> Green, 323-326.

<sup>38</sup> Röhrich, *Reformation*, 95; Gerbert, 145; Chrisman, "Women," 158; Deppermann, 179; Lois Yvonne Barrett, "Ursula Jost and Barbara Rebstock of Strasbourg" in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*, edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 274.

peasant's wife) suggest that the earlier scholarship more accurately captured his work, and the butcher referred to in the *QGT* was in fact a different man named Lienhard.<sup>39</sup> Even more significantly, many of the prophecies attributed to Lienhard by most modern scholars (chiefly those concerning Strasbourg as the New Jerusalem and the 144, 000 witnesses) on the basis of Strasbourg's archival sources are derived not from Lienhard's prophecies themselves, but from Melchior Hoffman's foreword to his prophecies. In light of this important and, until recently, unexamined source, the time is ripe for a reappraisal of Lienhard and Ursula's prophetic careers.

### **The Scope of This Study**

Methodologically, this study will allow the Josts to speak for themselves and tell their own story wherever possible, though the scant biographical details scattered in Strasbourg's archives and gathered, for the most part, in the *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer* have also been incorporated where possible. The more autobiographical nature of Lienhard's account facilitates the construction of a much more complete timeline of the Josts' early ministry than could be reconstructed from Ursula's visions alone. Unfortunately, the people with whom Lienhard interacted left no surviving traces of their encounters with him, which has made it difficult to corroborate aspects of Lienhard's account. However, while its accuracy in every particular cannot be proven, it is reasonable to assume that Lienhard's account truthfully described his own perceptions and memories of his prophetic ministry from 1522 to 1532. He already faced reprisals from the civil authorities—whom he could not win over despite his best efforts—for his

---

<sup>39</sup> Lienhard Jost, *Ein Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey des Linhart Josten van Stroßburg*, edited by Melchior Hoffman (Deventer: Albert Paffraet, 1532), fol. B1r; Melchior Hoffman, foreword to Ursula Jost, *Eyn Wore Prophetin zu disser Letzsten Zeitt*, edited by Melchior Hoffman (Deventer: Albert Paffraet, 1532), fol. F3v. For a reference to the other Lienhard, see Manfred Krebs and Hans Georg Rott (eds), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer. Vol. 8. Elsass II. Teil: Stadt Straßburg 1533-1535* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1960), 453.

attempts to speak publicly on God's behalf. In an age in which every theological question potentially carried eternal weight, to lie about messages he claimed to have received from God would have been to risk divine as well as temporal censure. As to the accuracy of his memories several years after the fact, Lienhard's own account addresses this objection: parts of his story and message were recorded at the time, and he worked diligently to complete that record as best he could.<sup>40</sup>

The question of the Josts' mental stability, which preoccupied so many of the nineteenth and twentieth-century historians cited above, is beyond the scope of this study. The diagnosis of a contemporary requires extensive testing and ongoing conversations with the subject, and can only be performed after years of specialized training; those who lived in the past and can no longer answer follow-up questions or submit to medical tests simply cannot be diagnosed at all, at least with any certainty. Nor is the purpose of this study to ascertain the legitimacy of the Josts' visions and prophecies as a form of divine revelation; this is a theological question, not a historical one. Of far greater historical interest is the language the Josts themselves and their contemporaries used to describe their visions—whether they used the language of divine revelation, evil, or madness. This study will elucidate how the Josts understood themselves and how their contemporaries understood them.

The first two chapters of this dissertation will tell the story of the Josts, using their visions and prophecies as well as the available external evidence. The first of the two will span the period from the beginning of Lienhard's ministry to the year 1529, when Melchior Hoffman arrived in Strasbourg. The second chapter will discuss the Jost's partnership with Hoffman from 1530 to Lienhard's reconciliation with Strasbourg's official church in 1539, after Ursula had died

---

<sup>40</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F1v.

and he had remarried. The Josts' partnership with Hoffman is the pivotal event of their lives and ministry. As illiterate peasants, they were unable to disseminate their ideas widely without support. Hoffman provided that support in abundance—he considered their visions not only valuable, but co-equal with Scripture. He provided the practical assistance required for the Josts to commit their visions and prophecies to writing and create a definitive edition, and he enthusiastically disseminated their visions to his followers, who proved a ready audience. Hoffman not only expanded the Josts' reach beyond Strasbourg, he also greatly increased their notoriety within their own hometown; there are no surviving archival records of the Josts' existence anterior to 1530, and most references to them in the records of the *Wiedertäuferherren* and the writings of the city's reformers are directly linked to their publications.

The next chapter examines the religious milieu of late medieval Strasbourg, where Lienhard and Ursula most likely came of age and began to form and articulate their faith. Since the Josts were illiterate and non-elite, this chapter focuses particularly on non-textual and publicly available aspects of religiosity. This includes city-wide religious rituals, some of which were common throughout Catholic Europe (such as Holy Week processions) and others of which were particular to Strasbourg (such as an annual procession on St. Luke's Day, begun in 1356 after an earthquake devastated the Lower Rhine). It surveys the establishment of new religious orders and their relationship to the community, popular expressions of lay piety, and medieval heterodox communities in Strasbourg. It also examines religious instruction through late medieval preaching, which flourished particularly in Strasbourg during the career of Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg, and through works of religious art, which could be seen throughout Strasbourg's cathedral and the rest of the city's churches.

The subsequent chapter analyzes the political and religious context in which the Josts began their prophetic ministries. It examines the relationships between Strasbourg's reformers, magistrates, and religious dissidents (among them the Josts) and the ways in which they sought to achieve their competing goals, with varying degrees of success. The Josts' relationships with both Strasbourg's magistrates and reformers were complex, marked alternately by hostility (including, most notably, Lienhard's forced hospitalization at the outset of his ministry) and attempts at rapprochement. Ultimately, however, the magistrates and reformers successfully achieved their goals in a way that the Josts and their fellow dissidents did not. Instead of winning the city's civil and religious authorities over to his side, Lienhard ultimately capitulated and returned to the umbrella of the city's official church in 1539.

The penultimate chapter addresses the widespread apocalyptic anxieties of the Reformation era, which persisted across confessional lines and were fuelled by both religious debates and conflicts and political developments, from the Peasants' War to the rise of the Ottoman Turks. These anxieties were not only reflected in the contents of the Josts' visions and prophecies (and indeed in their very existence), they also drove the ministry of the Josts' chief supporter, Melchior Hoffman. While the Josts' comparative unfamiliarity with the biblical texts resulted in apocalyptic ideas and schemata that lacked the sophistication and biblical framework of those espoused by Luther or even Hoffman, they provide an example of the prevalence of apocalyptic expectation at every level of society. This expectation, moreover, was cause not for fear but for hope; the Josts expected God to intervene powerfully and imminently in history in order to set the world to rights and vindicate the cause of the oppressed.

The final chapter examines the gendered dimensions of the Josts' lives and writings, the ways in which they were shaped by their social status, and the intersection of these two facets of

identity. The Josts benefitted from a medieval mystical and prophetic tradition that was marked by cross-gender partnerships (including those of Francis and Clare of Assisi and Marie of Oignies and Jacques of Vitry). As many female mystics had done in the later Middle Ages, the Josts claimed the authority to speak publicly as a result of the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit rather than any formal rank in the ecclesiastical or political hierarchies of the day. Lienhard and Ursula exhibited many similarities and drew from their shared identity as members of the lower class, but the differences between them, though few, are intriguing and of a potentially gendered nature. The Josts' visions and prophecies provide a rare opportunity to hear directly (or as nearly so as possible) from an illiterate sixteenth-century man and woman, embroiled in the upheaval of the Reformations and formulating and disseminating their own ideas about God and society. This dissertation will draw out the most complete picture available to date of those ideas and the couple who espoused them.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE JOSTS BEFORE MELCHIOR HOFFMAN, 1522-1529

The visions and prophecies of Lienhard and Ursula Jost were preserved for posterity in large part due to the efforts of Melchior Hoffman, and it is as associates (or even sometimes as followers) of Hoffman that the Josts are most commonly remembered. However, the majority of their experiences with direct revelation occurred prior to Hoffman's arrival in Strasbourg or even the establishment of a permanent separatist Anabaptist community in the city.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, although Hoffman served as editor and scribe for the Josts, their voices are clearly distinct from both Hoffman (who authored the forewords to their prophecies) and from each other, which suggests that he used a light editorial touch and that the visions, particularly those from 1529 and earlier, are a substantially reliable source for the beliefs the Josts held independent of Hoffman's influence. The Josts' pre-1529 visions and prophecies showcase their grievances with the contemporary state of affairs and their hopes for change and renewal. Lienhard and Ursula took issue with the oppression of the poor at the hands of the wealthy—particularly wealthy clergymen—and with numerous Catholic practices, including the Mass and clerical celibacy. They expected God to come to the defense of the oppressed and bring about justice promptly, and Lienhard in particular called Strasbourg's religious and political leaders to join God in the restoration of justice, lest they suffer his wrath. At a time when people of all genders and social strata across Western Europe were in the process of formulating and re-evaluating their beliefs about God, the Church, and society, the visions of Lienhard and Ursula Jost provide insight into how one illiterate peasant couple responded to the social and religious changes and anxieties of their era.

---

<sup>41</sup> Deppermann dates this to 1526, by which point nearly all of contents of Lienhard's prophetic autobiography had already taken place and Ursula had experienced more than half of her visions. Deppermann, 158.

## Lienhard's Visions Begin

Lienhard's visions began in December 1522. Lienhard worked as a woodcutter, and he sometimes left the city of Strasbourg to work for days at a time. According to his account, in the week before Christmas, a citizen of Strasbourg by the name of Pox Hans had commissioned him to cut wood, and he had gone to the village of Hanau, a short distance from Strasbourg, to do so.<sup>42</sup> As he cut wood in Hanau, a great earthquake shook Strasbourg and its environs—the magnitude of the earthquake was such that Lienhard expected many others to remember it ten years later—and made a significant impression on Lienhard.<sup>43</sup> The possibility of cataclysmic events greatly troubled him—he had heard rumours of an impending flood—and so he prayed and asked God for guidance, that He might reveal His will to His people and protect them from danger; after all, God had never left His people without witnesses to God's will and purposes.<sup>44</sup>

This prayer became a catalyst for a series of prophetic revelations that upended Lienhard's life. That same night, he fell asleep "filled with the love of God," and, in his sleep, he heard another voice cry out to God. The voice lamented that many did not have access to God's good gifts. God had created all people, and He had given them good lands, which they were meant to work in order to provide for their needs. The reality of the situation, however, fell far short of God's ideal. Wealthy men oppressed the poor, and forced them to work long and hard for inadequate resources, on the very lands God had created for them. Even as the poor barely eked out a living, the wealthy accumulated a surplus. They filled their storehouses and reveled in

---

<sup>42</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1r. Jonathan Green has identified the likely location of Hanau as modern-day Honau in Rheinau, Germany. See Green, "Lost Book of the Strasbourg Prophets," 317.

<sup>43</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1r.

<sup>44</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1r.



their excess, boasting “as though [God] were not God.”<sup>45</sup> The voice cried out for God to have mercy and to deliver the poor from the lashes of their oppressors. In response, another voice—God’s—urged the first speaker: “Go forward, I am with you, and you will receive great power. For I will break their vaults and frustrate their plans.”<sup>46</sup>

At the sound of God’s voice, Lienhard awoke, and the glory of the Lord surrounded him. He then received a message from God, which he was to transmit to Strasbourg’s rulers, and which they in turn were to transmit to the other imperial cities. Whereas the cities had previously greedily accumulated wealth and goods, God now called them to take up “the banner of godly righteousness and mercy, on which is inscribed the eternal Son, the Spirit with His righteous ones, and the Father of mercy.”<sup>47</sup> Once the lords had raised up the banner of godly righteousness, they were to call for their bishop and urge him to do the same and to carry the banner of godly righteousness into his other holdings. If the bishop obeyed and displayed godly righteousness, his flock would recognize him as a spiritual authority, but if he refused he would lose his vestments—the outer symbol of his authority—and any honour before God and men.<sup>48</sup>

When he first heard this message, Lienhard did not seem to feel compelled to relay it immediately. Instead, he returned to his work and cut wood until Christmas Eve. He found himself unable to make merry during the holidays, however, until he had passed the message on to Strasbourg’s lords. By his account, he went to “Master Phillips, the burgomeister” a few days later, on St. John’s day (27 December) and urged him to heed the command of God and to take up the banner of godly righteousness, along with the rest of Strasbourg’s rulers. Master Phillips was less than receptive to Lienhard’s message, but he sent him on to make his case to “Conrad

---

<sup>45</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B1r-B1v.

<sup>46</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1v.

<sup>47</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1v.

<sup>48</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1v.

Thomsen the burgomeister.” Conrad Thomsen, in turn, told him to go to the city scribe, who could write his message down. Lienhard viewed his suggestion with skepticism, however, and simply returned home instead.<sup>49</sup>

Lienhard’s initial attempts at spreading his prophecies were less successful than he had hoped, but his experiences of divine revelation only intensified. A few days later, on the feast day of St. Thomas of Canterbury, he set out again to cut wood. As he had earlier, he experienced cataclysmic weather, this time a wind so powerful that Lienhard believed it had cracked the earth open. Unlike the earthquake, however, this wind may only have been a vision, as Lienhard did not appeal to any witnesses and noted that, when he attempted to survey the damage, he found none.<sup>50</sup> He returned to his woodcutting, but not for long. His axes broke, and he felt God say to him that, instead of cutting wood, his new task was to cut open the shrine, in which God had hidden His elect, and allow the truth to flow out over the world.<sup>51</sup>

Once again, God urged Lienhard to speak to Strasbourg’s political leaders, and once again Lienhard left his work and returned to Strasbourg to deliver his prophecy. On his return journey to Strasbourg, he continued to hear divine instructions in conjunction with prophetic revelations. As he crossed the water in his boat, God warned him of a coming flood and commanded him to tie up his boat as high as possible, and, as he walked the rest of the way to the city, God commanded him to throw away a brand-new pair of gloves, on the grounds that another person would need them more than Lienhard did.<sup>52</sup> He began to prophesy to the people he encountered as soon as he reached the city, including a group of riders and a group of three lepers. “See dear brothers,” he announced, “this is the city from which the banner of all truth will

---

<sup>49</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B2r.

<sup>50</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B2r.

<sup>51</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B2r.

<sup>52</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B2r-B2v.

go out, that is to say where you are coming from. This was proclaimed to me by God in the little village of Hanau.”<sup>53</sup>

Once he reached his home, he sent for his godfather, a city councillor whom he called Herrto Ludwig, using Ursula and their neighbour, Orthels Jacob, as intermediaries. He explained the divine messages he had received thus far to Ludwig and requested his assistance in order that he might deliver his message to the whole city council. Herrto Ludwig was agreeable and, on 30 December, he accompanied Lienhard to the city hall so that he could deliver his prophecies.<sup>54</sup> The lords of the city, however, were not as eager to hear his message as Lienhard had hoped, and, rather than listen to it in its entirety, they sent him to the city scribe. Lienhard was disappointed, since he felt that he could far better convey his prophecy extemporaneously, but he settled for dictation and added that the lords of the city should send for him if they had any questions. They did not.

Lienhard’s next foray into public prophecy, however, made it impossible for the city council to ignore him. The night after he dictated his message to the city scribe, he felt the glory of the Lord compel him to throw off his clothes, to run through the streets of Strasbourg naked, and to ring the *mord glock*, a silver bell in the Strasbourg cathedral used to warn the people of Strasbourg of crisis or sedition.<sup>55</sup> He informed Ursula of God’s rather odd orders, left his house, and ran naked into the night, shouting the following words:

Murder upon murder! The child in its mother’s womb must and shall be terrified before the word of the Lord comes to pass. Murder once again! If the rulers and lords only knew that their princely clothes will be removed from them before God and the world, that they might seek God again, they would all cry along with me: murder upon murder! But after this the child in its mother’s

---

<sup>53</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B2v.

<sup>54</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B2v.

<sup>55</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B3r. On the *mord glock*, see Philippe André Grandidier, *Essais Topographiques et Historiques sur l’Église Cathédrale de Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: Levrault, 1782), 242-243.

womb will rejoice again and there will be much peace for all who have been sad.<sup>56</sup>

Lienhard's shouts soon attracted the attention of his neighbours. Alarmed, they restrained him and brought him to Herrto Ludwig. Even for Lienhard's previously supportive godfather, public nudity was a bridge too far, and he committed Lienhard to the city hospital, where he spent the next two months.<sup>57</sup>

### **Lienhard's Incarceration**

The civic authorities committed Lienhard to the hospital because they considered him to be out of his wits, but, as was the case with most responses to perceived mental illness in premodern Europe, it appears that they sought merely to contain him rather than to offer any sort of treatment, and he most likely shared accommodations with people suffering from a variety of ailments.<sup>58</sup> It is possible that he was kept in the hospice for epileptics located at the former site of Strasbourg's synagogue, though Jacques Hatt's assertion that those deemed mad were kept in chains there does not appear to accurately reflect Lienhard's experience.<sup>59</sup> In a 1533 polemical tract, the Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer suggested that the hospital workers had used restraints on Lienhard, but Bucer did not arrive in Strasbourg until after Lienhard's release, and Lienhard's own account suggests that he had some freedom of motion within the hospital—he went out to meet the caretaker, and even visited the women's chamber on one occasion.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B3r.

<sup>57</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B3r.

<sup>58</sup> For a brief overview of premodern asylums in Germany, see Christina Vanja, "Madhouses, Children's Wards, and Clinics: The Development of Insane Asylums in Germany" in *Institutions of Confinement: Hospitals, Asylums, and Prisons in Western Europe and North America, 1500-1950* edited by Norbert Finzsch and Robert Jütte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 118-119.

<sup>59</sup> Jacques Hatt, *Une Ville du XVe Siècle: Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: Collection Historique de la Vie en Alsace, 1929), 364.

<sup>60</sup> Martin Bucer, "Handlung in dem Offentlichen Gesprech zu Straßburg Jungst im Synodo Gehalten Gegen Melchior Hoffman," in *Martin Bucer's Deutsche Schriften Band 5: Straßburg und Münster in Kampf um den Rechten Glauben*,

Nevertheless, his confinement, and the concomitant dismissal of his prophecies as lunacy, distressed Lienhard. He particularly despaired when he was briefly moved from the hospital to a more restrictive asylum, called the *betzen huesslein*; when he sensed the presence of the glory of the Lord in the *betzen huesslein*, he protested. “What do you want to work through me, such a poor and despised creature? For I have been placed here so that no one can see or hear me, and I am utterly despised.”<sup>61</sup>

In fact, Lienhard did find an audience even during his incarceration, although the Spirit of the Lord warned him that his prophecies might not always penetrate their defenses. “Many will hear you and yet not hear, and many will see you and yet not see,” he cautioned.<sup>62</sup> The two months Lienhard spent in the hospital (January and February 1523) became the most fruitful period of his prophetic ministry—seventeen of the twenty-three chapters in his account of his prophecies deal with revelations he received during his incarceration. Although he could not force them to accept or understand his prophecies, Lienhard’s fellow inmates were quite literally a captive audience, and he appealed to at least one of them (an Erasmus Lentz) to confirm parts of his account.<sup>63</sup> He also shared parts of his prophecies with the hospital staff and with the hospital preacher, a Lord Peter, and he even sent for two Strasbourg preachers, who might not otherwise have visited the hospital at all, to come and judge the contents of his visions.<sup>64</sup> With the assistance of his friend Veith Schelthamer, who had come to visit him, he even found a preacher who agreed to record Lienhard’s prophecies to that point.<sup>65</sup>

---

1532-1534, edited by Robert Stupperich et al. (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1978), 53; Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C3v; D1r.

<sup>61</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B4r-B4v.

<sup>62</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B4v.

<sup>63</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B4r-B4v.

<sup>64</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C3r; D1r.

<sup>65</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C3r.

As Jonathan Green has demonstrated, Lienhard's prophecies were not merely a series of words, but performances.<sup>66</sup> God called him not only to speak, but to physically enact his prophecies in order to serve as an object lesson for his audience. This began before his incarceration, when he ran through the streets of Strasbourg naked, but it continued and even intensified during his stay in the hospital. He used even his food and drink, some of the only objects provided to him, for his prophetic performances. Near the beginning of his hospitalization, for instance, he attempted to eat a bowl of soup only to find that it had turned to bitter gall in his mouth. Lienhard associated the bitter taste of the soup with the bitter death that came from attendance at idolatrous masses. The people had come to seek life, but had found its opposite instead. He then felt God urge him to throw the bowl of soup on the floor and to break it, as a sign that God would no longer be constrained by false and idolatrous masses.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, he chewed three mouthfuls of bread, which also tasted like gall. He did not understand the meaning of this at the time, but he gave the chewed mouthfuls of bread to his neighbour, named Marczolff, for safekeeping, until such a time as he received an interpretation.<sup>68</sup> Weeks later, after a mouthful of cake also turned to gall in Lienhard's mouth, he felt the Spirit of God prod him to take the three mouthfuls of bread back from his neighbour and to use them alongside the mouthful of cake as an object lesson. The first mouthful represented the evils of religious celibacy, the second mouthful greed and tyranny, the third mouthful the number of years God's sheep had been led astray, and the fourth mouthful the coming damnation of those who would not heed the word of God.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Green, 322-326.

<sup>67</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B4r.

<sup>68</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B4r.

<sup>69</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. D1v-D2r.

Lienhard also found other ways to enact his prophetic messages. On one occasion, the glory of the Lord commanded him to lie on his back, and, when he attempted to move his limbs, he found himself completely immobilized. Alarmed, he called out to God and heard the following in response. “See what you [humans] are, and what you can do on the earth without Me. You place all hope and confidence and action and capability on yourselves, and forget God your Father, who alone has all power.”<sup>70</sup> On another occasion, he took an even bolder action, which could not fail but attract attention from the hospital’s overseer. A painting of “the rulers of the world” was hung on the wall, and the glory of the Lord compelled Lienhard to tear it down, as a sign that “thus must the images and the kingdom of men be destroyed, for God will raise up the true sign of men.”<sup>71</sup>

In his most extended act of prophetic performance, Lienhard performed his own version of a mass in front of his rather incredulous fellow inmates. He called on them to proclaim the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, to ponder His broken body and shed blood, and to rejoice in the fact that he had rescued them from damnation.<sup>72</sup> However, he also included clear warnings against idolatry, which he considered to be rampant in Catholic masses. “As you eat this bread, you should not pray to stone and wood,” he clarified, “but you should bow before your rulers, who have been established for you by God.”<sup>73</sup> Finally, he admonished them to mirror God, not the world, and to act mercifully. His audience seemed unconvinced by his words, and so he attempted to persuade them by performing a miracle. He lifted the jug of wine above his head and turned it upside down, and not a drop fell out. This only served to convince them that Lienhard had received his power from the devil, and so another unusual occurrence followed; all

---

<sup>70</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B4v.

<sup>71</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. D2r.

<sup>72</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E1r.

<sup>73</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E1v.

the room's inhabitants found themselves grief-stricken for three days without respite, as their mood inexplicably matched Lienhard's. Finally, Lienhard concluded his prophetic performance by taking the jug of wine and spilling it onto his bed. The wine that slowly seeped through the mattress represented a future in which peace and abundance would fill the earth.<sup>74</sup>

The actions Lienhard performed as part of his prophetic ministry, while certainly remarkable, were not entirely without precedent, but rather part of a long Judeo-Christian tradition of prophecy as a public performance, designed not only to share the word of the Lord, but also to communicate His message to the people visually through the use of conspicuous physical displays and object lessons. Striking stories of prophetic displays are commonplace in the Old Testament. The prophet Hosea, for instance, married a prostitute named Gomer as an object lesson of Israel's unfaithfulness to God, while the prophet Ezekiel lay on his left side for 390 days in order to symbolically bear the sin of the people of Israel, and then on his right side for a further 40 days in order to symbolically bear the sin of the people of Judah.<sup>75</sup> The prophet Jeremiah, for his part, made and wore a yoke. The yoke was symbolic of Israel's fate after its conquest by Babylon. God, according to Jeremiah, had sent the Babylonians as an object of his wrath against Israel and expected the Israelites to submit themselves to the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar for a time in order that they might be restored to their former position.<sup>76</sup>

It was Isaiah's actions, however, that bore the most similarity to Lienhard's, since both men engaged in public nudity as a prophetic sign. In Isaiah 20, God commanded Isaiah to remove the sackcloth and ashes he had previously worn to prophesy and instead to prophesy completely naked for a period of three years as a portent of God's impending judgment on Egypt

---

<sup>74</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E1v-E2r.

<sup>75</sup> Hosea 1:2-3; Ezekiel 4:4-8.

<sup>76</sup> Jeremiah 27:2-8.



and as a sign of the futility of attempting to trust in Egypt's armies instead of God for protection.

The author reported God's words at the end of Isaiah's demonstration thus:

“Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush, so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared—to Egypt's shame. Those who trusted in Cush and boasted in Egypt will be dismayed and put to shame. In that day the people who live on this coast will say, ‘See what has happened to those we relied on, those we fled to for help and deliverance from the king of Assyria! How then can we escape?’”<sup>77</sup>

Medieval Christians also occasionally behaved publicly in strange ways as a means showcasing their holiness or of making a statement at God's command. The thirteenth-century Franciscan tertiary Angela of Foligno is said to have ingested the water in which she bathed lepers, while the fourteenth-century Dominican tertiary Catherine of Siena reportedly drank pus directly from the wounds of those to whom she tended. In both cases, the women's hagiographers associated their behaviours with the act of symbolically taking on another's sin, as Jesus had done for the world on the cross.<sup>78</sup> The life of Saint Francis of Assisi, too, was marked by occasional odd public displays. Francis was the son of Pietro de Bernardone, a wealthy Italian merchant. However, as a young man, he experienced a religious awakening and consequently decided to reject the wealth and opulence to which he had been born and to live a life of voluntary poverty instead. He made a public display of his rejection of his parents and his upbringing by casting off his clothing before the Bishop of Assisi, in view of all. This incident had a powerful hold on the imaginations of medieval Christians; it was not only recounted in many of St. Francis' *vitae*, but also became the subject of several different artistic depictions of

---

<sup>77</sup> Isaiah 20:1-6.

<sup>78</sup> Kristine Ibsen. *Women's Autobiography in Colonial Spanish America* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999), 80.

the life of Francis in late medieval and Renaissance-era European churches and chapels, which made the story accessible to illiterate folks like the Josts as well as Europe's elites.<sup>79</sup>

Elements of Lienhard's account suggest that he may have, consciously or unconsciously, drawn inspiration from the life of St. Francis of Assisi. It is true that he never mentioned Francis by name and he frequently derided the Catholic mass as idolatrous and clerical celibacy as an abomination. Even so, however, there are some striking points of similarity between the life of the Strasbourg prophet and that of the Italian mendicant. Lienhard's motivation for running around Strasbourg naked bears a strong resemblance to the Francis' motivation for disrobing in front of his father and the bishop of Assisi. For both men, the casting off of clothing represented an emphatic rejection of wealth and opulence. In Francis' case, he rejected the wealth and opulence to which he had been born and which his family still enjoyed. In Lienhard's case, though he himself was not endowed with much wealth to cast off, he physically enacted the spiritual renunciation he expected from Strasbourg's ruling class. He called them to cast off their lordly clothing, in all its opulence, and to turn to God and seek him instead. Another event that took place during Lienhard's incarceration also mirrored that of St. Francis: in pondering the wounds of Christ, He received a physical reminder of these wounds on his right foot, which calls to mind Francis' reception of the stigmata, a famous event that inspired many imitators—particularly women—well into the seventeenth century.<sup>80</sup>

One of the principal themes of Lienhard's prophecies during his incarceration was lament. He grieved the past and the current state of affairs deeply; God's people had been misled

---

<sup>79</sup> See Julian Gardner, "A Minor Episode of Public Disorder in Assisi: Francis renounces his Inheritance." *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 68:2 (2005): 275-285.

<sup>80</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E1v-E2r. On the stigmata in late medieval and early modern mysticism, see Stephen Haliczer, *Between Exaltation and Infamy: Female Mystics in the Golden Age of Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

by false teachers and oppressed by greedy rulers, both lay and ecclesiastical, and they were left physically and spiritually vulnerable as a result. In chapter eight of his prophecies, he spoke of a new Ark, or house of God, which had first been established by Noah and his children after the flood. In this Ark, the children of God lived and worked and learned to follow God, and their physical and spiritual needs were met. In time, however, false teachers arose who did not wish to follow God's commands. Instead, they followed new ungodly commands (such as tonsuring their heads), and they sought in their greed to enrich themselves at the expense of the children of God.<sup>81</sup> He returned to this theme again, in an extended metaphor on wolves. When God first created wolves, the wolves did His bidding, and he gave them great strength in order to enable them to keep the world safe from predators (the wolves themselves were not predators since, by Lienhard's account, they ate only worms and grass when God first created them.) In time, however, the wolves became haughty and turned against God. They used their power to subdue people and livestock, and they abandoned vegetarianism and filled their bellies with anything that seemed good to them, whether oxen or sheep or people.<sup>82</sup> The wolves appear to represent lay and ecclesiastical leaders, who had been given great power by God, but who abused it and satisfied their greed at the expense of those God had placed in their charge.

Lienhard's laments were specific as well as general, and his prophetic utterances took aim against specific ways in which the people of God had been taken advantage of and misled. When he heard church bells calling people to worship, the sound brought him great pain. These bells, he cried out, were rung to the detriment of God's flock, and God Himself would bring an end to their peals so that his sheep might have rest and no longer be called at all hours to false modes of worship. "I have lost my Lord," he further called out. "They crucify Him in their

---

<sup>81</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C1r-C2r.

<sup>82</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C3v-C4r.

idolatrous masses!”<sup>83</sup> He further took issue with the use of holy water—why should God’s people bless water and salt, when God had blessed the whole earth—and he lamented the fact that false leaders had obscured God’s true Word and elevated false writings in its place.<sup>84</sup> When another man asked him to forgive his sins, Lienhard heard the following divine response: “you should not ask a man to forgive your sin, but rather the Heavenly Father, against Whom you sinned.”<sup>85</sup> Though he did not mention priests directly, his response to the incident undermined the rationale behind the sacrament of confession. Finally, he took aim against the practice of clerical celibacy, which he considered an abomination. God had intended humans to marry, and yet in their arrogance many entered cloisters and forfeited the grace God had given them. Those who neglected the grace of marriage and instead lived celibate harms did great harm to Christ, and they brought eventual ruin on themselves.<sup>86</sup>

Again and again the prince of darkness and his followers had fought back. They had even fought against Christ Himself during his time on earth and, by the ninety-ninth year after his birth (a figure Lienhard cited without explanation), they had begun again to harm Christ with lies and abandon His truth.<sup>87</sup> God’s people no longer had to be misled by false teachers, however, because the shrine had been opened again, ushering in a new era of divine revelation. God had revealed His truth to Lienhard, that those who had ears to hear and eyes to see might heed it. Lienhard also prophesied that this new age of revelation would come to full fruition within a decade. After he heard God inform Him that his prophetic ministry would be an uphill climb, since many would not truly hear him, he also heard the following promise.

You have a daughter named Elizabeth. When she is fourteen years old the

---

<sup>83</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B3v-B4r.

<sup>84</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C3r.

<sup>85</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C2v.

<sup>86</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C4v.

<sup>87</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C1r.

people will see me in my brilliance and will recognise great wonders, and at the same time I will turn the sorrows of all people into joy. For when I awakened you at Hanau on the Rhine, in the twenty-second year, My heart had mercy on for the people of Israel.<sup>88</sup>

The ultimate purpose of this new age of divine revelation was to usher in an era of peace and joy, in which all people recognized God's power and knew His truth.

Before this new age of peace could unfold, however, Lienhard prophesied that difficult times still lay ahead. He warned of coming hunger and scarcity, and he urged the pious Christians of Strasbourg to gather provisions and to arm themselves in order to guard the city from enemies of God's truth who might attempt to infiltrate it.<sup>89</sup> He even had a vision that the Kaiser and the Pope led a charge against Strasbourg.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, he prophesied that the people of God would ultimately emerge victorious. They would renew the whole earth, and bring it under the banner of godly righteousness.<sup>91</sup>

Lienhard prophesied that the oppressed would at last receive justice, and that their rulers would face God's judgment if they did not begin to govern fairly. When he first arrived in the hospital, he issued a call to arms against oppressive priests. "Strike dead, strike dead, across the width of the earth, all priests who have ruled contrary to God and His sheep out of a desire for silver and gold. Well, up, dear brothers! We want to go to them! Take your swords, sticks, and clubs, we want to be up."<sup>92</sup> He then felt God dampen his zeal a little and tell him to let the corrupt priests be a little while longer, but there was no doubt in his mind that God's plan to institute justice was not far off. The prince of darkness had long controlled the imperial cities, but God had now begun to thwart him, and He promised to uproot and send away the wild

---

<sup>88</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B4v.

<sup>89</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. D2v.

<sup>90</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. D4r.

<sup>91</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. D2v-D3r.

<sup>92</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B3r-B3v.

hornets, or oppressive rulers and false teachers, who had infiltrated the house of Israel, God's true church.<sup>93</sup> He also particularly singled out the cities, churches, and monasteries who had refused to heed the cry of the poor and had kept their full coffers to themselves; God would protect the cities who opened their doors and storehouses to the poor and ill, but the selfish cities, churches, and monasteries would be destroyed in full view of the world.<sup>94</sup>

To institute God's will on earth required more than justice for the poor, however. It also required right worship, and Lienhard's prophecies dealt extensively with the proper way to observe the mass/Lord's Supper.

You shall guard yourselves lest you eat unworthily the bread of the Supper, which was blessed through the word of the gospel and the Lord's Supper, but rather you shall share it also with others present, who are hungry and thirsty, and further more at eight or nine o'clock, when the little sheep are coming from their rest, you shall share with them the holy Gospel and teach them all the doctrines of the faith and hope, and to trust in Me alone.<sup>95</sup>

He returned to this topic again, with a lengthy list of instructions for men who desired to officiate the Last Supper. The worthy man who administered the Lord's Supper was to have hair drenched with love for God and neighbour and a heart bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ. He was to carry in his heart the memory of all the prophets who had come before him, from Noah onward, and he was to wear the prophets' robes of innocence, in order that he might be above reproach and prove himself trustworthy to his flock. He needed a tongue that spoke righteousness, a hatred for unrighteousness, and sharp eyes that saw injustice, and finally, in obedience with God's command, he had to be married.<sup>96</sup> These, in Lienhard's view, were characteristics of a good

---

<sup>93</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C1r; C2r.

<sup>94</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. D3r-D4r.

<sup>95</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C3r.

<sup>96</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. D4r-D4v.

bishop (along with an allegiance to the banner of godly righteousness and a willingness to bring about justice and to teach the idle to work and give rest to the weary.)<sup>97</sup>

It is unclear whether the things that Lienhard said and did during his incarceration had much of a lasting impact on anyone other than himself, but the two-month period helped him to clarify his own views, and to elaborate on the prophecies he had tried to deliver to the lords of Strasbourg before his hospitalization. He lamented the state of the world in which he lived and the corrupt Church that governed it, and he imagined what the world and the Church might look like at their best. With his release, however, the divine revelations ceased abruptly, and he had a respite from prophecy for two and a half years, in which time his wife Ursula began to take up the prophetic mantle.

### **Ursula's Visions Begin**

While many, or even most, of the people Lienhard encountered doubted the legitimacy of his visions and prophecies, Ursula did not. In fact, she eventually became convinced that she also wished to experience spiritual revelations directly. And so, at some point after Lienhard's release from the hospital, she and Lienhard both began to pray earnestly that Ursula, too, would see the wonders of God for herself.<sup>98</sup> In 1524, her prayer was answered, although her experiences of direct revelation differed somewhat from Lienhard's. Whereas Lienhard primarily heard messages from God, which he felt compelled to relay to others through words and actions, Ursula saw visions. At times these visions were accompanied by an interpretation, but far more often the images simply stood alone, to be interpreted at a later date. Like Lienhard, Ursula did

---

<sup>97</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E1r.

<sup>98</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. G1v.

not experience divine revelation constantly, but rather in bursts. Her first active visionary period, from the fall of 1524 to the fall of 1525, was her most fruitful, with a total of sixty-four visions.

In her first vision, Ursula experienced the glory of the Lord (as she, like Lienhard, called the Holy Spirit) as brilliant light, which turned into a wreath and rested itself on her head before it disappeared.<sup>99</sup> The imagery of light or brilliance, so common in mystical experiences of God, became a recurring theme in Ursula's visions. In many cases, as in her first, third, and fifteenth visions, the brilliant light denoted the presence of God Himself, while in other visions the light accompanied individuals or groups and set them apart as God-blessed. In both her fifty-third and her fifty-seventh visions, rays of light formed a ladder directly to heaven, and children began to climb the ladder, and, in her sixtieth vision, a stone emanated a bright light and took into itself a crowd of people "like young children in infancy."<sup>100</sup> In each of these cases, the light appeared to provide access to heaven or salvation to a group of innocents.

The image of the wreath in Ursula's first vision was another repeated theme. It bore a strong similarity to one of the visions Lienhard experienced during his incarceration, in which the glory of the Lord became a wreath of roses.<sup>101</sup> However, while Lienhard connected the wreath to the institution of marriage, Ursula does not appear to make a similar connection in her visions. The symbol of the wreath recurred three more times in her visions from 1524 to 1525: in her twentieth vision, Ursula saw a crowd of people, poorly dressed but surrounded by light. They walked towards a man who was holding a wreath, and they reached out their hands to it, which

---

<sup>99</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G1v. The numbering of Ursula's visions differs somewhat between the 1530 and 1532 editions. Unless otherwise specified, I use the 1532 numbering scheme throughout this dissertation.

<sup>100</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. H4r-l1r.

<sup>101</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C4v.



suggests that the wreath represented something like hope or salvation.<sup>102</sup> Her twenty-third vision made the association between the wreath and salvation even more explicit. Ursula saw

that much water poured from heaven just like a cloudburst. And I saw that the earth was full of water, and in the water I saw people drifting and flowing in the water just as though they would go under. And I saw a hand emerge out of the clouds, on which hung a little wreath, and to all those who swam and reached out above the water's waves the aforementioned hand stretched out and set them on the little wreath, and led them into heaven.<sup>103</sup>

Wreaths, however, did not necessarily provide assurance of salvation. In her thirty-first vision, Ursula saw two young women with wreaths of fire on their heads. These women fell prey to a man “who was wild and unusually dressed,” and he led them into darkness.<sup>104</sup>

The fact that the wreaths were made of fire, rather than light or greenery, may have been significant. The image of fire recurred multiple times in Ursula's visions from 1524 to 1525, and seemed to have an ambiguous meaning. In some of her visions, the significance of fire was entirely unclear, as in her twenty-first vision, in which she saw a lion breathe fire, or in her twenty-eighth vision, in which she saw men made entirely of fire riding animals through a blue fire, which then divided itself into two roads.<sup>105</sup> On another occasion, fire indicated the presence of God, much as it did on Pentecost. In Ursula's thirty-second vision, the glory of the Lord swept in and her whole house seemed to light on fire as a result.<sup>106</sup> In her forty-eighth vision, she connected the imagery of fire with hell or Sheol; she saw “a great burning fire, and in this fire sat many naked people, and at the front many old patriarchs, and the glory of the Lord led them all out.”<sup>107</sup> More commonly, she clearly associated fire with divine wrath and judgment, as in

---

<sup>102</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. G4r.

<sup>103</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. G4v.

<sup>104</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. H1v.

<sup>105</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fols. G4r; H1r-H1v.

<sup>106</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. H1v.

<sup>107</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. H3v.

Ursula's forty-second vision, in which Ursula saw "God the Almighty Father and Ruler of Israel" shooting fiery arrows, or in her thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth visions, in which fire rained down from heaven in scenes reminiscent of biblical judgments.<sup>108</sup>

Ominous or cataclysmic weather events more generally made repeat appearances in Ursula's visions. In her fifty-eighth vision, she saw rain and wind, briefly replaced by beautiful weather, only to be succeeded by "a cloud formation, and in it there were and appeared men and cattle. And...they fell against each other as though they were struck by the smoke of a fire."<sup>109</sup> Her thirty-sixth vision explicitly tied cataclysmic weather to God's judgment. She saw water, fire, brimstone, and pitch rain from heaven, and the glory of the Lord announced that she would witness the judgment and wrath of God; she then saw the mixture of water, fire, brimstone, and pitch flood the earth and burn people in its wake.<sup>110</sup> The God revealed in Ursula's visions had absolute control over the weather; in her fifty-second vision, the weather changed multiple times in quick succession, from clouds to blue sky, from darkness to sunlight, and from rain to stillness to wind. "As the Lord willed it," she concluded, "so it happened."<sup>111</sup>

Not all of the destruction in Ursula's visions from 1524 to 1525, however, came directly from God's hand. She frequently saw martial imagery, perhaps unsurprisingly since the Peasants' War, which included an Alsatian theatre, took place as she was experiencing her first burst of visions. Some of her visions showed men preparing for or engaging in battle. In her eighteenth vision, she saw a great crowd of people armed with muskets and halberds, and a landscape of cities, some of which had fallen.<sup>112</sup> In her twenty-seventh vision, a group of

---

<sup>108</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fols. H2r-H2v.

<sup>109</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. H4v.

<sup>110</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. H2r.

<sup>111</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. H4r.

<sup>112</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. G4r.

mercenaries wearing peacock feathers charged on a crowd of people.<sup>113</sup> Ursula's forty-third vision, for its part, showed a crowd of people marching out of a city, bearing the emblem of a cross on a long wooden pole; these people were under threat from an enemy cavalry but, as soon as the soldiers saw the cross, they fell off of their horses and died.<sup>114</sup> Other visions focused more on war's destructive aftermath. Her fifty-fifth vision showed a city, engulfed by darkness and razed to the ground, and in her sixth vision she saw a scorched field, covered in the bodies of dead men, and an army on horseback that rode over the corpses.<sup>115</sup>

Just as humans in Ursula's visions were sometimes harmed by divine judgment or human violence, so too was nature itself. In her thirtieth vision, she saw "the whole earth as though it were razed, and...the fish lay dead on dry land and...all the animals went about in disarray and appeared very tired."<sup>116</sup> Nature could also be a source of peril: some of her visions included poisonous snakes, spiders, scorpions, toads, and other animals commonly associated with evil. However, nature could also be a life-giving, peaceful setting. In her tenth vision, a garden became the scene of eternal reward, as a multitude of people received crowns one after the other, and ascended to heaven.<sup>117</sup> In her thirty-eighth vision, meanwhile, she saw a beautiful green tree, out of which flowed a spring. Two well-dressed (and therefore presumably wealthy) men attempted to block the spring with water, but their efforts ultimately proved futile. The spring rose up and burst out of the tree itself, and a crowd of common people found sustenance in the water that flowed from the tree.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. H1r.

<sup>114</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. H3r.

<sup>115</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. G3r-G3v; H4v.

<sup>116</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. H1v.

<sup>117</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G3r.

<sup>118</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. H2r-H2v.

Common people were consistently presented positively in Ursula's visions. They bore the cross, they sought salvation, and they ascended to heaven. Another positively identified figure was a handsome young man dressed in white, who appeared several times throughout the visions from 1524 to 1525, sometimes surrounded by light. She first saw him in her seventh vision, in which he left a house and sat in a wagon, accompanied by several beautiful young women.<sup>119</sup> He then reappeared twice as the bearer of judgment, presumably on God's behalf; in her thirty-ninth vision he carried rods "with the might of a hero" and, in her forty-ninth vision, he carried a piece of wood full of holes (most likely a pillory) and placed it on people's necks.<sup>120</sup> Finally, in her fifty-ninth vision, he was depicted carrying "a large, beautiful flag or banner, striped white and rosy red," a possible allusion to the banner of godly righteousness from Lienhard's visions.<sup>121</sup>

In contrast to the common people and the young man in white, the clergy consistently appeared in a negative light in Ursula's visions. She first saw, in their ninth vision, "very many—a great crowd of—bishops and spiritual prelates. These men all carried ropes under their arms, and many common folks were tied to these ropes. These common folks were pulled and yanked by the aforementioned bishops and the other prelates over sticks and shrubs."<sup>122</sup> Then, in her sixteenth vision, she saw "a great host of bishops and spiritual prelates and also educated men (*schriftgelerden*)," who sat and watched idly as a crowd of common people faithfully tilled the earth.<sup>123</sup> That Ursula included *schriftgelerden*, a common slur used by radical reformers to refer to magisterial reformers, suggests that her anticlericalism also extended to Strasbourg's evangelical preachers. Some of these oppressive clergy, however, did eventually face judgment

---

<sup>119</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G3v.

<sup>120</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. H2v; H3v.

<sup>121</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J1r.

<sup>122</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. G2v-G3r.

<sup>123</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G3v.

in Ursula's visions, either from human beings or from God Himself. In her twenty-fifth vision, a crowd of people pushed a bishop on a stool with his head split open into a dark hole and, in her forty-fifth vision, she saw the Pope himself dragged into darkness.<sup>124</sup> A handsome black-haired man then replaced the Pope and received his crown directly from God rather than from human hands.<sup>125</sup>

While Ursula's visions contained considerably fewer theological and ecclesiological reflections than Lienhard's prophecies, they did provide some insight into her beliefs about God, salvation, and more, particularly when those visions came accompanied with an interpretation.<sup>126</sup> Her fiftieth vision, for instance, showcased her views on divine and human participation in salvation. She saw

a large barrel, which was very well bound many times over. Then I wondered to myself and thought what this might mean. Then the glory of the Lord settled into me and spoke to me thus: the barrel you saw signifies the people who are righteous in right faith and in right words and works. God will bind them thus in many ways, that is, He will endow them with His grace in eternity so that they might fight against all temptation on earth.<sup>127</sup>

Salvation, in Ursula's vision, had both a divine and human component. The recipients of God's grace not only displayed right faith, but also the right words and works, and they were aided in this by God, who enabled them to resist temptation.

Her visions also showed a basic understanding of such theological concepts as the Trinity. In her first trinitarian vision, on Christmas Day 1524, she saw "God the Father sitting,

---

<sup>124</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fols. G4v-H1r; H3r.

<sup>125</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. H3r.

<sup>126</sup> Of Ursula's 113 visions, a total of seventeen include a complete or partial interpretation. For another examination of the theological content of Ursula's visions, see Christina Moss, "De Visionen van Ursula Jost: Een Herwaardering," translated by Jelle Bosma, *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 42 (2016), pp. 33-48.

<sup>127</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. H3v.

and on his lap his beloved son Jesus Christ, and over Him appeared the Holy Spirit.”<sup>128</sup> Her second trinitarian vision showed even more theological depth.

On the night of the Friday before Saint Matthew’s Day in the twenty-fifth year at dusk, the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and divided itself into three parts. And I saw three glories and lights standing one above the other, and in the middle glory there appeared a figure like a newborn child, appearing as small as though it had just come from its mother’s womb, but he had a great bright shine and glory. And I saw that the three glories put themselves back together again and out of the three lights there was once again one light and glory.<sup>129</sup>

In this vision, the three members of the Trinity are made of the same substance—light—and display not only a threefoldness but also an essential unity.

Ursula’s visions from 1524 to 1525 further demonstrated a confidence in the sovereignty of God over the universe. In her third vision, she saw

that the glory of the Lord came over me and showed itself to me in the form of a cloud, and it was as though this cloud filled the whole room. And this same cloud came apart and divided itself, and I saw a great unspeakable brilliance, just like the light of the sun. And in the brilliance of that light I saw a figure like a trellis, and in the holes of the trellis stars appeared. These stars were just like burning lights. And in the center of this trellis I saw God the Almighty Heavenly Father. He stretched out His right hand, and I saw that in His left hand was a globe, and He spoke to me thus: if I drew My hand back to Myself, what would all of you on this earth be? All of you together would come to nothing.<sup>130</sup>

God, in His power, held the universe in the palm of His hand, and the universe’s inhabitants were utterly dependent upon Him for their very existence. In fact, the God of Ursula’s visions was sovereign even over demons. In her fourth vision, she prayed to be shown the judgment, will, and wrath of God and felt herself surrounded by demons who attempted to drag her to hell. She cried out three times for God to rescue her, and, as she cried out for the third time, God

---

<sup>128</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G3r.

<sup>129</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. H1r.

<sup>130</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G3r.

intervened and the demons fell away.<sup>131</sup> Even the demons did the will of God, both as the unwitting agents of His wrath and judgment and by retreating, however unwillingly, at His command.

### **Lienhard's Visions Resume**

In late 1525, just as Ursula's first visionary period came to an end, Lienhard began to experience more frequent reminders of his own history of divine revelation. Shortly before Christmas, he felt the Spirit of God compel him to once again attempt to share his prophecies publicly, this time with an even wider audience. He felt compelled to go to the people of Strasbourg directly and to share his prophecies through song. He hesitated at this course of action, since he could not sing and did not know any tunes. His wife Ursula came to his rescue, however; she practiced with him until he had mastered the song, and she sang it with him in public. They sang publicly in the cathedral, then in St. Stephen's church, and finally returned to the cathedral to sing one more time.<sup>132</sup>

The "Song of the Prophets," which the Josts sang publicly, recounted Lienhard's earliest experiences with divine revelation and summarized his first prophecies. God had caught Lienhard's attention as he cut wood in Hanau, and had instructed him to open the shrine instead. The shrine was now open, and the truth was freely available. The time was at hand for the servants of God, compelled by righteousness and bolstered by truth, to speak of the wonders of God. God did not merely speak through the Bible, but had written letters in the hearts of prophets, and He now compelled them to testify to the truth they had received. The song reiterated Lienhard's message to Strasbourg's political authorities. They were to repent of their

---

<sup>131</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. G3r.

<sup>132</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E2r-E2v.

greed with which they had filled their coffers to call other cities to do likewise, and to take up the banner of godly righteousness. Unlike his earliest prophecies, this time Lienhard held out no hope that the bishop would follow suit, and only addressed the city's overseers. The song urged them to traverse their lands and instruct the inhabitants, the sheep under their charge, in godly righteousness and godly mercy. He concluded with the same warning he had given the bishop; if the lords of Strasbourg did not take up the banner of godly righteousness, their lordly robes would be removed from them and they would be dishonoured before God and the world.<sup>133</sup>

After he and Ursula had sung the song publicly for the third time, Lienhard realized that his audience might not fully understand its contents, and he promised to return the next day in order to provide an interpretation. He had intended to provide a fairly straightforward interpretation of his song, but that same night he received a new prophecy, which he was to share in its stead. The next morning, he returned to the cathedral, and shared a prophecy reminiscent of the Good Samaritan.

The Lord came into the world and found the human race wounded to the point of death He saw that the priests went by and did not have mercy on them. He saw that the wielders of the earthly sword went by and also did not show mercy. And He saw that the human race was wounded to the point of the death of their hearts. But then came Christ our Lord and He had mercy on the human race. He lifted them onto His shoulders and carried them into the right sheep pen and acquired new shepherds and gave them two pennies, that is the New Testament and the Old Testament. And He said [to the shepherds], you shall once again hold the human race in esteem and do much good for it. I will return this to you thousandfold when I come again. They promised to do this. If they have kept their promise, they will have succeeded well, but if they have not kept it, they will stand in great punishment and come against God our heavenly Father.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E2v-E3r.

<sup>134</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E3r-E3v.



The new prophecy revisited common themes in Lienhard's message: the past failings of ecclesiastical and political leaders alike, and God's call for leaders to treat those under their authority well, under threat of punishment if they failed to do so.

By this point, Lienhard's public displays had begun to attract attention from religious leaders. By his account, after he and Ursula sang in the cathedral the second time, a priest approached him and asked him about his singing, and whether he knew more about God's law. Lienhard replied, somewhat testily, that it was written that no one could add to or take away from God's law, and since his interlocutor was a priest and a learned man (*schriftgelerder*), he ought to be the one to enlighten Lienhard.<sup>135</sup> After he delivered his new prophecy, he received backlash from an even more prominent churchman—the reformer and cathedral preacher Mathis Zell. Zell shooed Lienhard's audience away and accused Lienhard of being a mere dreamer who undermined the Law. Undeterred, Lienhard responded that the Spirit of God had already alerted him of the opposition he would face and commanded him to stand his ground and speak the truth until his accusers blushed with shame.<sup>136</sup>

Despite Zell's opposition, Lienhard returned again to the cathedral the following Sunday to prophesy publicly. He cried out to the city's religious scholars, daring them to explain how to live under God's law and why God's children had set themselves against Him. He followed these challenges with dire warnings of judgment. God had seen how the people of the earth behaved themselves, and it grieved Him deeply. If they did not better themselves and take up the banner of godly righteousness and truth, Lienhard concluded, God would punish them severely and send “a great tempest of rushing water” over them until they were “up to [their] ears in affliction.”<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>135</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E3r.

<sup>136</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E3v.

<sup>137</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E3v.

His account made no note of any response to this prophecy, either from the preachers or from the crowd. When he returned to the cathedral the following Sunday and attempted to sing his song again, however, an emissary of Strasbourg's city council stopped him and threatened to expel him from the cathedral if he did not keep quiet. Lienhard took this as a sign that the people of Strasbourg were not ready to hear his message, and his account did not mention any further attempts to prophesy in such public settings.<sup>138</sup>

Nevertheless, Lienhard continued to attempt to find a smaller but highly influential audience for his prophecies in Strasbourg's preachers. Although his first encounter with Zell had been less than positive, a later conversation convinced Lienhard that he might be sympathetic. Lienhard had been barred from prophesying publicly in the cathedral, but Zell suggested an alternative. Lienhard could give his prophecies directly to him and, if they seemed suitable, he would write them down.<sup>139</sup> Lienhard also leveraged his connections with Herrto Ludwig in order to gain an audience with Strasbourg's preachers. While the preachers refused Lienhard's request that they allow him to preach and prophesy publicly, they nevertheless made a written copy of the prophecies Lienhard shared with them. When Lienhard later visited Zell alone, Zell encouraged him to have any further prophecies committed to writing and examined by the preachers. After these encounters, however, the Holy Spirit appears to have fallen silent again for Lienhard, and his account made no mention of new visions or prophecies until several years later.

### **Ursula's Visions Resume (to 1529)**

---

<sup>138</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E4r.

<sup>139</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E4r.

After a full year in which visions were a commonplace occurrence for Ursula, they ceased abruptly in November of 1525. According to her account, they do not appear to have resumed for four years, with one exception. In 1527, at the beginning of the year, she had a vision of a vineyard, in front of which lay three men: an old man, a man in armour, and a young man (perhaps the same figure as the handsome young man in white who had appeared in her earlier visions). The first two men appeared dead, but the young man seemed to still be alive.<sup>140</sup> She provided no interpretation to accompany the vision. Her visions began again in earnest in 1529, and she recounted a total of eighteen visions in that year.

The 1529 visions revisited several of the same images and themes that Ursula had envisioned in 1524 and 1525. She returned again to images of light to denote the divine presence. In her seventy-sixth vision, rays of light once again formed a ladder to heaven, and the Spirit of God appeared “springing and dancing” and led the elect (*ausserwelten*) up the ladder “with very great joy and glad jubilation.”<sup>141</sup> In her seventy-ninth vision, rays of brightness streamed out of the glory of the Lord, and in the rays floated flakes of manna. As Ursula watched, the glory of the Lord revealed to her that “God the Lord thus wants to feed His own, who have true trust in Him, abundantly with the true bread of heaven, yea with the eternal food of the Spirit.”<sup>142</sup> Finally, in her eighty-second vision, a clear echo of her first, the glory of the light appeared as light in the form of a child, which then transformed into a wreath.<sup>143</sup>

In addition to her eighty-second vision, the image of the wreath recurred twice more in her visions from 1529. In her sixty-eighth vision, she saw a man who wore a “lovely green

---

<sup>140</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J1v.

<sup>141</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, J2v.

<sup>142</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, J3r.

<sup>143</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, J3v.

wreath” on his forehead and he dug graves and buried the dead.<sup>144</sup> In her eighty-third vision, moreover, the wreath appeared to have two different meanings. The vision showed a giant wreath, as colourful as a rainbow, with two men fighting in one section and another man watching and laughing at them.<sup>145</sup> Ursula identified this giant wreath with a “large circle in Israel” from a previous vision.<sup>146</sup> She also relayed a further divine message concerning the image of the wreath, however, and prophesied that “when this wreath is placed on the forehead and each one prepares himself for betterment, then at that time will the Lord be revealed and known and seen in great might.”<sup>147</sup>

As in her earlier visions, images of light and salvation contrasted with images of death, destruction, and gloom. On the wreath in her eighty-third vision, for instance, two men on horseback clashed violently until blood flowed out everywhere.<sup>148</sup> Her sixty-ninth vision, meanwhile, showed a city surrounded with blood and full of large and hostile dogs, who appeared to want to devour it.<sup>149</sup> Other ominous scenes echoed parts of the book of Revelation; in her seventy-third vision the earth caved in on itself and the elements were extinguished and she heard a series of trumpet blasts, and in her seventy-fourth vision darkness fell over the sun and moon.<sup>150</sup> In her seventieth vision, darkness and gloom preceded a lord and his entourage, and people fell flat on their faces in his wake.<sup>151</sup>

In Ursula’s visions from 1524 to 1525, she viewed suffering and destruction as results of either the wrath of God or the violence of human beings. These interpretations persisted in her

---

<sup>144</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J2r.

<sup>145</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3v.

<sup>146</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J1r.

<sup>147</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3v.

<sup>148</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3v.

<sup>149</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J2r.

<sup>150</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. J2r-J2v.

<sup>151</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J2r.

visions from 1529, but they were accompanied by an awareness that suffering was all too often the earthly result of following Christ faithfully. In her seventy-fifth vision, she saw a man the colour of blood on a mountain, also the colour of blood. When she asked the glory of the Lord for an interpretation, she heard that the mountain represented “the Mount of Olives of all people who walk in the fear of God and in love. Sweat must also pour out from them as it poured out from Christ their Lord on the same mountain.”<sup>152</sup> One of her 1529 visions even showed what appeared to be faithful Christians experiencing persecution. In her seventy-sixth vision, she saw

a great tower and on it a black cross, and the cross was lowered and placed in the middle of the tower. And I saw a deep vault, and into it they led captive people. And afterwards I saw a hall, and in there stood many fierce lords who were full of wrath. The captives were unmercifully ordered in that same hall before the fierce lords to pull themselves up so that one let them violently onto their faces before the feet of the tyrants.<sup>153</sup>

Though the Strasbourg authorities were generally lenient towards religious dissenters, at least in comparison to other sixteenth-century jurisdictions, Ursula’s 1529 visions did coincide with the arrest and questioning of forty-four religious radicals in Strasbourg following the publication of a series of seditious leaflets, and it is possible that Ursula had these arrests in mind when she saw her visions of suffering and persecution.<sup>154</sup>

Another common image from Ursula’s 1529 visions was that of the black man. Black men had appeared occasionally in Ursula’s visions from 1524 to 1525, most remarkably in her nineteenth vision, in which a black man, who led a crowd of people who also had darkened faces, turned into a stick, and his head turned into male genitalia (*bauchzapffen*).<sup>155</sup> However, in

---

<sup>152</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J2v.

<sup>153</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J2v.

<sup>154</sup> Manfred Krebs and Hans Georg Rott, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer. Vol. 7. Elsass I. Teil: Stadt Straßburg 1522-1532* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1959), 226-227; John David Derksen, *From Radicals to Survivors: Strasbourg's Religious Nonconformists over Two Generations, 1525-1570* (Goy-Houten, Netherlands: Hes & de Graaf Pub., 2002), 53-55.

<sup>155</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. G4r.

her 1529 visions they figured more prominently, and in some of her visions she explicitly identified them with the Turks, who, though still very far from Strasbourg, were advancing on Europe from the East. In Ursula's 1529 visions, black men were uniformly menacing. In her seventy-first vision, she saw a "dreadful, large, and black" man, who turned into a darkness that swallowed the world., and her seventy-eighth vision "Casper S" (a probable reference to the Spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeld) appeared as a black man, and underwent a series of transformations before he settled into the appearance of an old woman, whom the glory of the Lord warned Ursula to avoid on account of her "false advice and guile."<sup>156</sup> Despite their identification with the Turks, however, the black men do not appear to have been uniformly racialized, but instead Ursula saw their blackness as a visual representation of shadow and darkness.

Her most detailed explanation of the significance of the image of the black man occurred in her eightieth vision, in which she saw

a wide and large moor, and on this moor I saw moving forward a large, fierce, and black man, in very gloomy darkness. And before this man went a bright light. Then I wondered what this might mean. Then it was revealed to me in my heart by the glory of the Lord that this man was the lord of the Turks and the light the might of God, which went before him, and that he will exercise great power and proffer misery before he then brings to pass his own end.<sup>157</sup>

In addition to identifying the black man as a Turk, the vision's interpretation also elaborated on Ursula's beliefs about God's sovereignty. The Turk was no follower of God. He would cause great destruction, and eventually would destroy even himself. Nevertheless, the might of God preceded him, and he accomplished God's purposes, however unwittingly.

---

<sup>156</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. J2r; J3r.

<sup>157</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3r.

God found an unlikely servant in the Lord of the Turks, but Ursula's 1529 visions also suggested that those who appeared to serve God might not truly do so at all. In her eighty-first vision, she saw "a great crowd of people from strange lands who seemed to have a humble appearance."<sup>158</sup> This humble appearance, however, was deceiving. When she asked God for an interpretation, she heard in response that "these are those who take the yoke of Christ and the cross and then wander among His sheep as though they were gentle. But they are slanderers and faithless rogues, and they are unfaithful in their hearts."<sup>159</sup> Her seventy-eighth vision even seemed to target one specific, seemingly pious Strasbourg individual. A Casper S., most likely Caspar Schwenckfeld, appeared to her on horseback, and transformed into a scale, a man in a suit of armour, and finally a deformed old woman, whom the glory of the Lord identified as cunning and deceitful.<sup>160</sup>

Ursula's 1529 visions also returned to her earlier anticlerical themes, this time with a more explicitly anti-Catholic bent that seemed to mock the idea of transubstantiation and the use of icons in worship. In her seventy-first vision she saw a flood of "dark streams and tears," filled with Eucharistic wafers. She then saw a priestly figure wearing an alb, whose face was veiled. He carried an idol, and he placed it on a pedestal and attempted to pray to it. Before he could, however, the flood of tears reached the idol and knocked it off of its pedestal.<sup>161</sup> The veil on the priest's face seems to have been indicative of spiritual blindness, given his willingness to worship an idol, and ultimately, the idol proved to be unworthy of worship when it failed to withstand the flood of tears that knocked it off of its pedestal.

---

<sup>158</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3r.

<sup>159</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3v.

<sup>160</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3r. Only the second edition of Ursula's visions names Casper S. as the man in question.

<sup>161</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J2r.

## Preservation and Transmission of the Josts' Visions and Prophecies pre-1529

As Jonathan Green points out in his article on Lienhard's prophecies, Lienhard's attitude to the value of the written word changed considerably in the first years of his prophetic ministry. When Lienhard first began to share his prophecies, he was so unenthusiastic at the prospect of dictating his prophecies to the city scribe that he first eschewed it entirely, and then did so only reluctantly. During his incarceration, however, he began to realize the value of written copies of his words, and actively sought out men who could serve as scribes.<sup>162</sup> When he resumed his prophetic ministry in late 1525, he cultivated a relationship with Zell and used him as a scribe. When the published version of Lienhard's prophecies appeared in 1532, he pondered the limitations of memory and lamented the fact that "lack of diligence and forgetfulness" meant that the picture painted in his account was sometimes incomplete.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, he reassured the reader, with half his prophecies, he immediately took pains to share what he heard with people who could make a record of it. Although he could not read them himself, he had kept these copies, and they had proved immensely useful in assembling this new, definitive account of his prophecies and visions.<sup>164</sup>

Unlike Lienhard, who assiduously sought to publicly share his prophecies and have them committed to writing, Ursula did not report making similar efforts with her visions. Nevertheless, there are indications that she did, in fact have access to some sort of scribe. Of her sixty-four visions from 1524 to 1525, thirty-five were precisely dated, despite the fact that Melchior Hoffman, who eventually put them into print, did not meet Ursula until at least 1529. While an

---

<sup>162</sup> Green, 327-329.

<sup>163</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F1v.

<sup>164</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F1v.S



illiterate woman like Ursula would likely have learned to rely on her memory in a different manner than someone with the ability to make and access written reminders, it is probable that Hoffman had access to at least a partial written record of Ursula's visions when he produced the first edition in 1530. Although Lienhard does not mention Ursula's visions in his own prophetic account (perhaps he felt it was unnecessary, since Hoffman published the two of them together), she may have made use of some of the same scribes as he did in the years before 1529.

## **Conclusion**

If Lienhard and Ursula managed to gather a substantial following before Melchior Hoffman arrived on the scene, no evidence of this has survived. It seems probable that they did not, as the majority of the interactions Lienhard recorded with his interlocutors were hostile or at best ambivalent. A few figures, such as Veith Schelthamer or Herrto Ludwig were mostly sympathetic. Nevertheless, their ideas were mostly fully formed by the time Hoffman arrived on the scene. They lamented the oppression of the poor, particularly by the Catholic Church and its representatives, and they looked forward to a new future in which justice and truth would flourish at last, aided by Strasbourg's leaders if necessary, but even without them if they refused to heed God's call and take up the banner of godly righteousness. By 1529, the Josts were poised to become important influences in the formation of the Melchiorite Anabaptist tradition, both through their visions and prophecies and through their very existence as visionaries and prophets, with the capacity to hear directly from God and communicate His will to others.

### **CHAPTER THREE: THE JOSTS AFTER MELCHIOR HOFFMAN, 1529-1539**

The Josts' partnership with Melchior Hoffman was the major turning point in their lives. Without it, they might not even have appeared in the historical record. The only record of their lives before the publication of their visions and prophecies is found in those very writings. Although Lienhard did recall interactions with both political and religious leaders in Strasbourg, these interactions do not appear to have made a particularly deep impression on them. The only significant action the Strasbourg authorities took against the Josts before 1530 was Lienhard's forced hospitalization, and even then the first surviving recorded mention of this event occurred in Ursula's visions. Hoffman's publication of their visions gave them greater influence outside of Strasbourg and notoriety in Strasbourg than they could have achieved on their own. Moreover, although the record of their visions and prophecies before their interactions with Hoffman appears to be substantially reliable, the contents of their visions and prophecies changed in some key ways after they met him. Lienhard adopted doctrines which had previously not been primary theological concerns, such as adult baptism.

Hoffman's promulgation of the Josts' visions was no mere act of altruism; their partnership was symbiotic. Hoffman believed that he had the spiritual gift of correctly interpreting Scripture, but he did not receive visions and prophecies of his own independently from meditations on the biblical text. Lienhard and Ursula's visions served as proof that the Last Days were indeed at hand. God had poured out his Spirit on all people, and sons and daughters alike prophesied. Hoffman, and Melchiorites more broadly, also drew a sharp distinction between prophecy and interpretation of prophecy, which allowed Hoffman to use the Josts' visions in support of his own theological arguments, even arguments the Josts themselves might

not make on their own. He heralded the Josts' prophecies as being on an equal footing with Scripture, and this paved the way for him to use them as he did Scripture, to bolster his theological claims.

### **Melchior Hoffman Before the Josts**

Melchior Hoffman began his public ministry in Livonia in 1523, as a lay preacher allied with Luther. He worked as a furrier in order to support himself; since he was not ordained and lacked formal theological training, he was barred from many ecclesiastical offices, even in areas sympathetic to the Reformation. He first preached in the city of Wolmar, where he tapped into popular anticlerical and iconoclastic attitudes. He railed in colourful terms against monks and nuns, the mass, and icons of saints. Hoffman's preaching alarmed Wolter van Plettenberg, the Grandmaster of the Teutonic order, which controlled Wolmar. Van Plettenberg first imprisoned and then banished Hoffman from the city.<sup>165</sup> From Wolmar, Hoffman travelled north to Dorpat, where he resumed his preaching and garnered popular support. When the castle bailiff Peter Stackelberg attempted to arrest him in January 1525, Hoffman's supporters responded with violence; they laid siege to the castle, and unleashed iconoclastic fury on Dorpat's churches.<sup>166</sup>

Since Stackelberg had overstepped his authority in order to arrest Hoffman—a significant contributing factor in the popular uprising—the city council did not immediately banish him. They did, however, demand confirmation of his orthodoxy directly from Martin Luther before he could preach again in public.<sup>167</sup> Hoffman travelled to Wittenberg and successfully obtained a letter of recommendation from Luther and his associate Johannes Bugenhagen.<sup>168</sup> Luther and

---

<sup>165</sup> Deppermann, 36-37.

<sup>166</sup> Deppermann, 49-50.

<sup>167</sup> Deppermann, 49-50.

<sup>168</sup> Deppermann, 55.

Bugenhagen also published open letters to the newly evangelical congregations in Livonia, and included a letter from Hoffman—his first public writing. In his letter, Hoffman called his followers in Dorpat to peace and unity. Although they had suffered at the hands of godless rulers, he urged them not to take revenge; the Last Days were at hand, and God himself would avenge them.<sup>169</sup> Although he returned to Livonia with an endorsement, Hoffman’s relationship with the city magistrates and the clergy remained tense. In 1526, after he publicly humiliated a burgomaster’s daughter for wearing a necklace made from a melted chalice, Hoffman was expelled from Dorpat.<sup>170</sup> He then travelled to nearby Reval and, when the authorities there also banished him, he left Livonia for Sweden.<sup>171</sup>

Even as an associate of Luther, Hoffman held many of the views that eventually led him to break with the magisterial reformers and join forces with the Josts. Hoffman could not boast of the same educational pedigree as most of the evangelical clergy. Though he could read and write in German, he had no Latin or Greek training, and, when it came to theological education, he was largely self-taught. As a result of his lack of training, other evangelical reformers failed to take him seriously as a preacher and theologian. Hoffman compensated for his lack of scholarly expertise, however, by appealing to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He turned the tables on his learned critics; their very scholarship, which filled them with such pride, gave them a false confidence in their human reason and blinded them to the true wisdom that only God could give.<sup>172</sup> God gave this wisdom to those who hungered for it, without consideration for social

---

<sup>169</sup> Deppermann, 56-57.

<sup>170</sup> Deppermann, 75.

<sup>171</sup> Deppermann, 75; 79.

<sup>172</sup> Deppermann, 58.

status or even gender; Hoffman cited Joel's prophecy that, in the last days, the Holy Spirit would descend on men and women, young and old, and cause them to prophesy.<sup>173</sup>

Hoffman gravitated particularly to the Bible's apocalyptic texts, since their esoteric nature often necessitated creative interpretations. In 1526, using the royal press in Stockholm, Hoffman published a commentary on Daniel 12. In his commentary, he emphasized once again the need for divinely granted spiritual wisdom in order to understand the text's hidden meanings.<sup>174</sup> Since Hoffman believed, as did many of his contemporaries, that the Last Days were at hand, the hidden meanings he divined from the text were particularly relevant to a sixteenth-century audience. The Pope was the Antichrist, and had too long kept the people in spiritual darkness. However, now that the Last Judgment was imminent, God would send the two witnesses of Revelation, the spiritual Elijah and Enoch, who would testify to the truth.<sup>175</sup> When he wrote the commentary in 1526, Hoffman believed that the sixth trumpet blast of Revelation had just sounded, and that Christ would return in 1533.<sup>176</sup>

By 1527, Hoffman had run afoul of King Gustavus Wasa and, as a result, he experienced banishment once again, this time from Sweden.<sup>177</sup> From Sweden, following a brief and unsuccessful attempt to evangelize the city of Lübeck, Hoffman travelled to Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>178</sup> By Hoffman's own account, he received a ready welcome there from King Frederick of Denmark, who placed Hoffman and his family under his protection and granted him royal permission to preach.<sup>179</sup> Hoffman began to preach at St. Nicholas' church in Kiel and, while

---

<sup>173</sup> Deppermann, 58.

<sup>174</sup> Deppermann, 59.

<sup>175</sup> Deppermann, 65. Hoffman eventually came to believe that he was Elijah.

<sup>176</sup> Deppermann, 67.

<sup>177</sup> Deppermann, 83.

<sup>178</sup> Deppermann, 84.

<sup>179</sup> Melchior Hoffman and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Dialogus und gründliche Berichtung gehaltener Disputation im Land zu Holstein underm König von Demarck vom hochwirdigen Sacrament oder Nachtmal des Herren* (Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1529), fol. A ii v.

Marquard Schuldorp, the deacon of St. Nicholas when Hoffman first arrived, expressed concern that Hoffman critiqued secular authorities too vehemently, his successor Hermann Biestermann became Hoffman's supporter.<sup>180</sup> While in Schleswig-Holstein, Hoffman also published two further commentaries—both using his own printing press—that reflected his allegorical and apocalyptic interpretative style: a commentary on Song of Songs, dedicated to the Danish Queen Sophia, and a commentary on the first chapter of Matthew.<sup>181</sup>

Schuldorp objected strongly to Hoffman's approach to Scripture, which he considered both unwarranted and pastorally ineffective. When Hoffman continued to preach esoteric apocalyptic messages instead of simple and practical doctrines, Schuldorp contacted Luther and the Magdeburg reformer Nicolaus von Amsdorf and lodged a complaint about Hoffman.<sup>182</sup> Luther and Amsdorf both concurred with Schuldorp's assessment, and Luther considered himself "foolish and deceived" for having endorsed Hoffman in the first place.<sup>183</sup> In May of 1527 Hoffman travelled to Magdeburg, armed with his new commentary on Matthew, to plead his case to Amsdorf. Amsdorf, at Luther's urging, harshly criticized Hoffman and suggested that he return to his day job as a furrier and leave preaching and theology to the experts.<sup>184</sup> Hoffman was incensed by the insult and viewed this as confirmation of the arrogance and spiritual blindness of trained theologians.

From Magdeburg, Hoffman travelled to Wittenberg to meet once again with Luther and Bugenhagen. His attempt to win the two men over to his cause was unsuccessful, and they dismissed him as out of his mind.<sup>185</sup> As he passed through Magdeburg on his return to Kiel, he

---

<sup>180</sup> Deppermann, 89.

<sup>181</sup> Deppermann, 96.

<sup>182</sup> Deppermann, 96-97.

<sup>183</sup> Deppermann, 97.

<sup>184</sup> Deppermann, 97.

<sup>185</sup> Deppermann, 99.

was arrested—a fact for which he blamed Amsdorf—and his possessions confiscated.<sup>186</sup> Throughout 1528, Amsdorf and Hoffman engaged in a polemical war. Despite the suboptimal results of his last visit to Wittenberg, he still hoped to win Luther over. He sent an annotated copy of Amsdorf's attack against him to Wittenberg in an attempt to argue in his defense.<sup>187</sup> His attempts, however, were once again unsuccessful. Hoffman complained that the theologians dismissed him because he trained as a furrier rather than as a scholar and had not learned to read Latin. He was a preacher officially appointed by the king, and yet his opponents persisted in dismissing him as a self-appointed, delusional prophet.<sup>188</sup> When his appeals to be taken seriously fell on deaf ears, Hoffman resorted to a series of colourful insults. Amsdorf was a rooster and an ass, a shameless belcher, a scoundrel, a blasphemer, and more.<sup>189</sup>

As the controversy wore on, Hoffman also began to take issue with his Lutheran opponents' views on the Lord's Supper. He referred to them as "sacrament conjurers" who attempted to confine the God of heaven and earth to a piece of bread.<sup>190</sup> Hoffman's newly displayed Sacramentarian tendencies alarmed King Frederick, who had hitherto supported him. In 1529, Frederick called for a disputation on the Eucharist between Schleswig-Holstein's Lutherans and Sacramentarians, to be held in Flensburg. Even before the debate began, however, the king favoured the Lutheran side; he refused to allow Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, Hoffman's best-known ally on the question of the sacrament, safe passage into Schleswig-Holstein in order to participate in the disputation.<sup>191</sup> Hoffman and his allies lost and the king banished him—a more lenient punishment than the death penalty some of his advisers had

---

<sup>186</sup> Deppermann, 99.

<sup>187</sup> Deppermann, 99.

<sup>188</sup> Deppermann, 101.

<sup>189</sup> Deppermann, 102.

<sup>190</sup> Deppermann, 105.

<sup>191</sup> Deppermann, 110.

counselled.<sup>192</sup> He then retreated to Eastern Frisia, where he collaborated with Andreas Karlstadt on an account of the Flensburg disputation. Yet, while the two men agreed on the Eucharistic question, they fell out over Hoffman's obsession with the End Times and the prophetic books of the Bible, and so in June 1529 Hoffman arrived in Strasbourg alone, in the process of re-evaluating his theology and open to new ideas and alliances.<sup>193</sup>

Hoffman's own printing press had been confiscated during his departure from Schleswig-Holstein, and he found himself in need of a printer to publish the *Dialogus*, his and Karlstadt's account of the disputation. In Strasbourg, Hoffman found Balthasar Beck. Beck's press was a natural choice for Hoffman since, by 1529, he had shown himself willing to publish works by figures outside of what was becoming the mainstream of Protestant reform, such as the spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeld and the spiritualist Anabaptist Johannes Bänderlin. Hoffman went on to publish a total of six books during his first stay in Strasbourg, all using Beck's press. While the *Dialogus* dealt with the Eucharistic controversy, the rest of Hoffman's Strasbourg publications returned to his preferred prophetic and apocalyptic themes.

The longest of these was his 1530 *Auslegung der Heimlichen Offenbarung Joannis des Heyligen Apostels unnd Evangelisten* (*Interpretation of the Heavenly Revelation of John the Holy Apostle and Evangelist*), an extended commentary on Revelation dedicated to King Frederick of Denmark whom Hoffman, despite his banishment, still considered an ally.<sup>194</sup> Luther, however, was now unquestionably Hoffman's enemy. Hoffman had earlier identified the Pope as Antichrist and, in his revelation commentary, he dismissed Luther as a new Pope.<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> Deppermann, 117.

<sup>193</sup> Deppermann, 137.

<sup>194</sup> Melchior Hoffman, *Auslegung der Heimlichen Offenbarung Joannis des Heyligen Apostels unnd Evangelisten* (Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1530), fol. A ii r.

<sup>195</sup> Hoffman, *Offenbarung*, fols. K vii v – K viii r.



Luther was no prophet of God, but rather the persecutor of the poor, despised prophets. Hoffman's 1530 writings also reiterated his belief that the right interpretation of Scripture was only possible through divine inspiration. Inspired interpreters of Scripture possessed the "Key of David," which allowed them to unlock the secrets of Scripture.<sup>196</sup> Hoffman remained convinced, despite the opposition he faced, that he possessed this key. If anything, the opposition he faced emboldened him; he faced persecution precisely because he preached the truth, and those who were blinded either by the devil or by their own pride in their education were simply unable to perceive the truth he taught. Hoffman's time in Strasbourg allowed him to find others like himself, simple folk who believed themselves to have great spiritual gifts, but who had been mocked and rejected by learned churchmen, Catholic and evangelical alike.

### **The 1530 Strasbourg Edition of Ursula's Visions**

At some point between his arrival in Strasbourg and early 1530, Hoffman came into contact with Lienhard and Ursula Jost. While the details of this first meeting are unknown, it launched a partnership that benefitted both parties. The Josts, with their visions and prophecies, validated Hoffman's emerging apocalyptic hypotheses and served as new authorities to whom he could appeal. At the same time, they benefitted from an enthusiastic literate supporter, who believed wholeheartedly in their revelations and had the means and connections to print them and disseminate them to a wider audience. Hoffman's promotion of the Josts' visions and prophecies began in 1530, when, once again using the press of Balthasar Beck, he published an edition of Ursula's visions, under the title *Prophetische Gesicht Unn Offenbarung der*

---

<sup>196</sup> Hoffman, *Offenbarung*, fol. F vii v.

*Goetlichen Würckung diser Letsten Zeit (Prophetic Visions and Revelation of the Divine Works in these Last Times).*

Beck used the same title page, full of rich apocalyptic imagery, for Ursula's visions and for Hoffman's commentary on Revelation. The top showed Jesus bursting through the clouds, bearing swords and flanked by angels blowing the trumpet. Below Jesus, on either side of the title page, stood the two witnesses of Revelation: Elijah and Enoch. The bottom of the title page featured a woman—most likely the whore of Babylon—riding a seven-headed dragon. To her side stood a richly arrayed clergyman, and a simply dressed man bowed before the woman.<sup>197</sup>

These clear pictorial representations of major events from the book of Revelation underscored the message Hoffman intended to convey: that the last days were at hand and that both he and the Josts were key players in the events that were to come. The Josts' contributions, however, were always to be filtered through Hoffman. In the 1530 edition of Ursula's visions, Hoffman did not mention her by name, but rather referred to her as an anonymous *gottesliebhaberin*, a feminine German noun meaning "lover of God." Whether this was done for her safety, to increase Hoffman's control over her visions, or some combination of the two is unclear. Even the printer Balthasar Beck was either unaware of her identity or committed to protecting her anonymity; in April of 1530, Strasbourg magistrates questioned Beck and his fellow printer Christian Engelnoff, and both men claimed to know nothing about Melchior Hoffman or "his woman."<sup>198</sup>

Hoffman prefaced Ursula's visions with a brief foreword. He emphasized God's desire to speak directly to his people, rather than force them to rely on imperfect human counselors. God thus used prophets to reveal his will to his people. He had done so in the past through the

---

<sup>197</sup> Ursula Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht Unn Offenbarung der Goetlichen Würckung diser Letsten Zeit*, edited by Melchior Hoffman (Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1530), fol. A i r.

<sup>198</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 262. Since the gender of the anonymous visionary is already evident on the title page of the book, *weib* in this case most likely refers to Ursula rather than to Hoffman's wife.

prophets in the pages of Scripture, such as John the Revelator, and in these last days God revealed himself again through prophets like Ursula.<sup>199</sup> He appealed to Isaiah 42 and 46 to support God's penchant for granting visions and prophecies: in these passages, God declared himself a God who revealed things before they came to pass, and showed his people the end from the beginning.<sup>200</sup> Hoffman lamented the number of his contemporaries who turned instead to unreliable and even sinister sources—those who attempted to manipulate nature, practitioners of the black arts, astrologers—for glimpses of the future and thus sought “the power of life from among the dead.”<sup>201</sup> This was wholly unnecessary, when God so freely revealed himself through prophets. Hoffman realized, however, that Ursula's visions, although he considered them undoubtedly inspired by God, were not entirely clear in their meaning or application. He promised that he would soon release an interpretation of Ursula's visions, in which he would clarify its contents and unlock its mysteries.<sup>202</sup> The promised interpretation does not appear to have materialized.

The edition was divided into seventy-seven visions from 1524 to 1529, with a brief addendum to the seventy-seventh vision dated from 1530. The numbering of the visions was somewhat arbitrary, with some numbered visions encompassing what appeared to be several visionary experiences. Given Hoffman's fondness for symbolism, the choice to divide the visions in order to arrive at a multiple of seven, a number that recurred frequently in Revelation and symbolized completion and divine perfection, may well have been deliberate.

Finally, Hoffman included an afterword in which he expounded on prophecy and related spiritual gifts. These visions were given directly by God, but, in the wrong hands, they remained

---

<sup>199</sup> Melchior Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. A i v.

<sup>200</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. A ii r.

<sup>201</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. A ii r.

<sup>202</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. A ii r.

open to misinterpretation, mockery, and even blasphemy. He urged readers not to dismiss them hastily, but rather to petition God to grant them understanding of the visions' contents.<sup>203</sup> Even if they asked, however, they might not receive a full understanding of the visions, since the Holy Spirit gave different gifts to different people. Just like prophecy, the discernment of spirits was a particular gift granted to some, not the province of every believer.<sup>204</sup> Ursula, he added, obviously possessed the gift of prophecy, but had not been granted the gift of interpreting prophecy.<sup>205</sup> This dismissal of Ursula's interpretative abilities was not entirely warranted by the text itself. While the majority of the seventy-seven visions were indeed presented without commentary, Ursula did occasionally describe asking God for understanding of a particular vision and receiving an explanation in response. In total, she shared complete or partial interpretations for twelve different visions, as well as related verbal messages from God for three other visions.<sup>206</sup> These interpretations became increasingly common in her later visions from 1529.

Hoffman, however, did not believe that Ursula would supply any further interpretations for her visions. Instead, he stressed that the ability to interpret her visions was granted to another—most likely, by implication, Hoffman himself. He attributed the fact that the visions had not yet been fully interpreted to satanic interference, but he expressed the hope that the interpretation would come to light at its proper time, as all things must.<sup>207</sup> He further informed readers that Ursula's husband also had a prophetic gift, and that he hoped to produce an edition of his prophecies soon.<sup>208</sup> The attitudes of his contemporaries, however, left Hoffman less than confident in the Josts' prophecies' reception. More than ever before, it seemed, Christ was

---

<sup>203</sup> Melchior Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C vii r.

<sup>204</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C vii r.

<sup>205</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C vii v.

<sup>206</sup> Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, passim.

<sup>207</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C viii r.

<sup>208</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C vii v.

maligned and trampled underfoot. Though the Holy Spirit worked freely, Hoffman's contemporaries were either blind to the work of the Spirit or actively tried to impede it, and as a result innocent blood was all too often shed.<sup>209</sup> Hoffman was confident, however, that eventually the enemies of the Holy Spirit would be thwarted; God would punish those who had attempted to stand against Him.<sup>210</sup> He closed with an exhortation to his readers, to seek to align themselves with the will of God and to pursue righteousness even when most of their contemporaries forsook it, and he implored God to assist his followers in this.<sup>211</sup>

### **Melchior Hoffman and the Josts, 1530-1532**

Whether either the Josts or Hoffman were already affiliated with an Anabaptist community in Strasbourg prior to the publication of Ursula's visions is not known, but by April 1530 Hoffman had petitioned the Strasbourg Rat for a designated meeting house for Strasbourg's Anabaptists. The Rat denied his request and resolved to find and question Hoffman, his printer, and the woman whose visions he had published.<sup>212</sup> Hoffman left Strasbourg soon after and began to travel through the Netherlands and North Germany as an itinerant Anabaptist apostle. He first arrived in Emden in East Frisia, where his preaching garnered him hundreds of followers, from a wide variety of social ranks. He was able to perform mass baptisms in public, in the Great Church of Emden.<sup>213</sup> While in Emden, Hoffman also wrote *Die Ordonnantie Godts* (*The Ordinance of God*), a defense of the practice of believers' baptism. Once again, he reiterated to his followers that only those with true spiritual understanding could be trusted to interpret

---

<sup>209</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fols. C vii v – C viii r.

<sup>210</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fols. C vii v – C viii r.

<sup>211</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C viii r.

<sup>212</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 261-262.

<sup>213</sup> Deppermann, 275.

Scripture, “to unravel all such involved snarls and cables, to untie such knots.”<sup>214</sup> In the wrong hands, Scripture could in fact become “a poison and eternal death.”<sup>215</sup>

Hoffman was forced to leave Emden in the fall of 1530, but he left behind a significant Anabaptist congregation in the hands of his associate Jan Volkerts Trijpmaker.<sup>216</sup> When Trijpmaker, in turn, faced banishment from Emden, he became an itinerant Melchiorite missionary. He traveled to Amsterdam, where he baptized new converts. The Amsterdam authorities were sympathetic, or at least lenient, toward Hoffman and Volkerts. When the Court of Holland heard of their activities, they ordered the mayor of Amsterdam to arrest Volkerts. Although the mayor attempted to make it possible for him to leave, Volkerts, zealous for a martyr’s death, turned himself in and revealed the names of other baptized Melchiorites to the authorities.<sup>217</sup> This led to the arrest of nine other Melchiorites. In December 1531, after a forced recantation, the ten captured Melchiorites were beheaded and their heads impaled.<sup>218</sup> When Hoffman heard of his followers’ deaths, he was taken aback. He decided that he much preferred living followers to baptized followers, and opted to halt the practice of baptism until Christ’s anticipated return in 1533.<sup>219</sup> The cessation of adult baptism removed the immediate threat to most of his followers’ lives, and he continued to travel the Netherlands and make converts.

The Josts, meanwhile, remained in Strasbourg and continued their prophetic activities. Ursula in particular saw several visions between 1530 and 1532 and, whereas the visions in the 1530 edition contained no clearly identified characters other than the Pope and the Lord of the

---

<sup>214</sup> Melchior Hoffman, “The Ordinance of God” in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, edited by George Huntston Williams and Angel M. Mergal (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), 202-203.

<sup>215</sup> Hoffman, “Ordinance,” 203.

<sup>216</sup> Deppermann, 276; 284.

<sup>217</sup> Deppermann, 285.

<sup>218</sup> Deppermann, 285.

<sup>219</sup> Deppermann, 286.

Turks, Melchior Hoffman (referred to only by his initials) became a recurring character in her later visions. At times, Hoffman was in some sort of peril. In her eighty-eighth vision, Hoffman came toward Ursula with “a letter in hand and a work to accomplish,” and the two found themselves suddenly threatened by an angry ox.<sup>220</sup> In her eighty-ninth vision, a man drew a sword and apparently decapitated Hoffman.<sup>221</sup>

Other visions, however, emphasized Hoffman’s authority and his relationship to Ursula. In her hundred and fourth vision, she approached a house on his orders.<sup>222</sup> In her ninety eighth vision, which was recorded alongside her visions from 1530 to 1532, but ostensibly took place earlier, she claimed to have received a vision before she met Hoffman.

In the twenty-ninth year a man was placed before me and it was revealed to me through the glory of the Lord that this man would testify to my visions. Then M.H. came to me and I recognized him that very hour from the vision, and knew that he would be the witness, as the glory of the Lord had explained to me.<sup>223</sup>

Compared to Ursula’s other visions, this one is suspect. It is the only one of her visions that appears out of chronological order in her retelling. Although she claimed to have seen this vision in 1529, it did not appear in the 1530 Strasbourg edition of her visions. Nevertheless, its inclusion in the later collection served to cement Hoffman’s legitimacy as purveyor of the Josts’ visions and prophecies.

Finally, Ursula’s hundred and sixth vision made a prediction concerning the future of Hoffman and his family; she claimed that the glory of the Lord had revealed to her that Hoffman’s wife was pregnant, and that she would give birth to a little boy, who would become an apostle of the Lord, an office Hoffman also claimed for himself.<sup>224</sup> Whether Hoffman’s wife

---

<sup>220</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4v.

<sup>221</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4v.

<sup>222</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1v.

<sup>223</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1v.

<sup>224</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K2r.

did indeed give birth is not known. Hoffman's surviving writings are theological treatises rather than correspondence, and the records of Strasbourg's preachers and magistrates contain very few details of his personal life.<sup>225</sup>

Ursula's visions from 1531 to 1532 also began to include other characters whom she apparently knew in real life. Her ninety-second vision showed Caspar Hedio, one of Strasbourg's reformers, violently attacked while preaching in the cathedral.<sup>226</sup> In her ninety-fourth vision, as she attempted to wrangle bread dough that overflowed its receptacle, she received assistance from a man named Sigmund.<sup>227</sup> Finally, in her hundred and fifth vision, she identified two characters: a man referred to as A, who wanted to help Ursula and her children, and "the wife of Master M.Z."—Katharina Schutz Zell, the wife of the Strasbourg reformer Mathis Zell—who threw two snakes at her and told her to feed them to her children.<sup>228</sup> While Hedio and Schutz Zell are easily identifiable, the exact identity of Sigmund and A is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, the fact that she gave them names and initials rather than simply referring to the figures she saw as unidentified men and women, as she did in the vast majority of her visions, suggests that they were known at least to her, if not to the other Strasbourg Melchiorites.

Another difference between Ursula's earlier visions and her post-1530 visions was the greater prevalence of domestic imagery. In her ninety-first vision, she prepared bread dough and set it out to rise, but encountered difficulty when she realized that she did not have access to an oven and the bread dough had an unusual texture. She then heard a voice telling her to let the dough stand for three days.<sup>229</sup> She returned to this scenario in her ninety-fourth vision. She had

---

<sup>225</sup> Of Hoffman's family, little is known other than the fact that he had a wife and at least one child before his arrival in Strasbourg. Hoffman and Karlstadt, *Dialogus*, fol. A ii v.

<sup>226</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1r.

<sup>227</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1r.

<sup>228</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K2r.

<sup>229</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4v.



found an oven and the dough had risen, so much so that it nearly reached the cathedral. She was able to gather the dough and bake it with help from a man named Sigmund.<sup>230</sup> In her hundred and fifth vision, although she originally appeared confused or put off when Katharina Schutz Zell threw snakes to her, she then encountered a man who taught her how to remove the poison from the snakes and cook them in oil.<sup>231</sup> At times, however, these domestic images took a disturbing and unnatural turn. In her eighty-eighth vision, she saw a crowd picking apples, seemingly unaware that the apples were foul. When they touched the apples, the apples then remained glued to their fingers and dangled there.<sup>232</sup>

Most of her later visions, however, were still quite similar to her earlier visions, and many of the themes and images from 1525 and 1529 re-emerged in her visions from 1530 to 1532. Warfare, violence and destruction were prevalent in several of the visions. In her eighty-fifth vision, she saw an army of lords riding through Strasbourg two by two, wielding unsheathed swords. These lords were followed by a host of servants, who were more peaceful.<sup>233</sup> She again saw an army riding in her hundred and ninth vision, this time with bloody weapons.<sup>234</sup> In her ninety-second vision, in which an angry mob slew Hedio and his listeners, “so much blood was poured out into the cathedral that they waded in blood that went past their shoes.”<sup>235</sup> Death similarly pervaded her hundred and first vision, in which she saw many people lying dead on the ground, surrounded by a crowd of onlookers.<sup>236</sup>

---

<sup>230</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1r.

<sup>231</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K2r.

<sup>232</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4v.

<sup>233</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4v.

<sup>234</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K2r.

<sup>235</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1r.

<sup>236</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1v.

She also saw several visions with images drawn from biblical apocalyptic literature. In an echo of her seventy-fourth vision, her hundred and eleventh vision showed the moon darkened and the sun the colour of blood.<sup>237</sup> Other images from apocalyptic literature were more hopeful. In her ninetieth vision, as she had in her tenth vision, she saw a crowd of people taken up into heaven.<sup>238</sup> Her eighty-sixth vision, meanwhile, bore a strong resemblance to the description of Mary in Revelation 12; in Ursula's vision, Mary "stood in the heavens in the sun...and had the moon under her feet and a crown of brightness on her forehead, and she carried her child."<sup>239</sup>

The black men, or Turks, also reappeared several times in Ursula's later visions. In her ninety-fifth vision, she saw a regal black man in a short robe—perhaps the lord of the Turks from her seventy-ninth vision. The man was armed with a knife which he waved around, but did not unsheathe.<sup>240</sup> In her hundred and second vision, she saw a small crowd of people who wore short robes like the regal black man, as well as Turkish hats. Another crowd soon appeared and chased the first away.<sup>241</sup> Another vision featuring black men was more abstract in its imagery; in her hundredth vision, she saw a meadow full of Scotch roses. These roses twice transformed into a host of black men, only to become roses again.<sup>242</sup>

The figure of the handsome young man also recurred in two of Ursula's later visions. In her eighty-fourth vision, as in her earlier visions, he appeared in a positive light; he attempted to walk the narrow road that led to salvation and, after some opposition, succeeded.<sup>243</sup> In her eighty-ninth vision, however, he posed a threat to Hoffman, whom he appeared to decapitate, and

---

<sup>237</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fols. K2r-K2v.

<sup>238</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J4v.

<sup>239</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J4r.

<sup>240</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. K1r.

<sup>241</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. K1v.

<sup>242</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. K1v.

<sup>243</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J4r.

therefore also by association to the Josts and the other Strasbourg Melchiorites.<sup>244</sup> In contrast to the young man, however, the figure of the beautifully dressed young woman appeared several times in Ursula's later visions, with generally positive associations. In her eighty-seventh vision, the woman wore a white dress and was followed by a crowd of headless pilgrims bearing staffs.<sup>245</sup> In her hundred and second vision, the beautiful young woman formed part of a group that seemed about to be beheaded, but ultimately escaped unharmed.<sup>246</sup> In her ninety-ninth vision, the beautiful young woman had the appearance of a bride and wore a wreath of roses, a symbol commonly associated with salvation in Ursula's visions. The roses on the wreath then transformed into long spears.<sup>247</sup>

The image of the wreath also recurred in Ursula's earliest vision from 1530. In this vision, she saw a narrow road—a symbol of the path to salvation—and, in front of the narrow road, two gravediggers who wore green wreaths. A young man then approached and wished to walk on the narrow road. At this, the gravediggers attempted to block his path and to toss him into a grave. The young man, however, prevailed, and continued to walk on the narrow path. As an apparent punishment for their actions, the gravediggers' wreaths were then consumed by fire.<sup>248</sup> This vision seems to suggest that Ursula believed that it was possible for people to lose their salvation if they began to actively thwart the work of God.

Ursula also returned to images of light and darkness. Her final recorded vision particularly exemplified the contrast between the two.

I saw in the thirty-first year after Saint Martin's Day, [standing] on a bulwark in Strasbourg looking out over the city wall, that there was a great darkness to the left side in the direction of the setting sun, and many people looked at the

---

<sup>244</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4v.

<sup>245</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4r.

<sup>246</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1v.

<sup>247</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1v.

<sup>248</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J4r.

darkness. And on the right side I saw that there stood a beautiful garden with two trees that bore beautiful blood red apples, and onto this same garden the sun shone in beautiful brilliance. And there was a small little host who had turned themselves to the trees to look at the trees and the apples, and a voice said to me: you will yet see great wonders. And everywhere around in was winter, and only in the garden was it summer. And it discouraged me greatly that the aforementioned large host did not wish to look at and behold the beautiful sun and the garden.<sup>249</sup>

This vision served as a fitting conclusion to Ursula's visions. It exemplified the views she held along with her fellow Melchiorites. Although there was great darkness in their world, God remained at work for those who had eyes to see. Far too few, however, had eyes to see, and instead they ignored the work of God and kept their eyes fixed on the darkness. Ursula grieved this, but could not prevent it. She could only bear witness to what she had seen.

Lienhard was not as prolific as Ursula during the period from 1530 to 1532, but he also had visions during this time, several of them featuring Melchior Hoffman. In one vision, dated from 1531, he saw

a lovely and beautiful wall, this same wall was made of shining brilliance, and I saw that on top of this wall was nothing but heads or faces. Then I had a thought of M.H., whether I might see or find his face there. And I wanted to look for this very diligently. Then I saw that these aforementioned faces, which had grown out of the aforementioned wall, all looked like M.H. And the length of the wall the faces were dead, and the dead faces also looked like M.H., except for the fact that they were not alive. And then one after another they became alive and all laughed in my direction in a friendly way with great joy.<sup>250</sup>

This vision made such an impression on the Strasbourg Melchiorites that Obbe Phillips mentioned it decades later in his confession, although he misattributed the vision to either Ursula Jost or Barbara Rebstock.<sup>251</sup> In another vision, Lienhard saw Hoffman attempting to sleep on a

---

<sup>249</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. K2v.

<sup>250</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F1v.

<sup>251</sup> Obbe Phillips, "A Confession" in Williams and Mergal, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 212; Samuel Cramer and Fredrick Pijper (eds.), *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica VII: Zestiende-Eeuwsche Schrijvers over de Geschiedenis der Oudste Doopsgezinden Hier te Lande* (The Hague: Nijhoof, 1910), 126.

pile of sticks, apparently with some discomfort.<sup>252</sup> Finally, in a vision that he received three nights in a row, though he did not expound on its significance, he attempted to clear away piles of rubble. This rubble had been left behind by “the teachers,” and he laboured and laboured at the urging of a fellow worker until he felt weak and lame.<sup>253</sup>

In addition to receiving visions in 1531, Lienhard also once again attempted to convey a message in a semi-public setting. At some point circa 1530, most likely around the same time as Hoffman, Lienhard had become convinced of the validity of adult baptism. He approached Mathis Zell, whom he had already approached in 1525, in order to convince him to begin to baptize adults. This meeting took place in the presence of unnamed witnesses, who were seated with Zell when Lienhard approached him.<sup>254</sup> Zell, however, did not share Hoffman’s unreserved enthusiasm and reverence for Lienhard’s prophecies and rejected his entreaty. Lienhard had found a supporter in Hoffman, who was poised to share his prophecies with followers across North Germany and the Netherlands, but he continued to struggle to gain a following in Strasbourg itself.

### **The 1532 Deventer Edition of Lienhard and Ursula’s Visions**

When he published Ursula’s visions in 1530, Hoffman assured his readers that a printed edition of Lienhard’s prophecies would soon follow. The fulfilment of this promise took two years. Hoffman had to flee Strasbourg in 1530, and he may not have finished compiling the text of Lienhard’s prophecies before his departure. In December of 1531 the Strasbourg Rat noted that Hoffman had recently returned to the city and resolved to arrest him.<sup>255</sup> Hoffman left the city

---

<sup>252</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F2r.

<sup>253</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F2r.

<sup>254</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F2r.

<sup>255</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 355.

before they could find him, but this brief visit may have provided him with the opportunity to finish gathering materials from the Josts in preparation for his edition of Lienhard's prophecies. In 1532, using the press of Albert Paffraet in Deventer, Hoffman published Lienhard's prophecies alongside a new and expanded edition of Ursula's visions. Paffraet, who had inherited his press from his father Richard, had begun his career by publishing mostly Latin works, including Roman texts, writings by Church Fathers and medieval theologians, and contemporary humanist texts. His partnership with Hoffman in 1532 marked the beginning of an extended phase in which Paffraet published radical Anabaptist literature.<sup>256</sup>

Lienhard's prophecies appeared under the title *Ein Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey des Linhart Josten van Strossburg (A Truthful, Exalted, and Firm Prophecy by Lienhard Jost of Strasbourg)*. The extended title told the story of how the Spirit of God had sent Lienhard to testify to Strasbourg's leaders and promised details of future happenings. Some of Lienhard's prophecies had already been fulfilled, and, the title page assured readers, the others would soon come to pass as well. Hoffman also included the oft-repeated Scriptural observation that prophets are always rejected in their hometown and the exhortation that those who had ears to hear should hear.<sup>257</sup>

Hoffman introduced Lienhard's prophecies with a lengthy foreword. He began with a reiteration of the ideas expressed in his foreword to Ursula's visions. God desired to reveal His will and the details of future events to his people and, since time immemorial, he had done so through prophets. He did this in order that his people might turn only to him for counsel and

---

<sup>256</sup> Paffraet was also the first printer to print works by David Joris. He stood trial in 1544 and was imprisoned for five months for printing Joris' works. See Paul Valkema Blouw, "Printers to the 'Arch-Heretic' David Joris" in *Dutch Typography in the Sixteenth Century: The Collected Works of Paul Valkema Blouw* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 508-509.

<sup>257</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A1r.

glorify him alone.<sup>258</sup> Hoffman reiterated his earlier condemnation of “fortune tellers... practitioners of black arts, [and] the science of astronomy” as vain and evil counterfeits of God’s gift of prophecy.<sup>259</sup> He began by expounding on the prophecies found in Scripture. In the Old Testament, the prophets declared things that would come to pass, and they happened as God had said.<sup>260</sup> God continued this pattern in the New Testament, and Revelation, the final book of the New Testament, was especially relevant to Hoffman’s readers since it described the Last Days, in which they now lived.<sup>261</sup>

God’s revelation, however, did not end with the book of Revelation. With the Last Days finally at hand, God had once again awakened prophets to reveal his will to his people. Lienhard Jost, Hoffman assured his readers, was one of these prophets, to whom God revealed pictures and prophecies and shadows of things to come.<sup>262</sup> Lienhard and God’s other prophets faced tremendous opposition, as the forces of darkness tried vehemently to prevent them from revealing God’s truth. In time, however, Hoffman was confident that, just as he had unlocked the secrets of John’s Revelation, the meanings of both Josts’ prophecies would be fully revealed, and even more prophets would rise up.<sup>263</sup>

Hoffman then described the challenges Lienhard faced as he attempted to prophesy to Strasbourg’s political and religious leaders. They dismissed him because of his simplicity and lack of education, just as Hoffman’s Lutheran critics had dismissed him. In fact, the illiterate Lienhard was at a far greater disadvantage, since Hoffman could at least read and write in

---

<sup>258</sup> Melchior Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A1v.

<sup>259</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A1v.

<sup>260</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A1v.

<sup>261</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. A1v – A2r.

<sup>262</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A2r.

<sup>263</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A2r.

German.<sup>264</sup> Strasbourg was full of highly educated men, whom the world might have deemed more likely recipients of divine revelation, but their pride and status was in fact a mark against them. God, as he always had, saw past appearances and looked at the heart, and he preferred to work with those who were simple, humble, and open to his leading.<sup>265</sup>

Magisterial Protestants of all stripes, however, had proven themselves closed to God's truth in Hoffman's estimation. The Lutherans and Zwinglians had no true faith or Gospel and had become nothing but false witnesses, blind men leading other blind men. Hoffman promised to expound on his criticisms of the Lutherans and Zwinglians in a forthcoming commentary on Romans 9.<sup>266</sup> He objected particularly strenuously to the doctrine of predestination. The true gospel was, in every sense of the word, good news. God did not want anyone to be damned to hell, but rather desired that all should be saved. Yes, Adam's curse was far-reaching, but it was no match for Christ's blessing.<sup>267</sup> The Lutherans and Zwinglians, however, rejected this gospel. In fact, they had departed so far from it that they made God out to be "an abominable Satan."<sup>268</sup> Truly, Hoffman concluded, they committed blasphemy unequalled since the time of the apostles.<sup>269</sup>

The Lutherans' and Zwinglians' blasphemy caused suffering in two ways: they persecuted the prophets of God and they aroused God's wrath, which caused him to unleash plagues and other divine punishments in response.<sup>270</sup> Because of their blasphemy and pride, God rejected the learned magisterial reformers and chose instead to reveal himself to the simple folk,

---

<sup>264</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A2v.

<sup>265</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A2v.

<sup>266</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A2v.

<sup>267</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. A2v – A3r.

<sup>268</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A3r.

<sup>269</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A3r.

<sup>270</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. A3r – A3v.



“students who [could] be taught by [God] alone” and who would give him all glory and honour rather than seek it for themselves.<sup>271</sup> The proud blasphemers rejected the words of the Josts and other prophets of God and insisted that the Scriptures they already possessed were sufficient, but Hoffman dismissed this as vanity and pride. Access to the words of Scripture was not enough; it had not prevented the Jews from killing Christ, and it did not now prevent the Lutherans and Zwinglians from persecuting God’s prophets.<sup>272</sup>

Hoffman then laid out the role he believed Strasbourg would play in the Last Days. Lienhard had been sent first to Strasbourg, because Strasbourg was the true New Jerusalem. Out of Strasbourg, the 144, 000 apostles of Christ would travel into all the earth and preach truth.<sup>273</sup> Hoffman understood that his readers might be skeptical. After all, had not Strasbourg’s magistrates and reformers rejected the truth? He assured his readers that they need not worry. After all, the original Jerusalem had also been home to Caiaphas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod, and still the gospel had flourished.<sup>274</sup> Hoffman predicted that the faithful from across Egypt—the Holy Roman Empire—would flock to Strasbourg to live under the banner of godly righteousness. Nevertheless, Strasbourg’s status as the New Jerusalem put the city in a precarious position. The great dragon, or Pharaoh—the Kaiser, though Hoffman dared not say so explicitly—would come against the city. In the end, however, he would be destroyed, as the Pharaoh in Exodus had been when he tried to fight Moses and the Israelites.<sup>275</sup>

---

<sup>271</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A3v.

<sup>272</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A4r.

<sup>273</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. A4r – A4v. Deppermann, who was unaware of the survival of Lienhard’s prophecies, believed, based on the short excerpt recorded by Strasbourg’s magistrates, that it was Lienhard who had convinced Hoffman that Strasbourg was the New Jerusalem. In fact, the ideas summarized in the excerpt are drawn entirely from Hoffman’s foreword, and Hoffman appears to have come up with the Strasbourg as New Jerusalem formulation on his own. See Deppermann, 184; Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 186.

<sup>274</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A4v.

<sup>275</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. A4v – A5r.

Hoffman then returned to the theme of the contrast between God’s true and faithful prophets and the Lutherans and Zwinglians. God’s true prophets diligently sowed the seeds of the gospel in preparation of the harvest, but the seed the Lutherans sowed was “sand, refuse, chaff, blood, leaven, and accursed human teaching.”<sup>276</sup> In fact, the Lutherans and Zwinglians were no better than “the uncircumcised Gentiles of Tyre and Sidon.”<sup>277</sup> In part due to the trouble they caused him, Hoffman’s publication of Lienhard’s prophecies had taken years longer than he planned. However, the timing of their publication was perhaps fortuitous. After all, Lienhard had prophesied that, when his daughter Elizabeth turned fourteen, God would reveal himself to the world in all his glory and bring joy to his people, and the time for the fulfillment was nearly at hand, since Elizabeth would turn fourteen in 1532.<sup>278</sup> Despite the mockery Hoffman and the Josts had encountered, Hoffman was confident that everything the Josts had prophesied would come to pass, and that not one letter of their visions and prophecies would fail to find fulfillment. After all, he considered the Josts’ prophecies equivalent to Scripture—they were “worth as much as Isaiah or Jeremiah.”<sup>279</sup>

Lienhard’s prophecies followed Hoffman’s foreword, in a very different format from Ursula’s visions. Whereas Ursula had mostly listed the things she saw and heard, with very few biographical details, Lienhard narrated his prophetic autobiography. In twenty-three chapters he told this story of his prophetic ministry: his initial calling, his attempts to prophesy to the magistrates, all that he saw and heard during his confinement, and the brief resumption of his prophecies in 1525. To this he appended an account of his attempt to convince Zell to baptize adults, a few visions, and an explanation of how he experienced divine revelation. At the

---

<sup>276</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A5v.

<sup>277</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A5v.

<sup>278</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A6r.

<sup>279</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A6v.

conclusion of Lienhard's visions, Paffraet included a woodcut of an angel flying over a city and its surrounding countryside.<sup>280</sup>

A second edition of Ursula's visions, entitled *Eyn Wore Prophettin zu disser Letzsten Zeitt* (*A True Prophetess in these Last Days*) followed, complete with a second title page and foreword from Hoffman. The title page reiterated the exhortation that those with ears to hear should hear, and also quoted Joel 2:28/Acts 2:17, a verse that described men and women alike as recipients of divine revelation and was particularly applicable to the husband-wife pair of Lienhard and Ursula.<sup>281</sup> Hoffman's foreword began in much the same way that his foreword to Lienhard's prophecies had. He described how, after he published the first edition, the *schriftgelehrten* (an epithet used by religious radicals to decry evangelical scholars, whose learning rendered them so consumed with the letter of the law that they missed its spirit) had mocked and attempted to suppress them. That God should show such favour to Ursula, a simple, illiterate peasant's wife with eight children, came as a surprise to some. After all, not only was Strasbourg full of puffed up learned men, there were also several haughty and proud learned women who might have fancied themselves the perfect recipients of divine revelation.<sup>282</sup> Those who dismissed Ursula's revelations, however, did so at their own peril. God had revealed these visions to Ursula in the exact same way as he had revealed the plan of the tabernacle to Moses, the contents of his epistles to Paul, and the book of Revelation to John.<sup>283</sup>

Hoffman then moved from a defense of Ursula's social status to a defense of her gender. He provided a comprehensive list of biblical prophetesses as proof that God had always made a

---

<sup>280</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F2v.

<sup>281</sup> Melchior Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F3r.

<sup>282</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F3r. This is a possible reference to Katharina Schutz Zell, the most vocal of Strasbourg's evangelical women.

<sup>283</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4r.

practice of revealing himself to women as well as men. Hoffman defined the term prophetess so broadly as to encompass nearly all the principal women of the Bible. He began his list with Eve, and went on to include Sarah, Rebekah, Hagar, Myriam, Deborah, Jael, Samson's mother, Hannah, Esther, Judith, and the mother of the Maccabees.<sup>284</sup> Curiously, despite the fact that the biblical text explicitly refers to her as a prophetess, he omitted Huldah, the prophetess who advised King Josiah in 2 Chronicles 34. From the New Testament, Hoffman cited the examples of Mary, Anna, Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, and the daughters of Philip.<sup>285</sup> Since the days of the New Testament, moreover, twelve more Gentile prophetesses had been recorded in the histories.<sup>286</sup> Therefore, Hoffman saw no reason to exclude women from the prophetic ministry—after all, there was no male or female in Christ, and even the apostle Paul had given instructions on how women could prophesy in church. Hoffman also asserted that women could become teachers in the church, provided no enlightened men were present to do the work.<sup>287</sup>

Hoffman then urged his readers, as he had in the 1530 edition of Ursula's visions, to seek out the ability to discern the spirits, that they might recognize God's prophets and not be led astray into blasphemy.<sup>288</sup> Finally, he closed with a meditation on faith and works that echoed the views expressed in Ursula's vision of the barrel, which emphasized the necessity of both faith and works.<sup>289</sup> Faith divorced from works, according to Hoffman, was meaningless. God rewarded people according to their works, and true faith was "the faith that obediently [worked] through real love to bring the whole will of God to fruition."<sup>290</sup> Those who displayed this would

---

<sup>284</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. F4r – F4v.

<sup>285</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4v.

<sup>286</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4v.

<sup>287</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4v.

<sup>288</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4v.

<sup>289</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. H3v.

<sup>290</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G1r.

be saved “by their deeds,” and for Hoffman these deeds particularly included enthusiastically seeking and practicing all the gifts of the Spirit.<sup>291</sup>

Ursula’s visions themselves contained all seventy-seven visions from the 1530 Strasbourg edition, although some of the visions had been subdivided such that the repeated visions numbered eighty-four in total. The only significant change to the text of these visions occurred in her seventy-eighth vision (seventy-second in the 1530 edition.) While the 1530 text simply described a man who rode a white horse, the 1532 text specified that the man in question was a “Casper S”—mostly likely Caspar Schwenckfeld.<sup>292</sup> This fit the pattern of Ursula’s later visions, which more frequently identified particular individuals. In addition to these eighty-four repeated visions, the 1532 text also included twenty-nine previously unpublished visions from 1530 and 1531.

Hoffman did not write an afterword as he had for the 1530 edition of Ursula’s visions, but he did append a brief collection of other prophecies he considered important. Many of the other prophecies Hoffman listed arose from sources in or near Strasbourg, and had particular implications for the city. A prophet named Bundt Hans, who lived two miles from Strasbourg, prophesied that the city would receive the Emperor’s favour, but also that a plague of boils would soon come.<sup>293</sup> A prophet from the nearby village of Eckelsheim prophesied that the Emperor would come against Strasbourg, and that both the Emperor and Ferdinand would be beheaded.<sup>294</sup> This same prophet also predicted that the Peasants’ War would resume shortly, and that this would result in numerous deaths of both priests and peasants. The Italian prophet Venturinus, whose February 1530 visit to Strasbourg had overlapped with Hoffman’s stay there,

---

<sup>291</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G1r.

<sup>292</sup> Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C v r; Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3r.

<sup>293</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K3v.

<sup>294</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K3v.

called on Luther to come to Strasbourg in order to learn the truth and called on Strasbourg to repent, lest it be destroyed.<sup>295</sup> Hoffman closed his compendium of prophecies with an expression of praise to God.<sup>296</sup>

### **The Josts and Hoffman After 1532**

Hoffman used Paffraet's press twice more in 1532, once to publish a commentary on Romans 9 and once to publish *Van der waren hochprachtlichen eynigen magestadt gottes / vnnd vann der worhaftigen menschwerdung des ewigen wortzs vnd Suns des allerhochsten*, or *Concerning the True, Glorious, and Unique Majesty of God and the True Incarnation of the Eternal Word and Son of the Most High*, a tract that articulated his unique Christology and drew in part of Ursula's visions in order to substantiate his theological views. Hoffman had begun to describe elements of his Christology in print near the end of his 1530 commentary on Revelation, but it was in this tract that he comprehensively articulated it. Christ, human though he was, had in no way received his human body from any of his flawed and sinful human ancestors—not Adam, nor Abraham, nor David, nor Mary.<sup>297</sup> References to Jesus as the Son of Man and as a descendant of Adam or of David were to be understood spiritually and metaphorically, and Mary was merely a vessel for Christ. Hoffman argued, on the basis of the essential unity of the persons of the Trinity and of the angel's words to Joseph following the Annunciation and the beginning of Mary's pregnancy—the angel had specified that this child was the child of the Most High, but

---

<sup>295</sup> Deppermann, 185; Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K3r.

<sup>296</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K4r.

<sup>297</sup> Melchior Hoffman, Voolstra, "Van der Waren Hochprachtlichen Eynigen Magestadt Gottes und vann der Worhaftigen Menschwerdung des Ewigen Worttzs und des Aller Hochsten, ein Kurtze Zeucknus und Anweisung Allen Liebhabern der Ewigen Worheit. (1532)" in S. Voolstra, *Het Woord is Flees Geworden: De Melchioritisch-Menniste Incarnatieleer* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1982), 242.

not that he was Mary's child—that Christ's human flesh was wholly unlike any other human flesh, but was rather fully divine and uncontaminated.<sup>298</sup>

Hoffman did not consider his doctrine of the Incarnation ancillary to Christian theology, but rather considered it a core theological truth of Christianity, obscured by the devil for centuries until Hoffman recovered it. Those who diminished Christ by making him out to be a flesh and blood descendant of sinners were “antichrists” and gave “false testimony.”<sup>299</sup> Those who argued that Christ had not fully supplied his own, pure flesh, he concluded, might as well deny the crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of God Himself and argue that these things had happened to a mere human.<sup>300</sup> For Hoffman, nothing less than the divinity of Christ was a stake.

Hoffman supported his Christological ideas not only with scriptural passages, but also with both of Ursula's Trinitarian visions: her twelfth vision, in which she saw God the Father holding the Son on his lap while the Holy Spirit hovered above them, and her twenty-sixth vision, in which she saw a light that divided itself into three parts before merging again into one light.<sup>301</sup> Hoffman particularly depended on the latter vision, with its description of the similar substance of Father, Son, and Spirit, to make his Christological argument. It is unclear whether Ursula intended for her visions to be used in this manner, or even shared Hoffman's Christology at all. It certainly seems unlikely that, when she first had these visions in 1524 and 1525, she interpreted them in this manner—even Hoffman himself had not yet reached his Christological

---

<sup>298</sup> Hoffman, “Waren Hochprachtlichen Eynigen Magestadt Gottes,” 232-233.

<sup>299</sup> Hoffman, “Waren Hochprachtlichen Eynigen Magestadt Gottes,” 234.

<sup>300</sup> Hoffman, “Waren Hochprachtlichen Eynigen Magestadt Gottes,” 240-241.

<sup>301</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. G3r; H1r. Hoffman uses the numbering from the 1532 edition of Ursula's visions rather than the numbering from the 1530 edition (in which these were the eleventh and twenty-second visions), which suggests that he published *Van der Waren Hochprachtlichen Eynigen Magestadt Gottes* after he published the 1532 Deventer edition of the Josts' prophetic writings.

conclusions. The visions seem to be informed primarily by a basic understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, and could be equally compatible with orthodox formulations of the Incarnation. Nevertheless, in enlisting Ursula's visions in support of his argument, however tenuously, Hoffman cemented the symbiotic relationship between prophet and teacher. He simultaneously bolstered Ursula's authority by promulgating her visions and cemented his own authority by claiming the support of modern-day prophets and establishing his interpretation of their words as the true spiritual interpretation.

Hoffman's followers enthusiastically adopted the Josts' visions and prophecies and at least some Melchiorites appear to have studied their contents diligently. In a 1533 letter to the Strasbourg Rat, Hoffman's associate Cornelis Poldermann claimed that the Netherlands were full of the Josts' writings.<sup>302</sup> He evidenced his own familiarity with their contents by reproaching the Strasbourg Rat on the basis of Lienhard's account of his dealings with them. In 1523 God had called them, through Lienhard, to take up the banner of godly righteousness, but they had failed to heed God's call and had dismissed Lienhard's spiritual insight as insanity.<sup>303</sup> The Anabaptist leader David Joris, when he came to dialogue with Strasbourg's Melchiorites in 1537, also showed familiarity with Lienhard's prophecies and cited them correctly on three occasions during his debate with Peter Tasch and Johann Eisenburg.<sup>304</sup>

As for the Josts themselves, Lienhard at least remained active for several years after the publication of his prophecies. Ursula may well have died not long after the Deventer edition appeared in print. Very few of her post-1532 visions have survived, and by 1539 Lienhard had

---

<sup>302</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 213.

<sup>303</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 213.

<sup>304</sup> Marc Lienhard, Stephen F. Nelson, and Hans Georg Rott (eds.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer Band XV: Elsass III Teil, Stadt Straßburg 1536-1542* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1986), 220-221; 224.



remarried.<sup>305</sup> Lienhard, for his part, supported Hoffman after the latter returned to Strasbourg in 1533 and was imprisoned. He acted as a courier for Hoffman and delivered a book to the Strasbourg Rat on his behalf.<sup>306</sup> In late June 1533 the Rat decided to question Lienhard Jost, though this does not seem to have resulted in any serious reprisals for him. He also continued to prophesy. A 1537 document compiled by Strasbourg's *Wiedertäuferherren*, the committee of magistrates that oversaw dealings with Strasbourg's Anabaptists and other sectarians, listed important Melchiorite prophets and prophecies and included several new visions from Lienhard. In the one of these visions, he saw that the "teaching of the Pope and the emperor" returned to Strasbourg and this resulted in great and bloody conflict between the ruling class and their subjects.<sup>307</sup> In another, he saw fire that fell from heaven but did not injure anyone and made way for a new earth, and in yet another he saw that the Lord appeared to his Melchiorite brothers in the Strasbourg temple (he likely meant the cathedral) and Lienhard successfully interceded on their behalf.<sup>308</sup> The document also listed Ursula as a prophetess and described her vision of the violent outbreak during Hedio's sermon, as well as a new vision of a man in armor on a horse, who rode towards the cathedrals and appeared to want to kill the residents of Strasbourg and Bern. It also attributed to her a prediction that the Emperor would threaten Strasbourg's sects.<sup>309</sup> Given that the vision of Hedio, at least, was several years old, the presence of Ursula on the list is not necessarily an indication that she was still alive in 1537.

---

<sup>305</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 317. George Huntston Williams, for inscrutable reasons, dates Ursula's death to 1530, which, in light of the rediscovery of the second edition of her visions, is impossible. See Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 392.

<sup>306</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 15.

<sup>307</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 110.

<sup>308</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 111.

<sup>309</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 112.

Lienhard also took part, along with the Strasbourg prophetess Barbara Rebstock, and the Melchiorite leaders Peter Tasch and Johann Eisenburg, in a 1538 disputation with David Joris, who attempted, unsuccessfully, to convince the Strasbourg Melchiorites to accept his leadership. Lienhard was often quiet during the disputation, according to Joris' account, but the few times he did speak revealed the clear divide in Melchiorite circles between the role of the prophet and the role of the interpreter. Lienhard avowed that, although God had given him many prophecies, he had initially understood very little. However, "through the help of the brothers, [his prophecies had] been opened and released to [him.]"<sup>310</sup> Joris' account also suggests that, in the intervening years between 1532 and 1538, Lienhard may have acquired some rudimentary literacy, since Joris referred to texts signed in Lienhard's handwriting.<sup>311</sup>

Lienhard parted ways with Hoffman before the latter died in prison in 1543. In 1539, Lienhard and his second wife Agnes, along with many of Strasbourg's other Melchiorites, recanted Anabaptism and agreed to rejoin the state church.<sup>312</sup> He resurfaced only once more in the historical record, when in 1549 he spoke out in support of Strasbourg's preachers. His daughter Elizabeth, whose fourteenth birthday in 1532 was intended to usher in a new era in divine revelation, does not appear to have joined her father in his recantation, and she and her husband remained Anabaptists and even refused to marry in church as an act of protest against the human invention of church weddings.<sup>313</sup> She may even have shared her parents' prophetic gifts—the *Wiedertäuferherren's* 1537 list of Melchiorite prophets includes an Elsa, although her

---

<sup>310</sup> David Joris, "The Strasbourg Disputation, 1538" in *The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris*, translated by Gary Waite (Waterloo: Herald Press, 1994), 193; Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 173.

<sup>311</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 227.

<sup>312</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 317.

<sup>313</sup> Marc Lienhard, Stephen F. Nelson, and Hans Georg Rott, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer Band XVI: Elsass IV Teil, Stadt Straßburg 1543-1552* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1988), 36.

last name is not specified.<sup>314</sup> If she was the prophetess Elsa in question, however, there is no evidence that she continued to play a prophetic role after the Melchiorite congregation disbanded.

## **Conclusion**

The Josts and Melchior Hoffman were drawn to one another not only because of their compatible callings but also because of their similar self-perceptions. Hoffman had some advantages that the Josts did not have—literacy, greater means and mobility, and greater connections—but all three lacked the education and social capital many of their fiercest critics enjoyed. They saw themselves as uniquely called and gifted by God, but mocked, despised, and overlooked by earthly authorities. In their own defense, they came to view the things they lacked—education and power—as barriers to divine revelation. They reframed their very weaknesses as strength. Unencumbered by earthly wisdom and status, they could hear God more clearly and obey him more fully.

Although they were despised by the world, Hoffman managed to craft religious circles in which he and the Josts wielded influence and commanded respect. Ultimately, however, Hoffman allowed himself greater power than he did the Josts. Their words might bear the same authority as Isaiah's or Jeremiah's, but they still required Hoffman to filter, interpret, and expound upon them in order to make their true meaning clear to readers. Hoffman did not allow himself to be consistently guided by the Josts' words. If he had, he might have heeded Ursula's words on the necessity of suffering for Christ's followers and opted not to pause baptisms to save his followers' lives. Instead, the Josts' prophecies were tools he wielded to support his ideas.

---

<sup>314</sup> Lienhard et al, *Elsass III*, 115.

Ultimately, however, this is as true of Hoffman's approach to Scripture itself as it is of his approach to the Josts' visions. From his earliest writings on, Hoffman maintained a spiritualistic view of Scripture. He drew a clear distinction between the spirit of the text and the letter of the text, and emphasized the need for divine revelation in order to understand the text's true, hidden meaning.

In theory, this ability to interpret Scripture rightly was available to all those who sought and loved God. In practice however, by establishing himself as a true and faithful interpreter of the word of God—perhaps even the most faithful living interpreter of the word of God, given his self-identification with the prophet Elijah—Hoffman became the arbiter of which prophecies and which interpretations of Scripture were considered true in Melchiorite circles and which ones were considered Satanic falsehoods. Lienhard and Ursula Jost were able to reach a wider audience, despite the failure of earlier attempts at self-promotion on Lienhard's part, because Melchior Hoffman considered their visions divinely inspired and worth printing and promulgating. However, notwithstanding the advantages of joining forces with Hoffman, the Josts ultimately ceded the ability to interpret their own visions and discern their true meaning, and allowed Hoffman to assume that role instead. Hoffman considered both the Josts' prophecies and the Scripture inspired by God, to be sure, but without a clear sense of his own fallibility as an interpreter, he ultimately, though perhaps unwittingly, placed himself above both texts as the final human arbiter of their message. This gave Hoffman tremendous authority in Melchiorite circles for as long as he could convince his followers of the legitimacy of his claims to spiritual insight.

Ultimately, however, recognition of Hoffman's authority as an interpreter of Scripture began to wane even among his followers as the truth of his fallibility became clear. Despite

Hoffman's predictions, Christ failed to return and set up his kingdom on earth in 1533. Moreover, 1533 marked the beginning of Hoffman's imprisonment in Strasbourg, which lasted until his death in 1543. Without the mobility to visit his followers across the Low Countries and Northern Germany, Hoffman's influence began to wane and new leaders such as Jan Matthijs, David Joris, and Menno Simons rose up to replace him and form their own versions of Melchiorite Anabaptism. In 1539, even the Strasbourg Melchiorites broke rank with Hoffman and rejoined the city's Protestant Church. Hoffman remained convinced of the rightness of his interpretation of Scripture, but by the time of his death the circle of people willing to grant Hoffman the same authority he granted himself had all but disappeared.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: MEDIEVAL STRASBOURG: THE WORLD THAT SHAPED THE JOSTS**

The Josts' visions and prophecies provide very few details about their lives before 1522. It is therefore difficult to ascertain how old they were when their visions began, or even whether they spent their lives prior to that in Strasbourg. It seems likely, however, particularly given Lienhard's connection to Herrto Ludwig, that the city and its environs were the only home the couple knew. The city of Strasbourg was not only exceptional in the era of the Reformation, but also in the late medieval period. Until the thirteenth century, it was under both the temporal and spiritual control of the bishop of Strasbourg. In 1262, however, Strasbourg's citizens defeated the forces of the Bishop Walther of Geroldseck at the Battle of Hausbergen and Strasbourg became a free imperial city, ruled by a largely patrician class as well as, eventually, guild representatives.<sup>315</sup> Strasbourg's magistrates took an active interest in the religious life of the city—something that was true, no doubt, for kings and princes as well, but given the size of their dominion the effects were felt more locally. Religious life flourished in late medieval Strasbourg; new orders were founded, new rituals created, and new—and ambitious—religious artistic and architectural projects were undertaken. It was in this context, before the Reformation arrived in Strasbourg, that the Josts came of age and began to explore their own faith.

### **Religious Orders in Late Medieval Strasbourg**

---

<sup>315</sup> On the Battle of Hausbergen, see Attila Bányi, "Hausbergen, Battle of" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Medieval Warfare and Military Technology, Volume 1*, edited by Clifford J. Rogers, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 246-247.

Many different groups of secular and regular clergymen were active in medieval Strasbourg, including the members of the cathedral chapter and the collegiate chapters of St. Thomas and Young- and Old-Saint-Peter, Augustinians (established in 1265), Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites (1316), Hospitallers, Wilhemites, and Carthusians.<sup>316</sup> Both the Franciscan and Dominican orders had made inroads in the town from the 1220s onward. The Dominicans in particular thrived—though ongoing conflict with the magistracy and the cathedral chapter resulted twice in their expulsion from the city in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they garnered significant support from both powerful protectors outside Strasbourg and laypeople within Strasbourg—among them many women—who often preferred the Dominican convent to their local parish church for ecclesiastical rites such as confession and who supported the chapter financially.<sup>317</sup> As they became more established, the Dominicans relaxed their ideals of evangelical poverty and began to accept donations of land and buildings as sources of perpetual revenue, both inside and outside the city.<sup>318</sup>

In the fifteenth century, however, the Dominican friars' status and influence began to decline in Strasbourg, even as, for their male counterparts elsewhere and their female counterparts within the city, the century marked a period of reform and revitalization.<sup>319</sup> The fifteenth century also marked another period of high tension between the city's secular clergy and mendicant orders over the pastoral care of the laity. While secular clergy insisted that the

---

<sup>316</sup> For a full list, see Luzian Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte der Stadt Strassburg im Mittelalter, nach den Quellen Dargestellt* (Colmar: Alsatia Verlag, 1941), 69-85. On religious orders in medieval Strasbourg see also Francis Rapp et al., *Le Diocèse de Strasbourg* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1982), 52.

<sup>317</sup> Charlotte A. Stanford, "Architectural Rivalry as Civic Mirror: The Dominican Church and the Cathedral in Fourteenth-Century Strasbourg," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64:2 (June 2005): 186-188; Jakob Twinger von Koenigshoven, "Chronik" in *Die Chroniken der Oberrheinischen Städte* volume 2, edited by Karl Hegel (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1871), 733-735.

<sup>318</sup> On the state of the Dominicans' landholdings in 1419, see Sandrine Turck, *Les Dominicains à Strasbourg Entre Prêche, Prière et Mendicité (1224-1420)* (Strasbourg: Société Savante d'Alsace, 2002), 85-117.

<sup>319</sup> Turck, 204; Rapp et al., *Diocèse de Strasbourg*, 65.

laity ought to confess, attend Mass, and eventually be buried in their own parishes, the mendicant friars also offered these religious services and a substantial number of laypeople preferred them. The debate reached its peak over the question of the *ultimum vale*; parish priests charged increasingly exorbitant fees to those who requested burial outside their parish cemeteries. Eventually, Strasbourg's magistrates intervened and limited the fees for external burial to 15 *denarii*.<sup>320</sup>

The arrival of the Dominicans in Strasbourg also led to a marked increase in local options for women seeking the religious life. Prior to their arrival, there existed one possibility for such women: the canonesses of the Church of St. Stephen. Within three decades of the Dominicans' arrival in Strasbourg, however, they had founded seven nunneries: St. Mark, St. Catherine, St. Nicholas-in-Undis, St. John-in-Undis, St. Margaret, St. Elizabeth, and St. Agnes.<sup>321</sup> Initially, these convents accepted women without regard for financial means, but by the fourteenth century the financial requirements were too onerous for most women who did not come from noble or wealthy bourgeois families.<sup>322</sup> In contrast to its seven Dominican nunneries, late medieval Strasbourg was home to two Franciscan nunneries: St. Clara auf dem Rossmarkt and St. Clara auf dem Wörth. The two convents were plagued by scandal and failed to attract the city's elite women the way their Dominican counterparts did.<sup>323</sup> The Dominican women's houses continued to attract new recruits throughout the late Middle Ages. By the late fourteenth century, however, the city's female and male Dominicans had come into serious conflict. Many of the nuns from

---

<sup>320</sup> Charles Schmidt, *Histoire du Chapitre de St. Thomas de Strasbourg Pendant le Moyen Âge, Suivie d'un Recueil de Chartes* (Strasbourg: C.F. Schmidt, 1860), 158-159.

<sup>321</sup> Turck, 171; Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 87-88. St. John-in-Undis was closed in 1475 and its sisters joined the sisters of St. Mark.

<sup>322</sup> Turck, 174.

<sup>323</sup> Charlotte A. Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead in Late Medieval Strasbourg: the Cathedral's Book of Donors and its Use (1320-1521)* (London: Routledge, 2016), 250.



three convents—St. Mark, St. Catherine, and St. Nicholas-in-Undis—left their enclosures, accused the Dominican friars of financial and sexual impropriety, and demanded to be released from their spiritual authority. The city council sided with the nuns—many of whom were family members—but the Dominican order ultimately ordered the nuns to retain the friars as their confessors and spiritual directors.<sup>324</sup>

In addition to Dominican and Franciscan nuns, medieval Strasbourg was home to as many as 85 more informal beguine houses (though by the fifteenth century only some forty remained). The women in these houses not only supported themselves through manual labour—spinning, sewing, care for the sick—but also as professional mourners.<sup>325</sup> There were two types of houses for beguines in late medieval Strasbourg. *Gotshuser*, or houses of God, were home to beguines from poorer families while beguines from wealthier families belonged to *samenungen*, a name taken from the word for gathering or assembly.<sup>326</sup> In comparison to the forty or more *gotshuser* still in use in the fifteenth century, only three homes for beguines were classified as *samenungen*. While earlier in the medieval period the women of the *samenungen* had been pious followers of the Dominican mystic Johann Tauler, by the fifteenth century they had acquired a reputation for an excess of partying and gluttony.<sup>327</sup>

The beguines' male counterparts, the beghards, were less well-organized, but remained present in late medieval Strasbourg despite their condemnation at Council of Vienne in the early fourteenth century. They cared for the sick, assisted those awaiting capital punishment, and performed pilgrimages on behalf of others for a fee.<sup>328</sup> Both men and women could also join the

---

<sup>324</sup> Turck, 174-175.

<sup>325</sup> Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead*, 286; Hatt, *Ville du XVe Siècle*, 59-63.

<sup>326</sup> Hatt, *Ville du XVe Siècle*, 59.

<sup>327</sup> Hatt, *Ville du XVe Siècle*, 64.

<sup>328</sup> Hatt, *Ville du XVe Siècle*, 65.

Dominican and Franciscan orders as tertiaries, but if many men and women other than beguines did so in Strasbourg, the sources are silent, at least after the fifteenth century.<sup>329</sup> If Lienhard or Ursula had specific opinions about different religious orders, these opinions are not present in their visions and prophecies. Instead, these visions and prophecies evinced a general concern about the unholiness of celibacy and clergy's acquisition of wealth at the expense of the common people. Parts of Lienhard's story, however, do show a similarity to the story of St. Francis (particularly their public nudity and reception of the stigmata), which suggests that, regardless of whether or not Lienhard had any affinity for the Franciscans of his day, he might have been favourably disposed towards the order's founder.

### **Lay Piety and Religious Observance in Late Medieval Strasbourg**

Few individuals stand out as influential religious leaders in late medieval Strasbourg in the same way as Bucer, Capito, and Zell stand out for the sixteenth century. One notable exception is the Dominican mystic Meister Eckhart, who gained a significant following in Strasbourg in the early fourteenth century. Eckhart's message centered around a letting go of self and possessions in order to be rebuilt in the simple goodness of God.<sup>330</sup> While Eckhart retained the support of many influential Dominicans, he also faced inquisitorial investigation and, in 1329, a year after his death, Pope John XXII condemned many of his positions as heretical.<sup>331</sup>

Eckhart's mystical legacy carried on in his student, the Strasbourg Dominican (and native son) Johannes Tauler, who likewise attracted a substantial following. Among his followers was the Strasbourg patrician Rulman Merswin, who, like many of his fellow medieval Germans with

---

<sup>329</sup> Rapp et al., *Diocèse de Strasbourg*, 55.

<sup>330</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 137.

<sup>331</sup> Turck, 133.

mystical tendencies, referred to himself as a *Gottesfreund*, or friend of God. Merswin wrote a series of severe mystical tracts and, in 1367, he purchased an old Benedictine abbey in order to live in pious seclusion with other *Gottesfreunde*, assisted by four Dominican chaplains. In 1370, due to a difficult relationship with the Dominican chaplains, Merswin handed the cloister over to the Knights Hospitaller.<sup>332</sup> Merswin and his circle became a focal point in the translation, exchange, and even production of late medieval vernacular mystical texts.<sup>333</sup> Notwithstanding Merswin and the small and mostly elite group that joined him, however, the principal audience of both Eckhart and Tauler's mystical sermons—at least those that have survived—were the city's Dominican nuns and beguines, who received them enthusiastically.<sup>334</sup>

The beliefs, practices, and religious priorities of Strasbourg's ordinary residents in the medieval period can be difficult to ascertain, but the twentieth-century church historian Luzian Pflieger identified several important features of the religious practices and values of Strasbourg's lay residents: a focus of Christ's suffering and Passion, devotion to the Mass and the Eucharist (including, beginning in the late thirteenth century, celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi), and a particular devotion to Mary (who was, after all, the cathedral's namesake).<sup>335</sup> Among other saints, the cults of St. Catherine, St. Christopher, St. Joseph, and St. Anna, the mother of Mary, were especially popular in late medieval Strasbourg.<sup>336</sup> The veneration of the rosary and of relics was likewise important; the cathedral possessed a number of relics from medieval saints, including St. Sophia, St. Columba, and St. Odilia. On Candlemas, the relics formed the

---

<sup>332</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 140-141.

<sup>333</sup> See John Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 28-31.

<sup>334</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 136-138.

<sup>335</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 169-176.

<sup>336</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 178-179.

centerpiece of a procession between the cathedral and the Church of St. Thomas.<sup>337</sup> In addition to the relics housed in the cathedral, Strasbourg's churches were home to the remains of several other saints, from St. Aurelia, buried in the crypt of the parish church that bore her name, to St. Amandus, Strasbourg's first bishop, entombed in the Church of Old-Saint-Peter.<sup>338</sup>

The cathedral and the city's other parish churches were the primary centers of many religious practices and rituals in medieval Strasbourg. As a bare minimum, in accordance with the dictates of the Fourth Lateran Council, Strasbourg's lay Christians were required to confess to their parish priest and take the Eucharist once every year.<sup>339</sup> For Strasbourg's patrician class, worship in the cathedral was also intertwined with civic pride. After the citizens of Strasbourg gained independence from the bishop's temporal governance and became a free imperial city in the thirteenth century, they maintained the use of an *altare civium* (altar of the citizens) in the cathedral, the site of the first Mass said every day.<sup>340</sup>

Marian devotion was especially important in medieval Strasbourg. In the late thirteenth century the cathedral—specifically a sculpture of the Virgin Mary within the cathedral—even briefly became a pilgrimage destination. Reports that the statue had miraculously begun to sweat drew crowds who attested to healings, resurrections, and more, sometimes bestowed as soon as the pilgrim had vowed to journey to Strasbourg and at other times once they had reached their destination.<sup>341</sup> Even after the pilgrims had largely stopped coming, Strasbourg's citizens continued to perform rituals in the Virgin's honour. Chief among these was a Mass and ten-hour

---

<sup>337</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 57.

<sup>338</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 176; 179-180.

<sup>339</sup> Papal Encyclicals Online, "Fourth Lateran Council: 1215" *Papalencyclicals.net*, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm> (accessed 25 June 2018).

<sup>340</sup> Joseph Walter, "La Topographie de la Cathédrale au Moyen-Âge," *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 3 (1935): 60; Henry Kraus, *Gold Was the Mortar: The Economics of Cathedral Building* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1979), 117.

<sup>341</sup> See Francis Rapp, "La Cathédrale de Strasbourg: Sanctuaire de Pèlerinage?," *Bulletin de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 24 (2000): 131-138.

long procession in honour of Mary, attended by the most prominent members of the Strasbourg magistracy. Participants left the Cathedral, marched through the streets of Strasbourg bearing candles (the Dominicans also carried an image of Mary), and finally returned to the Cathedral again.<sup>342</sup>

Many of the important religious processions and ceremonies took place during Holy Week. On Holy Thursday, penitents gathered in front of the cathedral's south façade and engaged in public communal displays of repentance before crawling into the cathedral to receive absolution.<sup>343</sup> In St. Andrew's Chapel in the cathedral, Holy Week rituals included placing Christ in the Holy Sepulchre and commemorating the descent into hell and the Resurrection. The Sepulchre was the site of daily visits throughout the week.<sup>344</sup> Devotion to the Holy Sepulchre was popular in late medieval Strasbourg and, in the fourteenth century, there were at least five different monuments to the Holy Sepulchre in the cathedral and other churches around the city.<sup>345</sup> Another important Strasbourg Holy Week ritual was the re-enactment of the women's visit to Jesus' (empty) tomb on Easter Sunday morning in the Cathedral, with priests and deacons playing the women who visited the tomb and the angels who informed them of Christ's resurrection.<sup>346</sup> During Pentecost, forty days after the end of Holy Week, the people of the diocese processed into the cathedral bearing holy relics and singing hymns.<sup>347</sup>

---

<sup>342</sup> Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead*, 111.

<sup>343</sup> Nina Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City: Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 235.

<sup>344</sup> Walter, 52.

<sup>345</sup> Victor Beyer, *La Sculpture Strasbourgeoise au Quatorzième Siècle* (Strasbourg: Compagnie des Arts Photomécaniques, 1955), 27-40.

<sup>346</sup> Charlotte A. Stanford, "From Bishop's Grave to Holy Grave in the Construction of Strasbourg Cathedral's St. Catherine's Chapel," *Gesta* 46:1 (December 2007): 74.

<sup>347</sup> Murray A. Cowie and Marian L. Cowie, "Geiler von Kaysersberg and Abuses in Fifteenth-Century Strasbourg," *Studies in Philology* 58: 3 (July 1961): 490.

While many of these public rituals and processions were common across Catholic Europe, others were unique to Strasbourg itself. After a 1356 earthquake devastated the lower Rhine on St. Luke's Day (18 October), Strasbourg's magistrates organized an annual procession. The members of the Rat processed through the city wearing penitential robes and carrying candles, which they consecrated to the Virgin Mary. After the procession and accompanying celebratory Mass, they donated their penitential robes, along with bread specially made for the occasion (called St. Luke's bread) to the needy.<sup>348</sup>

Particular moments of strain such as the Black Death prompted additional unsanctioned religious rituals in the city. The chronicle of Fritsche Closener, completed in 1362, details the arrival of 200 flagellants in the city in 1349. They marched through the city singing hymns and calling for repentance, and they publicly scourged themselves outside the city limits. They encouraged the people of Strasbourg to join them for a fee.<sup>349</sup> Initially they garnered such popular support that the city clergy were reluctant to criticize them, but eventually their public support diminished greatly and public self-flagellation became forbidden.<sup>350</sup>

The people did not always take part in even sanctioned religious services with the amount of reverence the clergy deemed acceptable. In an undated (late fifteenth century) letter to the Observant Franciscan and papal nuncio Emmerich Kemel, the Strasbourg humanist Peter Schott, writing at the behest of the cathedral preacher Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg, complained that the people conducted commerce on the cathedral portico and carried pigs and chickens through the church, heedless of what services were taking place.<sup>351</sup> Their processions, too, contained

---

<sup>348</sup> Hatt, *Ville du XVe Siècle*, 429.

<sup>349</sup> Fritsche Closener, "Chronik" in *Die Chroniken der Oberrheinischen Städte* volume 1, edited by Karl Hegel (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1870), 105-107.

<sup>350</sup> Closener, 119-120.

<sup>351</sup> Cowie and Cowie, 491.

elements that reform-minded clergy often found distasteful, including the wearing of masks and in particular the role of the *roraff* (shouting grotesque, or monkey-like, man), a sculpted mechanical figure above the organ of the Strasbourg Cathedral. During the Pentecost procession, a man would voice the *roraff* and sing songs—deemed profane and indecorous by Geiler.<sup>352</sup> Geiler and Schott also decried the practice of observing the feast of St Nicholas by appointing a child bishop—a choirboy who put on episcopal robes, sang the collects and gave a public blessing.<sup>353</sup>

The extent to which Lienhard and Ursula were involved in these sorts of rituals prior to the beginning of their prophetic careers is unclear. Certainly the church's holy days and feast days deeply impacted the way they marked time—whenever Ursula dated her visions she did so in relation to the church calendar (e.g. on Candlemas, on the Wednesday of Holy Week, etc.) The prevalence of the cult of St. Anne in late medieval Strasbourg may also explain why, in her ninety-third vision, Ursula saw the saint together with Mary and Jesus.<sup>354</sup> Both Josts, but especially Lienhard, evinced disdain for central elements of medieval worship such as the Mass and the Eucharist as they were performed by the Catholic hierarchy, though Lienhard also reimagined how such rituals might be performed when he administered communion to his fellow patients in the Strasbourg hospital.

### **Heterodoxy in Late Medieval Strasbourg**

More heterodox forms of belief and worship, which existed outside the umbrella of the Catholic Church, could also be found in high and late medieval Strasbourg. In 1212, prior to the

---

<sup>352</sup> Hatt, *Ville du XVe Siècle*, 425.

<sup>353</sup> Cowie and Cowie, 491.

<sup>354</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. K1r.

arrival of any mendicant friars in the city, the bishop of Strasbourg prosecuted more than eighty heretics, both men and women. He found the majority of them guilty after they failed a trial by ordeal and sentenced them to be burned to death.<sup>355</sup> A Waldensian community formed in Strasbourg in the late fourteenth century, also called Winkeler after their name for lay confessors, whom they judged just as capable of offering absolution as ordained priests. A 1400 persecution resulted in the imprisonment of thirty-two Winkeler, twenty-six of whom confessed and repented under torture.<sup>356</sup> Even the Taborites (Radical Hussites) were briefly present in Strasbourg thanks to the missionary activity of one Friedrich Reiser, though Reiser's 1458 execution cut short the establishment of a sustainable Taborite community in Strasbourg.<sup>357</sup>

In fact, one of the most persistent strains of medieval heterodoxy originated in the city of Strasbourg. A Strasbourg bourgeois by the name of Ortlieb, about whom little is known, established the Sect of the New Spirit, later known as the Brethren of the Free Spirit, in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Ortlieb and the Brethren of the Free Spirit taught that Christians ought to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit within them rather than submit to external hierarchies and ceremonies. Their ideas bordered on pantheism, and they urged adherents to seek a deep union with God that resulted in man becoming divine.<sup>358</sup> Pope Innocent III condemned Ortlieb's Teachings and the Council of Vienne's condemnation of beguines and beguards attributed to them many of the ideas propagated by the Brethren of the Free Spirit.<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>355</sup> Luzian Pflieger, "Les Hérétiques Strasbourgeois aux XIII et XIVe Siècles," *Cahier d'Études Cathares* 29:79 (1978): 57.

<sup>356</sup> Pflieger, "Hérétiques," 60.

<sup>357</sup> Pflieger, "Hérétiques," 60.

<sup>358</sup> Rufus M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 192-193.

<sup>359</sup> Jones, 192; Papal Encyclicals Online, "Council of Vienne 1311-1312 AD," *Papalencyclicals.net*, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum15.htm> (accessed 15 June 2018).



The persecution of the Brethren of the Free Spirit came in waves in Strasbourg and, indeed, in the Empire at large. The eighty heretics targeted by the bishop in 1212 were most likely followers of Ortlieb, and after the Dominicans arrived in Strasbourg, they, rather than the bishop, took the lead in extirpating heresy. In 1232, both the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor expressed renewed concern over heresy and, in the fourteenth century, the Brethren of the Free Spirit became associated with beguines and beghards, which led to crackdowns on the latter groups.<sup>360</sup> One of the mystical texts loosely associated with the Brethren of the Free Spirit was the fourteenth-century mystical tract *Schwester Katrei* (*Sister Catherine*), most likely composed in Strasbourg. The tract was also inspired by the figure of Meister Eckhart—indeed, some editions of *Schwester Katrei* append a mystical sermon attributed to Eckhart or include the subtitle *Meister Eckhart's Daughter*.<sup>361</sup> The tract featured a series of interactions between a woman and her confessor. While her confessor is a far more learned man, the woman's devotions lead her over time to a mystical knowledge of God that supersedes the confessor's theological training.<sup>362</sup>

While the numbers of medieval heretics in Strasbourg do not appear to be as significant as the city's Anabaptist population in the sixteenth century, it seems that many of the city's inhabitants did not favour persecution of the heterodox. The witch hunters Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, authors of the infamous medieval manual the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of the Witches*, the first printed edition of which was produced in Strasbourg in 1487),

---

<sup>360</sup> Pflieger, "Hérétiques," 58-60.

<sup>361</sup> Robert E. Lerner, "The Image of Mixed Liquids in Late Medieval Mystical Thought," *Church History* 40:4 (December 1971): 403; "Schwester Katrei und die Frau von Ein-und-Zwanzig Jahren/Sister Katherine and the Twenty-One-Year-Old Woman" in *Ladies, Whores, and Holy Women: A Sourcebook on Courtly, Religious, and Urban Cultures of Late Medieval Germany*, edited by Ann Marie Rasmussen and Sarah Westphal-Wihl (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010), 49.

<sup>362</sup> See "Schwester Katrei," 47-96.

faced significant opposition in Strasbourg, enough so that the Pope called on the bishop to oppose those who stood in their way.<sup>363</sup> By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, as Lienhard and Ursula came of age, it is likely that neither the Waldensians nor the Taborites nor the Brethren of the Free Spirit were present in the city in any substantial numbers. However, if any of their ideas persisted, Ortlieb's followers' emphasis on obedience to the Holy Spirit over the ecclesiastical hierarchy could certainly have emboldened the Josts as they faced opposition in their quest to disseminate their visions and prophecies.

### **Preaching in Late Medieval Strasbourg: Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg**

Well-known preachers passed through medieval Strasbourg, including Eckhart and Tauler, though the audiences of many of their sermons were limited. Among Strasbourg's late medieval preachers, however, none loomed larger than Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg, who held the post of cathedral preacher—a post created for him—for more than four decades. Geiler began his career as a scholar. He studied at the Universities of Freiburg and Basel and taught for several years at the former. However, he soon felt himself drawn to preaching. He initially accepted an invitation to preach a trial sermon in Würzburg, but he never reached the city and instead settled in Strasbourg, where he served as cathedral preacher from 1478 until his death in 1510.<sup>364</sup> His influence also extended beyond the city of Strasbourg—he served as a mentor to Friedrich von Zollern, the bishop of Augsburg, and as a chaplain to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian.<sup>365</sup> Geiler saw his role as that of a watchman, a metaphor he returned to in multiple sermons. His job

---

<sup>363</sup> F. Raphaël, "Juifs et Sorcières dans l'Alsace Médiévale," *Revue des Sciences Sociales. de la France de l'Est* 3 (1974): 71

<sup>364</sup> David C. Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings: from Geiler von Kaysersberg to Theodore Beza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 10.

<sup>365</sup> E. Jane Dempsey Douglass, *Justification in Late Medieval Preaching: A Study of John Geiler of Keisersberg* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 5.

was to sound the alarm, loudly and clearly, as long as the town remained (metaphorically) on fire. He was particularly zealous for reform, not only in the church but in the individual lives of his hearers, and his preaching frequently centered on repentance and penitence.<sup>366</sup>

Geiler saw the role of the preacher in part as a prophetic role; the preacher spoke to the people on God's behalf. The preacher both imparted God's grace and mercy where it was needed and spoke harsh words of judgment when warranted, even against prominent politicians and churchmen.<sup>367</sup> While those who held a municipal preaching office were generally expected to refrain from criticizing religious or temporal authorities, the charter granted to Geiler by the city of Strasbourg included no such restrictions. As a result, Geiler freely criticized magistrates and clergy alike from the pulpit and quickly made enemies of the bishop, as well as many in the cathedral chapter and the mendicant orders.<sup>368</sup>

Geiler focused first on the city's clergy; he called for more moral behaviour and stricter observance in the city's convents and cloisters. On one occasion he even criticized the Pope as part of a meditation on humans' lack of humility; citizens wished for the prestige and honour accorded to nobles, deacons wished to be treated like bishops, and the Pope considered himself entitled to the honour due to God alone.<sup>369</sup> Geiler's attempts at reform were always internal—he entertained no thought of separating from the Catholic Church—though the Strasbourg Rat nevertheless cited his critiques of corrupt priests and nuns in response to in response to a 1523 letter from Pope Adrian VI that attempted to quell Lutheran sympathies in Strasbourg.<sup>370</sup> Geiler

---

<sup>366</sup> Rita Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter auf dem Turm: ein Prediger und seine Stadt: Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510) und Strassburg* (Trier: Porta Alba Verlag, 2005), 31.

<sup>367</sup> Douglass, 74; 82.

<sup>368</sup> Rita Voltmer, "Klerikaler Antiklerikalismus? Die Kritik am geistlichen Stand bei Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510)" in *Kirchlicher und religiöser Alltag im Spätmittelalter*, ed. Andreas Mayer (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2010), 48-49; Rita Voltmer, "Political Preaching and a Design of Urban Reform: Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg and Strasbourg," *Franciscan Studies* 71 (2013): 72-73.

<sup>369</sup> Douglass, 93.

<sup>370</sup> Douglass, 8.

was particularly concerned by the unchaste behaviour of some of his fellow clerics and spoke out at length against clerical concubinage. The *Arbor Humana*, a series of Geiler's sermons recorded by Jakob Bieten von Reichenweyer and printed in 1521, 11 years after Geiler's death, acknowledges the problem of adulterous clerics and warns those who wish to "keep their house clean" to beware monks and priests.<sup>371</sup>

When Geiler's efforts at internal ecclesiastical reform proved far less fruitful than he had hoped, he turned his attention to the city's magistrates and began to make calls for political reform. Geiler's biographer Rita Voltmer has described his relationship with Strasbourg's authorities as one of active-constructive confrontation. He held several of them—most notably the four-time Ammeister Peter Schott—among his friends and had received his position from them, but he nevertheless felt duty-bound to challenge them with regard to their own moral conduct and their responsibility to the inhabitants of the city. His preaching had profound implications not only for the city's spiritual life, but also for its politics.<sup>372</sup> His demands included special political and economic rights for clerics and better care for the city's poor and needy. Here he met with qualified success, particularly in the areas of moral reform and charity—at his urging, the city established a new hospital for those suffering from syphilis.<sup>373</sup>

Geiler considered attending sermons an essential part of the Christian life and expected Strasbourg's inhabitants to attend either his sermons at the cathedral or sermons at one of the other churches in the city.<sup>374</sup> He was well aware that, for a number of his hearers, the text of his sermons would be the most comprehensive theological education they received. He assumed that his listeners had a weak understanding of even the most basic elements of the Christian faith, and

---

<sup>371</sup> Hatt, *Ville du XVe Siècle*, 174.

<sup>372</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 37-38.

<sup>373</sup> Voltmer, "Political Preaching," 81-86.

<sup>374</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 31.

he returned again and again to such staples as the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer in hopes of inculcating their lessons in his listeners.<sup>375</sup> Committed to making himself understood by the masses, Geiler both preached in the vernacular (though the written text of his sermons was usually in Latin) and appended vernacular translations to Latin Scripture readings.<sup>376</sup> Geiler's cathedral sermons followed an established routine. He began with a public prayer, during which he knelt and removed his hat, then made the sign of the cross before reading the scriptural text in both Latin and German. He followed the reading of Scripture with a recitation of the Ave Maria and an explanation of the day's Gospel reading before preaching his planned sermon.<sup>377</sup>

Geiler made use of his considerable education in his preaching. He drew not only from the Bible, but also from the Church Fathers, other ancient authors (such as Horace, Aesop, or Seneca), medieval theologians (he was particularly indebted to Jean Gerson and frequently translated parts of his works into German for his sermons), and even contemporary writers such as the satirist Sebastian Brant.<sup>378</sup> His arrival in Strasbourg coincided with the beginnings of printing in the city, and his sermons proved frequent fodder for the city's new presses.<sup>379</sup> He also made use of other books newly published in the city, most notably in a year-long sermon series inspired by Brant's *Narrenschiff* (*Ship of Fools*). He did not, however, wish to overwhelm his audience—most of whom were rather less educated than he was—and strove to deliver his message in an accessible way, without relying on obscure vocabulary or focusing on the complicated finer points of scholastic theology.<sup>380</sup>

---

<sup>375</sup> Douglass, 34.

<sup>376</sup> Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead*, 106; Steinmetz, 15,

<sup>377</sup> Steinmetz, 15.

<sup>378</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 212; Douglass, 20; Klaus Manger, *Literarisches Leben in Straßburg während der Prädikatur Johann Geilers von Kaysersberg (1478-1510)* (Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 1983), 55.

<sup>379</sup> See Manger, 17-19.

<sup>380</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 215.

Since his career spanned four decades, Geiler had the opportunity to address a great many subjects and scriptural texts in his sermons. Among the recurring themes of his sermons was the inevitability of death. He urged his listeners to remain ever mindful of this fact and, accordingly, to live pious lives and prepare themselves for a good death. Once, he even spent the better part of two years preaching a sermon series on death as the great leveller of men.<sup>381</sup> He also focused on suffering—sharing in the cross of Christ—as one of the chief callings of a Christian, alongside good works.<sup>382</sup> Moreover, Geiler’s preaching extolled at length the virtues of celibacy and virginity as the loftiest possible ideal. He subscribed to a hierarchy of rewards for various levels of chastity: those who had remained virgins their whole life would receive merit a hundredfold, those who were widowed after a chaste marriage and remained celibate would receive merit sixtyfold, and those who remained chastely married throughout their lives would receive merit thirtyfold.<sup>383</sup> He vehemently denounced those who attempted to promote marriage as equal or superior to celibacy and dismissed them as antichrists—men who fought against God and his divine precepts.<sup>384</sup> He even parted ways with many of his contemporaries in expressing serious reservations about bridal mysticism and discouraged the nuns under his care from seeking union with Christ by imagining Christ as their bridegroom.<sup>385</sup>

Current events also impacted Geiler’s preaching. He had some awareness of the events taking place in the Ottoman Empire and interpreted the rise of the Turks as a sign of God’s wrath against Christendom and its sinful rulers.<sup>386</sup> More locally, he caused a stir in 1481, after

---

<sup>381</sup> Pflieger, *Kirchengeschichte*, 183; Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 45.

<sup>382</sup> Douglass, 134.

<sup>383</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 666-667.

<sup>384</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 668.

<sup>385</sup> See Annette Volting, “Geiler von Kaysersberg and Late Medieval Contemplative Practice: Gerson, Bridal Mysticism, and the Force of the Imagination,” *Oxford German Studies* 43:3 (September 2014): 229-245.

<sup>386</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 411.

prolonged flooding had led to famine. Geiler encouraged the poor to storm the granaries of the rich grain speculators, hack them open with axes, and help themselves to the food found there.<sup>387</sup> This was something of an aberration—Geiler did not regularly counsel armed rebellion of the poor in his sermons—but he continued to urge the rich to show generosity to the poor throughout his career.<sup>388</sup> Geiler was, however, also anxious that alms be distributed properly and only the truly needy and deserving poor receive them.<sup>389</sup>

Neither Lienhard nor Ursula mentioned Geiler directly in their visions and prophecies, but, if indeed they grew up in Strasbourg, they would certainly have heard him preach before his death in 1510. Geiler's self-conception as a watchman and a prophet, called to warn the citizens and leaders of Strasbourg to repent, would certainly have resonated with Lienhard, and both Josts shared Geiler's concern for the plight of the poor, if not his distinction between deserving and undeserving poor, and his opposition to corrupt clerics, if not his lifelong loyalty to the Catholic Church. Geiler's emphasis on suffering as Christian faithfulness is compatible with Ursula's seventy-fifth vision, which reminded those who wished to follow Christ that they must suffer as he did on the Mount of Olives.<sup>390</sup>

The most obvious parallel between the Josts and Geiler, however, was their shared interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. In the twenty-first chapter of his prophecies, Lienhard expounded on the well-known parable:

The Lord came into the world and found the human race wounded to the point of death He saw that the priests went by and did not have mercy on them. He saw that the [wielders of] the earthly sword went by and also did not show mercy. And He saw that the human race was wounded to the point of the death of their hearts. But then came Christ our Lord and He had mercy on the human race. He lifted them onto His shoulders and carried them into the right

---

<sup>387</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 548-549.

<sup>388</sup> Douglass, 16.

<sup>389</sup> Voltmer, *Wie der Wächter*, 557.

<sup>390</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J2v.

sheep pen and acquired new stablemen and gave them two pennies, that is the New Testament and the Old Testament. And He said [to the shepherds], you shall once again hold the human race in esteem and do much good for it. I will return this to you thousandfold when I come again.<sup>391</sup>

This interpretation matches that proffered by Geiler in his *Peregrinus*, a written form of a series of sermons given in Strasbourg at least twice—in 1480 and again in 1500.<sup>392</sup> Like Lienhard, Geiler interpreted the Good Samaritan as a Christ figure and interpreted the two pennies given to the innkeeper as the Old and New Testament.<sup>393</sup> Lienhard, however, far more than Geiler, felt that the innkeepers (or priests) had failed to care properly for the people whom Christ had entrusted to them. Lienhard and Geiler's interpretation was not original—it was a prime example of medieval exegesis—but it was through sermons, not through the great texts of medieval theology, that this interpretation reached Lienhard.<sup>394</sup>

In other points, however, the Josts' theology departed drastically from Geiler's. Whereas Geiler viewed chastity as the most virtuous of all states, Lienhard dismissed it as rebellion against God, who had created human beings for the state of marriage. Nevertheless, even if the Josts did not adopt Geiler's theology wholesale, his use of vernacular Scripture in preaching and the example he set for his successors provided the Josts with the opportunity to hear Scriptures they could not read for themselves, especially the Gospels, which Geiler mentioned at least briefly in every sermon. The knowledge of Scripture the Josts evince in their visions and prophecies—of the wide and narrow paths in Matthew 7 or of the stories of Noah and the Ark or

---

<sup>391</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E3r-E3v.

<sup>392</sup> Karl Fischer, *Das Verhältnis Zweier Lateinischer Texte Geilers von Kaisersberg zu ihren Deutschen Bearbeitungen: der "Navicula fatuorum" zu Paulis "Narrenschiff" und des "Peregrinus" zu Otthers "Christenlich bilgerschafft" nebst einer Würdigung der Lateinischen Texte Geilers* (Metz: W. Leininger, 1908), 45.

<sup>393</sup> Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg, "Der Bilger mit seinen Eigenschaften, Auch Figuren" in *Sämtliche Werke: Erster Teil: Die Deutschen Schriften*, edited by Gerhard Bauer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 66.

<sup>394</sup> For an example of this interpretation from the Carolingian period, see Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture, Volume 2*, translated by E.M. Macierowski (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 224.



the provision of manna to the Israelites in the desert—may well have been imparted to them through the medium of the sermon, even as sermons also familiarized them with medieval models of biblical interpretation.

### **Religious Artwork in Late Medieval Strasbourg**

Medieval Catholic churches contained a multitude of statues, paintings, and stained glass that, in addition to displaying wealth and serving as objects of devotion, also provided visual representations of stories and concepts from the Bible and Christian history to those who could not access these stories in books. Pope Gregory the Great, in a 599 letter to the iconoclastic bishop Serenus of Marseilles, argued in favour of images on the basis of their didactic potential; “a picture is displayed in churches,” he wrote, “in order that those who do not know letters may at least read by seeing on the walls what they are unable to read in books.”<sup>395</sup> Medieval churchmen and craftsmen remained well aware of religious art’s ability to teach aspects of the Bible, and late medieval Strasbourg contained a wealth of religious artwork that was accessible to men and women such as Lienhard and Ursula.

The most opulent of the churches in Strasbourg was the cathedral, or *Münster*. Construction of the cathedral began in 1015 and, despite a number of fires, especially in the twelfth century, work continued apace through much of the latter half of the Middle Ages.<sup>396</sup> The cathedral’s final major part, its north spire, was completed in 1439, and a projected south spire never materialized.<sup>397</sup> The cathedral was a source of civic as well as spiritual pride for the inhabitants of Strasbourg, and particularly for the city’s magistrates. It was unusual among

---

<sup>395</sup> Celia M. Chazelle, “Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I’s Letters to Serenus of Marseilles,” *Word & Image* 6:2 (1990): 139.

<sup>396</sup> For a brief timeline of the Cathedral’s history, see Koenigshoven, 722-726.

<sup>397</sup> Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead*, 73.

medieval cathedrals in its reliance on lay donations, which were no mere occasional or supplementary gifts but rather formed the core of the Cathedral *fabrica*'s financial support.<sup>398</sup> Strasbourg's citizens gave not only money, but also clothing and armour to the cathedral. Women especially gave clothing since they were free to dispose of it as they wished, which was not always the case for their other property. This clothing was often resold, but it could also be used to adorn statues in the cathedral, particularly the celebrated image of Mary in the Chapel of the Virgin.<sup>399</sup> Other churches in the city also benefitted from the generosity of Strasbourg's citizens. Rival families such as the patrician Zorn and Müllenheim families sometimes competed with each other in order to leave the most lavish legacies; both families established chapels in the Church of Young-Saint Peter.<sup>400</sup>

Thanks to the wealth acquired from lay and ecclesiastical donors, the cathedral became an impressive edifice, full of rich exemplars of Gothic sculpture and stained glass. The *Straßburger Chronik* (*Chronicle of Strasbourg*) of the humanist Hieronymus Gebwiler, written in the early sixteenth century, attests to the impression the western façade in particular made on late medieval and early modern spectators. "With what lovely images and sculpted figures from the Old and New Testament is the face of the three front doors adorned," he gushed. "No one can look at it enough, for it is all so artfully and well made."<sup>401</sup> The three doors of the western façade, the cathedral's principal entrance, were indeed an impressive display of sculpture. They featured primarily biblical characters and saints, though political figures also were also present—

---

<sup>398</sup> Charlotte A. Stanford, "Donations from the Body for the Soul: Apparel, Devotion, and Status in Late Medieval Strasbourg" in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, volume 6, edited by Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 173.

<sup>399</sup> See Stanford, "Donations from the Body," 185-188.

<sup>400</sup> Kraus, 123.

<sup>401</sup> Robert Will, "La Plus Ancienne Description Monumentale de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg, Tirée de la Chronique de l'Humaniste Jérôme Gebwiler, Rédigée en 1521," *Bulletin de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 20 (1992): 72.

in the sixteenth century, the western facade featured three rulers on horseback: the Merovingian kings Clovis and Dagobert and Count Rudolph of Habsburg.<sup>402</sup>

The northern portal of the west façade featured statues of the Virtues with the vices under their feet, and the tympanum contained scenes from Christ's infancy from Matthew and Luke's Gospels: the arrival of the Magi, Herod's massacre of the innocents, and the encounter between Mary and the prophet Simeon during Christ's presentation at the temple.<sup>403</sup> The central portal of the west façade featured the statue of twelve prophets (despite biblical precedent, no prophetesses were featured) and a central statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ child. The tympanum featured scenes from the end of the four gospels: the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the last supper, Christ's arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ's trial, suffering, and crucifixion, and finally his resurrection and ascension to heaven.<sup>404</sup> The arcs surrounding the tympanum featured scenes from the Old Testament, and particularly the book of Genesis: the creation of the world, the Fall and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, Moses and the Burning Bush, Jonah and the whale, and many more. The arcs also featured images of Christian martyrs, evangelists, and church fathers.<sup>405</sup> Though in the current iteration of the creation scene the universe is shown at God the Father's feet, in the medieval period the Father was shown holding the universe in his hand.<sup>406</sup> The southern portal of the west façade, for its part, featured a set of eight sculptures illustrating the

---

<sup>402</sup> Robert Will, "Les Statues Équestres d'Empereurs et de Rois: Un Décor de Façade Insolite a la Cathédrale de Strasbourg," *Bulletin de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 21 (1994): 21. Currently, the cathedral features nineteenth-century copies of these statues as well as a fourth statue (also from the nineteenth century) of Louis XIV.

<sup>403</sup> Benoît van den Bossche, *La Cathédrale de Strasbourg: Sculpture des Portails Occidentaux* (Paris: Zodiace, 2006), 29. For minor variations in the statues today compared to surviving images and descriptions from the medieval and early modern periods, see van den Bossche, *Portails Occidentaux*, 46.

<sup>404</sup> Van den Bossche, *Portails Occidentaux*, 29-31, 46. Today, the portal features fourteen prophets and the Virgin Mary is shown with a menacing reptile under her feet, but this does not appear to have been the case in the medieval and early modern periods.

<sup>405</sup> Van den Bossche, *Portails Occidentaux*, 32.

<sup>406</sup> Van den Bossche, *Portails Occidentaux*, 46.

parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25. To the right of the door were Christ and the three wise virgins. To the left stood the Tempter, holding out an apple to the foolish virgins. He appeared from the front to be a well-dressed and wealthy young man, but his back was covered in all manner of toads and snakes.<sup>407</sup> The portal's tympanum featured scenes from the end of the world: the dead rising from their graves, the separation of the elect from the damned, and the return of Christ, accompanied by angels blowing trumpets.<sup>408</sup>

The southern façade was also decorated with a collection of sculptures. At its center stood a statue of King Solomon, and above Solomon hung a bust of Christ holding the *orbis terrarum*, which signified his dominion over the earth.<sup>409</sup> On either side of the portals stood statues of women representing the triumphant church and the defeated synagogue, and along the sides stood the twelve apostles.<sup>410</sup> The tympana above the façade's two portals featured scenes from the end of the life of the Virgin Mary: her Dormition and her heavenly Coronation.<sup>411</sup> Also among the adornments of the cathedral's exterior was a gallery of sculptures on the Cathedral's bell tower, above the rose window, featuring the Ascension of Christ, witnessed by the Virgin and the Apostles, and the Last Judgment.<sup>412</sup>

Inside the cathedral, as well, stood many more sculptures of saints and biblical figures. Marian iconography featured prominently in the Cathedral, and particularly in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which housed a statue of the virgin and child until the Reformation's

---

<sup>407</sup> Raphaël, 85.

<sup>408</sup> Van den Bossche, *Portails Occidentaux*, 34.

<sup>409</sup> Rowe, 209.

<sup>410</sup> Bernd Nicolai, "Orders in Stone: Social Reality and Artistic Approach; the Case of the Strasbourg South Portal," *Gesta* 41:1 (December 2002): 113.

<sup>411</sup> Rowe, 208-209. for a seventeenth-century engraving of the south façade, see Oseas Schadaeus, *Summum Argentoratensium Templum: Das ist: Außführliche un[d] Eigentliche Beschreibung deß viel Künstlichen, sehr Kostbaren, und in aller Welt Berühmten Münsters zu Straßburg* (Strasbourg: Lazarus Zetzner, 1617), between pages 46 and 47.

<sup>412</sup> Hans Reinhardt, *La Cathédrale de Strasbourg* (Grenoble: Arthaud, 1972), 138.

arrival in Strasbourg resulted in its removal in 1525.<sup>413</sup> Very few medieval funerary monuments survive in and around the Strasbourg Cathedral, but one notable example found in St. John's Chapel also featured the Virgin Mary, crowned and holding the infant Jesus, and the latter reached out toward the figure of a prominent churchman. This monument was the work of the celebrated fifteenth-century sculptor Nicolas van Leiden.<sup>414</sup> The tympanum above the transept's northern portal likewise featured the Virgin Mary enthroned, in addition to the Magi, and King David playing a harp.<sup>415</sup>

Another renowned piece of sculpture inside the cathedral was the Pillar of Angels, in the south transept arm. It featured a series of apocalyptic motifs: the four evangelists and corresponding four beasts of Revelation, trumpeting angels, and, at the top of the pillar, Christ sitting in judgment.<sup>416</sup> The cathedral's pulpit was also an ornate piece of sculpture created for Geiler in 1486. It featured images of the crucifixion, evangelists, church fathers, and martyrs. Less traditionally, the pulpit also featured some odd and grotesque images—notably an image of a monk looking up a beguine's skirts (a visual representation of the evils against which Geiler preached)—and a personal touch, a rendering of Geiler's beloved dog.<sup>417</sup> The cathedral's St. Catherine's chapel housed statues of Saints Catherine, Elizabeth, Andrew, and John the Baptist, as well as a monument to the Holy Sepulchre, which portrayed Christ lying in his grave

---

<sup>413</sup> Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead*, 77; 155.

<sup>414</sup> Reinhardt, 140.

<sup>415</sup> Reinhardt, 100. The original tympanum was destroyed during the French Revolution.

<sup>416</sup> Rowe, 195; 203.

<sup>417</sup> Grandidier, 270-271.

surrounded by sleeping Roman soldiers.<sup>418</sup> St. Andrew's chapel also contained stonework, no longer extant, which depicted the Virgin and Child and the Visitation of the Magi.<sup>419</sup>

In addition to its many sculptures, the Strasbourg cathedral in the Josts' lifetime also contained an impressive array of stained glass. The most recognizable of these was the western façade's rose window, a colourful geometric design featuring stalks of wheat. Other windows in the cathedral served more useful didactic purposes. In the nave of the cathedral, a thirteenth-century series of stained glass windows featured various historical German rulers, while a fourteenth-century cycle displayed scenes from the life of Christ, his Passion, the events that followed the Passion, and finally the Last Judgment.<sup>420</sup> The first window in this series explored the childhoods of Mary and Jesus. It began with the less well-known episodes of the Annunciation of Mary's birth to her parents Anne and Joachim and the betrothal of Mary and Joseph and culminated in the Adoration of the Magi and the flight to Egypt.<sup>421</sup> The second window featured scenes from the Life of Christ: his baptism by John the Baptist, various healings, the cursing of the fig tree, the resurrection of Lazarus, his encounter with the adulterous woman, and more.<sup>422</sup> The third window depicted the events of Passion Week, beginning with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and culminated in the salvation and damnation of the repentant and unrepentant thieves and the removal of Christ from the cross.<sup>423</sup> The fourth and final window began with the

---

<sup>418</sup> Stanford, "Bishop's Grave," 68-69. The monument to the Holy Sepulchre was dismantled in the seventeenth century and a statue of St. Florent added in the nineteenth century. See "1340 à 1371: Construction de la Chapelle Sainte-Catherine et de la Tour Nord," *Fondation de l'Oeuvre de Notre Dame*, accessed 15 June 2018, <http://www.oeuvre-notre-dame.org/cathedrale-de-strasbourg/histoire-cathedrale/grandes-etapes/1340-1360-construction-chapelle-sainte-catherine>.

<sup>419</sup> Walter, 53.

<sup>420</sup> Kraus, 124-125.

<sup>421</sup> Reinhardt, 183-184.

<sup>422</sup> Reinhardt, 184.

<sup>423</sup> Reinhardt, 184.

descent of Christ into hell in order to free Adam, Eve, and others and the Resurrection and culminated in the Ascension and Pentecost.<sup>424</sup>

The stained glass windows in the Cathedral's St. Catherine's Chapel, constructed in the mid-fourteenth century at the behest of Berthold of Bucheck, then Strasbourg's bishop, featured the twelve apostles as well as the sisters Martha and Mary, two of Jesus' most prominent female followers.<sup>425</sup> On the southern façade, two stained glass rose windows depicted symbolic images representing the Old and New Testaments.<sup>426</sup> To the North of the cathedral, series of smaller round windows featured scenes from the Passion, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, including Mary Magdalene's proclamation of the Resurrection to Peter and Christ's demonstration of his wounds to Thomas.<sup>427</sup> Also notable was a fourteenth-century stained glass window under the south tower that examined the theme of Works of Mercy—acts of kindness performed by Christians toward others and received by Christ as done to him, as in the account of the separation of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25—and showed Christ, hungry, sick, imprisoned, and cold and awaiting the assistance of the faithful.<sup>428</sup>

Beyond the sculpture and the stained glass, other notable pieces of art in the pre-Reformation Cathedral included the retable for the cathedral's main altar, completed in 1501, which featured images of the Adoration of the Magi, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Circumcision of Christ, the Lamentation of the Virgin, and the Death of the Virgin.<sup>429</sup> Also renowned was the choir screen, completed in the mid-thirteenth century, which separated the parts of the cathedral open to all the city's inhabitants from the parts reserved for clergy. The

---

<sup>424</sup> Reinhardt, 184.

<sup>425</sup> Stanford, "Bishop's Grave," 67.

<sup>426</sup> Reinhardt, 167.

<sup>427</sup> Reinhardt, 172.

<sup>428</sup> Reinhardt, 182.

<sup>429</sup> Reinhardt, 143. The retable was destroyed in the late seventeenth century.

choir screen returned to the theme of works of mercy, interspersed with scenes from the Last Judgment.<sup>430</sup> The screen also featured a representation of the Virgin and the Christ Child exchanging an apple (an image of redemption in contrast to the fall of Adam and Eve), and the figures of seven apostles and six prophets.<sup>431</sup> Only one medieval painting survives in the cathedral: an image of the Nativity of Christ above the doors of St. Andrew's Chapel.<sup>432</sup> The late medieval Strasbourg Cathedral was also home since 1354 to an impressive mechanical clock, though by the early sixteenth century it had ceased to function properly. The clock, featured automata of Mary, Jesus, the Wise Men, and a crowing rooster, as well as a carillon that rang out hymns, an astrolabe, a perpetual calendar, and an anatomical chart that indicated astrologically favourable times for bloodletting.<sup>433</sup>

Nor was the cathedral the only site of religious artwork in Strasbourg, a city rich with churches, convents, and chapels, all of which featured religious artwork, though the relative wealth of each parish affected its quality. Immediately next to the cathedral, atop the chapel in the adjoining graveyard, sat a statue of the St. Michael battling a dragon.<sup>434</sup> The Church of St. Thomas, which housed the Chapter of St. Thomas and eventually became an important center of the Reformation, featured a tympanum on its west portal that depicted Christ as he showed his wounds to a doubting Thomas in the presence of other apostles.<sup>435</sup> Outside the church, a large set of sculptures commissioned in 1498 depicted Christ praying on the Mount of Olives as his

---

<sup>430</sup> Walter, 48-50; Barbara Chabrowe, "Iconography of the Strasbourg Cathedral Choir Screen," *Gesta* 6 (January 1967): 35.

<sup>431</sup> Chabrowe, "Choir Screen," 35-36.

<sup>432</sup> Reinhardt, 195.

<sup>433</sup> F.C. Haber, "The Cathedral Clock and the Cosmological Clock Metaphor" in *The Study of Time II*, edited by J.T. Fraser and N. Lawrence (Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 1975), 399-401. The clock was replaced in the late sixteenth century.

<sup>434</sup> Reinhardt, 119.

<sup>435</sup> Suzanne Braun, *Églises de Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: Oberlin, 2002), 85



disciples slept and Judas led a crowd of soldiers to capture him.<sup>436</sup> The tympanum of the Church of St. Stephen (a church founded in the Carolingian period and home to several canonesses) featured scenes of the martyrdom of its titular saint, Saul/Paul's participation in Stephen's martyrdom, and his eventual role as a Christian apostle.<sup>437</sup>

A stained glass window from the Dominicans' church featured a bust of Christ holding the orbis mundi.<sup>438</sup> Other windows from the Dominicans' church, now housed in St. Lawrence's Chapel, featured scenes from the lives of Sts. Dominic, Augustine, and Bartholomew, as well as scenes from the life and Passion of Christ.<sup>439</sup> Certain visual themes recurred in different locations. Images of people wearing crowns and wreaths made of foliage, for instance, were common in the iconography of Strasbourg's churches: they appeared not only on some of the cathedral's sculptures but also in the Zorn and St. Nicholas Chapels in the Church of Young-Saint-Peter.<sup>440</sup>

It was in this artistic milieu that the Josts spent their prophetic careers, and the artwork that surrounded them provided them with a window into the Bible's stories and the histories of the faith. Many of the details that fascinate scholars today would doubtless have eluded them—identifying the finer points of a work's artistic or architectural style, pinpointing the exact artist behind a sculpture, or comparing the Strasbourg Cathedral with other medieval Gothic churches. Even the significance of some of the biblical imagery may well have escaped them if they did not hear it explained. Nevertheless, the setting in which they lived and worshipped shaped their imaginative universe. Ursula's visions in particular are rich in images, and many of them bear

---

<sup>436</sup> Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead*, 215. Today the sculptures can be found in the Strasbourg Cathedral.

<sup>437</sup> Braun, 33-34; 39.

<sup>438</sup> Reinhardt, 182. The window is now housed in the Strasbourg Cathedral.

<sup>439</sup> Reinhardt, 191.

<sup>440</sup> Braun, 91-92.

similarities to the religious artwork in Strasbourg's churches. The image of the wreath, which recurred in both Lienhard's prophecies and Ursula's visions, may have been inspired in part by contemporary sculptures and reliefs of wreathed and crowned figures. Her third vision, in which God the Father held the world in his hand, may have called to mind images of Christ holding the *orbis mundi*.<sup>441</sup> Her eighty-sixth vision, in which she saw the Virgin Mary holding her child, with a crown on her head and the moon beneath her feet, would have fit well with the Marian iconography throughout the cathedral.<sup>442</sup> Perhaps the most striking similarities between Strasbourg's religious artwork and Ursula's vision are evident in her thirty-first vision, in which a "wildly and unusually dressed" man leads young maidens astray.<sup>443</sup> While Ursula never describes exactly what makes the man's clothing odd, the image of the tempter, attempting to hide the toads and snakes and other creatures that cover the back of his clothes as he tempts the foolish virgins on the cathedral's south façade may well have served as an inspiration. Even if Ursula did not consciously draw from or reference these works of art, the sheer volume of them must have left an impression.

## Conclusion

Attempting to identify who or what influenced the thought of an illiterate figure is challenging, since one cannot pinpoint books they owned or read. Nevertheless, an examination of the religious milieu in late medieval Strasbourg offers possibilities for places the Josts may have encountered the images and ideas they adopted or ultimately rejected. Regular religious rituals, the preaching of Geiler von Kaysersberg and others, and the artwork of the city's

---

<sup>441</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. G2r.

<sup>442</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J4r.

<sup>443</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. H1v.

churches give insight into the sorts of ideas that were “in the air” in Strasbourg on the eve of the Reformation. Together, they elucidate the religious foundation the Josts might have had as they began their prophetic careers and as religious life in Strasbourg began to change rapidly around them.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE JOSTS AND STRASBOURG POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES' RESPONSE TO DISSENT, 1522-1539

“All the dregs of the worst good-for-nothing and heretical fellows converge at Strasbourg. Whose fault that may be, I do not know.”<sup>444</sup> These words, written by the Swiss Reformer Heinrich Bullinger to Ambrosius Blarer and Johann Zwick in 1533, speak to Strasbourg’s reputation, both among its contemporaries and among modern Reformation scholars as a haven for religious dissenters and sectarians. To be sure, in the sixteenth century religious dissent was never entirely without danger anywhere in the Holy Roman Empire, but in Strasbourg the penalties were less severe. As the spiritualist chronicler Sebastian Franck put it, “he whom one hangs elsewhere, one drives out of Strasbourg with rods.”<sup>445</sup> As such, many prominent sixteenth-century nonconformists spent some time in Strasbourg. These nonconformists, who never managed to garner institutional support for their religious agendas, were variously referred to in the Strasbourg magistrates' records as Anabaptists (sometimes as "stiff-necked" Anabaptists), adherents of sects, and occasionally heretics (ketzer). The Strasbourg reformers, concerned not only for civic order but also for the souls of the citizens, sometimes used language such as "terrible error" and "blasphemy" to describe the threats these dissenters posed. At best, they were misled and could be persuaded to see the error their ways. At worst, they were mad, or even evil, and could only be contained in order to prevent their ideas from spreading.

---

<sup>444</sup> Cited in J. Wayne Baker, “Church, State, and Dissent: The Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531-1536” in *Church History* 57:2 (June 1988): 145

<sup>445</sup> Cited in Bodo Brinkman and Berthold Hinz, *Hexenlust und Sündenfall: Die Seltsamen Phantasien des Hans Baldung Grien* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2007), 181.

Whether these religious dissenters saw themselves as particularly radical is less clear. Certainly most viewed themselves merely as faithful Christians (though they often also believed that few others could claim such a label) and attempted, at least before the magistrates, to present themselves as loyal and obedient residents of Strasbourg. They had seen, within recent memory, Luther and other men successfully change the religious status quo, and they hoped that they might successfully do so as well, especially since the Strasbourg magistrates seemed less hostile than their counterparts in other regions. In this environment—unusually permissive and religiously diverse—Lienhard and Ursula Jost began their prophetic ministries, eventually joined forces with Melchior Hoffman, and produced books that circulated throughout the Netherlands and North Germany.

The early years of the Reformation, particularly the 1520s and the first part of the 1530s, were tremendously theologically fluid. Strasbourg's reformers, the city authorities, the Josts, and the other dissenters who lived in or passed through Strasbourg were all in the process of determining what they believed about God, what the church ought to look like, and who was friend or foe as they sought to establish their conception of a just and godly church and society. The Strasbourg city council, the reformers, and various dissenters alternately fought with each other and sought to enlist each other as allies in bringing their diverse agendas to fruition. They sought to achieve goals that were often in tension: civic peace in the case of the magistracy, theological and ecclesiological unity and orthodoxy in the case of the reformers, and in the case of Lienhard Jost and his fellow Melchiorites, the establishment of a holy city, a new Jerusalem, a set apart bastion that held high the banner of godly righteousness for the world to see. This chapter explores the religious and political agendas of Strasbourg's reformers and magistrates and their responses to and interactions with the dissenters who lived in or passed through the

city, particularly the Strasbourg Melchiorites and the Josts themselves. As this chapter will demonstrate, the actions and attitudes of Strasbourg's magistrates and reformers and the tension that emerged when their aims conflicted combined to make it possible for the Josts and other dissenters to make their voices heard and gain a following with fewer reprisals than they might have experienced in other parts of the Holy Roman Empire, even though the magistrates and reformers ultimately achieved their religious and political aims far more successfully than the Josts.

### **Strasbourg's Religious and Political Organization in the Early Sixteenth Century**

In the Reformation era, Strasbourg's government consisted of a Stettmeister and an Ammeister, a Senate, and two privy councils, the Council of Fifteen and the Council of Thirteen. These roles were filled principally by patricians from Strasbourg's longstanding noble families and by wealthy and prominent guildsmen. A patrician always filled the (mostly ceremonial) role of Stettmeister; four sitting senators served as Stettmeister in a given year, each for a three-month term. The role of Ammeister, conversely, was closed to patricians. A rotation of six men, elected for life by the Senate and Twenty-One, served one-year terms as Ammeister (during which they performed most of the day-to-day work of city governance) followed by five years as Altammeister. The Senate, or *grosser Rat*, served as the city's high court and comprised ten patrician senators and twenty guildsmen. The Council of Fifteen took care of domestic affairs while the Council of Thirteen was responsible for war and diplomacy. Members of the privy councils who were not already Stettmeister or Ammeister also sat with the Senate in joint sessions to form a governing body known as the Senate and Twenty-One. On a few select

occasions, the Senate could also call for a vote of the *Schöffen*, an assembly of three hundred guild leaders, as they did for the abolition of the Mass in 1529.<sup>446</sup>

The official highest religious authority in Strasbourg in the early sixteenth century was the Bishop of Strasbourg, a role held by Wilhelm von Honstein from 1506 to 1541, throughout the upheaval of the first few decades of the Reformation. Even before Luther's ideas began to circulate in Strasbourg, however, von Honstein's authority was often more theoretical than actual. In 1509, he attempted to enact a series of clerical reforms. He wanted Strasbourg clergy to answer only to him rather than lay courts or governments, to avoid concubinage, and to diligently instruct the laity in proper Catholic doctrine.<sup>447</sup> Von Honstein's proposed reforms met with disapproval both from the Strasbourg magistrates and the city's clergy; the latter successfully appealed to Rome and halted the bishop's reform efforts.<sup>448</sup>

The bishop was similarly unable to impose his will a decade later, as evangelical clergy began to arrive and preach in Strasbourg. Over the course of the 1520s, the Catholic Church in Strasbourg steadily lost ground. Clergyman after clergyman broke with Rome and allied himself with the evangelical reformers instead, even as other evangelicals arrived in the city from elsewhere and received clerical posts. In 1524, the Strasbourg Rat claimed for itself the right to appoint pastors, a right previously reserved by the canons of Strasbourg's ecclesiastical chapters and other high-ranking churchmen.<sup>449</sup> As Strasbourg's churches moved from a Catholic to an evangelical model, Strasbourg's magistrates gained increasing control over ecclesiastical affairs and made pronouncements on previously internal church matters, such as clerical celibacy or the

---

<sup>446</sup> Thomas A. Brady, Jr., *Ruling Class, Regime, and Reformation at Strasbourg, 1520-1555* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 164-167.

<sup>447</sup> Abray, 27.

<sup>448</sup> Abray, 27-28.

<sup>449</sup> Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform: A Study in the Process of Change* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 115.

celebration of the Mass. By the mid-1520s, the most influential clergymen in Strasbourg were no longer Catholics, but a cadre of evangelical reformers led by Mathis Zell, Martin Bucer, and Wolfgang Capito.

### **Mathis and Katharina Zell**

Mathis Zell was the first of Strasbourg's major reformers to arrive in the city. In 1518 Zell, who had previously lived and studied in Freiburg am Bressgau, accepted a post as priest of the chapel of St. Lorentz in the Strasbourg Cathedral.<sup>450</sup> Within a year of his arrival, in 1519, Strasbourg printers began to produce and circulate Luther's writings, along with anonymous pamphlets by other reform-minded writers.<sup>451</sup> While Zell may have privately harboured Lutheran sympathies earlier, he began to speak of them publicly in his sermons around 1521. He devoted himself to preaching the pure word of God, beginning with a sermon series on the book of Romans. Zell's sermons gained a great following among Strasbourg's inhabitants. His listeners soon grew too numerous to fit in the chapel of St. Lorentz, but the cathedral canons denied Zell access to Geiler von Kaysersberg's old pulpit in the heart of the cathedral, which would have allowed him to preach to a greater crowd. In response, some carpenters who supported Zell designed a portable wooden pulpit for him, which his supporters brought into the cathedral whenever he preached.<sup>452</sup>

By 1522, Zell had caught the attention of Strasbourg's bishop Wilhelm von Honstein, who worried about the increasing popularity of Lutheran ideas in Strasbourg. After his attempts to convince the cathedral chapter to censure or dismiss Zell failed, he informed the Rat on

---

<sup>450</sup> Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform*, 92.

<sup>451</sup> Marc Lienhard, "Aufbruch und Entfaltung" in *Strasbourg und die Reformation* (Kehl: Morstadt, 1982), 18.

<sup>452</sup> Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480-1599* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 146-7.



August 2 of his intentions to begin public proceedings against Zell. He produced a twenty-four article critique of Zell's teachings and actions and ordered him to prepare a defense by December of that year.<sup>453</sup> The bishop's attempts to silence Zell were unsuccessful; Zell proved too popular to contain, and von Honstein realized that he risked a public uprising if he suddenly removed Zell from his post.<sup>454</sup>

Zell's response to the bishop's twenty four articles formed the basis of his *Christeliche Verantwortung* (*Christian Response*), a book-length document published in 1523 by Wolfgang Köpfel, in which he criticized the edifice of medieval Christianity, with its extrabiblical rules and sacraments and clerical privileges, and argued that the job of the pastor was to preach the word of God.<sup>455</sup> The *Christeliche Verantwortung* was the first in what became a long list of publications by Strasbourg's reformers. Zell's parishioners also spoke and wrote passionately in his defense, even after the initial threat of episcopal discipline had passed. One tract, attributed to a Steffan von Büllheyem and entitled *Ein Brüderliche Warnung an Meyster Mathis Pharherzen zu Sant Lorentzen im Münster zu Straßburg* (*A Brotherly Warning to Master Mathis, Pastor at St. Lorentz in the Strasbourg Cathedral*), praised Zell for clearly and powerfully preaching the Scriptures despite his opponents' best efforts to slander him and added that Zell's sermons were frequent topics of conversation in taverns and other gathering places.<sup>456</sup>

Zell deliberately challenged what he considered to be medieval Christianity's unbiblical and unnecessary dogmas one by one. When the former Dominican Martin Bucer arrived in

---

<sup>453</sup> René Bornert, *La Réforme Protestante Du Culte à Strasbourg Au XVIe Siècle (1523-1598): Approche Sociologique Et Interprétation Théologique* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 65; Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform*, 100-101.

<sup>454</sup> Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform*, 107.

<sup>455</sup> Marc Lienhard, "La Percée du Mouvement Évangélique à Strasbourg: Le Rôle et la Figure de Mathieu Zell" in *Strasbourg au Coeur Religieux du XVIe Siècle: Hommage à Lucien Febvre: Actes du Colloque International de Strasbourg, 25-29 Mai 1975*, edited by Georges Livet (Strasbourg: Librairie Istra, 1977), 87-88.

<sup>456</sup> Steffan von Büllheyem, *Ein Brüderliche Warnung an Meyster Mathis Pharherren zu Sant Lorentzen im Münster zu Straßburg* (Strasbourg: Johann Knobloch, 1524), fol. A iv r.

Strasbourg with his wife in the spring of 1523, Zell welcomed him and even occasionally invited him to preach in the cathedral, despite the precariousness of Bucer's clerical status as a former monk married to a former nun.<sup>457</sup> On December 3, 1523, Zell himself broke canon law and married a woman by the name of Katharina Schutz, the pious daughter of Strasbourg burghers. Katharina Schutz Zell was a formidable woman and a reformer in her own right. She published two reform-minded treatises in 1524: an open letter to Protestant women in Kentzingen whose husbands had been exiled and a defense of her own marriage and of clerical marriage in general.<sup>458</sup> At their wedding, the Zells broke a further taboo by taking communion together in both kinds (in the medieval Catholic Church the laity received the bread but not the wine), and in 1524 Mathis Zell began to officiate baptisms in German rather than Latin.<sup>459</sup> Each move cemented Zell's estrangement from the Roman Catholic Church and his eagerness to establish a new, scripturally based church order in Strasbourg.

Zell devoted himself to the work of pastoring the local church: preaching, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, and providing moral and spiritual guidance to Strasbourg's residents. He left behind a far smaller corpus of writings than his fellow Strasbourg reformers Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito, or indeed than his wife Katharina. On his own, he published only the *Christeliche Verantwortung* and a catechism, *Frag unnd Antwort uff die Artikel des Christlichen Glaubens* (*Questions and Answers Concerning the Articles of the Christian Faith*).<sup>460</sup> Moreover, he did not leave behind the same significant corpus of correspondence as

---

<sup>457</sup> Elsie Anne McKee, *Katharina Schutz Zell: Volume One: The Life and Thought of a Sixteenth-Century Reformer* (Leiden: Brill, 1999),

<sup>458</sup> See Elsie Anne McKee (Ed.), *Katharina Schutz Zell: Volume Two, The Writings: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1-54.

<sup>459</sup> Bornert, 1; Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 7.

<sup>460</sup> Mathis Zell, *Christeliche Verantwortung M. Matthes Zell von Kerserßberg Pfarrherrs und Predigers im Münster zu Straßburg* (Strasbourg: Wolfgang Köpfel, 1523); Mathis Zell, *Frag unnd Antwort uff die Artikel des Christlichen Glaubens* (Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1527).

his colleagues; very few letters survive for which Zell was the sole signatory, although he did add his name to a great many joint letters from Strasbourg's evangelical preachers. His in-person interactions, rather than his literary output, formed the core of his contributions to Strasbourg's Reformation.

It was in person rather than through Zell's writings that Lienhard Jost, who was after all illiterate, first encountered the reformer in 1525, just before Christmas. Lienhard's prophetic stirrings had recently returned after a two-year hiatus, and he felt compelled to go to the Strasbourg cathedral, where Zell pastored, and sing a song that told the story of the prophetic revelations he had received from God.<sup>461</sup> Zell had earlier argued, in his *Christeliche Verantwortung*, that, since learned and high-ranking churchmen had long shirked their duty to preach the gospel, even laypeople might well have the authority perform this much-needed task.<sup>462</sup> If Zell's sermons also encouraged lay preaching and proclamation of the Gospel, Lienhard may well have drawn encouragement from this. According to Lienhard's account, he and Ursula sang their song in the cathedral on two occasions and, after the second time, Lienhard promised to return to the cathedral promptly and to explain the prophecies he had laid out in the song.<sup>463</sup> When Lienhard returned the next day, however, and gave the interpretation of his song, Mathis Zell appeared and urged the crowd not to listen to him. He dismissed Lienhard's words as the product of dreams and fantasies and described Lienhard as speaking against God's Law and "out of the writings of his heart and the dreams of his head."<sup>464</sup> Lienhard retorted that it was in

---

<sup>461</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 2 r.

<sup>462</sup> Zell, *Christeliche Verantwortung*, fol. L i r.

<sup>463</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 3 r.

<sup>464</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 3 v.

fact Zell and the other Strasbourg preachers who spoke against God's Law and out of the dreams of their heads.<sup>465</sup>

Lienhard's next encounter with Zell, however, was less antagonistic. Lienhard had attempted once again to share his message in the cathedral, and a messenger from the city council had asked him to desist. Lienhard then found Mathis Zell and complained to him that he had been prevented from sharing his message. He added that he wanted someone to write his message down, in order that it might more easily be preserved and spread, a task he could not perform himself due to his illiteracy. According to Lienhard's account, Mathis Zell responded that he might write it down, so long as it was God's will and the message was suitable.<sup>466</sup> When Lienhard later met with Zell and other Strasbourg preachers in Zell's home and asked them for permission to share his message publicly, they advised him to keep silent, but wrote down parts of his prophecies for him.<sup>467</sup> Zell encouraged Lienhard to continue to dictate his prophecies to willing scribes and to submit them to the preachers for theological examination.<sup>468</sup>

Lienhard was not the only radical to attempt to use the Strasbourg cathedral as a platform to share his own ideas, and Mathis Zell gained further practice at dealing with dissent during cathedral services. A particularly notable interruption occurred in 1526, when Hans Wolff, a weaver from Benfeld, accused Zell, who had begun to read from Deuteronomy, of disobedience and lying against the Holy Spirit; Wolff himself should address the congregation, he added, since he could better discern the will of the Spirit.<sup>469</sup> The Strasbourg authorities imprisoned Wolff and arranged for the Strasbourg preachers to have a disputation with him. Wolff accused the

---

<sup>465</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 3 v.

<sup>466</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 4 r.

<sup>467</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 4 r.

<sup>468</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 4 r.

<sup>469</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 55.

Strasbourg preachers of failing to preach the true word of God and focusing only on outward ceremonies. He argued against infant baptism and Christians taking up the sword.<sup>470</sup> When the preachers proved unable to convince Wolff to change his mind, the Rat released him and ordered him to leave and to desist from interrupting church services again.<sup>471</sup>

Lienhard himself recounted one further encounter with Zell, this one in 1531. At the Spirit's prompting, he approached Zell in the cathedral and urged him to fully align himself with the will and word of God, to take up the banner of godly righteousness, and to begin baptizing adult believers rather than infants.<sup>472</sup> Zell protested that he saw nothing wrong with his current course, and that he would encounter the opposition of thousands of people if he began to baptize adults. Lienhard replied that God would guide and preserve Zell if he obeyed, but that if he did not his sheep would strike back at him and scatter.<sup>473</sup> This encounter did not have the effect Lienhard desired, as Zell remained within the fold of Strasbourg's official church and did not join forces with the Josts and Strasbourg's other Melchiorites.

Lienhard's descriptions of his encounters with Zell suggest a complicated relationship. On the one hand, given how frequently and aggressively he approached Zell, in particular, Lienhard seems to have believed that he had the greatest potential of the Strasbourg preachers to become an ally. On the other hand, Zell frequently disappointed Lienhard by failing to heed his message and align himself fully with him. In the absence of writings telling Zell's side of the story, it is difficult to gauge his motivations in these encounters, or indeed the accuracy of Lienhard's account. If Zell truly did assist Lienhard in committing his visions to writing, it may

---

<sup>470</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 53-55; Jean Rott (ed.), *Correspondance de Martin Bucer: Tome II (1524-1526)* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 258.

<sup>471</sup> George Henry Krahn, "An Analysis of the Conflict Between the Clergy of the Reformed Church and the Leaders of the Anabaptist Movement in Strasbourg, 1524-1534" (PhD diss.: University of Washington, 1969), 203.

<sup>472</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F I v – F ii r.

<sup>473</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. F ii r.

have been less because he saw value in the man's prophecies, as Lienhard believed, than because he wished to placate him and keep him from returning to the cathedral to share his message.

Even at his most helpful, Zell stopped short of openly promoting Lienhard's prophecies.

Ursula's visions provide far fewer autobiographical anecdotes than Lienhard's prophetic text, which makes it difficult to ascertain whether she encountered any of Strasbourg's reformers personally. One element of her visions, however, suggests that she perceived Katharina Schutz Zell in a more hostile manner than Lienhard perceived Mathis. In her hundred and fifth vision, Ursula sought food for her children when she encountered "the wife of Master M. Z.," presumably Katharina Schutz Zell. Schutz Zell tossed two poisonous snakes to Ursula and told her that she and her children should eat them. Thankfully, Ursula encountered another man who showed her how to remove the poison from the snakes so that she and her children could eat after all.<sup>474</sup> Ursula's hostility towards Katharina Schutz Zell is surprising, given that both women were passionate about caring for the poor. Ursula's visions frequently portray the poor as specially favoured by God and chastise religious and political elites for their exploitation of poor people's labour. Schutz Zell, for her part, was involved in many charitable works and in welfare reform in Strasbourg, particularly following the influx of refugees after the Peasants' War.<sup>475</sup> Moreover, Schutz Zell was at times so sympathetic to dissenters that she alarmed Martin Bucer, in particular, a fact that led both Schutz Zell's contemporaries and historians of the Reformation in Strasbourg to portray her as a friend (or, at the very least, not an enemy) of Strasbourg's religious radicals.<sup>476</sup> It is unclear whether Ursula's hostility was prompted by actual encounters with Schutz Zell or merely by Ursula's perception of the reformer's wife. Nevertheless, Ursula's

---

<sup>474</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. K 2 r.

<sup>475</sup> McKee, *Life and Thought*, 67-68.

<sup>476</sup> Bucer was particularly alarmed by her admiration for Caspar Schwenckfeld. See McKee, *Life and Thought*, 92.

vision suggests that she distrusted even Schutz Zell's charitable efforts and that, however much the other Strasbourg reformers might fear that Schutz Zell encouraged religious radicalism, Ursula did not consider her an ally.

## **Martin Bucer**

Martin Bucer, Strasbourg's preeminent reformer, arrived in the city in May of 1523. He had, by this point, already broken decisively with the Catholic Church, renounced his Dominican affiliation, and married a former nun. He had spent a year pastoring in Wissembourg, another Alsatian city to the North of Strasbourg, but had been forced to flee the city and seek refuge elsewhere. His early attempts to minister in Strasbourg met with opposition from the bishop and, as a result, Strasbourg's political authorities were reluctant to support him too enthusiastically. They did offer to protect him from persecution, but they denied his request for citizenship on two occasions and refused to grant him permission to give a series of lectures in German on the Gospel of John.<sup>477</sup> Bucer found an ally, however, in Mathis Zell, who gave him the use of his home and his parish to give theological lectures, first in Latin (less accessible to the common people and therefore less objectionable to the Rat) and eventually, as the Rat looked the other way, in German.<sup>478</sup> Bucer's lectures gained him enough popularity that, in January 1524, the parishioners at St. Aurelie, who mostly belonged to the gardeners' guild, demanded the right to install him as their pastor, at their own expense if necessary, and they opted to do so without the Rat's official authorization in February of 1524.<sup>479</sup>

---

<sup>477</sup> Martin Greschat, *Martin Bucer: Ein Reformator und Seine Zeit* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1990), 67.

<sup>478</sup> Greschat, 68.

<sup>479</sup> Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform*, 113-114.

In the first years of his tenure in Strasbourg, Bucer focused primarily on the threat of Catholicism and on convincing the Rat to support the appointment of evangelical preachers and the creation of a new evangelical church order. His first work published in Strasbourg, *Martin Butzers an ein Christlichen Rath und Gemeyn der Stadt Weissenburg Summary seiner Predigt Dasselbst Gethon* (*Martin Bucer's Summary of his Preaching, which he Made there, for a Christian Magistracy and Community in the City of Wissembourg*), contained expressions of his beliefs on the Scriptures, prayer, faith, and brotherly love and also took issue with the Mass, the “devilish” fasting of the monks, and the clergy’s self-appointed role as mediators of salvation.<sup>480</sup> Bucer and his colleagues made significant headway, though not as much as they wished to, in establishing a new Protestant Church order and uprooting old Catholic practices. An ever larger number of parishes acquired evangelical preachers as more and more preachers within the city converted and others arrived from outside the city. By 1525, they were more numerous and more powerful than their Catholic rivals and commanded substantial popular support; in April of 1525, in the face of popular pressure, the Strasbourg magistracy moved to abolish the Mass everywhere in the city, with the exception of four churches (the complete abolition of the Mass came later, in 1529, after the city council referred the decision to the *Schöffen*, or guild leaders).<sup>481</sup>

In his quest to replace Catholic worship with a new evangelical order, Bucer was initially willing to countenance a measure of theological disagreement from his allies. In a 1524 treatise on church ceremonies, Bucer advocated infant baptism but counseled against becoming too consumed with outward ceremonies.<sup>482</sup> Each person ultimately needed to follow their conscience

---

<sup>480</sup> Martin Bucer, “Martin Butzers an ein Christlichen Rath und Gemeyn der Stadt Weissenburg Summary seiner Predigt Dasselbst Gethon,” in *Martin Butzer's Deutsche Schriften Band I: Frühschriften 1520-1524*, edited by Robert Stupperich et al. (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1960), 79-147.

<sup>481</sup> Brady, *Ruling Class*, 204.

<sup>482</sup> Martin Bucer, “Grund und Ursach auß Gotlicher Schrifft der Neüwerungen an dem Nachtmal des Herren, so Man die Mess Nennet, Tauff, Feyrtagen, Bildern, und Gesang in der Gemein Christi, Wann die Zusammenkomt,



and, if individuals felt compelled to delay baptism, they could do so provided they did not undermine the unity of the Church.<sup>483</sup> When Bucer wrote *Grund und Ursach*, a separatist Anabaptist movement had not yet taken shape anywhere in Europe. Some laypeople in Strasbourg and other parts of the Holy Roman Empire, inspired in part by the reformers' willingness to jettison ceremonies without a scriptural basis, had begun to raise doubts about the legitimacy of infant baptism, but they were not yet willing to break with the reformers over the question of baptism.<sup>484</sup> As long as they did not use their doubts to sow disunity, Bucer could tolerate them; the unity of the (non-Catholic) Church was his paramount concern.

By 1526, however, Bucer had begun to worry about threats to church unity, not only from Catholics and Catholic sympathizers, but from other quarters as well. The number of dissenters and sectarians in Strasbourg had increased, owing in part to the growing number of religious refugees who fled to the city from other parts of the Holy Roman Empire because of the Strasbourg magistracy's relatively tolerant approach to religious dissent. The Swiss Anabaptist Wilhelm Reublin arrived in the city in March of 1526 and founded the city's first permanent separatist Anabaptist community, a pacifist and biblicist community of Swiss Brethren Anabaptists, which met in the home of the Strasbourg tailor Jörg Ziegler.<sup>485</sup> The spiritualist Anabaptist Hans Denck and the pacifist Anabaptist Michael Sattler also arrived in Strasbourg, both in the fall of 1526, and Denck in particular piqued the curiosity of many Strasbourg residents, much to Bucer's displeasure.<sup>486</sup> In a December 1526 letter to the French reformer

---

durch und auff das Wort Gottes zu Straßburg Fürgenomen" in *Martin Bucer's Deutsche Schriften Band I: Frühschriften 1520-1524*, edited by Robert Stupperich et al. (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1960), 260-261.

<sup>483</sup> Bucer, "Grund und Ursach," 262.

<sup>484</sup> One Strasbourg resident who questioned the legitimacy of infant baptism was the lay preacher Clemens Ziegler. (See Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 13-14). Ziegler never joined the Anabaptists when they began to assemble in Strasbourg, though his brother Jörg did.

<sup>485</sup> Deppermann, 158-159.

<sup>486</sup> Deppermann, 160.

Guillaume Farel, Bucer complained about Denck's divisive spirit and the way he brought turmoil to the church in Strasbourg.<sup>487</sup> Bucer successfully convinced the city council to banish Denck after a public disputation between the two on 22 December 1526.<sup>488</sup> Denck departed from Strasbourg on Christmas Day but left behind a spiritualist Anabaptist group under the leadership of Jakob Kautz, a preacher from Worms.<sup>489</sup>

Judging from the themes in his surviving correspondence, however, sectarians and dissenters were still not a matter of primary concern for Bucer in 1526. The problem took on an increasing urgency for him in the years that followed, as the Anabaptists and sectarians in Strasbourg not only failed to die out on their own but grew in numbers, both through immigration and the conversion of locals. In the summer of 1527, Bucer and his colleagues wrote an open letter warning against the teachings of Kautz and Denck, in which they called Denck an enemy of both the Scriptures and the governing authorities.<sup>490</sup> That same summer, he complained in a letter to the Zurich reformer Huldrych Zwingli: "the Anabaptists try us greatly, openly refuting Scripture and denying the satisfaction of Christ. May the Lord liberate us from those absurd people!"<sup>491</sup> In a February 1528 letter to Ambrosius Blarer, a reformer in Constance and Bucer's good friend, he lamented that the sectarians in Strasbourg had even reversed their position on oath taking and opted to take the civic oath, which allowed them to stay in the city and cause more trouble.<sup>492</sup>

---

<sup>487</sup> Rott, *Correspondance Bucer Tome II*, 185.

<sup>488</sup> Robert Kreider, "The Anabaptists and the Civil Authorities of Strasbourg, 1525-1555," *Church History* 24:2 (June 1955): 102.

<sup>489</sup> Deppermann, 165.

<sup>490</sup> Martin Bucer, "Getrewe Warnung der Prediger des Evangelii zu Straßburg uber die Artickel so Jakob Kautz, Prediger zu Worms, kürztlich hat lassen ausgohn" in *Martin Bucer's Deutsche Schriften Band II: Schriften der Jahre 1524-1528*, edited by Robert Stupperich (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1962), 234.

<sup>491</sup> Christian Krieger and Jean Rott (eds), *Correspondance de Martin Bucer: Tome III (1527-1529)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 69.

<sup>492</sup> Krieger and Rott, *Correspondance III*, 107.

Bucer's concerns about sectarian influence on the church were also evident in his 1528 commentary on John, in which he decried a separatist insistence on adult baptism, which prevented children from being fully brought into the Christian community.<sup>493</sup> Bucer and his colleagues continued to lobby the Rat for more decisive action on the Anabaptist problem, but never with as much success as they wanted. In March of 1529 Bucer, along with Zell and Caspar Hedio, another Strasbourg reformer, petitioned the Rat for permission to debate Kautz and Reublin. The two Anabaptist leaders had released a joint statement from prison and the reformers hoped to refute it publicly. The Rat, however, denied their request and deemed a written disputation sufficient.<sup>494</sup> While Bucer's correspondence with Zwingli shows him to have been initially intrigued by Melchior Hoffman's arrival in Strasbourg, Hoffman soon joined the ranks of the troublemakers in Bucer's estimation as well.<sup>495</sup> In 1531, he took aim against yet another sectarian enemy: the Anabaptist leader Pilgram Marpeck, who had arrived in the city in 1528. In an August 1531 letter to Margarethe Blarer, Ambrosius Blarer's sister, he lamented Marpeck's influence among pious women.<sup>496</sup> He debated Marpeck before the city council in late 1531, and in writing in early 1532, before Marpeck was finally expelled from Strasbourg.<sup>497</sup>

Bucer placed great hope in church discipline as a means of preserving his flock from sectarian error, and he and the rest of Strasbourg's preachers made some headway with the Rat to allow for greater oversight of the churches. In 1531, at the preachers' behest, the Rat established a committee of Kirchenpfleger (churchwardens), a group of laymen, council members, and guild

---

<sup>493</sup> See particularly Martin Bucer, *Enarratio in Evangelion Iohannis (1528, 1530, 1536)*, Volume II of *Martini Buceri Opera Latina*, edited by Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 77-97.

<sup>494</sup> Krieger and Rott, *Correspondance III*, 250-252.

<sup>495</sup> Krieger and Rott, *Correspondance III*, 292.

<sup>496</sup> Reinhold Friedrich et al. (eds), *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band VI (Mai-Oktober 1531)* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 92.

<sup>497</sup> Berndt Hamm et al. (eds), *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band VII (Oktober 1531-März 1532)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 105; 192-193.

leaders whose job it was to oversee each of the parishes and their pastors for doctrinal correctness and right behaviour.<sup>498</sup> This resulted in some tradeoffs for Bucer, since laymen had greater control of church supervision than the preachers, but it nevertheless provided the church with the oversight that Bucer felt it sorely needed. Even the establishment of the Kirchenpfleger, however, proved insufficient to stem the flourishing of heterodoxy and heteropraxy in Strasbourg, much to Bucer's frustration.<sup>499</sup> A joint letter, written by Bucer and his colleagues to the Strasbourg Rat in October 1532, decried how freely all manner of error was printed and circulated in Strasbourg. This letter also marked the first time that Bucer mentioned the Josts (whose writings Hoffman had published that same year in Deventer) in one of his writings. He and his colleagues decried Lienhard and other "simple-minded folk [who mistake] dreams for prophecies" and cause chaos as a result of their "evil fantasies."<sup>500</sup>

Bucer and his colleagues wanted to firmly establish the Strasbourg Church's beliefs and practices and decisively and publicly challenge the most influential heretics who threatened to mislead the city's faithful. In November of 1532, the Strasbourg preachers jointly petitioned the Rat for an open debate, which would allow them to publicly refute the arguments of sectarians and dissenters.<sup>501</sup> Out of this desire was born the Strasbourg Synod of June 1533, which had the twin aims of cementing the church's articles of faith and directly challenging well-known heretics (in particular the Strasbourg gardener Clemens Ziegler, Melchior Hoffman, and the

---

<sup>498</sup> Amy Nelson Burnett, *The Yoke of Christ: Martin Bucer and Christian Discipline* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 67.

<sup>499</sup> See, inter alia, Reinhold Friedrich et al. (eds.), *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band V (September 1530-Mai 1531)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 288; Wolfgang Simon et al. (eds.), *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band VIII (April 1532-August 1532)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 13.

<sup>500</sup> The Strasbourg preachers to the City Council, October 1532, Series 1 AST, Box 76, Item 7, Archives de Saint Thomas, Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg, transcribed in Reinhold Friedrich et al. (eds.), *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band IX (September 1532-Juni 1533)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 29-30.

<sup>501</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 575-577.

spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeld).<sup>502</sup> Bucer entered 1533, a year that marked a significant turning point for the history of religious dissent and sectarianism in Reformation Strasbourg, more determined than ever to fight for the unity of the church and with more support from the magistracy for these aims than he had previously enjoyed.

### **Wolfgang Capito**

Wolfgang Capito arrived in Strasbourg in March of 1523 after several years as a humanist scholar in the court of the archbishop of Mainz. During his tenure at Mainz, he had demonstrated some sympathy towards Luther's ideas but was deeply wary of the social upheaval that accompanied religious reform.<sup>503</sup> He took the position of provost of the Chapter of Saint Thomas, a benefice that allowed him to comfortably pursue his studies and, he hoped, maintain some distance from the current theological controversies.<sup>504</sup> This proved infeasible, however, as Strasbourg was already embroiled in religious controversy, with Mathis Zell's evangelical preaching at the centre of the debate. In June of 1523, acting in his role as provost, Capito challenged Zell on the pace of his reform and accused him of fomenting unrest and division.<sup>505</sup> Zell countered that Capito's objections showed an insufficient regard for the Word of God; surely, he added, there could be no such thing as preaching too much truth and no wrong time to preach it.<sup>506</sup> Zell's arguments convinced Capito to align himself with the cause of reform in Strasbourg.

---

<sup>502</sup> Krahn, 537.

<sup>503</sup> James Kittelson, *Wolfgang Capito: From Humanist to Reformer* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 84.

<sup>504</sup> Kittelson, 89.

<sup>505</sup> Wolfgang Capito, *An den Hochwirdigen Fürsten unn Herren Wilhelmen Bischoffen zu Straßburg und Landtgrauen zu Elsas Entschuldigung D. Wolfgangs Fa Capito* (Augsburg: Silvan Otmar, 1524), fols. B iii r – B iv r.

<sup>506</sup> Capito, *An den Hochwirdigen Fürsten*, fol. C i r.

Once Capito aligned himself with the reform movement, he cemented his new theological allegiance with a series of concrete steps. On 9 July, within a month of his conversation with Zell, he purchased Strasbourg citizenship, a move that both placed him under the city council's protection and made him accountable to the laws of the city in a way that clerical privilege had previously prevented. He took to the pulpit to preach, a task previous provosts of Saint Thomas had considered beneath their rank and, following Zell's example, preached the pure Word of God. He also published a series of pro-reform tracts, in which he explained his new religious allegiances to the bishop of Strasbourg and disputed accusations levelled against the reformers by the Augustinian Conrad Treger.<sup>507</sup> These actions imperiled Capito's provostship, which fell within the bishop's purview, but, as they had for Zell, Strasbourg's citizenry intervened on his behalf and, in the spring of 1524, demanded that he be installed as pastor at the church of New St. Peter's.<sup>508</sup> Once he had a post that did not depend on the bishop's favour, Capito cemented his allegiance to the Reformation by marrying Agnes Roettel, a patrician woman whose father belonged to the Council of Fifteen.<sup>509</sup>

Capito joined forces with Bucer, Zell, and a growing cadre of Strasbourg preachers who fought traditionalists for the implementation of evangelical reforms and the abolition of "papist" practices such as the mass. In a November 1525 letter to Ambrosius Blarer he expressed satisfaction with the pace of the reform and relief that the city had not been plagued with sectarian dissent (a situation that turned out to be temporary.)<sup>510</sup> When Wilhelm Reublin arrived in the city in 1526, Capito made guardedly positive comments to Zwingli about his piety, but he

---

<sup>507</sup> Kittelson, 108.

<sup>508</sup> Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform*, 112; Kittelson, 108.

<sup>509</sup> Kittelson, 108.

<sup>510</sup> Rummel, Erika (ed.), *The Correspondence of Wolfgang Capito Volume 2: 1524-1531* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 170.

had nothing good to say about Hans Wolff when he began to cause disruption.<sup>511</sup> He called his appearance a “new strategy of Satan” and dismissed Wolff as “insane,” “vainglorious,” and “altogether illiterate.”<sup>512</sup>

Towards many dissenters, however, Capito adopted a relatively tolerant and compassionate approach. On 31 May 1527, ten days after Michael Sattler’s execution, Capito wrote a letter to the city council of Horb, denouncing the use of force and coercion in disputes with dissenters. Sattler had visited Strasbourg several months prior and, while Capito had serious points of theological disagreement with him and considered him the proponent of a “new monasticism,” he admired his zeal for God and his desire that people live upright lives.<sup>513</sup> Capito and his colleagues had disagreed with him “in the mild manner owed to a fellow Christian” and even then “in fear and trembling lest [they] hastily oppose what truly comes from God.”<sup>514</sup> He called on the Horb City council to show mercy to those Anabaptists who still remained the city’s prison and urged them to acknowledge their zeal for Christ and to correct them gently.<sup>515</sup>

Capito expressed his views on the piety of the Anabaptists publicly in his 1528 commentary on Hosea. “There are good men among them...if they sin, they sin without malice,” he cautioned.<sup>516</sup> As long as they respected the public peace, Capito was content to let dissenters believe as they wished. In an undated letter (most likely from 1531) to the Augsburg preacher Wolfgang Musculus, he expressed reservations about how freely evangelical preachers proceeded against the Anabaptists. Capito considered himself incapable of judging others’ faith; in Strasbourg dissenters were required only to refrain from slandering the Word or gathering in

---

<sup>511</sup> Krahn, 196.

<sup>512</sup> Rummel, *Correspondence 2*, 220-221.

<sup>513</sup> Rummel, *Correspondence 2*, 280-281.

<sup>514</sup> Rummel, *Correspondence 2*, 281.

<sup>515</sup> Rummel, *Correspondence 2*, 283-285.

<sup>516</sup> Wolfgang Capito, *In Hoseam Prophetam V. F. Capitonis Commentarius* (Strasbourg: John Hervagius, 1528), 177v.

secret meetings and to obey the magistracy (including taking the oath of citizenship), and it served no good to require anything further of them.<sup>517</sup> In 1530/1, he even drafted a memorandum on the treatment of Anabaptists, probably meant for circulation among other reformers. He reaffirmed both his profound theological disagreement with the Anabaptists and his regard for their zeal and piety. They endured unspeakable torments for their faith, after all, in a way that reminded Capito of the martyrs of the early church.<sup>518</sup>

Capito was never in particular danger of joining the Anabaptists himself, though he was drawn to spiritualism for a few years, partially due to a friendship he developed with the spiritualist writer Martin Cellarius in 1527.<sup>519</sup> Nevertheless, his less than complete support for his fellow preachers' reform program emboldened Strasbourg's dissenters and greatly alarmed Bucer, who deplored Cellarius' influence on Capito in a 1528 letter to Zwingli.<sup>520</sup> When Capito's relaxed attitude towards heterodoxy had still not subsided by late 1531, Bucer's alarm grew. He wished to hold a public disputation with the Anabaptists but worried, as he confided to Blarer in a 1531 letter, that Capito's moderate opinions had hurt his cause with the Strasbourg magistracy.<sup>521</sup> Moreover, Capito had just lost his wife in 1531 and sunk into a deep melancholy, and Bucer worried that he might marry Sabina Bader, the widow of executed Anabaptist and self-proclaimed prophet Augustin Bader.<sup>522</sup> In an attempt to cure Capito of his melancholy, Bucer suggested a months-long trip to Swiss and South German cities to visit fellow reformers and examine the state of the church in their respective cities.<sup>523</sup> This trip also included a visit to

---

<sup>517</sup> Rummel, *Correspondence 2*, 455-456; Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 331-332.

<sup>518</sup> Rummel, *Correspondence 2*, 440-444; Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 284-288.

<sup>519</sup> Deppermann, 169-171.

<sup>520</sup> Krieger and Rott, *Correspondance III*, 204.

<sup>521</sup> Hamm et al., *Briefwechsel/Correspondance VII*, 141.

<sup>522</sup> Kittelson, 192.

<sup>523</sup> Kittelson, 190.



Blarer, and Bucer pleaded with him to speak with Capito about his attitude towards the Anabaptists.<sup>524</sup>

Capito returned from his trip in better spirits. At Bucer's urging, he married Wibrandis Rosenblatt, the widow of the Basel reformer Oecolampadius. He also participated more fully in Bucer's anti-sectarian efforts; he was one of the senders of the October 1532 letter of the preachers to the Rat, in which they argued against Kautz and referred to the prophecies of Lienhard Jost as dreams and evil fantasies.<sup>525</sup> As with Bucer, this letter marks the first time that Capito directly referred to the Josts. However, given his disdain for Hans Wolff's illiteracy and claims to spiritual insight, it seems likely that, even at his most tolerant, he would have viewed them much the same way as he viewed the weaver from Benfeld. The Josts' insistence that they could hear regularly and in great detail from God without the ability to study the Word and Lienhard's determination to make himself heard in the cathedral do not match the quiet piety that Capito admired in other Anabaptists.

By late 1532, moreover, despite his desire for free and unforced faith and his admiration for the piety of some dissenters, Capito had come to accept that the need for public order trumped his unwillingness to use coercion in matters of faith. Even at their strictest, the Strasbourg reformers were never as bloodthirsty as some of their contemporaries when it came to dealing with dissenters. They preferred to persuade them to rejoin the church where possible and, even for the most recalcitrant offenders, they usually considered banishment or imprisonment sufficient at a time when many others opted for the death penalty. Nevertheless, at the outset of 1533 as they began to prepare for the synod, Capito and his colleagues were united in their desire to establish firm theological barriers and to protect their flock from heresy: by persuasion if

---

<sup>524</sup> Hamm et al., *Briefwechsel/Correspondance VII*, 143.

<sup>525</sup> Friedrich et al., *Briefwechsel/Correspondance IX*, 29.

possible, but by with the assistance of the state if necessary. He participated in drafting the preachers' request for a disputation with the sectarians, which led to the Synod of 1533 and Bucer wrote with relief to Ambrosius Blarer: "Capito is now wholly ours. Would that he had always been so!"<sup>526</sup>

### **The Josts and the Rest of the Strasbourg Clergy**

Zell, Capito, and Bucer were the principal protagonists of the early Reformation in Strasbourg, but they were not the only or even (with the exception of Zell) the principal clerical figures with whom the Josts themselves interacted. If the dates in Lienhard's autobiography are fully accurate, his first prophetic episode occurred from December 1522 to February 1523, before either Bucer or Capito had arrived in the city and before the reformers had gained the upper hand in Strasbourg's church. He first noted an encounter with a clergyman after he arrived in the Strasbourg hospital in 1523. He called out a prophecy to others in his room, who did not understand his meaning, but an unnamed priest who was himself a patient interceded on his behalf. "Oh dear brothers," he called out, "you do not understand what he says, but I understand it, for it will happen, and it is written, that the word of the Lord will be break forth through those who have not reached maturity."<sup>527</sup>

At another point, after Lienhard had been moved from the hospital to the asylum, a friend of his by the name of Veith Schelthamer brought with him an unnamed preacher who recorded a subsection of Lienhard's prophecies for him.<sup>528</sup> After he had returned again to the hospital, he called for a pastoral visit from two pastors: an unnamed Doctor and Symphorian Altbiesser, a

---

<sup>526</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 575-577; Berndt Hamm et al. (eds.), *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band X (Juli 1533 – Dezember 1533)* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 340.

<sup>527</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 3 v.

<sup>528</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C 3 r.

local preacher who had also begun, following Zell's example, to preach evangelically in 1522.<sup>529</sup> He described his prophetic experiences and asked them whether they thought God had sent them. They instead rejected it as the work of the devil, and Lienhard, incensed, protested that he had always asked God to take the visions away from him if they were not of divine origin, and he refused to believe they could be the devil's work. The preachers left Lienhard, at an impasse.<sup>530</sup> Even when a clergyman seemed to have a guardedly positive reaction to Lienhard, the latter sometimes reacted testily. In 1525, after he sang and prophesied in the Strasbourg cathedral, an unnamed priest approached Lienhard and asked if he knew anything further concerning the law of God, and Lienhard retorted that, since he was a priest and a learned man (*schriftgelerder*), he ought to teach him and not the other way around.<sup>531</sup>

The Josts certainly had ideas for reform that meshed well with those of Strasbourg's Protestant reformers and citizens. Lienhard railed at length about the abomination of clerical celibacy, and he and Ursula both showed a profound distaste for the Catholic ceremony of the Mass; "they crucify [Christ] with their idolatrous masses," Lienhard once exclaimed in distress.<sup>532</sup> They also shared with Strasbourg's Protestant populace a strong concern for economic justice and a righteous anger at the ways in which the Catholic Church had enriched itself and gilded its houses while the common folk went hungry.<sup>533</sup> Yet, despite Lienhard's occasional attempts to recruit evangelical clergymen as allies, the Josts soon came to feel at best ambivalent and at worst openly hostile towards the *schriftgelehrten*. In 1530, Ursula even had a

---

<sup>529</sup> On Altbiesser, see Eugène and Émile Haag, *La France Protestante: Tome I* (Paris: Joël Chérbuliez, 1846), 67.

<sup>530</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C 3 r – C 3 v.

<sup>531</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E 3 r.

<sup>532</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B 4 r; C 4 v; Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J 2 r.

<sup>533</sup> For ways in which elements of the popular reform movement in Strasbourg, particularly iconoclasm, were linked to concern for the well-being of the poor, see Lee Palmer Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 111-113.

disturbingly violent vision about Kaspar Hedio, a cathedral preacher and protégé of Wolfgang Capito, which she described in the following manner:

I saw that Dr. Hedio preached in the cathedral and the other *schriftgelehrten* listened to him, and also a great crowd of people. After this I saw coming another great crowd of people. They cast Dr. Hedio down from his pulpit, and I saw that they beat to death the *schriftgelehrten* together with Hedio and the crowd of listeners. And then I saw that so much blood was poured out into the cathedral that they waded in blood that went past their shoes.<sup>534</sup>

As for the evangelical clergy themselves, they frequently had bigger problems to deal with than the Josts, but to the extent that they did interact with them, they seem to have largely vacillated between attempting to reason with them and bring them into the fold (if necessary building goodwill by first serving as scribes) and dismissing them as mentally unstable. Above all, the preachers valued knowledge of and obedience to the Word of God. They were happy to preach to and catechize simple unlettered men and women—in short, to act as their teachers. They did not quite know what to do with a simple unlettered man and woman who believed that they had things to teach the preachers and who valued their own ability to hear from God more than they valued the preachers' understanding of the Word.

### **Strasbourg's Political Authorities**

Strasbourg's reputation as a comparatively tolerant sixteenth-century city is well known, but the question of whether this was due to the attitudes of the reformers or of the governing authorities has been a matter of some debate. Miriam Usher Chrisman, in her 1967 monograph *Strasbourg and Reform: A Study in the Process of Change*, argued that the city's governing authorities took a stricter approach to dissent than the reformers, who preferred persuasion.<sup>535</sup>

---

<sup>534</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. K 1 r.

<sup>535</sup> Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform*, 191.

Later scholarship, however, has refuted this assertion. Thomas A. Brady, Jr.'s 1978 *Ruling Class, Regime, and Reformation at Strasbourg, 1520-1555* supported the arguments that Strasbourg's lay leaders, rather than its reformers, bore the greater responsibility for the city's reputation for toleration.<sup>536</sup> The Strasbourg preachers frequently petitioned the Rat for firmer action against the sectarians—in the same 1532 letter in which they criticized the prophecy of Lienhard Jost, they took pains to remind the Rat that their commitment to the Word of God should, if necessary, outweigh their commitment to keeping the peace.<sup>537</sup>

In fact, keeping the peace was the primary concern of the Strasbourg governing authorities and the principal reason they took what actions they did against Strasbourg's sectarians, or even in favour of the Reformation itself. Brady has identified three factions among the city's governing authorities in the early years of the Reformation: the Zealots, who wholeheartedly supported reform even if it had consequences for the city, the Politiques, who favoured reform to an extent but also considered the city's security and international reputation, and the Old Guard, staunch Catholics and defenders of the status quo.<sup>538</sup> The Politique faction essentially prevailed by 1525 and, while the magistracy granted reforms in order to keep the peace of the city whenever popular pressure mounted, they often moved at a much slower pace than the clergy preferred.

The Strasbourg magistrates consistently showed an unwillingness to police others' beliefs, provided they did not disturb the public peace. However, the sectarians that began to flood into Strasbourg after 1526 determined to proselytize did, at times, threaten the public order, particularly when they undermined practices such as swearing the civic oath. The Senate began

---

<sup>536</sup> Brady, *Ruling Class*, 247n43.

<sup>537</sup> Friedrich et al., *Briefwechsel/Correspondance IX*,

<sup>538</sup> Brady, *Ruling Class*, 209.

to question Anabaptists and other sectarians, attempting to ascertain their beliefs and practices.<sup>539</sup> In December of 1526 the Rat decided to produce an anti-Anabaptist mandate and, in July of 1527, they issued it.<sup>540</sup> The mandate, which the Senate renewed in 1530, ordered Strasbourg's citizens to refrain from housing, feeding, or otherwise assisting Anabaptists and promised punishment to those who disobeyed.<sup>541</sup> Later in 1527, they took an even stronger stance against dissent when they executed Thomas Saltzmann, who denied the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, and the inspiration of the New Testament.<sup>542</sup> This was, however, an unusually harsh intervention on the part of the Strasbourg civil authorities. Throughout the sixteenth century, only one other heretic—the bigamist Claus Frey—faced execution in Strasbourg. The majority of the dissenters captured by the Strasbourg authorities faced the lesser punishments of imprisonment, fines, or banishment.

Most of the time, the Strasbourg civil authorities focused their attention on the leaders of sectarian movements, most of whom had arrived in Strasbourg from other parts of the Empire. There were, however, bursts of more intensive persecution. In 1528 the authorities imprisoned forty Anabaptists and, after questioning them, fined those who were willing to swear the civic oath and expelled those who were not.<sup>543</sup> A year later, in March 1529, a series of leaflets critical of the civic authorities appeared throughout the city and, although the authors turned out to be disgruntled Catholics upset about the abolition of the Mass, the Senate initially suspected Anabaptists; they arrested and questioned forty-four religious radicals, including Wilhelm

---

<sup>539</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 62-66.

<sup>540</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 67; 122.

<sup>541</sup> Mandate of the Senate Against the Anabaptists, 27 July 1527, Series 1 AST, Box 76, Item 1, Archives de Saint Thomas, Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg; Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 268.

<sup>542</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 134-136.

<sup>543</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 153-154.

Reublin who, despite an earlier banishment, had returned to the city.<sup>544</sup> In October 1530, the Rat established a subcommittee, the *Wiedertäuferherren*, dedicated entirely to keeping the dissenters under control.<sup>545</sup> When the preachers sent their 1532 request for a synod, or an official gathering of Strasbourg's religious and political authorities in order to officially establish church doctrine and order, Strasbourg's magistrates gladly acquiesced; the synod gave them the opportunity both to keep a tighter handle on the sects that sowed discord within the city and to retain a great deal of control over the workings of Strasbourg's official church.<sup>546</sup>

The relationship of the Josts to Strasbourg's governing authorities prior to the publication of Lienhard's visions and the second edition of Ursula's visions in 1532 is a complicated one. Lienhard in particular believed that Strasbourg's lords were chosen by God to lead the rest of the world into a new, more just and righteous way of living. The Strasbourg authorities were the intended recipients of many of Lienhard's prophecies, and he tried desperately to pass his message along to them and convince them to take up "the banner of godly righteousness." According to Lienhard's account, he had good reason to hope for a hearing; his godfather, whom he called Herrto Ludwig, was one of the city magistrates.<sup>547</sup> Herrto Ludwig helped Lienhard obtain an audience with the city magistrates on one occasion and on another with Mathis Zell and other Strasbourg preachers.<sup>548</sup>

It is difficult to establish Herrto Ludwig's identity without independent evidence to corroborate Lienhard's account. There were several men with the name Ludwig in city governance in 1522/3, when Lienhard's visionary experiences began: Hans Ludwig von

---

<sup>544</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 226-227; Derksen, *Radicals to Survivors*, 53-55.

<sup>545</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 289-290.

<sup>546</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 578.

<sup>547</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 2 v.

<sup>548</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 2 v; E 4 r.

Endingen, Stettmeister and member of the Council of Thirteen, Ludwig Zorn zum Riet, a member of the Council of Fifteen, and Ludwig Böcklin von Böcklinsau, Ludwig von Mülnheim, and Hans Ludwig von Rotweil, all members of the Council of Thirteen.<sup>549</sup> It is also possible that Lienhard misunderstood his godfather's role in city governance—there are indications in his visions that he was not fully acquainted with Strasbourg's governing structure and its members. On the twenty-seventh of December, the first time he tried to give his prophecy to the magistrates, he claimed to have spoken to two burgermeisters: a Lord Phillips and a Lord Conrad Thomsen.<sup>550</sup> Lord Phillips may have been Philips von Ramstein, who served as Stettmeister in 1522, but no one by the name of Conrad Thomsen filled any such role (a Conrat von Duntzenheim did serve as Ammeister in 1523).<sup>551</sup>

The Strasbourg magistrates did not live up to Lienhard's expectations of them. At best, they humoured him and shunted him off to the city scribe to give his prophecy, when he clearly wanted to give it to them in person. The first time they did this, he went home without seeing the city scribe, but the second time he opted to dictate his prophecy in hopes that they would send for him at a later date to explain it more fully.<sup>552</sup> They did not, but even ten years later he seemed to entertain a faint hope that they still might.<sup>553</sup> Moreover, when Lienhard caused a public disturbance by running through the town naked and crying out in the middle of the night, Herrto Ludwig himself placed him in the Strasbourg hospital.<sup>554</sup> The fact that they opted for the hospital rather than jail as a solution for Lienhard suggests that the authorities viewed him as merely

---

<sup>549</sup> Brady, *Ruling Class*, 303; 311; 337; 358; 384-385.

<sup>550</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 2 v; E 4 r.

<sup>551</sup> Jacques Hatt, *Liste des Membres du Grand Sénat de Strasbourg, des Stettmeistres, des Ammeistres, des Conseils des XXI, XII, et des XV: Du XIIIe Siècle à 1789* (Strasbourg: Mairie de la Ville de Strasbourg, 1963), 194-195.

<sup>552</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 2 r – B 2 v.

<sup>553</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 2 v.

<sup>554</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 3 r.



mentally unstable, not malicious, but both Lienhard and Ursula viewed the experience as a difficult trial and a form of imprisonment, and they described it using words like *Gefängnis* and *Bestrickung*.<sup>555</sup>

This hospitalization, however, seems to have been the worst thing the Josts experienced at the hands of the Rat, even after the Rat began to view Melchior Hoffman, the Josts' eventual mentor and editor, with suspicion. The magistrates did question the printers Balthasar Beck and Christian Engelnoff after Hoffman printed the first edition of Ursula's visions (without using her name) in 1530, but the printers could not identify her, and the brief biographical details she provided about her husband's hospitalization appear not to have jogged the magistrates' memories.<sup>556</sup> Forced to deal with a myriad of threats both in and outside the city, the Strasbourg magistrates seem not to have taken Lienhard particularly seriously. It was easy enough to dismiss him as mad and to wait for him to go away, especially before the printing of his prophecies. They paid more attention to Hoffman, who in their minds posed a greater threat due to his numerous publications and his many followers in Strasbourg and in North Germany and the Netherlands. In 1531 they resolved to imprison him, should they apprehend him in the city again, which they did two years later, in May 1533.<sup>557</sup>

Ursula in particular seems to have taken issue with the Rat's persecution of dissenters. In a 1529 vision, possibly following the string on arrests in March, she saw the following vision:

I saw a great tower and on it a black cross, and the cross was lowered and placed in the middle of the tower. And I saw a deep vault, and into it they led captive people. And afterwards I saw a hall, and in there stood many fierce lords who were full of wrath. The captives were unmercifully ordered in that same hall before the fierce lords to pull themselves up so that one let them violently onto

---

<sup>555</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B 4 r; Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. G 1 v.

<sup>556</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 262.

<sup>557</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 355.

their faces before the feet of the tyrants.<sup>558</sup>

The lords in this vision come across as almost cartoonishly evil, and the fact that the cross on top of the tower is black suggests that Ursula viewed it as a symbol of a false Christianity—one that saw itself as righteous but resorted to persecuting the meek. Strasbourg may have been a haven for dissenters in comparative terms, but in absolute terms it left much to be desired. Ultimately, it failed to fulfill its potential in Lienhard's imagination as the standard bearer of godly righteousness or in Melchior Hoffman's imagination as the New Jerusalem.

### **Melchior Hoffman's Incarceration and the Synod of 1533**

Melchior Hoffman returned to Strasbourg in the spring of 1533, after a three-year period of apostolic ministry in North Germany and the Netherlands, during which time he had amassed a considerable following. He returned to Strasbourg fully anticipating trouble from the authorities; he had received a prophecy from a follower in East Friesland that he would face a brief imprisonment in Strasbourg, a necessary precursor to a glorious flowering of Melchior Hoffman's teaching all over the world.<sup>559</sup> In the first few weeks after his return to Strasbourg, he attempted to convince the magistrates to accept and fulfill the city's role as the spiritual New Jerusalem. Lienhard assisted him in this task, and he served as a courier for Hoffman on at least one occasion when he delivered Hoffman's book on the sword to the Rat.<sup>560</sup> Hoffman's eagerly anticipated arrest took place in May, after the Strasbourg authorities arrested Claus Frey, a former associate of the Strasbourg Melchiorites, for bigamy. Frey attempted to convince the authorities that he posed no threat to the city and pointed them instead to Hoffman, who was

---

<sup>558</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. J 2 v.

<sup>559</sup> Obbe Philips, *Bekentnisse Obbe Philipsz* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1584), fol. A v r; Deppermann, 254.

<sup>560</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 15. Or, alternatively, this book on the sword was by Lienhard Jost. If so, there was no mention of plans for such a book in the prophecies published a year earlier.

staying in the house of his follower Veltin Dufft.<sup>561</sup> They did not release Claus Frey, but they did arrest Hoffman and bring him in for questioning. Hoffman, overjoyed at the sight of his captors, whom he saw as the fulfillment of prophecy, raised his hands to heaven in praise and swore to eat only bread and water until his release from prison.<sup>562</sup>

The Strasbourg authorities questioned Hoffman on multiple occasions in an attempt to ascertain the danger he posed to the city. Hoffman protested that he wanted nothing but good for the city and would gladly give his own neck for it necessary.<sup>563</sup> The Strasbourg governing authorities, however, were less than impressed with his hopes for Strasbourg as the new Jerusalem, which included an all-out war with the Holy Roman Emperor, the dragon of Revelation.<sup>564</sup> They were also alarmed by his allegations that the Lutherans and Zwinglians preached a false, demonic gospel and did not have the truth, and they remained unpersuaded by his arguments for his Christology—that Christ had not received his human flesh from his mother Mary, but had brought his own flesh from heaven, untainted by sin.<sup>565</sup> Hoffman's imprisonment coincided the finalization of plans for the Strasbourg Synod of 1533. Strasbourg's evangelicals had succeeded only four years earlier in seeing the Mass entirely abolished and had subsequently turned their attention more fully to establishing order within their own church. Their plans for a synod to aid in this process has at last come to fruition after some negotiation with the city's magistrates. They resolved to include Hoffman with the other sectarians and heretics whom Bucer planned to debate at the Synod the following month.<sup>566</sup>

---

<sup>561</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 13.

<sup>562</sup> Philips, *Bekentnisse*, fol. A v v.

<sup>563</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 15; 18.

<sup>564</sup> Melchior Hoffman, introduction to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. A 4 v – A 5 r.

<sup>565</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 17-18.

<sup>566</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 16.

The Strasbourg Synod of 1533 took place in three phases. The first phase, a pre-synod held from 3 to 6 June, involved formalizing sixteen articles of doctrine to be adopted by the churches in Strasbourg and its associated rural parishes. Just as the Tetrapolitan confession of 1530 had clarified the Strasbourg church's theology with respect to the Zwinglian/Lutheran debates on the Lord's Supper, the Sixteen Articles of the Strasbourg Synod clarified the church's position with respect to certain sectarian and dissident teachings.<sup>567</sup> Article Four, which affirmed Christ's simultaneous divine and human nature, took direct aim at "the new error" that claimed that Christ did not take his human nature from Mary, a clear reference to Hoffman and his followers, and Article Nine (on the sacraments as "visible gospels") denounced all who rejected infant baptism.<sup>568</sup> The articles also denied human free will and condemned the formation of separate churches. Participants in the pre-synod consisted of a group of four presiding city magistrates, the city preachers, the *Kirchenpfleger*, representatives of the Chapter of Saint Thomas, and the city's teachers.<sup>569</sup>

Once the pre-synod participants had agreed on the wording of the articles, the five day long main synod began on 10 June. The main synod allowed a greater number of participants than the free synod; representatives of Strasbourg's associated rural parish churches, *Schöffen* from each guild, and representatives from the city's sectarians were also invited (or, in the case of the sectarians, ordered) to take part.<sup>570</sup> The synod began with an examination of the state of the rural parish churches, but its centerpiece was a series of debates between Martin Bucer and

---

<sup>567</sup> Deppermann, 249. In some cases, the draft of the articles made explicit references to the people they were contradicting, only to excise them. Article one, which defends the Trinity, contains a crossed out mention of a *Hispanier* (Servetus) who wrote against the threefold personhood of God. See The Sixteen Articles of the Synod, 1533, Series 1 AST, Box 75, Item 18, Archives de Saint Thomas, Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg.

<sup>568</sup> The Sixteenth Articles of the Synod, Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg, transcribed in Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 25-32.

<sup>569</sup> Deppermann, 249.

<sup>570</sup> Deppermann, 249.

leading dissenters: Clemens Ziegler, Melchior Hoffman, and Caspar Schwenckfeld. There was, of course, no question of the sectarians winning the debate or possibly influencing church policy—both Strasbourg’s reformers and Strasbourg’s magistrates were already acquainted with their beliefs and had found them wanting—but the semi-public setting provided Bucer with the opportunity to reassure Strasbourg’s religious and political leaders that the sectarians’ arguments had no scriptural merit. Bucer spent two synod sessions arguing with Hoffman: one on the afternoon of 11 June and one on the afternoon of 12 June. Hoffman also unsuccessfully requested permission to debate Schwenckfeld directly.<sup>571</sup>

Bucer was particularly concerned by the geographical breadth of Hoffman’s influence and determined to spread his refutation of Hoffman to the German and Dutch regions where Melchiorite heresies had taken root. Within weeks of the synod he had produced a tract entitled *Handlung in dem Offentlichen Gesprech zu Straßburg Jungst im Synodo Gehalten Gegen Melchior Hoffman* (An Account of the Open Debate, Recently Held in Strasbourg in the Synod, Against Melchior Hoffman.) In it, Bucer tackled what he considered Hoffman’s four principal errors: his Christological belief that Christ had not taken his flesh from Mary, his belief that God’s grace made the soul truly free to choose either good or evil, his claim that there was no forgiveness for mortal sins committed after conversion, and his dismissal of infant baptism.<sup>572</sup> He also directly referenced the prophecies of Lienhard and Ursula Jost, reminding his readers of Lienhard’s hospitalization due to “crazy” (*verrucket*) behaviour.<sup>573</sup> These “bloodthirsty, uproarious dreams,” he concluded, certainly did not come from the Holy Spirit, but rather from that evil spirit “who was a murderer from the beginning.”<sup>574</sup>

---

<sup>571</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 83.

<sup>572</sup> Bucer, “Handlung Gegen Hoffman,” 43-108.

<sup>573</sup> Bucer, “Handlung Gegen Hoffman,” 53.

<sup>574</sup> Bucer, “Handlung Gegen Hoffman,” 53.

Bucer distributed his reponse to Hoffman assiduously. By early July, he had mailed copies to Ambrosius Blarer, Joachim Vadian, and Philipp of Hesse.<sup>575</sup> Supporters of Bucer and magisterial reform promptly translated it into Low German and Dutch for distribution in Northern Germany and the Netherlands, where many eagerly awaited news of Hoffman's fate in Strasbourg.<sup>576</sup> The Melchiorite camp also circulated documents from their own perspective. A Melchiorite identified as Caspar Beck wrote and printed a tract entitled *Eyn Sendbrieff an Alle Gottsforchtigen Liebhaber der Ewigen Warheytt, inn Welchem Angetzeiget Seind die Artickel des Melchior Hoffmans* (A Letter to All God-Fearing Lovers of the Eternal Truth, in Which Are Shown the Articles of Melchior Hoffman.)<sup>577</sup> He decried the "evil tyranny" of Strasbourg's religious and political authorities, who treated Hoffman egregiously, and he set out five points of Melchiorite theology: the Melchiorite Christology, that God wishes for all men to be saved and predestines no one for damnation, that once God's Word brought enlightenment men could freely choose good or evil, that infant baptism is of the devil, and finally, that those who sin willingly after conversion will not receive forgiveness.<sup>578</sup> These were largely the same points that Bucer had combatted in his *Handlung*. He and Hoffman did not misunderstand or misrepresent each other, but rather had an insurmountable disagreement on the correct interpretation of the Scriptures.

The final phase of the synod was held in October 1533, when a subset of the synod attendees met to discuss a draft church ordinance written by a committee of pastors and Kirchenpfleger. The draft ordinance called for greater supervision of the laity's beliefs on the

---

<sup>575</sup> Hamm et al., *Briefwechsel/Correspondance X*, 5; 9-10, 45.

<sup>576</sup> J. V. Pollet, *Martin Bucer: Études sur les Relations de Bucer avec les Pays-Bas, l'Électorat de Cologne, et l'Allemagne du Nord, avec de Nombreux Textes Inédits, Tome I* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 360.

<sup>577</sup> Deppermann suggests that the author was most likely Johann Eisenburg. Deppermann, Deppermann, 259. It may also have been Hoffman himself, since he used the pseudonym Caspar Beck on a later occasion.

<sup>578</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 101-110

part of the Kirchenpfleger and for a joint committee of pastors and Kirchenpfleger to examine potential pastors and oversee church discipline.<sup>579</sup> The final session of the synod culminated in a less than ideal resolution for the preachers. By the time the church ordinance was finalized in 1534, the synod commission gave more church oversight responsibilities to the magistrates and fewer to the preachers than the preachers had hoped, and the magistrates continued to refuse to police privately held beliefs.<sup>580</sup> However, when people attempted to spread these beliefs far and wide, as Hoffman did, the magistrates readily recognized the danger. In preparation for the deliberations of the final session, the Strasbourg magistrates commissioned a list of errors found in the written works of Hoffman and Schwenckfeld. The list particularly focused on the ways Hoffman accused his opponents, even (or perhaps especially) Lutherans and Zwinglians of being in thrall to the devil and devoid of the true Gospel. It also included an assessment of the prophecies of the Josts, which particularly took exception to Ursula's violent vision of Hedio's death and Hoffman's assertion that he considered the Josts on an equal footing with Isaiah and Jeremiah.<sup>581</sup> The Strasbourg magistrates were still not as strict towards dissenters as Bucer and the other reformers wanted them to be, but on the question of Hoffman, at least, they agreed with the preachers on the need to contain him and his followers.

### **The Last Years of the Strasbourg Melchiorites**

Initially, Hoffman and his followers bore his imprisonment cheerfully. Hoffman kept to his promised bread and water fast, which Bucer ridiculed as a false display of spirituality in a

---

<sup>579</sup> Burnett, 68-69.

<sup>580</sup> Burnett, 71; Deppermann, 264.

<sup>581</sup> On the Writings of Hoffman and Schwenckfeld, 1533, Series 1 AST, Box 76, Item 38, Archives de Saint Thomas, Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg. Transcribed in Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 182-193.

1533 letter to Heinrich Bullinger.<sup>582</sup> He found ways to fulfill parts of his apostolic tasks from prison. He preached to and taught his disciples through the window of his jail cell, much to the consternation of his jailers and the Strasbourg magistrates, who resolved to move him to another jail cell.<sup>583</sup> Undeterred, he continued to preach through the window of his new jail cell to as many as forty listeners, which led the magistrates to decide to place him in a windowless cell.<sup>584</sup> Hoffman also published tracts from prison, which he smuggled out of prison with the assistance of his associate Cornelis Poldermann.<sup>585</sup> In frustration, the Rat resolved to no longer give Hoffman any paper or writing implements.<sup>586</sup> They also resolved to question Lienhard Jost, although there is no evidence that this questioning resulted in any further chastisement or even took place at all.<sup>587</sup>

As the months wore on and no end to his imprisonment appeared in sight, however, Hoffman's good spirits began to flag. He became ill, and the Strasbourg magistrates decided to heat his jail cell and give him a cap and shoes in hopes of ameliorating his condition.<sup>588</sup> Nevertheless, he continued to be unwell, and in November 1533 the Rat sent Mathis and Katharina Zell to care for him.<sup>589</sup> The Rat also contended that Hoffman's entirely voluntary bread and water fast also exacerbated his condition. In a letter to Hoffman written in late 1533, the Ammeister Mathis Pfarrer reminded him that there were times when it was appropriate to fast and other times when it was not, and warm and more substantial food was freely available to Hoffman if he would only stop being stubborn.<sup>590</sup>

---

<sup>582</sup> Hamm et al., *Briefwechsel/Correspondance X*, 131.

<sup>583</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 93-94.

<sup>584</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 98.

<sup>585</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 100.

<sup>586</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 110.

<sup>587</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 110.

<sup>588</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 133.

<sup>589</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 203.

<sup>590</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 220.



Meanwhile, developments in the Westphalian city of Münster further complicated Hoffman's relationship with the Strasbourg magistrates. By 1533 Münster's civic reformer Bernd Rothmann actively cast doubt on the practice of infant baptism, and his followers in the city were increasing in number as a result of both local conversions and an influx of Dutch and North German Melchiorites who hoped the city might be a haven.<sup>591</sup> Rumours flew in the city about Hoffman's fate in Strasbourg, and in November 1533 the Rat resolved to write a letter to Münster to combat the rumour that Hoffman had been victorious in the Strasbourg Synod and successfully converted the entire city to his opinions.<sup>592</sup> The Strasbourg reformers likewise took pains to correct the spread of error in Münster; Bucer wrote a Latin tract on infant baptism refuting Rothmann directly, and the Strasbourg preachers jointly wrote and published an open letter to the churches and government of Münster on correct doctrine and proper administration of sacraments in the Church.<sup>593</sup>

In an effort to head off Münster-like developments in Strasbourg, the Strasbourg magistrates published a mandate against the city's Melchiorites on 26 December 1533. The mandate required all the adherents of the "Hoffmanian sect" to either abjure their errors or to leave the city and not return; it appears to have particularly targeted foreign Melchiorites, since it specifically mentioned Netherlanders.<sup>594</sup> This resulted in the departure of several prominent Melchiorites from Strasbourg. Veltin Dufft, who had hosted Hoffman during his imprisonment, was banished in March 1534, and Katharina Seid, who had hosted Hoffman on another one of his

---

<sup>591</sup> On Rothmann and Münster, see Willem de Bakker et al., *Bernhard Rothmann and the Reformation in Münster, 1530-1535* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2009).

<sup>592</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 204.

<sup>593</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 222-225; Bucer et al., "Bericht auß der Heyligen Geschrift" in *Martin Bucer's Deutsche Schriften Band 5: Straßburg und Münster in Kampf um den Rechten Glauben, 1532-1534*, edited by Robert Stupperich et al. (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1978), 119-258.

<sup>594</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 232.

visits to the city, was banished in April.<sup>595</sup> The authorities also questioned the Melchiorite prophetess Barbara Rebstock and her husband Hans, though there are no indications that this questioning resulted in further reprisals.<sup>596</sup>

Hoffman also drew the ire of the preachers and the Strasbourg magistrates when he began a feud with Capito in the spring of 1534. Following the execution of Claus Frey for bigamy, Capito published a tract warning his readers against Frey's errors. Capito focused particularly on Frey's sexual immorality—a sin of which Hoffman was guiltless—but also critiqued Frey's willingness to listen to his own sense of divine revelation (which conveniently reinforced his desires) over the revelation of Scripture.<sup>597</sup> While he acknowledged that Frey and Hoffman had significant disagreements with each other, he drew comparisons between both men's illusions of their divine callings.<sup>598</sup> Hoffman, once he heard of the tract's contents, was incensed. He responded by smuggling a pseudonymous tract out of his jail cell, in which he protested that he had been most unjustly represented by the city's magistrates and reformers.<sup>599</sup> His followers posted the tracts throughout the city, accompanied by a note that read "The captured witness is Melchior Hoffman. Jerusalem is Strasbourg. The bloodhounds are Hedio, Bucer, and Capito. Capito wrote lies in his book about Claus Frey."<sup>600</sup> This booklet resulted in pointed questioning from the Rat, both of Hoffman and of the city's printers.<sup>601</sup>

The situation in Münster, in the meantime, continued to worsen. A Dutch Melchiorite by the name of Jan Matthijs, who had appointed himself the Enoch to Hoffman's Elijah (a role

---

<sup>595</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 291; 309.

<sup>596</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 304.

<sup>597</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 325.

<sup>598</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 329-330.

<sup>599</sup> Deppermann, 306.

<sup>600</sup> Deppermann, 307.

<sup>601</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 371-378; 387-389.

Hoffman believed belonged to Poldermann), had arrived in the city and begun baptizing believers and teaching that Münster, not Strasbourg, was the promised New Jerusalem. In February 1534, the Anabaptist faction won the city council elections and promptly evicted all who did not accept adult baptism from the city.<sup>602</sup> The prince-bishop of Münster, Franz von Waldeck, responded by laying siege to the city. Matthijs himself died in an ill-fated charge against the city's besiegers on Easter Sunday 1534, but his associate Jan Bockelson van Leiden took over the leadership of the city and soon began to call himself King of Münster.<sup>603</sup> King Jan's rule resulted in the institution of policies that horrified the rest of Europe, most notably forced polygamy and community of goods.<sup>604</sup> The Anabaptist kingdom of Münster weathered the siege for over a year, but it eventually fell to the prince-bishop's forces and became a cautionary tale for Protestant and Catholic rulers across the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>605</sup>

In an attempt to ascertain the degree of responsibility Hoffman bore for Münster, the Strasbourg Rat sent a representative to the city to question Jan van Leiden and the other imprisoned former leaders of the Münster regime about their connection to him. Their questioning unearthed no evidence of a direct connection; the Münsterites were well acquainted with Hoffman's writings, but did not know the man himself.<sup>606</sup> In fact, Hoffman himself had not sanctioned the Münster experiment. He had not validated Matthijs' authority and he remained convinced that Strasbourg, not Münster, was the New Jerusalem. Despite the failure of some of his initial prophecies (Hoffman did not experience a miraculous release from prison and the glorious return of Christ in 1533), Hoffman and his followers remained convinced of the

---

<sup>602</sup> Sigrun Haude, *In the Shadow of Savage Wolves: Anabaptist Münster and the German Reformation During the 1530's* (Boston: Humanities Press, 2000), 4.

<sup>603</sup> Haude, *Savage Wolves*, 12-13.

<sup>604</sup> Haude, *Savage Wolves*, 14.

<sup>605</sup> Haude, *Savage Wolves*, 16.

<sup>606</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 482.

essential elements of his prophecies for a remarkably long time. He lambasted the Rat for their unwillingness to hear that they had the true prophet Elijah in their midst; he was the last prophet, he warned, and God would not send another.<sup>607</sup> He also reminded the magistrates that Barbara Rebstock and Lienhard Jost had made many prophecies, if they cared to listen, and he sometimes offered new prophecies of his own; Strasbourg was about to suffer famine, he warned in April 1535, and should gather as many provisions as possible.<sup>608</sup> As each year passed without Christ's anticipated return, Hoffman repeatedly tweaked the date of the promised Second Coming and remained otherwise confident in his ability to gauge God's plans.<sup>609</sup>

As Hoffman's release became increasingly improbable, prominent Melchiorites began to attempt to unite the Melchiorites under a new leader. Jan van Batenburg, whose followers imitated Münsterite polygamy and travelled the countryside as raiders, attempted to enlist the assistance of the Strasbourg Melchiorites in 1537. He wished to reenact the events of Münster, this time in Holland.<sup>610</sup> The Strasbourg Melchiorites opted not to join forces with Batenburg, but his arrival nevertheless alarmed the Strasbourg authorities. They drafted a mandate requiring future applicants for Strasbourg citizenship to provide a letter of reference from their previous domain, indicating that they had not fought in the Peasants' War or joined an Anabaptist community.<sup>611</sup> They followed this with another mandate in 1538, in which they attempted to curtail the number of people who ignored their banishment from Strasbourg and repeatedly returned to the city. The mandate proposed an escalating punishment: the first time that banished dissenters returned without permission, they were to be imprisoned for four weeks and given

---

<sup>607</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 386.

<sup>608</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 393; 444.

<sup>609</sup> Deppermann, 305.

<sup>610</sup> Haude, *Savage Wolves*, 113.

<sup>611</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 106.

only bread and water, the second time they were to face torture (the loss of a finger or the burning of the back), and the third time they were to be executed by drowning.<sup>612</sup> The Strasbourg authorities seemed content to wield only the threat of execution, however, as they did not drown any dissenters after they issued the mandate.

Throughout the years of Hoffman's imprisonment, the Josts seem to have retained their stature in the Strasbourg Melchiorite community (in Ursula's case, until her death, which occurred sometime between 1532 and 1539). In 1537, the authorities in Speyer brought a collection of fourteen Melchiorite writings to the attention of the Strasbourg Rat. The writings contained an assortment of prophecies from Hoffman and other Melchiorite prophets, including the Josts. In Ursula's case, the writings repeated her description of Hedio's death from the 1532 edition of her visions and included two brief prophecies that promised peril for Strasbourg's sects and for all the inhabitants of both Strasbourg and Bern.<sup>613</sup> In Lienhard's case they included several new visions. He saw fire fall from heaven without burning anyone, he saw a meal prepared for him by God Himself, he saw the Strasbourg preachers plotting to gouge out Melchior Hoffman's eyes, and he heard a bell ring out from the city hall and a voice that called out "The time is here. All their malice is becoming evident."<sup>614</sup> Several years after the publication of his visions, Lienhard still viewed his prophetic role as an ongoing calling.

Lienhard also participated in meetings with other Strasbourg Melchiorite leaders. In 1538, the Dutch Anabaptist David Joris arrived in Strasbourg and met with the Melchiorite leaders Peter Tasch, Johann Eisenburg, Lienhard Jost, and Barbara Rebstock in an attempt to convince them to support him as he sought to unite the Melchiorites under his leadership. Jost

---

<sup>612</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 141.

<sup>613</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 112.

<sup>614</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 111-112.

spoke little during the disputation, but Joris, Tasch, and Eisenburg all seemed to hold his prophetic gifts in high regard. Joris freely quoted from Lienhard's visions, and Tasch and Eisenburg praised the conformity of his prophecies with Scripture.<sup>615</sup> As for Barbara Rebstock, she commanded such respect among the Strasbourg Melchiorites that her distrust of Joris ultimately resulted in the failure of his attempt to lead them.<sup>616</sup>

The faith of the Strasbourg Melchiorites in Hoffman's prophecies, however, was beginning to flag. Within weeks of their discussion with Joris, Eisenburg and Tasch decided to rejoin Strasbourg's Protestant Church, and resolved to work with Bucer to bring as many Melchiorites as they could along with them. In return, Bucer and the Strasbourg authorities negotiated some exemptions that facilitated the reconciliation of the Melchiorites with the state church: they allowed leaders to recant privately rather than publicly (to allow them continued access to Melchiorite gatherings) and they waived any punishments for Melchiorites willing to return to the church.<sup>617</sup> Tasch first travelled through Hesse, meeting with Melchiorites and convincing them to recant, then returned to Strasbourg and attempted the same there.

Lienhard Jost and his second wife Agnes (who had been baptized in Benfeld by Hans Wolff) were among the first Strasbourg Melchiorites to rejoin the state church on 15 April, 1539. It was devoutly to be hoped, Lienhard added, that God would be gracious and allow the Strasbourg church and the Anabaptists to unite.<sup>618</sup> Tasch and Eisenburg's efforts to convince Hoffman himself to recant were less successful—he was willing to reconsider his objections to infant baptism but clung firm to his Christology—but they nevertheless convinced many of the remaining Strasbourg Melchiorites to rejoin the church, particularly after they allowed the

---

<sup>615</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 186; 220-221; 224.

<sup>616</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 163; 179-180.

<sup>617</sup> Deppermann, 326.

<sup>618</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 317.

rumour to circulate that Hoffman had indeed recanted.<sup>619</sup> Those who did not rejoin the state church joined groups of other Anabaptists (particularly the biblicist, pacifist Swiss Brethren) instead. Hoffman died in prison in 1543, his prophecies unvalidated and his followers scattered. As for Lienhard Jost, he appears to have spent the rest of his life as a loyal member of Strasbourg's magisterial church. He spoke up briefly in favour of Strasbourg's preachers at a debate in 1549, but otherwise disappeared from the record.<sup>620</sup> Some of his family, however, appears to have maintained their sectarian connections. His daughter Elisabeth and her husband Marx Reicher were identified as Anabaptists by the Rat in 1543, and had chosen to marry outside the church because of a belief that church weddings were a human invention rather than a divine command.<sup>621</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Lienhard and the Strasbourg Melchiorites were able to remain active and gather a following in Strasbourg for a long time, and they fared considerably better in Strasbourg than they might have in more repressive parts of the Holy Roman Empire. Ultimately, however, their attempts to enact their apocalyptic agenda in Strasbourg were utterly unsuccessful. Neither Strasbourg's reformers nor its magistrates accepted the validity of the Josts' prophetic gifts or their claims to spiritual authority; instead, they dismissed the couple as mentally unstable at best and in thrall to Satan at worst. The Strasbourg reformers and magistrates were slightly more successful in achieving their goals, at least until the establishment of the Augsburg Interim in 1548, when Charles V forced the defeated Protestants to reinstitute the Mass. Dissenters did not

---

<sup>619</sup> Deppermann, 328-330.

<sup>620</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass IV*, 297.

<sup>621</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass IV*, 36.

disappear entirely from Strasbourg, but they did become quieter and increasingly moved away from the city itself and into the surrounding countryside, which made it easier for the Rat to preserve the peace within the city's walls. As for the Strasbourg reformers, their quest for unity within the city's church was aided by the defection of Tasch, Eisenburg, Lienhard and Agnes Jost, and other Strasbourg Melchiorites. After trying in vain for years to convince Strasbourg's religious and political authorities to accept the validity of his prophetic calling and his hopes for the church, Lienhard Jost yielded instead to the reformers and faded into obscurity. He had wished to convince them to become his ally, but finally he became theirs.



## CHAPTER SIX: THE JOSTS AND EARLY MODERN APOCALYPTICISM

The concepts of apocalypticism and eschatology are closely intertwined throughout the history of Christianity. The word eschatology comes from the word eschaton, meaning end (whether the end of a significant age in human history or the end of the entire world), and the word apocalypticism comes from the word apocalypse, meaning revelation. Apocalypses were a specific genre of literature, defined by John J. Collins and a task force organized by the Society of Biblical Literature as

a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.<sup>622</sup>

The Christian canon itself contained two principal apocalyptic texts—the book of Revelation in the New Testament and much of the book of Daniel in the Old Testament—as well as several proto-apocalyptic, apocalyptic, and eschatological portions of the prophets and the Gospels.

While in a technical sense apocalyptic can refer to any apocalypse, not merely canonical texts, it was the canonical texts and their interpretation that most profoundly shaped Christian apocalyptic thought. Moreover, though apocalypticism does not necessarily deal with catastrophe or with the end of the world, it has come to be associated with both in common parlance. This chapter will focus less on the revelatory aspect of apocalypticism—though that aspect is certainly relevant to the Josts’ experience—and focus instead on interpretation of past revelations and on the present and future envisaged in different strains of apocalyptic thought. Bernard McGinn’s broader definition of apocalypticism as “an attempt by each era to understand itself in

---

<sup>622</sup> John J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 9.

relation to an all-embracing teleological scheme of history” in *Visions of the End* is particularly useful.<sup>623</sup>

### **The Legacy of Medieval Apocalypticism**

Apocalyptic and eschatological thought shaped Christianity from its inception. Jesus himself may have been deeply influenced by Jewish eschatological thought, and many early Christians expected Christ to return and inaugurate a new age within their lifetime.<sup>624</sup> The influence of the Church Father Augustine of Hippo (354-430), however, greatly moderated apocalyptic expectation in early Christianity. Augustine allegorized many of the biblical apocalyptic texts instead of anticipating an imminent earthly fulfillment. The millennium, for instance, referred simply to the spread of Christianity and the extension of the Church’s influence.<sup>625</sup> Augustine’s influence was far-reaching, and apocalyptic expectation had little effect on the course of medieval European history in comparison with its effects in the first few centuries of Christian history and in the era of the Reformations.<sup>626</sup>

One of the first important thinkers to revive Christian apocalyptic thought in the Middle Ages was the twelfth-century Cistercian abbot Joachim of Fiore. He divided history into three overlapping ages: the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit. The age of the Father had begun with Adam, reached its height with Moses, and ended with Christ. The age of the Son had begun with the prophet Elijah, reached its height with Jesus, and was waning in Joachim’s day. The third age, the age of the Spirit, had begun with Benedict of Nursia,

---

<sup>623</sup> Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), xiv.

<sup>624</sup> Arthur H. Williamson, *Apocalypse Then: Prophecy and the Making of the Modern World* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 9.

<sup>625</sup> Williamson, 11-12.

<sup>626</sup> Williamson, 15.

and Joachim expected it to reach its height imminently.<sup>627</sup> Joachim also popularized the idea that the Antichrist could be a false Christian rather than an overt enemy of the Christian faith and predicted that groups of preachers and hermits, known as *virī spirituales* or spiritual men, would arise to fight the Antichrist.<sup>628</sup>

Joachim of Fiore's ideas persisted despite their condemnation at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.<sup>629</sup> His writings were especially popular among the Spiritual Franciscans, a subset of the Franciscan Order committed to the maintenance of Francis' original vision of absolute poverty. The Spiritual Franciscans came to see themselves as Joachim's *virī spirituales*, appointed to fight the Antichrist.<sup>630</sup> Other prophecies and ideas about the end also circulated, including the Sibylline Oracles, which predicted the rise of a last emperor who would arise before the last day and bring reform to state and church alike.<sup>631</sup> Moreover, while the majority of apocalyptically-minded medieval Christians were content to wait patiently for the realization of their hopes, a few groups took matters into their own hands. Millenarianism or chiliasm—the belief that God would imminently establish a perfect earthly kingdom and bring history to its culmination—held particular appeal for members of disenfranchised groups, whose earthly life fell rather short of perfection. While millenarianism did not necessarily lead to violent uprisings intended to overthrow the existing regime and usher in God's kingdom, it certainly could. During the English Peasants' War, for instance, popular preachers announced that the time for the

---

<sup>627</sup> Williamson, 17.

<sup>628</sup> Williamson, 19; Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 203.

<sup>629</sup> Irena Backus, *Reformation Readings of the Apocalypse: Geneva, Zurich, and Wittenberg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xvii.

<sup>630</sup> McGinn, *Visions*, 203.

<sup>631</sup> Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine, and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25.

restoration of God's perfect created order, in which all men were equal, and encouraged their listeners to rise up against the lords who had set themselves above the people.<sup>632</sup>

The most (albeit still only briefly) successful of these medieval millenarian uprisings was the revolt of the Taborites in fifteenth-century Bohemia, who arose in the aftermath of the Czech priest and reformer Jan Hus' 1415 execution at the decree of the council of Constance. Hus, a vocal critic of corruption in the priesthood and the papacy, gained a substantial following in his homeland of Bohemia and their loyalty to his ideas persisted after his death, much to the alarm of the new king of Bohemia and eventual Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund.<sup>633</sup> The Hussites, led by general John Zizka, actively resisted Sigismund's attempts to force the Bohemian church to comply with Rome's orders and, in 1420, they secured for the Bohemian Church the right to maintain its distinct character, particularly the practice of Utraquism (the offering of communion in both kinds to the laity as well as the priests).<sup>634</sup>

The Hussites, however, were divided amongst themselves, and the Taborites—including General Zizka—were their most radical faction. They considered themselves the final remnant of God's people who had resisted the lure of Antichrist and had a responsibility to purify the world in anticipation of Christ's Second Coming. They sold their land and possessions and built a new fortified city named Tabor—after the mount on which Christ's Transfiguration had occurred—where they lived as a single community with all goods in common, set apart from the rest of the world.<sup>635</sup> The Taborites survived for several decades but were eventually vanquished by more moderate Hussite forces, and in 1452 the Bohemian regent George Podebrady destroyed their

---

<sup>632</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, third edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 199-200.

<sup>633</sup> On the ideas of Hus and his followers, see Craig Atwood, *The theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

<sup>634</sup> McGinn. *Visions*, 261-262.

<sup>635</sup> McGinn, *Visions*, 261.

city.<sup>636</sup> Their legacy, however, extended beyond their base. They commissioned missionary priests to travel across Europe and spread their teachings, including, in 1431, the Waldensian convert Friedrich Reiser, who continued his missionary work until his execution in Strasbourg in 1458.<sup>637</sup> The Taborites did not ultimately usher in Christ's kingdom as they had hoped, but they did spread their ideas well into Europe. According to fifteenth-century inquisitorial records, Waldensians in Paesana in the Po River Valley anticipated the coming of a promised king of Bohemia, who would overthrow the Church and its leaders and usher in a new kingdom, marked by the healing of diseases and community of goods.<sup>638</sup>

As the fifteenth century drew to a close, apocalyptic preaching continued to find a ready audience across Europe. In Florence, the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola preached on the imminence of the Last Day and urged his audience to repent, lest they face God's wrath.<sup>639</sup> While some members of the Catholic hierarchy enthusiastically preached apocalyptic sermons, others were alarmed at these sermons' proliferation. In 1513, the Fifth Lateran Council cautioned against attempting to predict the timing of future events such as the last judgment or the coming of Antichrist and ordered clerics to avoid these topics in sermons and focus instead on preaching the gospel.<sup>640</sup> These warnings, however, could not stem the public appetite for apocalyptic ideas. Europe's Christians were both anxious at the unrest they faced and eager as they anticipated what God would do. It was in this spiritual soil that the Reformation began to take root.

---

<sup>636</sup> McGinn, *Visions*, 262.

<sup>637</sup> Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 147-148.

<sup>638</sup> Susan K. Treesh, "Europe's Peasant Heretics: The Waldensians, 1375-1550" (PhD diss., Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, 1988), 223-224.

<sup>639</sup> Williamson, 28-29.

<sup>640</sup> Papal Encyclicals Online, "Fifth Lateran Council 1512-17 AD," *Papalencyclicals.net*, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum18.htm> (accessed 14 February 2018).

## Apocalyptic Thought in the Reformation

Virtually from the beginning of his appearance on the public scene, Martin Luther's writings were suffused with apocalyptic thought. The Protestant reformer fully expected Christ's imminent return within his lifetime or shortly thereafter.<sup>641</sup> He did not reject Augustine's interpretation of the millennium as the rise of Christianity, but he did consider those metaphorical thousand years an age of steady decline and he expected Satan, who had been chained and found his power curtailed throughout the millennium, to be released imminently.<sup>642</sup> Luther did not anticipate the earthly establishment of God's kingdom, as medieval millenarians had. Rather, he expected the earth to be completely destroyed in preparation for the Last Judgment, after which God would establish a new heaven and a new earth.<sup>643</sup> The sociopolitical chaos that surrounded him served as evidence of this impending destruction; not only was Christendom under threat from within and without, but, in the eyes of Luther and his allies (and indeed many of his enemies, though their definitions might differ) vice and heresy proliferated as never before.<sup>644</sup> In the midst of this chaos and uncertainty, apocalyptic ideas were a source of hope for Luther as they had been for his medieval counterparts, a reminder that God controlled the course of history and the trials of the present, though grave, were only temporary.

The best-known of Luther's apocalyptic ideas was his identification of the Pope (and, indeed, the entire office of the papacy) as Antichrist. He first suggested the connection in a 1518 letter, and by 1520 he had lost all hope that internal reform of the church was even possible.

---

<sup>641</sup> When he did attempt to date the Second Coming—somewhat playfully, since he did not expect precise dating to be entirely accurate—he settled on the year 1558. See Walter Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages: Apocalyptic Expectation in the Radical Reformation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 25.

<sup>642</sup> Backus, 10

<sup>643</sup> Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 38.

<sup>644</sup> Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, 44.

While late medieval figures such as Jan Hus had at times suggested that a particular corrupt Pope might be the Antichrist, Luther considered the office itself to be evil, regardless of the relative corruption of its holder.<sup>645</sup> As a result of Luther's identification of the papacy with Antichrist, Reformation-era anti-papal propaganda often had a distinctly apocalyptic bent. One prominent example of such propaganda was Lucas Cranach's oft-reissued *Passional Christi und Antichristi* (*Passion of the Christ and Antichrist*), a series of thirteen pairs of woodcuts contrasting Christ's suffering and humility with the Pope's greed and ostentatious wealth.<sup>646</sup>

In his early years, Luther drew his apocalyptic ideas primarily from the Old Testament book of Daniel. He identified the European and Mediterranean kingdoms of his own day with the ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7, and the arrogant horn that rose up to destroy some of them with the rising Ottoman Empire.<sup>647</sup> He also appealed to the descriptions of the tyrannical kings of the South and the North in Daniel 11 in support of his identification of the Pope as Antichrist.<sup>648</sup> The book of Revelation, by contrast, initially featured less prominently in his thought; in 1522, Luther wrote dismissively of Revelation and its ability to teach Christ. By 1528, however, he had decided that, if it did not teach Christ, it could still teach the present age quite effectively and he wrote a glowing preface to a reissued late medieval commentary on Revelation, in which he particularly seized on the book's identification of the papacy as Antichrist.<sup>649</sup> Moreover, even in 1522, Revelation was the only book of Luther's New Testament to be accompanied with illustrations—a set of evocative woodcuts by Lucas Cranach, including

---

<sup>645</sup> Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, 42-43.

<sup>646</sup> Cunningham and Grell, 28.

<sup>647</sup> Adam Francisco, *Martin Luther and Islam: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Polemics and Apologetics* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 81-82.

<sup>648</sup> Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, 40.

<sup>649</sup> Backus, 7.

an engraving of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse modeled after a famed 1498 woodcut by Albrecht Durer.<sup>650</sup>

Luther not only developed his own apocalyptic schemata in the light of current events, he also quickly became a central figure in the apocalyptic schemata of others. His associate Philipp Melancthon, for instance, identified him with the prophet Elijah, one of the two witnesses of Revelation returned to preach the truth in the Last Days. Luther himself rejected this identification and insisted that prophecies about the return of Elijah were fulfilled in John the Baptist.<sup>651</sup> Nevertheless, popular ideas about Luther as a heroic counterpart to the Pope's Antichrist persisted, and some followers of Luther even began to date their letters from his appearance.<sup>652</sup>

While many of Luther's contemporaries shared his conviction that the Last Days were at hand, not all were as enamoured with apocalyptic ideas or even apocalyptic biblical texts or convinced of their ongoing sociopolitical relevance. The humanist Desiderius Erasmus, for instance, expressed skepticism about the inclusion of the book of Revelation in the canon as well as doubts about its authorship and criticisms of its style.<sup>653</sup> Unlike Luther and the majority of his contemporaries, Erasmus was not particularly concerned with an impending Last Day and instead anticipated that history would continue for a long while yet and follow a positive trajectory.<sup>654</sup>

---

<sup>650</sup> Cunningham and Grell, 6; Peter Van Der Coelen, "Pictures for the People? Bible Illustrations and their Audience" in *Lay Bibles in Europe 1450-1800*, edited by Mathijs Lamberigts and A. A. den Hollander (Leuven: Peeters Publishing, 2006), 188.

<sup>651</sup> Cunningham and Grell, 24; Rodney L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days: The Theme of the Two Witnesses in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 99-100.

<sup>652</sup> Cunningham and Grell,

<sup>653</sup> Backus, 3-6.

<sup>654</sup> István Pieter Bejczy, *Erasmus and the Middle Ages: The Historical Consciousness of a Christian Humanist* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 127.



Like Erasmus, Zwingli expressed reservations about Revelation's canonicity. His successor Heinrich Bullinger, however, paid closer attention to the Bible's apocalyptic writings and produced a series of sermons on Revelation in which he considered the events of Revelation in light of Reformed Christians' experiences of religious persecution at the hands of Catholics.<sup>655</sup> Moreover, despite his reservations about apocalypticism, Zwingli too considered the possibility that the Last Days were at hand and in 1520, before the rift formed between Wittenberg and Zurich over eucharistic theology, he was one of the first to refer to Martin Luther as Elijah.<sup>656</sup> He was, however, less concerned with the imminent end of time and more concerned with building an earthly Christian society than his counterpart in Wittenberg.<sup>657</sup>

Strasbourg's evangelical reformers were closer to Zwingli than they were to Luther in their approach to apocalyptic ideas. They did share the belief that they lived in the Last Days and that the end was imminent, and they likewise identified the Pope as the Antichrist. When they did address the finer points of apocalyptic ideas in their writings, they sometimes differed amongst themselves; Capito, influenced by the apocalyptic spiritualist Martin Cellarius (Borrhaus), came to believe that, as part of the events of the Last Days, the Jews would be restored to their homeland in Palestine, a belief that Bucer did not share.<sup>658</sup> For the most part, however, apocalyptic ideas did not feature as prominently in their writings or in their correspondence as they did in Luther's. Both Capito's and Bucer's correspondence from the 1520s and early 1530s featured only occasional references to the Antichrist or to the Last Days

---

<sup>655</sup> Cunningham and Grell, 53.

<sup>656</sup> Cunningham and Grell, 24.

<sup>657</sup> Daniël Timmerman, *Heinrich Bullinger on Prophecy and the Prophetic Office, 1523–1538* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 126.

<sup>658</sup> R. Gerald Hobbs, "Pluriformity of Early Reformation Scriptural Interpretation" in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation: Volume II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, edited by Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 474-476.

and very rarely engaged with the principal apocalyptic texts in the Old and New Testaments. While they did believe themselves to be living in the Last Days, this belief does not appear to have been a central organizing principle for them, and they were alarmed by the gusto with which Hoffman, the Josts, and others formulated and disseminated their own ideas about the Last Days.

### **Apocalyptic Thought in the Radical Reformation**

While enthusiastic expectation of Christ's imminent return was common in the sixteenth century, it was far more so among the common people than at the highest echelons of ecclesiastical hierarchies—with the obvious exception of Luther himself. As Robin Barnes argues in *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation*, Lutheranism alone, of the major Reformation-era confessions, wholeheartedly sanctioned apocalyptic expectancy, while leaders in the Reformed and Catholic confessions were more reluctant to espouse and promote these ideas.<sup>659</sup> Outside of the principal confessions, however, apocalyptic ideas flourished.

When the first Anabaptist group formed in Zwingli's Zurich they quickly met with opposition, not from Catholic forces—who had very little power in Zurich—but rather from the evangelical preachers and the city council. As such, they identified the villains of Revelation not only with the Pope, but also with Zwingli and his allies. The former associate of Zwingli turned Anabaptist Conrad Grebel referred to Zwingli as the beast of Revelation and argued that “the abomination of desolation” had come to Zurich.<sup>660</sup> The Swiss Brethren Anabaptist leader Michael Sattler, for his part, wrote a letter to his congregation in the village of Horb am Neckar

---

<sup>659</sup> Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, 3.

<sup>660</sup> Klaassen, 58.

after his imprisonment in 1527, outlining his expectations for the near future and drawing on apocalyptic imagery from Daniel and Revelation.

Pray that reapers may be driven out into the harvest, for the time of threshing has come near. The abomination of desolation is visible among you. The elect servants and maidservants of God will be marked on the forehead with the name of their Father. The world has arisen against those who are redeemed from its error. The gospel is testified to before all the world for a testimony. According to this the day of the Lord must no longer tarry.<sup>661</sup>

Sattler did not expect to live to witness Christ's return—he was in prison, awaiting execution—but he fully expected the Second Coming to occur without delay and, with a sense of great urgency, commissioned his followers to spread the gospel with the time that remained.

While many Anabaptists saw signs of the impending end all around them, Hans Hut, an erstwhile associate of Thomas Muntzer during the Peasants' War and a South German Anabaptist leader, was the first Anabaptist to attempt to precisely date the Second Coming of Christ, which he anticipated in 1528. He identified the recently executed Muntzer and his associate Heinrich Pfeiffer as the two witnesses of Revelation, and he expected an imminent invasion of Europe by Ottoman forces, who would leave a trail of destruction in their wake. The surviving elect, whom he expected to live peacefully until God gave the signal that the time for vengeance had come, would then dispatch the remaining unrighteous—Catholic and magisterial Protestant alike—and pave the way for Christ's return. Once this happened, one of Hut's followers claimed, Hans Hut would rule on earth as Christ ruled in heaven. Hut himself never lived to see Christ's conspicuous failure to return in 1528, since he was arrested in Augsburg and executed in December 1527.<sup>662</sup> His policy of temporary restraint in anticipation of a coming

---

<sup>661</sup> Michael Sattler, "Imprisonment: Letter to Horb" in *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*, edited by John Howard Yoder (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 61.

<sup>662</sup> Klaassen, 26; 81; 111; Cunningham and Grell, 33-34.

violent judgment was echoed early in Lienhard's visions, when he was stirred to take up arms against oppressors but, on reflection, heard God respond "we must let them be awhile still."<sup>663</sup>

Melchior Hoffman, both before and after he joined forces with the Josts, was deeply preoccupied with apocalyptic ideas. As a biblical commentator, he gravitated towards apocalyptic texts. While in Sweden in 1526 he published a commentary on the twelfth chapter of Daniel, and in Strasbourg in 1530 he published a commentary on the book of Revelation. Like so many of his contemporaries, Hoffman identified the Pope as Antichrist and the Mass as the Antichrist's perverse form of worship, the "abomination of desolation" described by the prophet Daniel.<sup>664</sup> Nor did Hoffman confine his criticisms to the Catholic Church. His commentary on Revelation accused Luther of being nothing more than a new Pope and he railed against the lies of the Zwinglians and Lutherans in the foreword to Lienhard Jost's visions.<sup>665</sup> In contrast to the many parts of Europe that still fell under the rule of Antichrist, Hoffman identified the city of Strasbourg as the New Jerusalem, the principal refuge and sending base of the righteous in the Last Days. Nor indeed was Hoffman the first to see Strasbourg as a city of great apocalyptic significance—some late medieval prophecies identified the city as the site of the final battle between the righteous and the unrighteous.<sup>666</sup>

Like Hans Hut, Hoffman took it upon himself to date the Second Coming of Christ. He identified the year 1526 as the beginning of the seven years of tribulation, which he expected to culminate in Christ's return in 1533.<sup>667</sup> As the seven years wore on, Hoffman conceived of a grand apocalyptic role for himself; he was Elijah, the first of the two witnesses of Revelation. He

---

<sup>663</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B3r-B3v.

<sup>664</sup> Klaassen, 70.

<sup>665</sup> Hoffman, *Offenbarung*, fols. K vii v – K viii r; Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. A2v-A3v.

<sup>666</sup> Klaassen, 86.

<sup>667</sup> Klaassen, 28.

saw his own apostolic ministry, and the prophetic ministry of the Josts and others, as validation of his assumption that he was living in the Last Days. Since God's people faced darker times than ever before, God has also equipped them with a renewed outpouring of divine revelation in order that God's people might hear the truth and be strengthened.<sup>668</sup> As 1533, the date of Christ's anticipated return, drew nearer, Hoffman's expectation grew. All the adversity that Hoffman encountered—including, most notably, his arrest in Strasbourg in May 1533—served to convince him that his calculations were correct. Unlike Hut, however, Hoffman lived to see his prophecies unfulfilled. 1533 drew to end without any sign of Christ's return, and Hoffman remained imprisoned. Hoffman initially remained optimistic and made only slight adjustments to his calculations, but by his death in 1543, abandoned by his followers, he was completely demoralized and his apocalyptic hopes were dashed.

### **The Josts' Apocalyptic Thought**

Since the Josts were unable to read the Bible for themselves, their apocalyptic schemata took a different shape than those of Martin Luther or Melchior Hoffman. They made no attempt to identify the Antichrist or Gog and Magog (hostile nations described in Revelation, whom many sixteenth-century commentators identified with the Ottoman Turks, nor did they try to construct a clear timeline of the ages of the world or map current events to scriptural passages. Nevertheless, their prophecies and visions demonstrate a clear conviction that they lived on the cusp of a great change in human history. In the sixth chapter of his prophetic autobiography, Lienhard recounted the following divine message, which he received shortly after his confinement in the asylum began:

You have a daughter named Elizabeth. When she is fourteen years old the

---

<sup>668</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A2r.

people will see Me in My brilliance and will recognise great wonders, and at the same time I will turn the sorrows of all people into joy. For when I awakened you at Hanau on the Rhine, in the twenty-second year, My heart had mercy on for the people of Israel.<sup>669</sup>

The grandiosity and universality of this promise suggests an event unlike any other in history, a time when God's pledges to set the world to rights are finally realized. By the time Hoffman published Lienhard's prophecies in 1532, Elizabeth was about to turn fourteen years old and the anticipated time of God's great revelation was almost at hand. While at times both Lienhard and Hoffman did emphasize the continuity between the Josts and the prophets of old, Lienhard also used language and images to suggest that the work on God in his lifetime was a radically new thing. In the second chapter of his prophetic autobiography he spoke of God finally opening a shrine and revealing what had long been hidden, a theme he returned to later when he publicly sang a summary of his prophecies in 1525.<sup>670</sup> He also used (and publicly embodied) the metaphor of casting off old clothing and waiting for God to clothe His people anew.<sup>671</sup>

While some of the Josts' visions and prophecies focused on their direct surroundings, others were universal in scope, and it is these visions that most clearly represent their apocalyptic expectations for God's new work in the world. Sometimes these worldwide events were terrifying and destructive. Ursula's twenty-third and thirty-fifth visions showed the earth covered in water—boiling water, in the thirty-fifth vision—as a sign of God's judgment, and Lienhard prophesied judgment and damnation for those who denied and disobeyed God's word.<sup>672</sup> That these visions and prophecies of judgment and damnation often came accompanied by calls for repentance and change, however, suggests that, while likely, these terrible future events were not

---

<sup>669</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B4v.

<sup>670</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B2r; E2v.

<sup>671</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B3r-B3v.

<sup>672</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. G4v; H2r; Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. D1v-D2r.

yet a foregone conclusion. By contrast, the Josts were utterly confident that their positive prophecies would come to pass. The judgment that Lienhard prophesied on the unrepentant was accompanied by a promise of salvation for God's afflicted sheep, and elsewhere he prophesied that God would work great wonders for his sheep and lead them into a new and better state of being.<sup>673</sup> In the nineteenth chapter of his prophetic autobiography, he performatively spilled wine on his bed and used the spreading of the wine stain as an illustration of a coming age of abundance and salvation.

This wine will flow across the width of the earth, and after this time all things will grow sufficiently. Wine, oil, and fruit will be sufficient. Then you will live in peace and you will lie in the sunshine, and there will be such an abundance of sufficiency that the grapes will hang over your mouths. Then the time of the Lord will approach. Think on this: the Lord is not far away and will come to wake us from the dead and to save us.<sup>674</sup>

The Josts' apocalyptic predictions, both of coming salvation and of coming judgment, were a source of hope and promise that, after centuries of oppression and injustice, God was finally about to set the world to rights.

Moreover, while they lacked Hoffman's familiarity with biblical apocalyptic literature, they were at least aware of some of the more common images found therein. Both Lienhard and Ursula evoked the image of trumpets or horns blown to introduce divine judgment, as depicted in the book of Revelation.<sup>675</sup> Ursula also saw, on multiple occasions, the sun and moon darkened or turned to blood, a sign that, in the book of Joel, preceded the "great and terrible day of the Lord."<sup>676</sup> Images of the faithful rising from the dead and ascending to heaven also recurred in Ursula's visions, and, in her eighty-sixth vision, she saw an image of Mary wearing a crown with

---

<sup>673</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C2r; D1v-D2r.

<sup>674</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. E2r.

<sup>675</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. D3r; Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J2v.

<sup>676</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. J2v; K2v-K2r; Joel 2:31, NRSV.

the moon under her feet that paralleled the portrayal of Mary in Revelation 12.<sup>677</sup> The Josts' familiarity with these images despite their illiteracy suggests that they encountered biblical apocalyptic ideas and images second hand, perhaps through sermons or art, and supplemented them with their own particular visions and prophecies of the form a God-ordained near future would take.

### **Apocalyptic Thought and Current Events: The Deluge of 1524**

In addition to the religious and political upheaval of the Reformations, other contemporary developments caused unrest and fueled apocalyptic expectation in Christian Europe. Awareness of contemporary wars and rumours of impending cataclysm clearly informed the Josts' visions and prophecies. Lienhard's prophetic autobiography began with an account of an earthquake, which took place in December 1522 and, he assured readers, the inhabitants of Strasbourg still remembered a decade later. This earthquake proved a spiritual catalyst for Lienhard; it made him afraid and caused him to pray and ask God for divine protection and revelation. This fear was occasioned, however, not merely by the recent earthquake, but also by rumours of a coming flood, "which many men say will come over us."<sup>678</sup> Shortly thereafter, Lienhard was travelling over a river and received a prophetic warning from God to tie up his boat in anticipation of a coming watery storm.<sup>679</sup>

There were indeed widespread rumours of impending flood circulating in Europe in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. In 1499, the German astrologer Johann Stöffler published his *Almanach Nova (New Almanac)*, which detailed a number of planetary conjunctions that

---

<sup>677</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fols. G4r-G4v; J4r-J4v.

<sup>678</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1r.

<sup>679</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B2r.



would take place in the sign of Pisces in 1524 and predicted that a series of catastrophes would accompany these planetary conjunctions.<sup>680</sup> In the early sixteenth century, these vague promised catastrophes were increasingly described as floods and became the subject of more than a hundred treatises.<sup>681</sup> Astrologers disagreed over the exact nature of the promised flooding. Some, such as the Italian astrologer Luca Gaurico, described a deluge akin to a reoccurrence of Noah's Flood, which would devastate all of Europe.<sup>682</sup> Others, such as the German astrologer Johannes Virdung, agreed that the planetary conjunctions of 1524 heralded flooding, but at a much smaller scale. After all, had God not made a covenant with Noah that a flood would never again destroy the Earth and given the rainbow as a sign of this promise?<sup>683</sup>

As rumours of the impending deluge spread beyond small academic circles and into society at large, religious leaders also began to debate the predicted flood. For Heinrich Pastoris, author of the 1523 *Practica Teutsch*, the predicted flood was compatible with biblical portrayals of judgment, and the widespread fear it caused presented an opportunity to urge people to turn to God for salvation and deliverance.<sup>684</sup> Stephan Wacker, author of the polemical tract *Das Kain Sündfluß Werd auß der Hailigen Geschriff Probiert vnnd Gezogen (That No Flood Can Be Discerned or Taken from the Holy Scriptures)*, which he wrote in January 1524, rejected astrology altogether, and described those who feared the consequences of planetary conjunctions

---

<sup>680</sup> Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 140.

<sup>681</sup> Dietrich Kurze, "Popular Astrology and Prophecy in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Johannes Lichtenberger" in *"Astrologi Hallucinati": Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, edited by Paola Zambelli (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 177.

<sup>682</sup> Paola Zambelli, "Many Ends for the World: Luca Gaurico Instigator of the Debate in Italy and in Germany" in *"Astrologi Hallucinati": Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, edited by Paola Zambelli (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 248.

<sup>683</sup> Zambelli, "Many Ends," 249-250.

<sup>684</sup> Robin Bruce Barnes, *Astrology and Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 121-122.

and other astrological signs as weak in faith.<sup>685</sup> That Lienhard was aware enough of these rumours to fear the prospect of a coming flood suggests that these discussions had well and truly trickled down to the European common people, though it is not certain that Lienhard was aware of the astrological signs that had begun the speculation. Certainly Melchior Hoffman, in his foreword to Lienhard's prophecies, was careful to distinguish between the Josts' divinely inspired prophecies and the misguided, if not devilish, "science of astronomy."<sup>686</sup>

The Great Deluge of 1524 never materialized, except perhaps in a metaphorical sense.<sup>687</sup> Nevertheless, extreme weather continued to figure prominently in the visions and prophecies of the Josts and their fellow Strasbourg Melchiorites. Lienhard predicted to his fellow inmates in the Strasbourg hospital that they would see great wonders and that "heaven and earth [would] crack."<sup>688</sup> Ursula's visions contained even more descriptions of extreme weather. In her twenty-third vision, water poured from heaven and covered the earth, sweeping up people in its wake.<sup>689</sup> In her thirty-fourth vision, water again flowed through the earth, this time so boiling hot that it burned people's feet and caused them to fall.<sup>690</sup> Sometimes, as in her thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth visions, water mixed with other catastrophic elements, including fire and sulfur.<sup>691</sup> Ursula's fellow Melchiorite prophetess Barbara Rebstock also had visions of extreme weather; when the

---

<sup>685</sup> Helga Robinson Hammerstein, "The Battle of the Booklets: Prognostic Tradition and the Proclamation of the Word in Early Sixteenth-Century Germany" in *"Astrologi Hallucinati": Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, edited by Paola Zambelli (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 147.

<sup>686</sup> Hoffman, introduction to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A1v.

<sup>687</sup> The abbess Caritas Pirckheimer, writing after 1524, came to associate prophecies of deluge with the spiritual flood of Lutheran heresy into Germany. See Paola Zambelli, "Introduction" in *"Astrologi Hallucinati": Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, edited by Paola Zambelli (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 10.

<sup>688</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. D3v.

<sup>689</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G4v.

<sup>690</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. H2r.

<sup>691</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. H2r.

Strasbourg Rat questioned her in 1534 she described visions of great amounts of snow and rain.<sup>692</sup>

### **Apocalyptic Thought and Current Events: The Peasants' War**

Weather was not the only cause of anxiety for the Josts and their contemporaries. Population increase and economic growth in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had worked to the disadvantage of the peasant population in the Holy Roman Empire, who faced increased rents, fines and commodity prices.<sup>693</sup> In Alsace, this led to a series of abortive peasant uprisings known as the *Bundschuh* uprisings, named after the laced boots Alsatian peasants often wore. In 1493, a group of thirty to forty Alsatian men gathered on the summit of the Ungersberg in the Vosges Mountains and made plans to rise up against the governing authorities and seize control first of the city of Sélestat and eventually of all Alsace.<sup>694</sup> The authorities reacted swiftly and decisively; they executed the chief conspirators and banished or fined others, but fears of further unrest persisted, with reason.<sup>695</sup> In 1517, the escaped serf Joss Fritz, who had previously spearheaded short-lived uprisings in Bruchsal and in Freiburg-am-Bresgau, organized a network of peasant cells prepared for war, including cells in lower Alsace. The plot was foiled when one of the conspirators had second thoughts about the peasants' efforts and alerted the authorities.<sup>696</sup>

These repeated attempts at revolt and rebellion point to a deep discontent with the status quo among Alsace's lower classes. This discontent was directed particularly, though not

---

<sup>692</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 304.

<sup>693</sup> Michael G. Baylor, "Introduction" in *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012), 4.

<sup>694</sup> Georges Bischoff, *La Guerre des Paysans: l'Alsace et la Révolution du Bundschuh, 1493-1525* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2010), 83-84.

<sup>695</sup> Francis Rapp, *Réformes et Réformation à Strasbourg: Église et Société dans le Diocèse de Strasbourg, 1450-1525* (Paris: Ophrys 1974), 406.

<sup>696</sup> Rapp, 408-409.

exclusively, at ecclesiastical overlords—Joss Fritz and his co-conspirators painted priests as opponents of divine justice.<sup>697</sup> This discontent with the oppression of the poor at the hands of the wealthy—and particularly at the hands of wealthy ecclesiastics—also permeated the visions and prophecies of the Josts. Lienhard’s prophecies of 1522 and 1523 repeatedly lamented the fact that a small minority amassed wealth for themselves while the common people suffered. He bemoaned “all priests who have ruled contrary to God and His sheep out of a desire for silver and gold” and those who hoarded the wealth God had given to all his sheep.<sup>698</sup> Ursula too, in her earlier visions, saw clergymen oppressing the common people and benefitting from their labour.<sup>699</sup> Lienhard frequently expressed the hope that Strasbourg’s political and religious authorities could be persuaded to act in accordance with God’s will, and he urged both Strasbourg’s magistrates and bishop to take up the “banner of godly righteousness.”<sup>700</sup> However, they consistently failed to take his prophecies seriously, and his calls went largely unheeded.

In 1524, the grievances of the common people against their overlords culminated in the Peasants’ War, a series of rebellions across the Holy Roman Empire. Peasants organized themselves into local bands and made demands of their local lords regarding rents, taxation, labour dues, and more. Inspired in part by Reformation ideas, though they took them in a different direction than the magisterial reformers did, the peasants demanded that their lords submit to the ideals of godly justice and act not out of desire for riches and power, but out of love of neighbour and desire for the common good.<sup>701</sup> The best-known and most-circulated set of

---

<sup>697</sup> Rapp, 408.

<sup>698</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B3r; C1v-C2r.

<sup>699</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fols. G2v-G3v.

<sup>700</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1v

<sup>701</sup> On the interplay between the Peasants’ War and the magisterial reformers, see Peter Blickle, “Das göttliche Recht der Bauern und die göttliche Gerechtigkeit der Reformatoren,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 68:2 (1986): 351-370.

demands, the Twelve Articles, was drawn from the demands articulated by peasant bands from Baltringen, Lake Constance, and Allgäu at an assembly in the city of Memmingen. These demands were condensed and edited by the lay preacher and furrier Sebastian Lotzer, with scriptural citations from the preacher Christoph Schappeler, and first published in March 1525. The articles themselves had religious, social, and economic dimensions; the peasants demanded the right of communities to select their own pastors, the abolition of serfdom and death-taxes, fair rents, proportionate penalties for crimes, rights to hunt, fish, and gather wood, and more.<sup>702</sup> From Memmingen the articles spread to other peasant bands, who eagerly applied them to their own contexts.

The Peasants' War took hold in Alsace in April 1525, beginning with radical preaching from the Strasbourg gardener Clemens Ziegler, whose preaching focused particularly on ecclesiastical abuses, such as onerous tithes, though he did not call for violent action in opposition to these abuses.<sup>703</sup> Other preachers joined in; on Easter Saturday, Andreas Preunlin, a preacher in the village of Dorlisheim, introduced his congregation to the Twelve Articles.<sup>704</sup> The peasants of Alsace soon developed their own list of twenty-four grievances, which repeated many of the demands in the Twelve Articles and also included new ones, particularly in the area of judicial reform. These articles demanded that lords exercise restraint in confiscating the property of convicted criminals, so that their widows and children might still inherit as much as possible, and called for a single, local appellate court to reduce travel costs for the territory's

---

<sup>702</sup> Sebastian Lotzer and Christoph Schappeler, "The Twelve Articles of the Upper Swabian Peasants, March 1525" in *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012), 76-82.

<sup>703</sup> Franziska Conrad, *Reformation in der Bäuerlichen Gesellschaft: zur Rezeption Reformatorischer Theologie im Elsass* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1984), 117; Bischoff, 126.

<sup>704</sup> Conrad, 118.

poorer inhabitants.<sup>705</sup> They organized in village bands and carried their own banners, reminiscent of Lienhard's banner of godly righteousness. The peasants of Ebersheimmünster marched under a banner that read "the Word of God remains forever," and the villagers of Truttenhausen chose as their slogan "Gospel, Christ, and Clemens Ziegler."<sup>706</sup>

The events of the early Reformation in Strasbourg fuelled the peasants' expectations. Many of the town and villages surrounding Strasbourg were influenced by evangelical preachers, and as the peasants began to organize they often framed their aims in evangelical terms. Given all the changes that had already taken place in Strasbourg as a result of the Reformation, the Alsatian peasants hoped to gain and assiduously sought the support of Strasbourg's magistrates and preachers. In this, however, they were disappointed. When Capito, Zell, and Bucer met with them, they advised them to desist and argued that the murder of even unjust magistrates was not supported by Scripture.<sup>707</sup> The Strasbourg magistrates further disappointed the peasants by granting asylum to landowners who fled to the city and refusing to hand them and their possessions over to the peasant bands.<sup>708</sup> Among the people of Strasbourg, however, the peasants had better luck in recruiting support. Many residents of Strasbourg left the city to join the rebellion or provided material aid, and the butchers' and gardeners' guild appear to have been particularly sympathetic.<sup>709</sup>

In comparison with other peasant groups in the Holy Roman Empire, the peasants in Alsace, under the leadership of Erasmus Gerber of Molsheim, were a remarkably unified and

---

<sup>705</sup> Peter Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective*, translated by Thomas A. Brady, Jr. and H. C. Erik Middlefort (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 62.

<sup>706</sup> Conrad, 119.

<sup>707</sup> Blickle, *Revolution of 1525*, 111.

<sup>708</sup> Rapp, 478-479.

<sup>709</sup> Blickle, *Revolution of 1525*, 112.

organized group.<sup>710</sup> Gerber ordered supporting villages to draft a fourth of their able-bodied men to join the peasant fighters, and he further urged them to rotate the troops on the field often in order to minimize the impact on village life.<sup>711</sup> Over the months of April and May, the Alsatian peasants gained the free and voluntary support of towns like Molsheim and Barr, and reluctant support due to internal pressure, external pressure, or both from towns like Kaysersberg and Altkirch, even as major urban centers like Strasbourg and Sélestat kept their distance from the rebellion.<sup>712</sup>

While Lienhard's prophecies provide no record of his thoughts and activities during the Peasants' War, the spring of 1525 was a particularly fruitful period for Ursula, who experienced more than 20 visions during that time, including a series of visions over the Easter weekend as the conflict began to intensify in Alsace. Many of these visions featured images of death, destruction, and conflict, likely inspired by the events unfolding around her. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, she saw a crowd of mounted warriors surrounding a city. A large group of people then came out of the city, carrying a cross on a long pole. At the sight of the cross, the mounted warriors stopped in their tracks and fell to the ground, mortally wounded.<sup>713</sup> This vision, like many of Ursula's visions, highlights the tension between the common people and the powerful and wealthy. The common folk, though they lacked worldly stature, power, or resources, had God on their side—as evidenced by the cross they bore—and therefore the hope of ultimate victory.

Ursula's thirty-eighth vision, which she saw in April 1525, highlighted this tension in a metaphorical fashion:

On the Friday before Palm Sunday in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the

---

<sup>710</sup> Bischoff, 147.

<sup>711</sup> Blickle, 129.

<sup>712</sup> See Tom Scott, "South-West German Towns in the Peasants' War" in *Town, Country, and Regions in Reformation Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 151-152.

<sup>713</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. H3r.

glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up, and I saw a beautiful green tree with many green branches. And I saw that a spring sprang from this same tree. After this I saw coming two men who were very well dressed, and I saw that they brought beautiful green grass from the earth and with it closed and stuffed up the aforementioned spring. And I further saw that the water from the aforementioned spring rose up above itself and ran out a thousandfold from the tree's branches. And after this I saw that there came a great crowd of folks who were all from the common people. They drank the droplets of water that flowed from the aforementioned branches and they were all satisfied. And I saw that after this they raised up their hands and heads to God the eternal Father and very greatly gave Him praise and thanks.

The well-dressed—and therefore clearly wealthy—men were attempting to prevent the common people from accessing the water in the spring, but their best efforts to contain it were unsuccessful, and God ensured that the common people were still able to access the water. Since Ursula does not provide additional commentary for this vision, the meaning of the water is unclear. It could be a metaphor for the Gospel, or a simpler reference to the necessities of life. Both interpretations fall within the scope of the critiques levelled by Lienhard and Ursula at unscrupulous religious and political authorities, who both kept the common people from knowing God's truth and denied them the shelter and sustenance they needed.

Both supporters and detractors of the peasants in the Holy Roman Empire found ways to incorporate the peasant uprisings into their apocalyptic schemata. Peasant leaders varied in the extent to which they supported their actions with a well-developed theology, but some, such as Thomas Müntzer in Saxony, saw themselves as bringing about a new order heralded by the Scriptures.<sup>714</sup> Luther, on the other hand, argued that the peasants' brazen blasphemy was the work of the devil, who was emboldened by the nearness of the Last Day.<sup>715</sup> Ultimately, however, neither the Josts' nor the peasants' hopes for a more just society came to fruition in 1525. On

---

<sup>714</sup> Blickle, *Revolution of 1525*, 150.

<sup>715</sup> Martin Luther, *Wider die Mordischen und Reubischen Rotten der Bawren* (Wittenberg: Weißenburger, 1525), fol. A ii r.



May 15th, the forces of Duke Anton of Lorraine laid siege to the peasant forces in Saverne. Gerber attempted repeatedly but unsuccessfully to convince the Strasbourg authorities to serve as mediators.<sup>716</sup> The next day, a clash between the peasants and the Duke's forces at Lupstein resulted in the deaths of 4000 to 6000 peasants but only eight of Duke Anton's soldiers.<sup>717</sup> With the peasants cowed by their defeat at Lupstein, the duke of Lorraine's forces took Saverne on May 17th and arrested the peasants' leaders including Gerber, whose public execution reinforced the message that the peasants had been defeated.<sup>718</sup>

### **Apocalyptic Thought and Current Events: The Ottoman Empire**

Threats of war further afield also shaped the apocalyptic outlook of the residents of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1517, the Ottoman Turks, who had conquered Constantinople in 1453, subdued their Mamluk rivals in Europe and were poised to turn their attention once again to Christian principalities.<sup>719</sup> The accession of Suleiman I in 1520 resulted in a new wave of Ottoman conquests. The city of Belgrade fell to Suleiman's forces in August 1521, and the city of Rhodes—a Christian stronghold and important commercial node in the eastern Mediterranean—likewise became Ottoman territory in 1522 after a protracted siege.<sup>720</sup> This wave of Ottoman military successes, ever closer to Western European territories, was a further source of anxiety for European Christians, many of whom were already preoccupied by religious unrest and divisions at home.

---

<sup>716</sup> Bischoff, 193.

<sup>717</sup> Bischoff, 194.

<sup>718</sup> Bischoff, 196-199.

<sup>719</sup> Adam S. Francisco, "Crusade, Pacifism, and Just War: Responses to Ottoman Imperialism in the early Reformation era," *The Muslim World* 107:4 (2017): 623.

<sup>720</sup> Vernon J. Parry, "The reign of Sulaimān the Magnificent, 1520-66" in *The History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, edited by Michael A. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 79-80.

Ferdinand, the ruler of the Austrian Habsburg territories and brother of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, was particularly alarmed by the possibility of westward Ottoman expansion into the kingdom of Hungary. Hungary was a close Habsburg ally—King Louis II Jagiellon of Hungary was Ferdinand’s brother-in-law twice over through his marriage to Ferdinand’s sister Mary and Ferdinand’s marriage to Louis’ sister, a double marriage alliance brokered by the 1515 Treaty of Vienna.<sup>721</sup> Ferdinand feared that an Ottoman takeover of Hungary would adversely affect Habsburg interests in eastern Europe and attempted to enlist the support of the princes of the Holy Roman Empire to wage war against the Ottomans. The princes were initially more concerned with the unrest at home than abroad, but in 1526 Ferdinand finally convinced the Protestant princes to send soldiers to Hungary.<sup>722</sup> Before the soldiers even arrived, however, Suleiman’s forces attacked King Louis’ forces on 29 August at the Battle of Mohacs. King Louis died in battle, without any children to serve as heirs.<sup>723</sup>

Ferdinand lay claim to the newly vacant Hungarian throne on behalf of his wife Anna, the sole surviving child of King Louis’ father Ladislas, but the Hungarian nobles, uncomfortable with granting a Habsburg such authority in Hungarian affairs, supported the Hungarian nobleman John Zapolya’s claim to the throne instead. In 1527, Zapolya also received the formal endorsement of the Ottoman Porte in Constantinople for his bid for kingship. Ferdinand responded with a hasty but successful military campaign that caught Zapolya off guard and brought the kingdom of Hungary and Bohemia under Ferdinand’s control.<sup>724</sup> The Ottomans, however, refused to acknowledge Ferdinand’s claim to the throne and saw his involvement in

---

<sup>721</sup> Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, *Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism, 1521-1555* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 8; Jean Bérenger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1273-1700* (New York: Longman, 1994), 147.

<sup>722</sup> Fischer-Galati, 25-26.

<sup>723</sup> Fischer-Galati, 27.

<sup>724</sup> Fischer-Galati, 31.

Hungarian affairs as a direct threat to Ottoman interests in Eastern Europe. The hostilities between Ferdinand and Suleiman culminated in the Ottoman advance on Vienna in 1529. Ottoman forces laid siege to the city for a full month before they retreated and Ferdinand, shaken by the siege, agreed to pay tribute to their Ottomans in exchange for their recognition of his claim to the Hungarian throne.<sup>725</sup> Even though Western Europe remained firmly in Christian hands (what kind of Christian hands, of course, remained an open question), the realization that the Ottomans could advance as far as they had alarmed Western Europeans. The Turkish threat, however, also provided the Protestant princes with opportunities to gain political leverage against the Holy Roman Emperor, who could ill afford to wage war on two fronts at once.

The many residents of the Holy Roman Empire who had not travelled to Ottoman territory themselves or even encountered Ottoman travelers, emissaries, or soldiers relied on polemical texts and images for their understanding of the Ottoman world. Of particular importance in the early sixteenth century was George of Hungary's *Tractatus de Moribus, Conditionibus, et Nequitia Turcorum (Booklet Concerning the Customs, Conditions, and Depravity of the Turks)*, written in 1480 or 1481.<sup>726</sup> George of Hungary's captivity account circulated widely and became the foundation of Luther's understanding of Islam and the Ottoman world, and he even wrote a foreword to a new 1530 edition of the text.<sup>727</sup> George of Hungary's account was not wholly dismissive of Islam and the Ottoman Turks. Though he considered Islam a false and evil religion, he admired aspects of Ottoman civilization and his account grappled with the fact that many Christians in Ottoman lands found Islam attractive and

---

<sup>725</sup> George C. Kohn, *Dictionary of Wars* (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 46.

<sup>726</sup> On George of Hungary, see Albrecht Classen, "Life Writing as a Slave in Turkish Hands: Georgius of Hungary's Reflections about his Existence in the Turkish World," *Neohelicon* 39 (2012): 55-72.

<sup>727</sup> David D. Grafton, "Martin Luther's Sources on the Turk and Islam in the Midst of the Fear of Ottoman Imperialism," *The Muslim World* 107:4 (2017): 666.

converted for a variety of reasons. In fact, he himself faced this temptation and practiced Islam for a time during his captivity.<sup>728</sup>

Other polemical portrayals of the Turks and Islam were less ambivalent. European perceptions of the Ottoman Turks fixated particularly on rumours of rampant sexual immorality. The fact that polygamy was an acceptable practice under Islamic Law horrified Protestant reformers; Calvin called Muhammad a “corrupter of conjugal faithfulness” and Luther argued that the Turkish practice of marriage, without guaranteed exclusivity or permanence, could not properly be called marriage at all.<sup>729</sup> Other accusations, more lurid and even less grounded in fact, abounded. The 1526 anonymous polemic *Aufzug eynes Briefes (Excerpt of a Letter)* even claimed that the vice of sodomy (by which the author referred to unspeakable acts with persons or animals of either gender) had in fact originated in Turkish lands and thence infected Christendom.<sup>730</sup>

Not only did Europeans perceive the Turks as sexually depraved, they also saw them as cruel and bloodthirsty. This fear only intensified as the Turkish armies actually marched into Europe and rumours of acts of needless cruelty circulated. In 1530, the year after the siege of Vienna, Hans Goldenmunde produced an engraving of the Turkish army in the Vienna woods that emphasized the Ottoman army’s cruelty and bloodlust. The engraving showed victims of all ages, from adults to babies and small children, whom the Ottoman soldiers impaled. A poem decrying Turkish violence and begging for divine aid accompanied the engraving.

O Lord God in the highest throne

---

<sup>728</sup> Classen, 60-61.

<sup>729</sup> Jan Slomp, “Calvin and the Turks,” *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 19:1 (2009): 62; Martin Luther, “On War Against the Turk” in *The Annotated Luther, Volume 5: Christian Life in the World*, edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 364.

<sup>730</sup> Silke R. Falkner, “‘Having It off’ with Fish, Camels, and Lads: Sodomitic Pleasures in German-Language Turcica,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13:4 (Oct. 2004): 426.

Look upon this great misery  
That the Turkish raging tyrant  
Has done in the Vienna forest  
Wretchedly murdering virgins and wives  
Cutting children in half  
Impaling them on posts  
O our shepherd Jesus Christ  
You who are gracious and merciful  
Turn your wrath away from the people  
Save us out of the hand of the Turks<sup>731</sup>

As the above poem demonstrates, Europeans saw the advance of the Ottoman Turks at least in part as a manifestation of the wrath of God. Luther expressed this view as early as 1518, when he described the Turks as the means by which God punished Christians, since they would not punish themselves.<sup>732</sup> They also incorporated the Turks into their apocalyptic schemata in a variety of ways. In 1498, Albrecht Durer depicted the first two horsemen of the apocalypse—riding the white horse of the conqueror and the red horse of slaughter—in Turkish garb.<sup>733</sup> In the 1530 edition of the Luther Bible, woodcuts depicting the Turkish siege of Vienna accompanied passages about Gog and Magog, the nations that brought destruction in biblical prophecy.<sup>734</sup> Luther also identified the Turks with the little horn with human eyes and an arrogant mouth that destroyed three other horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7.<sup>735</sup> Moreover, though Luther principally identified the papacy as the Antichrist, he sometimes also broadened his view of the Antichrist to include both the papacy (in the religious realm) and the Turks (in the political

---

<sup>731</sup> Cited in Gregory J. Miller, "Luther on the Turks and Islam" in *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, edited by Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 191n.17. The woodcut itself is pictured in Miller, 194.

<sup>732</sup> Martin Luther, *Resolutiones Disputationum de Indulgentiarum Virtute* (Wittenberg: Johann Rhau-Grunenberg, 1518), fol. B iv r.

<sup>733</sup> Grafton, 668. For an image of the woodcut, see Cunningham and Grell, 5.

<sup>734</sup> See Jourden Travis Moger, "Gog at Vienna: Three Woodcut Images of the Turks as Apocalyptic Destroyers in Early Editions of the Luther Bible," *Journal of Biblical Reception* 3:2 (2016): 255-277.

<sup>735</sup> Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, 40.

realm).<sup>736</sup> In virtually every case, European Christians viewed the Ottoman Turks as evil and opposed to God, but even so they could still fulfill God's purposes by serving as instruments of his wrath.

Lienhard's prophecies made no mention of the Turks, but Ursula's visions show that, though Strasbourg was nowhere near the Holy Roman Empire's eastern frontier, she had some awareness of the threat the Ottoman Empire posed. In 1529, the same year the Ottoman army lay siege to Vienna, she saw in her eightieth vision

a wide and large moor, and on this moor I saw moving forward a large, fierce, and black man, in very gloomy darkness. And before this man went a bright light, and I wondered what this might mean. Then it was revealed to me in my heart by the glory of the Lord that this man was the lord of the Turks and the light the might of God, which went before him, and that he will exercise great power and proffer misery before he then brings to pass his own end.<sup>737</sup>

She also saw a crowd of people in Turkish garb—specifically hats—in her hundred and second vision, which took place in 1530. Another crowd of people soon appeared and shoed them away.<sup>738</sup>

While these are the only two instances in which she explicitly identified the subjects of her vision as Turks, the identification of the black man in her eightieth vision as the leader of the Turks suggests that some of her other visions of black men—an image that recurs in her visions with some frequency—may have also been informed by her ideas of the Turks. In particular, her nineteenth vision showed a black man whose head was transformed into male genitalia, an image which calls to mind European perceptions of the Ottoman Turks as lascivious and sexually immoral.<sup>739</sup> The principal threat posed by the Turks in Ursula's visions, however, was not sexual

---

<sup>736</sup> Grafton, 672.

<sup>737</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. J3r.

<sup>738</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. K1v.

<sup>739</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. G4r.

immorality—her nineteenth vision is the only vision with even remotely sexual undertones—but rather violence and destruction. Even this violence and destruction, however, was not outside of the will of God. The lord of the Turks, who brought death and destruction, was preceded by the light of God—Ursula joined many of her Christian European contemporaries in viewing the Turkish advance as part of God’s judgment—but the death and destruction he brought would not continue unchecked forever, and he would ultimately bring about his own end.

## **Conclusion**

Apocalyptic language and ideas provided early modern Christians with the opportunity to understand themselves and the events that shaped their lives in the context of a larger story, overseen by a good and sovereign God and guaranteed to end happily for the faithful. The Josts and their contemporaries faced both political and religious chaos and instability, and they cherished the hope that even the worst difficulties they faced were proof that God was at work in the world and would soon set all things to rights. Even as the Josts’ illiteracy prevented them from participating fully in intellectual discourse on biblical apocalypticism and eschatology, their visions and prophecies show how some of these ideas permeated all levels of society and showcase how one peasant couple grappled with the period of history and the world in which they lived and the God who ruled it.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: GENDER, CLASS, AND PROPHECY IN THE JOSTS' WORLD<sup>740</sup>

Lienhard and Ursula Jost are an interesting case study for historians of gender. They had much in common: they lived in the same area, were part of the same social stratum, and both became respected visionaries in the Melchiorite community. They were particularly conscious of their shared identity as poor folks, oppressed by the wealthy inside and outside the church. These many similarities, however, make the differences that did exist between the Josts' ministries and their potential gendered nature all the more intriguing. Moreover, as a married couple, the Josts provide an example of marriage in the Reformation era, a topic that has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate. Finally, as a woman of great influence among the Strasbourg Melchiorites, Ursula forms an important part of histories of women and the Reformation(s) in Strasbourg. This chapter explores how Lienhard and Ursula Jost fit into gendered histories of visions, mysticism, and prophecies, the Reformations, and the realities of marriage in the early modern period.

### **Mysticism, Prophecy, and Gender: The Medieval Legacy**

For medieval and early modern Christians, belief in the Holy Spirit's ongoing role in the world allowed those who did not or could not hold official positions in ecclesiastical hierarchies—such as women, or the unlettered—to teach and exert influence in the Church

---

<sup>740</sup> Portions of this chapter appeared previously in Christina Moss, "'They Hear and Believe [Her] As They Do God': Barbara Rebstock and the Strasbourg Melchiorites," *Anabaptist Historians: Bringing the Anabaptist Past Into a Digital Century*, published 7 April 2017, <https://anabaptisthistorians.org/2017/04/07/they-hear-and-believe-her-as-they-do-god-barbara-rebstock-and-the-strasbourg-melchiorites/>; Christina Moss, "Marriage as Spiritual Partnership in Sixteenth-Century Strasbourg: The Case of Lienhard and Ursula Jost" in *Newberry Essays in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 9, edited by Karen Christianson and Andrew K. Epps (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 2015), 83-93.



anyway. The thirteenth-century Catholic theologian Henry of Ghent distinguished between teaching *ex officio* (from an official position of religious authority) and *ex beneficio* (out of the gift of grace). Those from the lower strata of society attained the right to the former with great difficulty, if at all, and women were barred from it altogether. The latter, however, was theoretically open to anyone. This was no free-for-all—those who taught *ex beneficio* required approval from those who held formal ecclesiastical offices to confirm the soundness of their doctrine—but it allowed some medieval women, from Hildegard of Bingen to Catherine of Siena to become highly influential figures in the medieval church.<sup>741</sup>

There were several distinct but overlapping forms of and approaches to direct spiritual revelation that could provide justification for teaching *ex beneficio*. The first of these was mysticism, defined by Bernard McGinn in his definitive series *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* as “[centered] on a form of immediate encounter with God whose essential purpose is to convey a loving knowledge (even a negative one) that transforms the mystic’s mind and whole way of life.”<sup>742</sup> Visions were another form of divine revelation, and they could be corporeal (experienced by the visionary as part of his or her physical environment), spiritual (perceived by the visionary in his or her soul), or intellectual (in which the visionary comes to understand a divine truth).<sup>743</sup> Indeed, these visions could engage not only the sense of sight, but all the senses: medieval visionaries heard voices, tasted God’s goodness, and felt the wounds of Christ in their own bodies. One woman, Margaretha Ebner, even had a visionary

---

<sup>741</sup> Bernard McGinn, “The Changing Shape of Late Medieval Mysticism” in *Church History* 65:2 (June 1996): 209.

<sup>742</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200-1350* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 26.

<sup>743</sup> McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 155.

experience in which she breastfed the Christ child.<sup>744</sup> Finally, there was prophecy, which, as Thomas Aquinas put it, “[conveyed] a message from God about the past, present, or future,” and often had implications for ecclesiastical or secular politics.<sup>745</sup> These categories were by no means mutually exclusive. Visions could be mystical or prophetic, and mystics could also be visionaries and prophets. The Josts themselves, in fact, straddled these boundaries. They were primarily visionaries and prophets, but their visions and experiences occasionally displayed mystical elements, such as Lienhard’s intense identification with the sufferings of Christ, or Ursula’s vision in which God the Father provided her with assurance of His loving sovereignty over the earth.<sup>746</sup>

---

<sup>744</sup> Rosemary Drage Hale, “‘Taste and See, for God Is Sweet’: Sensory Perception and Memory in Medieval Christian Mystical Experience” in *Vox Mystica: Essays for Valerie M. Lagorio*, edited by Anne Clark Bartlett et al. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 4.

<sup>745</sup> Bernard McGinn, “‘Trumpets of the Mysteries of God’: Prophetesses in Late Medieval Christianity” in *Propheten und Prophezeiungen: Prophets and Prophecies*, ed. Matthias Riedl and Tilo Schabert (Wüzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), 125; André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, edited by Daniel E. Bornstein, translated by Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 225.

<sup>746</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E1v-E2r; Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fol. G3r. This third vision of Ursula’s bears a strong resemblance to a portion of the Showings of Julian of Norwich, in which Julian saw a small round object the size of a hazelnut lying in the palm of her hand. As she wondered what it would mean, she was told that “it is all that is made...it lasteth and ever shall, for God loveth it.” Cited in Liz Herbert McAvoy, *A Companion to Julian of Norwich* (Rochester, New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 157. However, it is unlikely that Ursula would have been directly aware of this passage, given the extremely limited circulation of Julian of Norwich’s writings in the sixteenth century. See Alexandra Barratt, “How Many Children Had Julian of Norwich?: Editions, Translations, and Versions of her Revelations” in *Vox Mystica: Essays for Valerie M. Lagorio*, edited by Anne Clark Bartlett et al. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 28. Instead, it seems likely that both women drew from the same Scriptural theme, evidenced in passages such as Wisdom 11:22-26 (NRSV):  
“Because the whole world before you is like a speck that tips the scales,  
and like a drop of morning dew that falls on the ground.  
But you are merciful to all, for you can do all things,  
and you overlook people’s sins, so that they may repent.  
For you love all things that exist,  
and detest none of the things that you have made,  
for you would not have made anything if you had hated it.  
How would anything have endured if you had not willed it?  
Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved?  
You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living.”

McGinn, in his study of Christian mysticism, found that the year 1200 marked a significant turning point in the history of mysticism and direct revelation in the Christian tradition.<sup>747</sup> This was due in part to broader developments in European and Catholic history, including the formation of new mendicant orders which prioritized the active, apostolic life over the contemplative life of the cloistered orders and allowed the men in these orders to interact more freely with other members of society, and the flourishing of vernacular literature, both secular and religious. Most especially, however, the last few centuries of the Middle Ages were marked by an unprecedented proliferation of female saints, prophets, visionaries, and mystics, who gained prominence in their local communities and even, in exceptional cases, across Western Europe.<sup>748</sup> These women also came from a greater variety of social strata than earlier medieval saints; female sainthood was no longer the almost exclusive province of women from the ruling classes, but also became accessible to women from merchant and artisan classes, although the poorest women were still very much underrepresented.<sup>749</sup>

These women almost always partnered with men in order to share their lives and the contents of their revelations with the world, and McGinn presents two principal motifs of cross-gender partnership in *The Flowering of Mysticism*. The first and most common model was that of the female mystic/visionary and her confessor/hagiographer, a model John W. Coakley also explores in his 2006 monograph *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and their Male Collaborators*. This relationship was epitomized by the beguine Marie of Oignies, one of the first models of the new forms of female sanctity that emerged around 1200, and her hagiographer Jacques de Vitry. The daughter of reasonably wealthy parents from Nivelles in

---

<sup>747</sup> McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 1.

<sup>748</sup> McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 15; Vauchez, 220.

<sup>749</sup> John W. Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 8.

present-day Belgium, Marie married in 1193 but convinced her husband to adopt a life of celibacy and service to the poor. In 1208, she left for the nearby town of Oignies, where she founded a community of like-minded women.<sup>750</sup> There she acquired a reputation for extreme asceticism, bouts of mystical ecstasy, and even the ability to perform miracles.<sup>751</sup> Jacques de Vitry first met her after her move to Oignies and was deeply inspired by her displays of sanctity. She became a mentor to him and encouraged him to take holy orders and develop his skills as a preacher.<sup>752</sup> In 1216, three years after her death, he wrote her saint's *vita*, through which he spread the account of her life, and that same year he successfully petitioned the Pope to grant permission for the formation of communities of beguines, despite 1215 Fourth Lateran Council's interdiction of new religious orders.<sup>753</sup> Even after her death, his relationship with Marie was symbiotic. He legitimized her reputation as a holy woman, and in turn his close association with such a holy woman legitimized him as a cleric and preacher.

The other example McGinn highlights is the cross-gender partnership modelled by Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi. In this case, it was Francis who first acquired a reputation for his firm commitment to voluntary poverty and his mystical experiences, most notably his physical identification with the wounds of Christ. Inspired by his example, Clare sought to emulate him and reached out to him directly for help and advice. He met with her secretly in order to formulate a model for women who also wished to live lives of evangelical poverty.<sup>754</sup> The women who followed Clare in her emulation of Francis' ideals came to call themselves Poor Clares and, while they were forced to accept claustration in 1215 and therefore lived lives that

---

<sup>750</sup> Coakley, 69.

<sup>751</sup> McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 37.

<sup>752</sup> McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 34-35.

<sup>753</sup> Fiona Bowie, introduction to *Beguine Spirituality: An Anthology*, (London: SPCK, 1989), 17.

<sup>754</sup> McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 47.

differed markedly in some ways from their male counterparts', they remained committed to the ideal of poverty and eschewed communal property to subsist instead on alms earned by Franciscan brothers.<sup>755</sup>

New forms of apostolic life and new forms of mysticism flourished in late medieval Strasbourg, just as they did in other parts of Western Europe. This was especially true in the fourteenth century, when two prominent medieval mystics, the Dominicans Meister Eckhart and Johann Tauler, spent a considerable portion of their careers in the city.<sup>756</sup> These men had more extensive educations and stronger institutional connections than many of their female contemporaries, though this did not exempt them from ecclesiastical oversight. John I, who served as bishop of Strasbourg for the first quarter of the fourteenth century, was particularly zealous in his attempts to curtail mystical heresies, and Eckhart himself was tried for heresy and had portions of his works condemned by the Pope in 1329.<sup>757</sup> As for late medieval Strasbourg's female mystics and visionaries, none achieved the prominence of Eckhart or Tauler, but convents inspired by the Dominican and Franciscan mendicant orders proliferated, as did beguinages.<sup>758</sup>

Late medieval mystics of both genders and their supporters, in Strasbourg and beyond, possessed a variety of tools to share their message with the masses and inspire imitators. Hagiographies and editions of their writings even allowed them to make their mark on the historical record, although in their own time their impact was confined to the relatively small literate portion of the European population. Within their local areas, mystics' and visionaries' teachings also spread through word of mouth and, for those whose ecclesiastical credentials permitted them to do so or who were willing to brave the Church's displeasure, public preaching

---

<sup>755</sup> Bert Roest, *Order and Disorder: The Poor Clares between Foundation and Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 49-53.

<sup>756</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany* (New York: Crossroad, 2005), 241.

<sup>757</sup> McGinn, *Harvest of Mysticism*, 65; 94.

<sup>758</sup> McGinn, *Harvest of Mysticism*, 241.

allowed them to communicate with a wider audience. Both Jacques de Vitry and Johann Tauler acquired reputations as engaging preachers, and Tauler's followers even recorded as many as eighty of his sermons and homilies for posterity.<sup>759</sup> For women, whose abilities to speak publicly were more restricted, singing provided a way to circumvent restrictions against preaching, a strategy put to good use by Marie of Oignies.<sup>760</sup>

Even though the Josts broke in significant ways from most late medieval visionaries and mystics, most notably in their rejection of the Catholic Church and their dismissal of the Mass as idolatry, they also benefitted in significant ways from the trends that allowed the new mystics and visionaries of the late medieval period to flourish, particularly the emphasis on vernacular over Latin literature and the new openness to women and non-elites. Their relationship with each other and with Melchior Hoffman also showed strong similarities to the gendered partnerships described by Coakley and McGinn. Lienhard and Ursula's relationship with Hoffman followed a similar model to the relationship of Marie of Oignies and Jacques de Vitry. Hoffman argued for the legitimacy of their visions and prophecies and created a written record that allowed them to spread and survive. In return, he was legitimated by his association with prophets, who had the ability to hear directly from God. The relationship between Lienhard and Ursula, meanwhile, was closer to the relationship between Francis and Clare; his visionary and ecstatic experiences began before hers, and his model of piety so inspired her that she consciously sought to emulate it, although her visions developed their own unique character over time.

In many ways, both Lienhard and Ursula bore a stronger similarity to the women mystics of the late medieval period than to men such as Eckhart or Tauler. Their relative

---

<sup>759</sup> McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 34; McGinn, *Harvest of Mysticism*, 244.

<sup>760</sup> Carolyn Muessig, "Prophecy and Song: Teaching and Preaching by Medieval Women" in *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, edited by Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 151.

disenfranchisement—their lack of education, their inability to gain official positions in Catholic or magisterial church hierarchies, and Ursula’s gender—led them to rely on claims of divine inspiration as their sole source of authority, a claim recognized in Melchiorite circles but nowhere else. Like Marie of Oignies, they tried to use song as a method of preaching. While it is impossible to know exactly which specific figures served as their example and inspiration—Francis seems likely to have been one of them, given the similarities between his public actions and Lienhard’s—they benefitted either directly or indirectly from the new models of sanctity and tactics for exerting religious influence adopted by the female vernacular mystics who left such an indelible mark on late medieval Christianity.

### **The Josts and Marriage in Sixteenth-Century Europe**

One of the recurring themes in early Protestant and late medieval anticlerical propaganda was the tyranny of enforced celibacy for monks, nuns, and clerics, and the importance of marriage for the Christian believer. Protestant Reformers urged priests to take wives, and monks and nuns to leave their cloisters and seek spouses. Even Martin Luther’s own wife, Katharina van Bora, an erstwhile nun, was moved by these injunctions. After reading texts by reformers, she and several of her fellow nuns became convinced of the ungodliness of forced celibacy and the rightness of the reformers’ cause. The nuns famously arranged to escape their convent by striking a deal with the man who delivered fish to them and convincing him to smuggle them out in empty herring barrels. After Katharina’s successful escape, she moved to Wittenberg and, in 1525, married the famous reformer—and former Augustinian monk—Martin Luther. The Luthers signified their religious transition through their marriage. Medieval Catholic theology had emphasized chastity as the ideal sexual state for both men and women. Holy men and

women lived out their vows of chastity in the cloister as monks and nuns and in the world as priests, mendicants, and beguines. Even those married men and women who achieved saintly status frequently vowed to remain chaste within their marriages.<sup>761</sup> Luther, Katharina, and their Protestant contemporaries, however, no longer sought to conform to this medieval ideal of sexual holiness. Instead, they embodied a new, Protestant ideal of virtue—one that viewed marriage and procreation as a far higher spiritual calling than celibacy.

The consequences for women of this renewed emphasis on marriage were mixed; on the one hand, the role of wives and mothers became an important, if somewhat circumscribed spiritual calling for women. On the other hand, celibate spiritual callings, which had characterized the lives of so many medieval female saints, were seen in Protestant circles as highly suspect. Steven Ozment, in his 1983 monograph *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe*, painted the Protestant teachings on marriage and celibacy as a positive development for women, especially when contrasted with what he viewed as the “antifeminism” of the medieval emphasis on celibacy.<sup>762</sup> In order to delineate the shape of family life in the Reformation-era Holy Roman Empire, Ozment studied housefather manuals, estate management guides, tracts on marriage, and other resources intended to assist early modern people in governing their Christian households. He argued that these documents demonstrated a concern for companionship in marriage and that the role of the wife, while distinct from that of the husband, was not undervalued.<sup>763</sup> Far from it, Ozment concluded, the position of mother of the house (*hausmutter*) was “a position of high authority and equal respect” to that of her

---

<sup>761</sup> On chaste marriage in medieval Christendom, see Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>762</sup> Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 3.

<sup>763</sup> Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 55.



counterpart, the father of the house (*hausvatter*).<sup>764</sup> He also highlighted the egalitarian aspects of the reformers' view of marriage, which emphasized the importance of fidelity for both the husband and the wife.<sup>765</sup>

Lyndal Roper, by contrast, emphasized the limitations the Reformation introduced to the lives of the women of Augsburg in her 1989 monograph *The Holy Household: Women, Religion, and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*. She argued that “the moral ethic of the urban Reformation, both as a religious credo and a social movement, must be understood as a theology of gender” and that “the institutionalized Reformation was most successful when it insisted on a vision of women’s incorporation within the household under the leadership of their husbands.”<sup>766</sup> The early urban Reformation in Augsburg allied itself with the city’s guilds and promoted a family structure modelled on the hierarchical ideals of family life held by master craftsmen, who ruled over households that comprised their wives, children, servants, and journeymen. The increasingly paternalistic attitude of the city council also led them to establish moral ordinances governing marriage and sexual behaviour, which in turn reinforced the subordination of women to their husbands. Contrary to Ozment’s claim that *hausmütter* enjoyed a significant amount of respect and authority, Roper argued that, at least in Augsburg, women’s opportunities to exercise the authority afforded to them as mothers were outweighed by the limitations placed upon them as their husbands’ subordinates.<sup>767</sup> Even the protections the city council offered women—against wife-beating, for instance—depended on their submissiveness as wives.

---

<sup>764</sup> Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 54.

<sup>765</sup> Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 55.

<sup>766</sup> Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women, Religion, and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 1-2.

<sup>767</sup> Roper, *Holy Household*, 203.

Even a cursory survey of the writings of the major Protestant reformers supports Roper's contention that Reformation ideals of marriage were fundamentally non-egalitarian. In his commentary on Genesis, for instance, Martin Luther elaborated on what he believed to be the natural state of relationships between men and women. While he conceded that Eve was once "wholly free and in no sense inferior to the man, and was an equal partaker of all the endowments bestowed by God on him," he emphasized that women now lived in a cursed state and were punished for Eve's sin not only through pain in childbirth, but also through subordination to their husbands.<sup>768</sup> Therefore, Luther concluded, "the rule and government of all things remain in the power of the husband whom the wife according to the command of God is bound to obey. The husband rules the house, governs the state politic, conducts wars, defends his own property, cultivates the earth, builds, plants, etc. The woman on the other hand as a nail driven into the wall sits at home."<sup>769</sup> The French reformer John Calvin also emphasized the subordination of women, arguing in his commentary on 1 Timothy that woman was "by nature formed to obey."<sup>770</sup> Calvin justified women's subjection with a reference to the order of creation. "The woman," he explained, "was created [after the man] in order that she might be a kind of appendage to the man...she was joined to the man on the express condition, that she should be at hand to render obedience to him...God did not create two chiefs of equal power, but added to the man an inferior aid."<sup>771</sup> The Strasbourg reformers, although they emphasized husbands' responsibilities as well as their rights and urged them to be kind masters, nevertheless advocated for wives' cheerful submission to their husbands, even when they disagreed strongly with them.

---

<sup>768</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther on the Creation: A Critical and Devotional Commentary on Genesis*, edited by John Lenker, translated by Henry Cole (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands, 1904), 311.

<sup>769</sup> Luther, *Genesis*, 311.

<sup>770</sup> John Calvin, "Commentary on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon: 1 Timothy 2:11-15," *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, accessed 11 January 2015, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom43.iii.iv.iv.html>.

<sup>771</sup> Calvin, "1 Timothy 2:11-15."

Bucer allowed for one exception—if the husband’s orders directly contravened God’s, His authority was higher, but in all other cases women’s obedience to God required marital submission.<sup>772</sup>

In emphasizing the subordination of women to men in marriage, the Protestant reformers showed remarkable continuity with their medieval Catholic predecessors. Luther and Calvin drew their views on gender and hierarchy largely from the Pauline interpretation of the creation account in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy, which argued for men’s authority over women on the basis of the order of creation (the man was created before the woman) and deception (the woman sinned before the man).<sup>773</sup> The patristic author John Chrysostom had used the same source material to make similar arguments over a millennium earlier. In his *Homilies on Timothy*, he argued that the Apostle Paul (and indeed God himself) “[wished] the man to have the preeminence in every way,” both because the man was formed before the woman and because “the woman taught the man once, and made him guilty of disobedience, and wrought our ruin.”<sup>774</sup> The thirteenth-century scholastic theologian Thomas Aquinas also argued for women’s subjection to men on the basis of the Genesis creation account.<sup>775</sup> With the exception of a few short-lived sects, this Pauline view was largely normative among medieval and early modern Christians of all denominations.

---

<sup>772</sup> Anne-Marie Heitz-Muller, *Femmes et Réformation à Strasbourg (1521-1549)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009), 126; 130.

<sup>773</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:9, NRSV “Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man.” 1 Timothy 2:12-14, NRSV “I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”

<sup>774</sup> John Chrysostom, “Homilies on Timothy,” *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, accessed 12 May 2015, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.v.iii.x.html>.

<sup>775</sup> Thomas Aquinas, “Summa Theologica: Question 92. The Production of the Woman,” *New Advent*, accessed 20 March 2015, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1092.htm>.

Radical reformers too, though they departed from both Protestants and Catholics in their ecclesiology, held similar views of marriage as a hierarchal relationship in which the husband held authority over his wife. Some Anabaptist groups made allowances for the wives of unbelieving husbands by permitting divorce in the case of spiritual incompatibility, but these women generally remarried a man within the Anabaptist community and became subject to his authority.<sup>776</sup> The Dutch Anabaptist leader Menno Simons instructed women to “be obedient to your husbands in all reasonable things, so that those who do not believe may be gained by your upright, pious conversation without the word, as Peter says.”<sup>777</sup> Hutterite women were not even permitted to choose whether to accept or reject a marriage proposal. Instead, each Hutterite community’s spiritual leaders (known as the Servants of the Word) arranged the marriages of the community’s inhabitants.<sup>778</sup> Nowhere, however, was the principle of marital submission and patriarchal control enforced more fully than in the Anabaptist kingdom of Munster. In 1534, King Jan van Leyden mandated polygyny and ordered every woman over the age of twelve to marry, ensuring that every woman in the city would be under the authority of a man.<sup>779</sup> This may have been inspired in part by the Münsterite Hille Feicken’s failed attempt to follow in the footsteps of the biblical Judith and eliminate the prince-bishop of Munster, who was laying siege

---

<sup>776</sup> Sigrun Haude, “Anabaptist Women—Radical Women?” in *Infinite Boundaries: Order, Disorder, and Reorder in Early Modern German Culture*, ed. Max Reinhart (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1998), 325.

<sup>777</sup> Menno Simons, “The Faith of the Sinful Woman,” accessed 11 January 2015, <http://www.mennosimons.net/ft035-sinfulwoman.html>.

<sup>778</sup> Adam Darlage, “Double Honor: Elite Hutterite Women in the Sixteenth Century,” *Church History* 79:4 (2010): 769.

<sup>779</sup> Haude, *Savage Wolves*, 14.

to the city.<sup>780</sup> When one of King Jan's own wives, Elisabeth Wandscheer, publicly criticized his treatment of his subjects, he responded by ordering her execution.<sup>781</sup>

The ubiquity of patriarchal ideals of marriage in the early modern period and the near-unanimity of Reformation-era theologians on the necessity of a woman's subordination to her husband, however, obfuscates the variety of early modern marriages in practice. Didactic treatises and works of theology were intended to describe aspirational ideals rather than strict reality. An examination of other sources that document individuals' lived experiences offer a more varied picture of the realities of marriage for men and women in the early modern period. Some of these sources, such as marriage court records, self-select for dysfunctional marriages and can highlight the prevalence of behaviours such as infidelity and wife-beating, which persisted despite being highly frowned upon by early modern theologians and marriage counselors. On the other hand, personal sources such as correspondence and autobiographical accounts can also reveal cases where individuals behaved in more egalitarian, mutually supportive ways toward their partners than a strictly literal interpretation of their theology would suggest.

The relationship between Martin Luther and his wife Katharina von Bora once again provides a prime example of this dichotomy. Despite Luther's patriarchal theories of marriage, his surviving correspondence with his wife and the testimony of the couples' friends and acquaintances suggest that the Luthers actually enjoyed a relatively egalitarian, mutually

---

<sup>780</sup> On Hille Feicken, see Marion Kobelt-Groch, "Hille Feicken of Sneek" in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*, edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 288-297.

<sup>781</sup> Anthony Arthur, *The Tailor-King: The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 1999), 158-159. Elisabeth Wandscheer was publicly beheaded, and King Jan and his remaining wives were reported to have danced around her corpse. Since this claim survives only in anti-Anabaptist propaganda, its veracity is difficult to determine.

supportive relationship. Luther referred to Katharina playfully, but with genuine admiration, as his Morningstar of Wittenberg, as his “most holy lady doctor,” and even as “my lord Käte,” and to himself as “your holiness’ most willing servant.”<sup>782</sup> He also nicknamed Galatians, his favourite book of the Bible, his “Katie von Bora,” a designation that speaks as much to his admiration for his wife as his appreciation for the Pauline epistle.<sup>783</sup> Due to Luther’s lack of administrative gifts, Katharina took charge of the Luther family household and finances. Luther acquiesced to her decision-making, describing himself as ruled by Katharina on household matters and by the Holy Spirit on spiritual matters.<sup>784</sup> Even on spiritual matters, however, Katharina still showed a willingness to challenge her husband on occasion, disagreeing with some of the assertions he made in his table talk.<sup>785</sup>

In Strasbourg itself, Mathis and Katharina Zell offered another example of a Reformation-era couple with a mutually supportive and functionally egalitarian relationship. Katharina’s correspondence and autobiographical writings detail the nature of their mutually supportive marriage and shared ministry, and Mathis’ colleagues also noted the high esteem in which Mathis held his wife. The Zells’ relationship at times alarmed Martin Bucer, who considered Katharina too talkative and Mathis too easily influenced by her.<sup>786</sup> Undeterred, convinced of her calling, and buoyed by her husband’s support, however, Katharina continued to search for opportunities to minister to the people of Strasbourg even after his death. Even Bucer, moreover, though he considered Katharina’s influence on Mathis too strong, was no petty tyrant

---

<sup>782</sup> Stjerna, 56-7; 62; Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (eds.), *Martin Luther on Women: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 212.

<sup>783</sup> Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation*, 57.

<sup>784</sup> Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation*, 57.

<sup>785</sup> Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation*, 63.

<sup>786</sup> Herman J. Selderhuis, *Marriage and Divorce in the Thought of Martin Bucer* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 1999), 232 fn. 394.

in his own home. After the death of his first wife Elisabeth Silbereisen and his remarriage to Capito's widow Wibrandis Rosenblatt, he remarked on how much he missed the manner in which Elisabeth freely corrected him.<sup>787</sup>

While some couples left letters and autobiographical materials that have enabled historians to learn more about their marriages, gauging the experiences of the mostly-illiterate members of the lower classes can be difficult, especially if these couples avoided appearing in marriage courts. Lienhard and Ursula's lives, therefore, present a unique opportunity to learn about the marriage of a peasant couple. The Josts' collected visions and prophecies were not written as treatises on marriage, but they nevertheless offer insight both into Lienhard and Ursula's views and experience of marriage. The thirteenth chapter of Lienhard's prophecy, for example, demonstrates that he shared the Protestant reformers' rejection of celibacy and wholehearted affirmation of the institution of marriage. He clarified his views on the subject in the most biting terms, referring to cloisters as "houses of abomination."<sup>788</sup> Whoever chooses to live a life of chastity, Lienhard argued, "does violence to Christ the Lord," lives without God's grace, and is destined for damnation.<sup>789</sup> By contrast, he held that those who entered into the institution of marriage would receive "the grace and blessing of God" and "the crown of everlasting life."<sup>790</sup>

As to the Josts' own marriage, it was in some ways entirely typical in terms of gender roles and division of labour; Ursula bore Lienhard children—at least eight, according to the foreword to the 1532 edition of her visions—and he in turn provided financially for his family's

---

<sup>787</sup> Selderhuis, 125.

<sup>788</sup> Jost, *Worhaftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C4v.

<sup>789</sup> Jost, *Worhaftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C4v.

<sup>790</sup> Jost, *Worhaftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. C4v.

physical well-being through his work as a woodcutter.<sup>791</sup> However, their visions and prophecies also often showcase a spiritual partnership of equals. Evidence from both Lienhard and Ursula's prophetic texts indicates that both partners were devoted to their own spiritual calling, while at the same time wholeheartedly supporting one another. Lienhard found his spiritual calling first and excitedly took up the mantle of prophet, but he looked to Ursula as a sounding board for his vocation. This was particularly the case when he received controversial orders from God. In the third chapter of his prophecies, Lienhard reported feeling compelled by God to walk around the city of Strasbourg naked as a prophetic act, behavior that, as discussed in chapter two, resulted in his confinement in a mental institution.<sup>792</sup> Furthermore, Ursula became an even more crucial part of Lienhard's prophetic ministry after his release. In the twentieth chapter of his prophecies Lienhard recounted an event from 1525, in which the Spirit of God compelled him to go to the Strasbourg Cathedral and to sing a prophetic song for the congregation and share with them the messages he had received from God. Lienhard wanted to obey, but felt inadequate to the task due to his difficulty with memorizing and singing songs. When he explained his dilemma to his wife, she assisted him in setting his prophecy to music and spent the night practicing the song with him. Over the next few days, she accompanied him first to the minster and then to other churches in the city, and they sang the prophetic song together.<sup>793</sup>

Ursula's own prophetic ministry began after Lienhard's release from the mental hospital. In her brief preface to her own visions, Ursula detailed how she began to seek after visionary experiences of her own when she found herself unsatisfied with hearing about Lienhard's connection to the divine. Lienhard supported his wife's spiritual endeavor, and Ursula describes

---

<sup>791</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F3v;

<sup>792</sup> Jost, *Worraftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B3r.

<sup>793</sup> Jost, *Worraftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. E2r-E2v.



how the two of them prayed diligently that she too would begin to experience prophetic revelations.<sup>794</sup> She also clearly drew inspiration not only from the fact that Lienhard received revelations from God, but also from the contents of those revelations, since both Josts often saw similar images and described their experiences using similar terminology.

For historians interested in the intersection between theology and social life, the Josts' visions, particularly the parts that touch on their marriage, serve as sources that go beyond theory and prescriptive ideas of marriage and instead begin to elucidate its lived realities. In all the major Christian theologies of marriage in early modern Europe, wedlock was theoretically a strictly hierarchal relationship, in which the wife was expected to serve her husband, meet his needs, and submit to his authority, in accordance with the Pauline injunctions on godly marriage. Despite the dominance of this theology, however, the realities of marriage for early modern European Christians were more complex and diverse than the theology that underpinned them. The marriage of Ursula and Lienhard Jost, as described in their prophetic writings, complicates the traditional picture of early modern marriage as a strict hierarchy. As unusual as the Josts were in their spiritual vocation and ecstatic experiences, their mutually supportive approach to their marriage and their spiritual callings may well have been more common among early modern European Christians than a simple reading of commentaries, sermons, and treatises on marriage would suggest.

### **Similarities and Differences Between Lienhard and Ursula**

Lienhard's visions and prophecies began before Ursula's and inspired her to seek out visionary experiences of her own, and his influence on Ursula's prophetic career is unmistakable.

---

<sup>794</sup> Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. A2r.

Both Josts used the same, relatively unique expression to refer to the Holy Spirit, calling him “the glory of the Lord.”<sup>795</sup> They also reported experiencing the Spirit as a physical, and at times almost tangible, presence, often accompanied by bright light or clouds. In addition, a handful of the images from Lienhard’s earlier visionary episodes recur in Ursula’s visions. Most notably, in the eighth chapter of his prophecies, Lienhard had described how he saw the glory of the Lord transform into a beautiful wreath, which appeared to be made out of roses.<sup>796</sup> In her very first vision, Ursula described a markedly similar sight. She narrated: “The glory of the Lord came upon me and opened itself up, with such a bright glory and shine that due to the brightness I did not recognize the figure in the glory of the Lord. Thereafter the same brightness of the Lord became a lovely and beautiful wreath over me.”<sup>797</sup>

In general, however, Ursula’s and Lienhard’s prophetic texts show a distinctive style that reveals different experiences of divine revelation and different approaches to their prophetic careers. These differences may well have their roots in gender, as Lienhard’s attempt to build an active ministry for himself and Ursula’s more contemplative experience of divine revelation mirror common gendered differences in medieval saints’ lives. Lienhard’s ecstatic experiences, while they included a few visions, consisted primarily of receiving verbal messages directly from God. Some of these were for his own benefit, while at other times he was instructed to convey others to a particular audience; usually the Strasbourg magistrates, the city preachers, or his fellow patients at the Strasbourg mental hospital. Some of these messages included orders for Lienhard to exhibit certain behaviors in public—from walking around naked to serving communion to his fellow mental patients—as a prophetic act, which he was then to interpret for

---

<sup>795</sup> Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, passim; Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, passim; Jost, *Worrafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, passim. They frequently used the German phrase “*der schein des Herren*.”

<sup>796</sup> Jost, *Worrafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C4v-D1r.

<sup>797</sup> Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. A2v.

his audience. Lienhard sought a large and politically powerful audience for his prophecies from the very beginning, enlisting the support of prominent magistrates and churchmen in the city of Strasbourg. Though his ministry was never as successful as he had hoped, Lienhard had already begun the work of publicizing his visions before Melchior Hoffman arrived on the scene.

By contrast, Ursula's visions consist almost entirely of images, with only a limited amount of interpretation or theological commentary. She described the many and varied sights she saw during her ecstatic experiences—from soldiers at war to budding green trees to fire and brimstone raining from heaven—and relied on her audience to determine the spiritual meaning of the images. Moreover, unlike Lienhard, there is no evidence that Ursula made attempts to widely publicize her visions on her own. Instead, they were disseminated by Hoffman through his publication of Ursula's prophecies. The detailed imagery and chronology found in Ursula's visions from 1525, four years before she even met Hoffman, suggests that she likely found someone to act as her scribe for at least some of her visions—perhaps one of the men who performed the same service for Lienhard. However, it does not appear that she sought to gather a significant audience within Strasbourg itself the way her husband did.

Ursula's visions may have contained less self-promotion than her husband's, but they were also considerably less defensive. She insisted on the truth of her visions on only one occasion: in her fifteenth vision, she wondered whether the divine message she had received was false and prayed "O almighty God, save me and do not lead me into temptation."<sup>798</sup> She then received reassurance that this was no temptation and does not appear to have entertained the question of false revelations again. She seems to have simply taken their legitimacy for granted, and to have expected her audience (at least those who were not inherently hostile to God's truth,

---

<sup>798</sup> Jost, *Wore Prohettin*, fol. G3v.

such as ecclesiastical authorities) to do the same. Moreover, although Hoffman expended considerable energy defending the fact that Ursula—a woman—dared to speak and prophesy, Ursula herself paid no attention to her gender and made no acknowledgment that some might object to a woman as religious teacher or prophet. It is unclear whether she was unaware of objections to women as spiritual leaders or simply did not see them as worth engaging, but in either case she does not appear to have treated them as a significant threat to her ministry.

### **Women and the Reformation in Strasbourg**

The Reformation, with its renewed emphasis on marriage, resulted in some changes to the religious and social lives of Strasbourg's women. In terms of women's social and economic role, Strasbourg followed many of the same patterns as Lyndal Roper observed in Augsburg. In Strasbourg, as elsewhere, a renewed emphasis on morality on the part of the Strasbourg reformers led to a crackdown on prostitution. Like many other fifteenth-century German cities, Strasbourg had opened a municipal brothel in 1469 and ordered the city's prostitutes to either practice there or leave the city.<sup>799</sup> Both the brothel's workers and its clients were strictly regulated; the women could not be married, or virgins, or the daughters of Strasbourg citizens, and the men who paid for their services could not be priests, Jews, or married men.<sup>800</sup> In return for their submission to these regulations, however, the women received certain protections, including a guarantee of adequate nutrition, the ability to refuse work during menstruation or pregnancy, and the freedom to refuse clients.<sup>801</sup> The Strasbourg reformers, however, were not satisfied with the containment of vice and preferred to strive for its eradication. They petitioned

---

<sup>799</sup> Heitz-Muller, 59.

<sup>800</sup> Heitz-Muller, 59-60.

<sup>801</sup> Heitz-Muller, 59-60.

the city council multiple times, from the mid-1520s onward, to take decisive action against adultery, prostitution, and all manner of vice. The Strasbourg city council, ever more concerned with preserving the peace than enforcing moral and ideological purity, did not respond as decisively as the preachers wished, but, by the mid-sixteenth century, the reformers' efforts resulted in the closure of Strasbourg's municipal brothels.<sup>802</sup>

The decline of women's economic prospects in the sixteenth century, however, was not limited to women whose careers were considered morally suspect. As Merry Wiesner demonstrated in her monograph on *Working Women in Renaissance Germany*, early modern women found themselves relegated to a smaller range of occupations than their late medieval counterparts and commanded lower wages and less respect for the work they did do.<sup>803</sup> The reasons for this were complex and varied—they included the professionalization and increased regulation of many forms of work and increased concern with public morality—but part of the change can be attributed to urban reformers in Strasbourg and elsewhere who, often allied with the cities' guilds, emphasized the distinct roles of men and women and sought to convince as many women as possible to marry, submit to the authority of a male head of the household, and raise a brood of godly children.<sup>804</sup>

The wives of master craftsmen still had opportunities to participate actively in the family business, although these opportunities diminished over the course of the sixteenth century as journeymen organized to demand more opportunities for themselves.<sup>805</sup> One such master's wife had a direct impact on the Josts' visionary careers. Margarethe Prüss was the daughter of a

---

<sup>802</sup> Heitz-Muller, 65.

<sup>803</sup> Merry Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 195.

<sup>804</sup> Wiesner, 192.

<sup>805</sup> Wiesner, 193.

master printer in Strasbourg and, as such, although barred from becoming a master printer herself, could pass on the title to her husband or male descendants.<sup>806</sup> She married her first husband, Reinhardt Beck, in 1511, and he joined the family printing business. By 1519, Reinhardt and Margarethe had become some of the first printers in Strasbourg to produce and circulate Luther's work.<sup>807</sup> In 1524, two years after Reinhard's death, she married Johannes Schwann, and their press began to publish authors who were viewed with suspicion by Catholics and evangelicals alike, including Andreas Karlstadt and Clemens Ziegler.<sup>808</sup> Schwann, however, died suddenly two years into their marriage and, in 1527, Margarethe remarried a third and final time to the printer Balthasar Beck. Balthasar and Margarethe continued the tradition of publishing the works of controversial figures, including Melchior Hoffman. In 1530, the Beck-Prüss family press produced the first edition of Ursula's visions, though they probably interacted only with Melchior Hoffman rather than with the Josts directly.<sup>809</sup> Balthasar and Margarethe faced repeated political and financial consequences for their association with religious nonconformists, but they nevertheless maintained their ties with a great variety of sixteenth-century marginal religious figures; one of them, the Spiritualist Sebastian Franck, even became their son-in-law.<sup>810</sup>

Another major change for women in early modern Strasbourg was the Protestant reformers' attempts to close Strasbourg's convents in an attempt to eliminate the primary official religious role available to women in medieval Catholicism. Before the 1520s, approximately two

---

<sup>806</sup> Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, "Margarethe Prüss of Strasbourg" in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*, edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 282.

<sup>807</sup> Nafziger-Leis, 264.

<sup>808</sup> Nafziger-Leis, 266.

<sup>809</sup> When the Strasbourg Rat questioned Beck in 1530, he claimed not to know the identity of the then-anonymous *Gottesliebhaber* responsible for the visions. See Krebs and Rott, *Elsass I*, 262.

<sup>810</sup> Nafziger-Leis, 268.

hundred nuns lived in Strasbourg's seven convents.<sup>811</sup> As was the case in other Protestant cities in the Holy Roman Empire, the reformers and the city magistrates joined forces in an attempt to close the convents and convince the women living there to seek marriage instead of a vowed celibate life. Three of Strasbourg's convents, however—the Dominican convents of Saints Margaret and Agnes, Saint Mary Magdalene, and Saint Nicholas-in-Undis—resisted repeated attempts at dissolution. In order to ensure their continued existence, the nuns compromised with the Protestant magistracy; they agreed to wear secular garb and took on a useful civic role as educators for Strasbourg's young girls.<sup>812</sup> However, they also fought against the city council's dictates. They emphatically rejected the replacement of their confessors with Protestant pastors, and continued to take new novices despite orders to the contrary.<sup>813</sup> Ultimately, all three convents remained open long enough to witness the reintroduction of Catholic worship following the Augsburg Interim, and two of them even survived until the French Revolution, longer than many of Strasbourg's Protestant congregations.<sup>814</sup>

The Strasbourg reformers may have sought to eliminate convents as an option for women, but they also introduced a new ecclesiastical role: that of the pastor's wife, who kept her husband's household and served as a model of female piety for the women of the congregation. Martin Bucer arrived in Strasbourg already married to Elisabeth Silbereisen, but the other prominent reformers married Strasbourg women: Kaspar Hedio married Margarethe Drenss on 23 April 1524, over the strenuous objections of her brother Augustin, and Wolfgang Capito

---

<sup>811</sup> Amy Leonard, *Nails in the Wall: Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 6.

<sup>812</sup> Leonard, 57.

<sup>813</sup> Leonard, 79.

<sup>814</sup> Leonard, 155-156.

married Agnes Roettel, the daughter of a patrician, on 1 August 1524.<sup>815</sup> The most prominent of the first generation of pastors' wives in Strasbourg, however, was unquestionably Katharina Schutz Zell. Katharina made her first foray into the public sphere with her pamphlet in defense of clerical marriage in general and her husband in particular, and she continued to take on an active and visible role in Strasbourg's Protestant community throughout her husband's life and ministry.<sup>816</sup> She published pastoral pamphlets and hymnbooks and organized welfare initiatives within the city. Katharina Schutz Zell conceived of her role as that of a "Church Mother," an endeavor in which she was supported by her husband, who referred to her as his assistant minister.<sup>817</sup> She also offered public exhortations at several funerals, most notably her husband's and the funerals of Schwenckfelder women whom the city preachers had denied a Christian burial service.<sup>818</sup> Her sense of responsibility for her husband's congregation can be seen most clearly in her willingness to openly challenge Zell's successor Ludwig Rabus in 1557, after he left Strasbourg for a post in Ulm.<sup>819</sup>

The changes the Protestant Reformation wrought for ordinary women, who were neither nuns nor pastor's wives, were less marked. Unlike the few sixteenth-century Calvinist churches that elected both male and female deacons, Strasbourg's evangelical church did not formally recognize deacons at all, though pious women of means were expected to engage in charitable

---

<sup>815</sup> Thomas A. Brady, Jr., "You Hate Us Priests: Anticlericalism, Communalism, and the Control of Women at Strasbourg in the Age of the Reformation" in *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by Peter Dykema and Heiko Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 194; Heitz-Muller, 155.

<sup>816</sup> For an English translation of this pamphlet, see Elsie Anne McKee (ed.), *Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 62-81. The pamphlet probably did not circulate widely, as it was confiscated by the Strasbourg city council very shortly after its publication.

<sup>817</sup> Elsie Anne McKee, "Katharina Schutz Zell" in *The Reformation Theologians*, edited by Carter Lindberg (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 225; McKee, *Church Mother*, 221.

<sup>818</sup> McKee, *Life and Thought*, 128; 223.

<sup>819</sup> McKee, *Life and Thought*, 183-188.



work.<sup>820</sup> The Reformation did result in greater availability of education for women and girls in Strasbourg, although the city's poorest families were likely still unable to avail themselves of these opportunities. The reformers stressed the importance of religious instruction for all, and basic literacy allowed the populace to read the Bible, which was financially accessible to most families already in the early years of the Reformation.<sup>821</sup> By 1535, 126 girls attended two different schools for girls in Strasbourg: a significant number in comparison to girls in other sixteenth-century cities in the Holy Roman Empire, though considerably smaller than the 524 boys who also attended school.<sup>822</sup>

Ursula was less affected by these changes than many other Strasbourg women. As a woman of small financial means, whose husband did not belong to a guild, professionalization did not significantly affect her job prospects or earning potential. She did not receive an education, and it is unlikely that any of her daughters were among the 126 girls enrolled in Strasbourg schools in 1525. Moreover, her suspicion of Catholics and magisterial reformers alike almost certainly extended to nuns and reformers' wives. Nevertheless, as a resident of Strasbourg, Ursula was surrounded by women on all sides of the religious debates of the early Reformation, from Katharina Schutz Zell to the Dominican nuns, who were not content to stay on the sidelines but rather took visible public actions in support of their chosen faith. Their example may well have motivated Ursula, consciously or unconsciously, as she waded into these debates herself with her visions.

---

<sup>820</sup> Heitz-Muller, 77.

<sup>821</sup> Heitz-Muller, 26. The New Testament in 1522 was about the same price as two rabbits.

<sup>822</sup> Heitz-Muller, 40; 49. On one congregation with female deacons, see Jesse Spohnholz, "Instability and Insecurity: Dutch Women Refugees in Germany and England, 1550-1600" in *Exile and Religious Identity, 1500-1800*, edited by Gary K. Waite and Jesse Spohnholz (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 114.

## Women in Melchiorite Anabaptism

Scholars of early modern Anabaptism have long acknowledged the expanded role of women in Melchiorite congregations. In his seminal textbook on *Anabaptist History and Theology*, Arnold Snyder noted that “nowhere in the Anabaptist movement did women achieve and maintain as lofty a pastoral and leadership role as in the Strasbourg Melchiorite community.”<sup>823</sup> Sigrun Haude, in her 1998 essay “Anabaptist Women—Radical Women” echoed the point and argued that “the greatest freedom enjoyed by women can be found in those Anabaptist groups that emphasized visions, prophecies, and the Spirit.”<sup>824</sup> In Melchiorite circles, ongoing divine Revelation played an important role—Melchior Hoffman even considered the prophecies of Lienhard and Ursula Jost “worth as much as Jeremiah or Isaiah” and therefore coequal with Scripture.<sup>825</sup> Since Hoffman and his followers believed that God still spoke, frequently and specifically, prophets were a crucial part of Melchiorite congregations. Hoffman envisioned a fourfold hierarchy within congregations: first the apostles—a role held only by men, and pre-eminently by Hoffman himself—then the prophets—a role that could be filled by anyone, regardless of gender—followed by the pastors, who watched over individual congregations, and finally the regular members.<sup>826</sup>

Hoffman defended the existence and authority of female prophets at length in his 1532 foreword to the second edition of Ursula Jost’s visions.<sup>827</sup> He began, as many of his

---

<sup>823</sup> C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: Revised Student Edition* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 1997), 321.

<sup>824</sup> Haude, “Anabaptist Women,” 318-319.

<sup>825</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. A6v.

<sup>826</sup> C. Arnold Snyder, “The North German/Dutch Anabaptist Context” in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 248.

<sup>827</sup> Ursula herself did not defend her right to speak at any point in her visions, nor does she appear to have treated her gender as an obstacle to be addressed. She appears to have taken her right and responsibility to speak for granted.

contemporaries did whenever they wished to justify outspoken religious women, by invoking Joel 2:28/Acts 2:17: “In the last days I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.”<sup>828</sup> Hoffman was firmly convinced, as were many other sixteenth-century Christians, that the Last Days were indeed at hand, and that this Scripture was therefore more relevant than ever. Female prophets, however, were not a phenomenon limited to the last days, and Hoffman’s foreword went on to make an exhaustive list of women in the Old and New Testaments who had exhibited signs of the gift of prophecy. “Some are bewildered and angry that God works and lays out His plans through such a poor and simple little woman,” he remarked. “This is nothing new, however, but an old story, for from the beginning of the world God has shown visions to womanish people in all sorts of ways.”<sup>829</sup> There was Eve, the very first woman. There was Sarah, to whom God Himself appeared in bodily form and spoke with her. As he spoke to Sarah, he also spoke to her maidservant Hagar and her daughter-in-law Rebekah. The book of Exodus told the story of the prophetess Myriam, Judges featured Samson’s mother, and first Samuel told the story of Hannah, who prayed so passionately that Eli the high priest believed her to be drunk. Hoffman concluded his survey of women prophets in the Old Testament with brief retellings of the stories of Judith, Deborah, Jael, Esther, and the mother of the Maccabees.<sup>830</sup>

The New Testament, in turn, featured several more prominent women. There was, of course, Jesus’ mother Mary, and there was her cousin Elizabeth, who recognized Jesus while He was still in the womb. There was the prophetess Anna, who recognized Him at the Temple, and Mary Magdalene, who proclaimed His resurrection to the apostles, not to mention the daughters

---

<sup>828</sup> Joel 2:28 NRSV; Acts 2:17 NRSV.

<sup>829</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4r.

<sup>830</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fols. F4r-F4v.

of Philip and the Samaritan woman. Hoffman also mustered the Pauline epistles in support of his argument. Had Paul not said in Galatians that there was no male or female in Christ? Moreover, he took for granted in 1 Corinthians that women would prophesy, and merely advised them to do so with decorum.<sup>831</sup> In light of the multiplicity of Scriptural examples, Hoffman felt confident in his decision to recognize women as well as men as prophets, who had much to offer their contemporaries, though when he addressed women as teachers rather than prophets he added the caveat that they could do so if no enlightened men were present.<sup>832</sup> According to a 1537 document authored by the *Wiedertäuferherren*, a committee of Strasbourg magistrates responsible for Anabaptist affairs, Melchiorites in Strasbourg recognized at least eighteen prophets and, while Lienhard Jost was considered pre-eminent among them, seven of the prophets listed were women: Ursula Jost, Barbara Rebstock, Agnes, Margret, Elsa, Apollonia, and the unnamed wife of a shoemaker named Heinrich.<sup>833</sup> The list, given its hostile authorship, may not be entirely reflective of the views of the Strasbourg Melchiorites; in particular, it lists both Jan Matthys and Johann Batenburg, whose connections to Hoffman and Melchiorites in Strasbourg were tenuous at best. Nevertheless, the list's approximation of gender parity speaks to the importance accorded to women prophets in Melchiorite circles.

Of the female prophets recognized by the Strasbourg Melchiorites, two emerged as the most prominent: Ursula Jost and Barbara Rebstock. In his *Confession*, the former Anabaptist leader Obbe Phillips described their influence in Melchiorite circles; they “dealt with many remarkable visions...and could predict what deception would arise...and all this through visions, images, and allegories.”<sup>834</sup> Ursula, moreover, had the opportunity to teach and prophesy to

---

<sup>831</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4v.

<sup>832</sup> Hoffman, foreword to Jost, *Wore Prophettin*, fol. F4v.

<sup>833</sup> Lienhard et al, *Elsass III*, 115.

<sup>834</sup> Phillips, “A Confession,” 211; Cramer and Pijper, *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica VII*, 125.

Melchiorites far from Strasbourg through the publication and distribution of her writings, which, as Cornelis Poldermann's 1533 testimony to the Strasbourg Rat makes clear, had a broad geographical reach in the Netherlands. Hoffman considered her prophecies equivalent to Scripture and cited them as he would Scripture in support of his Christology.<sup>835</sup>

Since Barbara Rebstock's visions, unlike Ursula's, were not published in comprehensive editions, considerably fewer of them have survived. When the Strasbourg city council questioned her in 1534, she mentioned recurring visions of cataclysmic weather involving large amounts of snow and rain.<sup>836</sup> Indeed, cataclysm and impending judgment appear to have been prominent themes in her visions—a 1537 collection of several visions by Strasbourg Melchiorites included Rebstock's prophecy that, if Strasbourg did not better itself, it would be reduced once again to a village.<sup>837</sup> The fullest account of visions possibly by Rebstock occurs in Obbe Phillips' *Confession*, in which he described a few visions by either Barbara Rebstock or Ursula Jost: a vision of a swan swimming in a river, which was interpreted to legitimize Melchior Hoffman's identification with Elijah, one of the two witnesses of Revelation, and a vision a youth serving a chalice to an assembly of Melchiorites, which was interpreted as evidence that Cornelis Poldermann was Enoch, the second witness of Revelation.<sup>838</sup> However, there are inconsistencies in Phillips' account that cast some doubt on this attribution. He also attributed another vision to the same prophetess, a vision of Melchior Hoffman's severed head on the Strasbourg wall, when in fact this was one of Lienhard Jost's visions from the 1532 Deventer edition of Lienhard and Ursula's prophecies.<sup>839</sup>

---

<sup>835</sup> Hoffman, "Waren Hochprachtlichen Eynigen Magestadt Gottes," 230; 244.

<sup>836</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 304.

<sup>837</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 111.

<sup>838</sup> Phillips, "A Confession," 212; Cramer and Pijper, *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica VII*, 126.

<sup>839</sup> Phillips, "A Confession," 212; Cramer and Pijper, *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica VII*, 126.

From the time she and her husband Hans, a weaver, arrived in Strasbourg from Esslingen (sometime in or before 1533), however, Rebstock seems to have played a key role not only as a visionary but as an important voice in matters of congregational oversight.<sup>840</sup> In 1533, when the disgraced Anabaptist Claus Frey left his wife and declared Elisabeth Pfersfelder to be his true spiritual spouse, Rebstock (along with Melchior Hoffman and Veltin Dufft, another Melchiorite leader) chastised him and condemned his infidelity and bigamy.<sup>841</sup> In June 1533, while discussing possible sanctions against the recently imprisoned Hoffman and his followers, the Strasbourg city council noted that Rebstock led an Anabaptist meeting in the city, and, as Lois Barrett notes in her chapter on the Strasbourg prophetesses in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*, Barbara was even called an “elder in Israel.”<sup>842</sup> Moreover, her reputation spread beyond Strasbourg itself and drew Anabaptists from elsewhere to the city. When Strasbourg’s *Wiedertäuferherren* questioned and ultimately expelled the Flemish Anabaptist Franz von Hazebrouck in April 1534, he revealed that, while in Strasbourg, he had stayed in Rebstock’s home. He had come to the city in the first place because rumours of her prophecies and her ability to work miracles had reached his home in the Low Countries.<sup>843</sup>

The clearest example of Rebstock’s influence in Strasbourg Melchiorite circles, however, was her participation in a 1538 dispute with the Dutch Melchiorite David Joris, who hoped to unite the Melchiorites across German and Dutch-speaking lands under his leadership. He met with a group of Melchiorite leaders in Strasbourg, including Peter Tasch, Johann Eisenburg, and the prophets Lienhard Jost and Barbara Rebstock. For three days, Joris debated the Strasbourg

---

<sup>840</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass IV*, 420.

<sup>841</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 13.

<sup>842</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 110; Lois Y. Barrett, “Ursula Jost and Barbara Rebstock of Strasbourg,” in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*, edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 282.

<sup>843</sup> Krebs and Rott, *Elsass II*, 300.

Melchiorites and attempted to convince them to accept his spiritual authority. His efforts, however, proved fruitless, in part due to the opposition of the prophetess Barbara Rebstock. In the midst of Joris' debate with Tasch and Eisenburg, she asked to speak, adding that her "spirit [impelled] her." She then uttered the following words of caution: "I think that there are some here who desire to pluck the fruits of the tree before they are ripe. Therefore the Lord warns us that no one should speak further, for they will account for it."<sup>844</sup> She also reproached Joris for his spiritual presumption in assuming himself above the Strasbourg Melchiorites. "We have been in the fear of the Lord for over ten years," she added, "do you believe that we are godless?"<sup>845</sup> After his attempt to persuade the Strasbourg Melchiorites to accept his authority failed, Joris produced a manuscript account of the debate and, in his foreword, complained that he had entered the debate at a disadvantage because of the hostility Rebstock bore towards him, since the Strasbourg Melchiorites "[heard] and [believed] her as they [did] God."<sup>846</sup>

However, while recognition of their prophetic gifts gave both Ursula Jost and Barbara Rebstock considerably more religious influence and authority than they would otherwise have had, their power in Melchiorite circles still had its limits. Any recognition Jost and Rebstock received as prophetesses was ultimately dependent on the authority of male apostles, who reserved for themselves the right to judge who had truly heard from God, and what those divine messages actually meant. In return for this recognition, Hoffman and other male Melchiorite leaders used these women prophets and their visions to bolster their own authority. In his afterword to the 1530 edition of Ursula's visions, Hoffman explicitly stated that Ursula did not

---

<sup>844</sup> Joris, "Strasbourg Disputation," 198; Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 179.

<sup>845</sup> Joris, 198; Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 180.

<sup>846</sup> Joris, 185; Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 163.

have the capacity to interpret her own visions and, in his 1532 Christological apologia, he took up that task himself in service of his own theological agenda.<sup>847</sup>

Even Barbara Rebstock, who appears to have taken a more active role in congregational leadership than Ursula, was not entirely exempt from this patriarchal dynamic. It is no coincidence that the best-remembered of Barbara's visions are the two visions that were interpreted to cement Melchior Hoffman and Cornelis Poldermann's identities as the two witnesses of Revelation. Moreover, as effectively as Rebstock confronted David Joris in the 1538 Strasbourg disputation, she prefaced her remarks by asking the Strasbourg Melchiorite leaders Peter Tasch and Johann Eisenburg for permission to speak, something none of the other interlocutors on either side felt compelled to do.<sup>848</sup> The role of prophetess certainly enabled Jost, Rebstock, and other Melchiorite women to cross some boundaries, but they still faced many of the same barriers that women faced in Anabaptist circles and in other sixteenth-century religious traditions.

### **The Josts and Social Class**

The Josts' writings contain no explicit reflections on gender roles or the ways in which gender shaped their own experiences, but they focus considerably more on their shared identity as poor and oppressed members of society. They were far from the only ones to question the existing social hierarchy—the Peasants' War reached Alsace in the spring of 1525, in the middle of an intense period of visionary activity for Ursula, and capitalized on existing discontent with the existing social hierarchy. From the beginning of their prophetic careers, the Josts'

---

<sup>847</sup> Hoffman, afterword to Jost, *Prophetische Gesicht*, fol. C7v.

<sup>848</sup> Joris, 198; Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 179.



dissatisfaction with the oppression of the poor by the wealthy was evident. In the very first chapter of his prophecies, Lienhard heard a voice calling out to God:

Oh God, You created us and set us above all creatures, and You placed us on this earth in your goodness. But hear us true—we do not have the use of all the earth, and we must labour and serve on all these good lands, which You as a good, kind-hearted Father gave to us, and we earn our daily bread with difficulty. But see, O Lord, they have built great vaults and storehouses, they oppress us and give us hardships and crush us utterly with great force. Therefore, o Lord, have mercy, have mercy on us! Free us from their lashes! For you see how they boast as though You were not God, and they say “come here to us and gather all the musicians, let us revel and rejoice, for our coffers are full, and we have all manner of servants and workers, who must richly provision us, and more than we can eat.” O Lord, have pity and be merciful to us!<sup>849</sup>

Lienhard then heard God respond: “Go forward, I am with you, and you will receive great power. For I will break their vaults and frustrate their plans.”<sup>850</sup>

This lament for the plight of the common people and God’s promise to upset the social order and frustrate the plans of the rich set the tone for the rest of Lienhard’s prophecies. Again and again, he lamented not only how the people had been spiritually misled, but also how they had been left to languish in physical need while the wealthy grew ever wealthier.<sup>851</sup> Even when he ran through the streets of Strasbourg naked—the most infamous episode of his prophetic career—he shouted condemnations of the wealthy, who would lose their lordly clothing.<sup>852</sup> As for Ursula, her visions focused particularly on ecclesiastical oppressors of the common people, as in her ninth vision, in which churchmen tied up the common people with ropes and dragged them over rocks, and her sixteenth vision, in which the common people worked hard to till the earth while ecclesiastical officials simply watched, benefitting from their labour without lifting a

---

<sup>849</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. B1r-B1v.

<sup>850</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B1v.

<sup>851</sup> See, inter alia, Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fols. C4r-C4v; D1r; D3r-D3v.

<sup>852</sup> Jost, *Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey*, fol. B3r.

finger.<sup>853</sup> Ursula's visions held out no great hope for the redemption of any rich and powerful men, but Lienhard remained by times optimistic that the Strasbourg magistrates and reformers were not too far gone to repent, take up the banner of godly righteousness, and begin to act justly and teach rightly. Lienhard was also far more conscious than Ursula of the drawbacks of one particular aspect of his lower social status—his illiteracy. He was unable to commit his message to writing without assistance, and, especially at the beginning of his prophetic career he mistrusted scribes' ability to capture the full meaning of his message. As Jonathan Green has demonstrated, however, Lienhard became more comfortable with the written word over the course of his incarceration and began to actively seek out scribes in order to communicate the message he believed God had already written on his heart.<sup>854</sup> By the time he took part in the Melchiorite leaders' debate with David Joris and 1528, Lienhard appeared to have even acquired some rudimentary literacy himself, at least enough to sign his name.<sup>855</sup>

## Conclusion

In many ways, Lienhard and Ursula Jost complicate gendered histories of late medieval and early modern religion. Both Josts showed traits commonly associated with women mystics of the later Middle Ages and benefitted from the societal conditions that led to a marked increase in women's mysticism. Their marriage, which appears to have been for all intents and purposes a spiritual partnership of equals, reinforces the fact that the lived realities of early marriage did not always conform to laws or theological treatises. In the midst of the turmoil of the Reformation in Strasbourg, Ursula joined the ranks of women from all sides of the conflict—Catholic,

---

<sup>853</sup> Jost, *Wore Prophetin*, fols. G2v-G3v.

<sup>854</sup> Green, "Lost Book of the Strasbourg Prophets," 327.

<sup>855</sup> Lienhard et al., *Elsass III*, 227.

Protestant, Melchiorites—who publicly and confidently took part in the debates raging around them. Unlike her Strasbourg contemporary Katharina Schutz Zell, however, Ursula does not seem to have felt compelled to defend her right to participate in these debates as a woman. Instead, she identified much more closely with her social stratum than her gender, and focused throughout her visions on God’s divine preference for the poor and common folk, a theme that likewise ran through Lienhard’s prophecies, which pronounced judgment on the worst offenders and called other powerful men to take up the cause of justice for the common people.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Lienhard and Ursula were deeply shaped by their hometown of Strasbourg. Even before they began their prophetic careers, the proliferation of vernacular preaching, public rituals, and religious art provided them with opportunities for some informal catechesis despite their illiteracy. Once they did begin to prophesy publicly, the relative leniency of Strasbourg's magistrates meant that, while Lienhard experienced a momentary loss of liberty, the risk to their lives was far less than it might have been in many other, more repressive regions of the Holy Roman empire, and they had reason to believe that they might be heard. Ursula's visions often reflected local anxieties, especially at the height of the Peasants' War, and Lienhard's apocalyptic hopes centered Strasbourg's bishop and magistrates as prospective bearers of the "banner of godly righteousness," who, if they obeyed God's summons, would set in motion the renewal of the earth. If Ursula struggled with whether her gender prevented her from speaking for God, she left no evidence of this in her account of her visions, but the involvement of prominent and vocal women on all sides of the debate over the Reformation in Strasbourg may have reassured her on the matter.

Most significantly, however, Strasbourg's status as a magnet for sixteenth-century dissidents and sectarians provided the opportunity for the Josts to encounter Melchior Hoffman, without whom they would almost certainly have died unremembered not only outside Strasbourg, but even by many of their fellow citizens. As large as Strasbourg loomed in their visions and prophecies, the surviving records show that Strasbourg's magistrates and reformers took surprisingly little notice of them, preoccupied as they were by, on the one hand, the Holy Roman Emperor and other supporters of Catholicism, and, on the other hand, more prominent

dissidents who arrived in the city, such as Hans Denck, Caspar Schwenckfeld, and Melchior Hoffman. It was through their association with the latter that the Josts entered the historical record. His publication and distribution of their visions and prophecies, and his insistence that they spoke for God as clearly and accurately as the prophets of the Old Testament forced Strasbourg's religious and political authorities to pay attention to the Josts and refute their claims. Even this refutation, however, was often brief and dismissive—Martin Bucer dedicated hours at the Strasbourg Synod of 1533 and a lengthy tract to refuting Hoffman's theological claims, but spared only a few sentences in the latter to address the Josts and their visions.

While the Josts enjoyed great influence in Melchiorite circles, their influence outside those circles should not be overstated. They lived in an age when the upheaval of the Reformations and the still new technology of printing allowed for an unprecedented number of people to express and disseminate their opinions on religious matter—they were two voices among many. For all the many religious writings that appeared in the first half of sixteenth century, however, many more Reformation-era Christians formulated opinions about God and about the events unfolding around them that never entered the historical record. The fact that the voices of Lienhard and Ursula—poor and illiterate townsfolk, the very sort of people whose lives left few traces—have been preserved is remarkable. As unusual as the Josts were with respect to their claims to prophetic authority, they were ordinary people in many ways, and they provide a window into the thought of members of the lower classes in the Reformation era.

The Josts' visions and prophecies demonstrate just how deeply many of the sixteenth-century religious debates penetrated society. Though they drew only indirectly from the biblical text, since they could not read it for themselves, they nevertheless thought deeply about God's nature and will for humanity and the events unfolding around them. Their visions and prophecies

reflect common critiques of the religious ceremonies and hierarchies of early sixteenth-century Europe, and they demonstrate the ways in which those critiques were often both driven by apocalyptic anxiety and suffused with apocalyptic hope for divine transformation. Nor were they content to hold these views privately. Instead, they insisted on publicly joining a conversation that had become far too unwieldy for the reformers who had begun it to control. Their insistence, and Hoffman's assistance, prevented them and their visions from fading into ephemerality and, whether or not they truly spoke for God, afforded them the chance to speak for themselves, even centuries later.

## Bibliography

### Archival Primary Sources

Series 1 AST (Archives de Saint Thomas). *Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg*.

### Sixteenth-Century Printed Primary Sources

Capito, Wolfgang. *An den Hochwirdigen Fürsten unnd Herren Wilhelmen Bischoffen zu Straßburg und Landtgrauen zu Elsas Entschuldigung D. Wolfgangs Fa Capito*. Augsburg: Silvan Otmar, 1524. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Capito, Wolfgang. *In Hoseam Prophetam V. F. Capitonis Commentarius*. Strasbourg: John Hervagius, 1528. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Hoffman, Melchior and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt. *Dialogus und grüntliche Berichtung gehaltener Disputation im Land zu Holstein underm Künig von Denmarck vom hochwirdigen Sacrament oder Nachtmal des Herren*. Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1529. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Hoffman, Melchior. *Auslegung der Heimlichen Offenbarung Joannis des Heyligen Apostels unnd Evangelisten*. Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1530. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Jost, Lienhard. *Ein Worhafftige Hohe und Feste Prophecey des Linhart Josten van Stroßburg*. Edited by Melchior Hoffman. Deventer: Albert Paffraet, 1532. Held at the Austrian National Library.

Jost, Ursula. *Eyn Wore Prophetin zu disser Letzsten Zeitt*. Edited by Melchior Hoffman. Deventer: Albert Paffraet, 1532. Held at the Austrian National Library.

Jost, Ursula. *Prophetische Gesicht unnd Offenbarung der Götlichen Würckung zu diser Letsten Zeit*. Edited by Melchior Hoffman. Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1530. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Luther, Martin. *Resolutiones Disputationum de Indulgentiarum Virtute*. Wittenberg: Johann Rhau-Grunenberg, 1518. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Luther, Martin. *Wider die Mordischen und Reubischen Rotten der Bawren*. Wittenberg: Weißenburger, 1525. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Philips, Obbe. *Bekentnisse Obbe Philipsz*. Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1584. Held at the Ghent University Library.

Von Büllheym, Steffan. *Ein Brüderliche Warnung an Meyster Mathis Pharherren zu Sant Lorentzen im Münster zu Straßburg*. Strasbourg: Johann Knobloch, 1524. Held at the

Bavarian State Library.

Zell, Mathis. *Christeliche Verantwortung M. Matthes Zell von Kerserßberg Pfarrherrs und Predigers im Münster zu Straßburg*. Strasbourg: Wolfgang Köpfel, 1523. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

Zell, Mathis. *Frag unnd Antwort uff die Artikel des Christlichen Glaubens*. Strasbourg: Balthasar Beck, 1527. Held at the Bavarian State Library.

### Later Reprints of Primary Sources

Aquinas, Thomas. "Summa Theologica: Question 92. The Production of the Woman." *New Advent*. Accessed 20 March 2015. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1092.htm>.

Baylor, Michael G. (Ed.) *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War: A Brief History with Documents*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.

Calvin, John. "Commentary on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon: 1 Timothy 2:11-15." *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*. Accessed 11 January 2015. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom43.iii.iv.iv.html>.

Chrysostom, John. "Homilies on Timothy." *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*. Accessed 12 May 2015. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.v.iii.x.html>.

Cramer, Samuel and Fredrick Pijper (Eds.) *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica VII: Zestiende-Eeuwsche Schrijvers over de Geschiedenis der Oudste Doopsgezinden Hier te Lande*. The Hague: Nijhoof, 1910.

Friedrich, Reinhold et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band V (September 1530-Mai 1531)*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Friedrich, Reinhold et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band VI (Mai-Oktober 1531)*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Friedrich, Reinhold et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band IX (September 1532-Juni 1533)*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Geiler von Kaysersberg, Johann. *Sämtliche Werke: Erster Teil: Die Deutschen Schriften*. Edited by Gerhard Bauer. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989.

Hamm, Berndt et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band VII (Oktober 1531-März 1532)*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Hamm, Berndt et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band VII (Juli 1533-Dezember 1533)*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.



- Hegel, Karl (Ed.) *Die Chroniken der Oberrheinischen Städte*. 2 vols. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1870-71.
- Hillerbrand, Hans J. *The Annotated Luther, Volume 5: Christian Life in the World*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017.
- Hoffman, Melchior. “Van der Waren Hochprachtlichen Eynigen Magestadt Gottes und vann der Worhaftigen Menschwerdung des Ewigen Worttzs und des Aller Hochsten, ein Kurtze Zeucknus und Anweissung Allen Liebhabern der Ewigen Worheit. (1532)” In Voolstra, S. *Het Woord is Flees Geworden: De Melchioritisch-Menniste Incarnatieleer*, pp. 229-245. Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1982.
- Karant-Nunn, Susan C. and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Eds.) *Martin Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Krebs, Manfred and Hans Georg Rott (Eds.) *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer. Vol. 7. Elsass I. Teil: Stadt Straßburg 1522-1532*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1959.
- Krebs, Manfred and Hans Georg Rott (Eds.) *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer. Vol. 8. Elsass II. Teil: Stadt Straßburg 1533-1535*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1960.
- Krieger, Christian and Jean Rott (Eds.) *Correspondance de Martin Bucer: Tome III (1527-1529)*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Lenker, John (Ed.) *Luther on the Creation: A Critical and Devotional Commentary on Genesis*. Translated by Henry Cole. Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands, 1904.
- Lienhard, Marc, Stephen F. Nelson, and Hans Georg Rott (Eds.) *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer. Vol. 15. Elsass III. Teil: Stadt Straßburg 1536-1542*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1986.
- Lienhard, Marc, Stephen F. Nelson, and Hans Georg Rott (Eds.) *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer. Vol. 16. Elsass IV. Teil: Stadt Straßburg 1543-1552*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1988.
- McKee, Elsie Anne (Ed.) *Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- McKee, Elsie Anne (Ed.) *Katharina Schutz Zell: Volume Two, The Writings: A Critical Edition*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Papal Encyclicals Online. “Council of Vienne 1311-1312 AD.” *Papalencyclicals.net*. <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum15.htm>. Accessed 15 June 2018.
- Papal Encyclicals Online. “Fifth Lateran Council 1512-17 AD.” *Papalencyclicals.net*. <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum18.htm>. Accessed 14 February 2018.

- Papal Encyclicals Online. "Fourth Lateran Council: 1215." *Papalencyclicals.net*.  
<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm>. Accessed 25 June 2018.
- Philips, Obbe. "A Confession." In *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*. Edited by George Huntston Williams and Angel M. Mergal. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957.
- Rasmussen, Ann Marie and Sarah Westphal-Wihl (Eds.) *Ladies, Whores, and Holy Women: A Sourcebook in Courtly, Religious, and Urban Cultures in Late Medieval Germany*. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010.
- Rott, Jean (Ed.) *Correspondance de Martin Bucer: Tome II (1524-1526)*. Leiden: Brill, 1989.
- Rummel, Erika (Ed.) *The Correspondence of Wolfgang Capito Volume 2: 1524-1531*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Simon, Wolfgang et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer Briefwechsel/Correspondance: Band VIII (April 1532-August 1532)*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Simons, Menno. "The Faith of the Sinful Woman." Accessed 11 January 2015.  
<http://www.mennosimons.net/ft035-sinfulwoman.html>.
- Stupperich, Robert et al. (Eds.) *Martin Butzer's Deutsche Schriften Band 1: Frühschriften 1520-1524*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1960.
- Stupperich, Robert et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer's Deutsche Schriften Band 2: Schriften der Jahre 1524-1528*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1962.
- Stupperich, Robert et al. (Eds.) *Martin Bucer's Deutsche Schriften Band 5: Straßburg und Münster in Kampfum den Rechten Glauben, 1532-1534*. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1978.
- Waite, Gary (Ed.) *The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris*. Waterloo: Herald Press, 1994.
- Yoder, John Howard (Ed.) *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973.

## Secondary Sources

- "1340 à 1371 : Construction de la Chapelle Sainte-Catherine et de la Tour Nord." *Fondation de l'Oeuvre de Notre Dame*.  
 Accessed 15 June 2018. <http://www.oeuvre-notre-dame.org/cathedrale-de-strasbourg/histoire-cathedrale/grandes-etapes/1340-1360-construction-chapelle-sainte-catherine>.
- Abray, Lorna Jane. *The People's Reformation: Magistrates, Clergy, and Commons in Strasbourg, 1500-1598*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

- Adam, Johann. *Evangelische Kirchengeschichte der Stadt Strassburg bis zur Französischen Revolution*. Strasbourg: J. H. Ed. Heitz.
- Arthur, Anthony. *The Tailor-King: The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 1999.
- Atwood, Craig. *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.
- Backus, Irena. *Reformation Readings of the Apocalypse: Geneva, Zurich, and Wittenberg*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Baker, J. Wayne. "Church, State, and Dissent: The Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531-1536." *Church History* 57:2 (June 1988): 135-152
- de Bakker, Willem et al. *Bernhard Rothmann and the Reformation in Münster, 1530-1535*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2009.
- Bárány, Attila. "Hausbergen, Battle of" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Medieval Warfare and Military Technology*, Volume 1, edited by Clifford J. Rogers, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 246-247.
- Barnes, Robin Bruce. *Astrology and Reformation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Barnes, Rpbm Bruce. *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Barrett, Lois. "Wreath of Glory: Ursula's Prophetic Visions in the Context of Reformation and Revolt in Southwestern Germany, 1524-1530." PhD diss.: The Union Institute, 1992.
- Bartlett, Anne Clark et al. (Eds.) *Vox Mystica: Essays for Valerie M. Lagorio*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995.
- Bejczy, István Pieter. *Erasmus and the Middle Ages: The Historical Consciousness of a Christian Humanist*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Bérenger, Jean. *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1273-1700*. New York: Longman, 1994.
- Beyer, Victor. *La Sculpture Strasbourgeoise au Quatorzième Siècle*. Strasbourg: Compagnie des Arts Photomécaniques, 1955.
- Bischoff, Georges. *La Guerre des Paysans: l'Alsace et la Révolution du Bundschuh, 1493-1525*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2010.
- Blickle, Peter. "Das göttliche Recht der Bauern und die göttliche Gerechtigkeit der

- Reformatoren,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 68:2 (1986): 351-370.
- Blickle, Peter. *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective*. Trans. Thomas A. Brady, Jr. and H. C. Erik Middlefort. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.
- Blouw, Paul Valkema. *Dutch Typography in the Sixteenth Century: The Collected Works of Paul Valkema Blouw*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Bornert, Rene. *La Réforme Protestante Du Culte a Strasbourg Au Xviè Siècle (1523-1598): Approche Sociologique Et Interprétation Théologique*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
- Bowie, Fiona (Ed.) *Beguine Spirituality: An Anthology*. London: SPCK, 1989.
- Brady, Thomas A. *Ruling Class, Regime and Reformation at Strasbourg, 1520-1555*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
- Brinkman, Bodo and Berthold Hinz. *Hexenlust und Sündenfall: Die Seltsamen Phantasien des Hans Baldung Grien*. Petersberg: Imhof, 2007.
- Burnett, Amy Nelson. *The Yoke of Christ: Martin Bucer and Christian Discipline*. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994.
- Cameron, Euan. *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.
- Chabrowe, Barbara. “Iconography of the Strasbourg Cathedral Choir Screen.” *Gesta* 6 (January 1967): 35-40.
- Chazelle, Celia M. “Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I’s Letters to Serenus of Marseilles.” *Word & Image* 6:2 (1990): 138-153.
- Chrisman, Miriam Usher. *Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480-1599*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Chrisman, Miriam Usher. *Strasbourg and the Reform; A Study in the Process of Change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Chrisman, Miriam Usher. “Women and the Reformation in Strasbourg, 1490-1530.” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 63 (1972): 143-168.
- Classen, Albrecht. “Life Writing as a Slave in Turkish Hands: Georgius of Hungary’s Reflections about his Existence in the Turkish World.” *Neohelicon* 39 (2012): 55-72.
- Coakley, John W. *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and their Male Collaborators*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

- Cohn, Norman. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. Third edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970
- Collins, John J. "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre." *Semeia* 14 (1979): 1-20.
- Conrad, Franziska. *Reformation in der Bäuerlichen Gesellschaft: zur Rezeption Reformatorischer Theologie im Elsass*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1984.
- Cook, Michael A. (Ed.) *The History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Cowie, Murray A. and Marian L. Cowie. "Geiler von Kaysersberg and Abuses in Fifteenth-Century Strasbourg." *Studies in Philology* 58: 3 (July 1961): 483-495.
- Cunningham, Andrew and Ole Peter Grell. *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine, and Death in Reformation Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Darlage, Adam. "Double Honor: Elite Hutterite Women in the Sixteenth Century." *Church History* 79:4 (2010): 753-782.
- Deppermann, Klaus. *Melchior Hoffman: Soziale Unruhen und Apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979.
- Derksen, John David. *From Radicals to Survivors: Strasbourg's Religious Nonconformists over Two Generations, 1525-1570*. Goy-Houten, Netherlands: Hes & de Graaf Pub., 2002.
- Derksen, John. "Voice, Leadership, and Influence Among Spiritualist and Anabaptist Women in Strasbourg, 1525-1570." *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 88:4 (October 2014): 423-450.
- Douglass, E. Jane Dempsey. *Justification in Late Medieval Preaching: A Study of John Geiler of Kaisersberg*. Leiden: Brill, 1989.
- Dykema, Peter, and Heiko Oberman (Eds.) *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 1993.
- Elliott, Dyan. *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Falkner, Silke R. "'Having It off' with Fish, Camels, and Lads: Sodomitic Pleasures in German-Language Turcica." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13:4 (Oct. 2004): 401-427.
- Fischer, Karl. *Das Verhältnis Zweier Lateinischer Texte Geilers von Kaisersberg zu ihren Deutschen Bearbeitungen: der "Navicula fatuorum" zu Paulis "Narrenschiff" und des "Peregrinus" zu Otthers "Christenlich bilgerschafft" nebst einer Würdigung der*

- Lateinischen Texte Geilers*. Metz: W. Leininger, 1908.
- Fischer-Galati, Stephen A. *Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism, 1521-1555*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Francisco, Adam S. "Crusade, Pacifism, and Just War: Responses to Ottoman Imperialism in the Early Reformation era." *The Muslim World* 107:4 (2017): 621-631.
- Francisco, Adam S. *Martin Luther and Islam: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Polemics and Apologetics*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- Gardner, Julian. "A Minor Episode of Public Disorder in Assisi: Francis renounces his Inheritance." *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 68:2 (2005): 275-285.
- Gerbert, Camill. *Geschichte der Strassburger Sectenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation, 1524-1534*. Strasbourg: Heitz & Mündel, 1889.
- Grafton, David D. "Martin Luther's Sources on the Turk and Islam in the Midst of the Fear of Ottoman Imperialism." *The Muslim World* 107:4 (2017): 665-683.
- Grandidier, Philippe André. *Essais Topographiques et Historiques sur l'Église Cathédrale de Strasbourg*. Strasbourg: Levrault, 1782.
- Green, Jonathan. "The Lost Book of the Strasbourg Prophets: Orality, Literacy, and Enactment in Lienhard Jost's Visions." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 46:2 (Summer 2015): 313-329.
- Greschat, Martin. *Martin Bucer: Ein Reformator und Seine Zeit*. Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1990.
- Haag, Eugène and Émile. *La France Protestante: Tome I*. Paris: Joël Chérbuliez, 1846.
- Haber, F.C. "The Cathedral Clock and the Cosmological Clock Metaphor." In *The Study of Time II*. Edited by J.T. Fraser and N. Lawrence. Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 1975. Pp. 399-416.
- Haliczer, Stephen. *Between Exaltation and Infamy: Female Mystics in the Golden Age of Spain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Haude, Sigrun. "Anabaptist Women—Radical Women?" in Max Reinhart, ed., *Infinite Boundaries: Order, Disorder, and Reorder in Early Modern German Culture*. Kirksville, 1998, 313-28.
- Haude, Sigrun. *In the Shadow of Savage Wolves: Anabaptist Münster and the German CReformation During the 1530's*. Boston: Humanities Press, 2000.

- Hatt, Jacques. *Liste des Membres du Grand Sénat de Strasbourg, des Stettmeistres, des Ammeistres, des Conseils des XXI, XII, et des XV: Du XIIIe Siècle à 1789*. Strasbourg: Mairie de la Ville de Strasbourg, 1963.
- Heitz-Muller, Anne-Marie. *Femmes et Réformation à Strasbourg (1521-1549)*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009.
- Hulshof, Abraham. *Geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinden te Strasbourg van 1525 tot 1555*. Amsterdam: J. Clausen, 1905.
- Ibsen, Kristine. *Women's Autobiography in Colonial Spanish America*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999.
- Jones, Rufus M. *Studies in Mystical Religion*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004.
- Kawerau, Peter. *Melchior Hoffman als Religiöser Denker*. Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1954.
- Kienzie, Beverly Mayne and Pamela J. Walker (Eds.) *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Kittelson, James. *Wolfgang Capito: From Humanist to Reformer*. Leiden: Brill, 1975.
- Klaassen, Walter. *Living at the End of the Ages: Apocalyptic Expectation in the Radical Reformation*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992.
- Krahn, George Henry. "An Analysis of the Conflict Between the Clergy of the Reformed Church and the Leaders of the Anabaptist Movement in Strasbourg, 1524-1534." PhD diss.: University of Washington, 1969.
- Kraus, Franz Xaver. *Kunst und Alterthum in Elsass-Lothringen: Beschreibende Statistik*. Strasbourg: Friedrich Bull, 1876.
- Kraus, Henry. *Gold Was the Mortar: The Economics of Cathedral Building*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1979.
- Kreider, Robert. "The Anabaptists and the Civil Authorities of Strasbourg, 1525–1555." *Church History* 24:2 (1955): 99-118.
- Krohn, Barthold Nicolaus. *Geschichte der Fanatischen und Enthusiastischen Wiedertäufer vornehmlich in Niederdeutschland: Melchior Hofmann und die Secte der Hofmannianer*. Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1758.
- Lamberigts, Mathijs and A. A. den Hollander (Eds.) *Lay Bibles in Europe 1450-1800*. Leuven: Peeters Publishing, 2006.
- Leendertz, W.I. *Melchior Hofmann*. Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1883.

- Leonard, Amy. *Nails in the Wall: Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Lerner, Robert E. "The Image of Mixed Liquids in Late Medieval Mystical Thought." *Church History* 40:4 (December 1971): 397-411.
- Lienhard, Marc and Jakob Viller. *Strassburg und die Reformation*. Kehl: Morstadt, 1982.
- Lindberg, Carter (Ed.) *The Reformation Theologians*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.
- Livet, Georges (Ed.) *Strasbourg au Coeur Religieux du XVIe Siècle: Hommage à Lucien Febvre: Actes du Colloque International de Strasbourg, 25-29 Mai 1975*. Strasbourg: Librairie Istra, 1977.
- de Lubac, Henri. *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture, Volume 2*. Translated by E.M. Macierowski. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Lundström, Kerstin. *Polemik in den Schriften Melchior Hoffmans: Inszenierungen Rhetorischer Streitkultur in der Reformationszeit*. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2015.
- Manger, Klaus. *Literarisches Leben in Straßburg während der Prädikatur Johann Geilers von Kaysersberg (1478-1510)*. Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 1983.
- McAvoy, Liz Herbert. *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*. Rochester, New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2008.
- McGinn, Bernard. "The Changing Shape of Late Medieval Mysticism." *Church History* 65:2 (June 1996): 197-219.
- McGinn, Bernard. *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200-1350*. New York: Crossroad, 1998.
- McGinn, Bernard. *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- McKee, Elsie Anne. *Katharina Schutz Zell: Volume One, The Life and Thought of a Sixteenth-Century Reformer*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Moss, Christina. "An Examination of the Visions of Ursula Jost in the Context of Early Anabaptism and Late Medieval Christianity." MA thesis, University of Waterloo, 2013.
- Moss, Christina. "De Visionen van Ursula Jost: Een Herwaardering." Translated by Jelle Bosma. *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 42 (2016): 33-48.
- Moss, Christina. "Marriage as Spiritual Partnership in Sixteenth-Century Strasbourg: The Case



- of Lienhard and Ursula Jost.” In *Newberry Essays in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 9. Edited by Karen Christianson and Andrew K. Epps. Chicago: The Newberry Library, 2015. Pp. 83-93.
- Moss, Christina. ““They Hear and Believe [Her] As They Do God”: Barbara Rebstock and the Strasbourg Melchiorites.” *Anabaptist Historians: Bringing the Anabaptist Past Into a Digital Century*. Published 7 April 2017. <http://anabaptisthistorians.org/2017/04/07/they-hear-and-believe-her-as-they-do-god-barbara-rebstock-and-the-strasbourg-melchiorites/>.
- Müller, Gerhard. *Franz Lambert von Avignon und die Reformation in Hessen*. Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1958.
- Niccoli, Ottavia. *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*. Trans. Lydia G. Cochrane. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Nicolai, Bernd. “Orders in Stone: Social Reality and Artistic Approach; the Case of the Strasbourg South Portal.” *Gesta* 41:1 (December 2002): 111-128.
- Ozment, Steven. *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Petersen, Rodney L. *Preaching in the Last Days: The Theme of the Two Witnesses in the 16th and 17th Centuries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Pfleger, Luzian. *Kirchengeschichte der Stadt Strassburg im Mittelalter, nach den Quellen Dargestellt*. Colmar: Alsatia Verlag, 1941.
- Pfleger, Luzian. “Les Hérétiques Strasbourgeois aux XIII et XIVe Siècles.” *Cahier d'Études Cathares* 29:79 (1978): 57-60.
- Pollet, J. V. *Martin Bucer: Études sur les Relations de Bucer avec les Pays-Bas, l'Électorat de Cologne, et l'Allemagne du Nord, avec de Nombreux Textes Inédits, Tome I*. Leiden: Brill, 1985.
- Raphaël, F. "Juifs et Sorcières dans l'Alsace Médiévale," *Revue des Sciences Sociales. de la France de l'Est* 3 (1974): 69-106.
- Rapp, Francis. “La Cathédrale de Strasbourg: Sanctuaire de Pèlerinage?” *Bulletin de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 24 (2000): 131-138.
- Rapp, Francis et al. *Le Diocèse de Strasbourg*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1982.
- Rapp, Francis. *Réformes et Réformation à Strasbourg: Église et Société dans le Diocèse de Strasbourg, 1450-1525*. Paris: Ophrys 1974.
- Reinhardt, Hans. *La Cathédrale de Strasbourg*. Grenoble: Arthaud, 1972.

- Riedl, Matthias and Tilo Schabert (Eds.) *Propheten und Prophezeiungen: Prophets and Prophecies*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003.
- Roest, Bert. *Order and Disorder: The Poor Clares between Foundation and Reform*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Röhrich, Timotheus Wilhelm. *Geschichte der Reformation in Elsass, und Besonders in Strasburg*. 2 vols. Strasbourg: Friedrich Karl Heiß, 1830-1832.
- Röhrich, Timotheus Wilhelm. "Zur Geschichte der Strassburgischen Wiedertäufer in den Jahren 1527 bis 1543: aus den Vergichtbüchern und andern archivalischen Quellen." *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie* 30 (1860): 3-121.
- Roper, Lyndal. *The Holy Household: Women, Religion, and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Rowe, Nina. *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City: Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Sæbø, Magne (Ed.) *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation: Volume II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.
- Schmidt, Charles. *Histoire du Chapitre de St. Thomas de Strasbourg Pendant le Moyen Âge, Suivie d'un Recueil de Chartes*. Strasbourg: C.F. Schmidt, 1860.
- Scott, Tom. *Town, Country, and Regions in Reformation Germany*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Selderhuis, Herman J. *Marriage and Divorce in the Thought of Martin Bucer*. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 1999.
- Slomp, Jan. "Calvin and the Turks." *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 19:1 (2009): 50-65.
- Snyder, Arnold. *Anabaptist History and Theology: Revised Student Edition*. Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1997.
- Snyder, C. Arnold and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Eds.) *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996.
- Stanford, Charlotte A. *Commemorating the Dead in Late Medieval Strasbourg: The Cathedral's Book of Donors and its Use (1320-1521)*. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Stanford, Charlotte A. "Donations from the Body for the Soul: Apparel, Devotion, and Status in Late Medieval Strasbourg." In *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*. Volume 6. Edited by Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010. Pp. 173-205.

- Stanford, Charlotte A. "From Bishop's Grave to Holy Grave in the Construction of Strasbourg Cathedral's St. Catherine's Chapel." *Gesta* 46:1 (December 2007): 59-80.
- Steinmetz, David C. *Reformers in the Wings: from Geiler von Kaysersberg to Theodore Beza*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Stjerna, Kirsi. *Women and the Reformation*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009.
- Timmerman, Daniël. *Heinrich Bullinger on Prophecy and the Prophetic Office, 1523–1538*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015.
- Treesh, Susan K. "Europe's Peasant Heretics: The Waldensians, 1375-1550." PhD diss., Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, 1988.
- Turck, Sandrine. *Les Dominicains à Strasbourg Entre Prêche, Prière et Mendicité (1224-1420)*. Strasbourg: Société Savante d'Alsace, 2002.
- Van den Bossche, Benoît. *La Cathédrale de Strasbourg: Sculpture des Portails Occidentaux*. Paris: Zodiacque, 2006.
- Van Engen, John. *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Vanja, Christina. "Madhouses, Children's Wards, and Clinics: The Development of Insane Asylums in Germany." In *Institutions of Confinement: Hospitals, Asylums, and Prisons in Western Europe and North America, 1500-1950*. Edited by Norbert Finzsch and Robert Jütte. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. 117-132.
- Vaucher, André. *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*. Edited by Daniel E. Bornstein. Translated by Margery J. Schneider. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993.
- Volfing, Annette. "Geiler von Kaysersberg and Late Medieval Contemplative Practice: Gerson, Bridal Mysticism, and the Force of the Imagination." *Oxford German Studies* 43:3 (September 2014): 229-245.
- Voltmer, Rita. "Klerikaler Antiklerikalismus? Die Kritik am geistlichen Stand bei Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510)." In *Kirchlicher und religiöser Alltag im Spätmittelalter*. Edited by Andreas Mayer (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2010), pp. 47-75.
- Voltmer, Rita. "Political Preaching and a Design of Urban Reform: Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg and Strasbourg." *Franciscan Studies* 71 (2013): 71-88.
- Voltmer, Rita. *Wie der Wächter auf dem Turm: ein Prediger und seine Stadt: Johannes Geiler*

- von Kaysersberg (1445-1510) und Strassburg. Trier: Porta Alba Verlag, 2005.
- Waite, Gary K. and Jesse Spohnholz. *Exile and Religious Identity, 1500-1800*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014.
- Walter, Joseph. "La Topographie de la Cathédrale au Moyen-Âge." *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 3 (1935): 37-108.
- Wandel, Lee Palmer. *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Wengert, Timothy J. (Ed.) *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004.
- Wiesner, Merry. *Working Women in Renaissance Germany*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986.
- Will, Robert. "La Plus Ancienne Description Monumentale de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg, Tirée de la Chronique de l'Humaniste Jérôme Gebwiler, Rédigée en 1521," *Bulletin de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 20 (1992): 71-81.
- Will, Robert. "Les Statues Équestres d'Empereurs et de Rois: Un Décor de Façade Insolite a la Cathédrale de Strasbourg." *Bulletin de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg* 21 (1994): 21-26.
- Williams, George Huntston. *The Radical Reformation*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962.
- Williams, George Huntston. *The Radical Reformation*. Third Edition. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth-Century Journal Publishers, 1992.
- Williamson, Arthur H. *Apocalypse Then: Prophecy and the Making of the Modern World*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008.
- Zambelli, Paola (Ed.) "*Astrologi Hallucinati*": *Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.
- Zur Linden, Friedrich Otto. *Melchior Hoffman, ein Prophet der Wiedertäufer*. Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1885.

**APPENDIX A: A TRANSLATION OF THE 1532 DEVENTER EDITION OF  
LIENHARD'S PROPHECIES AND URSULA'S VISIONS**

**A Truthful, Exalted, and Firm Prophecy by Lienhard Jost of Strasbourg, Who Was  
Pressed and Sent by God Through the Holy Spirit to Prophecy to the Leaders and Rulers  
of the City of Strasbourg, Yea the True New Jerusalem, the Bride and City of the Most  
High God, and the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Furthermore the Course of  
Future Events, and How Some Have Already Been Legitimized by their True Fulfillment,  
and All the Remaining Ones Are Recognized as True in True Power and Will Be Fulfilled**

A prophet is nowhere less recognized than at home and by his own. Matthew 13, Mark 6, Luke  
4, John 4.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Matthew 11, 13, Mark 4, 7, Luke 8, 14, Revelation 2, 3,  
13, Ezekiel 3.

1532

**Foreword**

From the foundation of the world (Genesis 3, 4), God's goodness and mercy has always  
allowed His will to be revealed to His people through His servants and holy prophets, yea to be  
pronounced in all earnestness. This He did from the first Adam onwards, to Noah (Genesis 6-9),  
and further to the exalted patriarch Abraham (Genesis 12, 17-19), and also further through all  
His servants, witnesses, and prophets, until our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For our Lord God  
does nothing unless He has first revealed the secret to His servants and prophets (Amos 3) and  
He has also earnestly commanded, as Isaiah says, "You shall ask me concerning future things,  
for I announce to you new things, and I will let you hear of them before they begin" (Isaiah 42)

and again “I proclaim from the beginning that which is to come, and from before that which has not yet happened,” (Isaiah 46) and again “I have long told you things, and allowed you to hear before they happened, in order that you might not speak thus: ‘My idol did it’” (Isaiah 48).

For it is not the will of the Most High God that His people should turn anywhere other than to Him alone: not to fortune tellers (Exodus 20, Isaiah 8) or to the Devil’s troublemakers, practitioners of black arts, or to the science of astronomy.<sup>856</sup> For at all times He has sufficiently revealed to His people what was to come in the Old Testament, in order that for all time what had been said and proclaimed by God truly had its fulfilment (Isaiah 28, Zechariah 1). And it entered into history with power, so that the glory due to God was not presented to any other (Jeremiah 9, 1 Corinthians 1). For He alone is the one who tells His people what is and what is to come (Isaiah 48). And throughout all time He remains the same one, who does and will open up all heavenly things (Daniel 2, Genesis 41, Ecclesiastes 24).

Further, in the New Testament, God showed His works to His loved ones in manifold ways and opened up all manner of things through a great abundance of prophets, and He set out the spirit of the New Testament down to the letter, the whole course of it, from the first coming of Christ to the Last Day, and He pictured and set forth the end of the world. Yes, and further the whole ministry of all the servants and apostles of the New Testament (Acts 2). And further still through His eternal Word He allowed the heavenly Revelation to be written by the apostle and evangelist Saint John to complete the New Testament (Revelation 1). Through it He showed all servants and messengers of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ what will happen in God’s church and in the whole world until the Last Day at the end of the world (Revelation 22).

---

<sup>856</sup> Hoffman appears to mean astrology, rather than astronomy.

And further still, in these last of times at the end of the world, God has awakened special holy prophets, so that those who love Him might abundantly understand and recognize His will. And these prophets will share anew the testimony of those who came before them, so that all God's warriors truly recognize all the better the lives of these prophets, and that the part of God's secrets that was shut to them becomes entirely opened up, yea without any break, error, or defect. For it is an old [pattern], that when God impels the work of His Spirit, the fruit of His Spirit will not fail to materialize: to awaken apostles, prophets, seers, and many more such, now as before will be mightily heard and seen. And through these further into all the world the will of God will be illuminated, understood, and remembered, and God the Lord all earnestly through such servants desires for, promotes, draws, and calls all to better themselves and to a holy repentant life (Matthew 24, Revelation 14). Thus God proves Himself through these aforementioned prophets, through whom He explains His most pleasing will and His holy work, yea He sets it forth very diligently and most earnestly.

And God works through this prophet Lienhard mostly in parables, and with pictures and shadows of the current state of things, and in these He displays very great secrets and spiritual power, how in these times the whole work of God will have its way through all of His servants and workers, and also the fulfilment of His entire work. And the whole kingdom of Satan—which ignominiously and unhelpfully does not wish for even a lace or button to be undone—will stand and send itself against this work. But in His time, with the help of true hearts, it will happen in the dust of the Earth that God will also create free cities, places, and spaces in order to fulfil the service of the Most High. And as for this work, just as the Revelation of John is taught, so shall these two books from the prophet and the prophetess run their course along with the Revelation and be opened up along with many and overflowing other prophecies.

It is further evident and clear as day that this prophet Lienhard Jost at this time is not received or welcomed by many of his own, and this because of his paltry and simple person. Thus it will be and has been from the beginning, that the world looks at the outside and at the type of person and always has seen these things, such that it is always wrong, but the Most High alone discerns and looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16, Luke 1, 1 Samuel 2). And He primarily uses the paltry and the simple to do His work, who appear to be nothing in the eyes of the world (Isaiah 29, 33, 1 Corinthians 1). [Some] are even thought to be possessed by the devil (John 8, Matthew 10). For why should those who feign holiness<sup>857</sup> believe that God should speak through such a poor little peasant, who can neither read nor write and is also just a poor day labourer and woodcutter, and has a house full of small children, when at the same time so many spiritual prelates live in Strasbourg, to whom, as the world understands it, such a holy ministry might have more easily fallen.

Furthermore each man should know that this prophet Lienhard Jost, due to his simplicity, calls the Holy Spirit a glory, or a light, yea also a grace, and a brilliance, and a wonder, and each man is warned from the beginning to guard himself from being upset or pushing against this. For by taking up and seeing the person's outward qualities so many hundreds of thousands of people are entangled, blinded, and confused, yes and also led away from the true kingdom and way of the Most High. For so it is these days that Luther and Zwingli jointly with their whole following, yea all of them together have no true faith or gospel. And from these two crowds no true gospel is preached, nor can they preach any true gospel. Instead they have become nothing but false witnesses, who battle and fight against the truth of the Most High, who have met with the most

---

<sup>857</sup> *die schein heylgen*



fearsome blindness, such that they have now become blind and leaders of the blind, and the ninth chapter of Romans will soon be clarified concerning them.<sup>858</sup>

For it is the highest mission of God through Jesus Christ (Matthew 18, Mark 16) that the true apostles and servants of the Lord should proclaim the true gospel to all people. This is the true gospel: that Jesus Christ died for the sin of the whole world, and with His blood paid for the whole fall of Adam's seed (John 1, 6, 1 John 2, Hebrews 2) as Saint Paul testifies to this, that Christ Jesus gave Himself for every man (1 Timothy 2) and it is God's desire that all men are healed, saved, and come to understand the truth, as it also says in 2 Peter 3, that God does not want anyone to be lost, but rather wants every man to better himself, and in 4 Esdras 8, that God did not wish for man to become nothing and perish. Thus also in Ezekiel 18 and 33 God does not want the death of the sinner, but for him to be converted, to better himself, and to live, and there is a true comfort from God that, as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15) and as through Adam the curse spread itself over all men, so through Christ did the blessing. Yes, such a gospel will and shall remain forever, which true eternal gospel the Lutherans and Zwinglians with false, lying witness stand against, and have stood against for such a long time, but in a short time their folly will be revealed before all the world.

Also, it has gone so far with the aforementioned false witnesses that they preach as though God were an abominable Satan, who according to them works and wills all manner of evil things, yea all abomination and unrighteousness, which work the Saviour Christ ascribes not to His Father but to the abominable Satan (John 8). As Saint Paul also says, Satan has his work in such things (Ephesians 2). And the greatest good is most abominably blasphemed by these blind leaders, such that I do not believe that since the time of the apostles there have arisen such

---

<sup>858</sup> This is a reference to Hoffman's commentary on Romans 9, also published in 1532.

abominable blasphemers of God as the Lutheran and Zwinglian host. Therefore each lover of God must keep watch well, lest it cost them body and soul for eternity.

And one can also easily mark that the Saviour Jesus Christ does not want to be found by these guardians (Song of Songs 5), for they are nothing more than guardians of darkness, who persecute, wound, and strike the Bride, who seeks and longs for her Bridegroom Jesus Christ. For by these false witnesses the sun lost its light (Joel 1, Acts 2, Matthew 27, Revelation 6). Yea, the moonlight of faith became nothing but blood, and the comfort of peace was twisted by them into a false comfort and an eternal lack of peace, and also through these false witnesses the plague[s] and wrath of God have been introduced over the entire world as they were in Egypt's land<sup>859</sup> (Exodus 10, Apocalypse 9, 16). Yea, the whole earth is covered in darkness and ruined with the most abominable blood and leaven. Therefore the time and the hour are here, and also near at hand, yea it must, shall, and will be that the work of the high prophet Elijah will have its beginning (Malachi 4, Zechariah 4, Revelation 11) and attain its breakthrough, in order that all things might be put right again and all broken things raised up and rebuilt.

And so also God will put forward His true Apostolic ministry through Jesus Christ and will take most of His servants from paltry folk (1 Corinthians 1, Isaiah 19, 33) and He will choose them for this reason: in order to scatter all who are haughty and puffed up in their hearts (1 Samuel 2, Luke 1) in order that the honour, praise, and worship due to Him not be given to anyone else or be abandoned (Revelation 3, Isaiah 48, Jeremiah 9, 1 Corinthians 1). Unlike the red and brown little tabernacles who boast of their words and tongues and great schools, He sends His own students, who can be taught by Him alone (John 6, Isaiah 54, Hebrews 8, Jeremiah 31, Apocalypse 21) and who also boast only in the Lord (Jeremiah 9, 1 Corinthians 1)

---

<sup>859</sup> lit. "over the Egypt's land of the whole world."

and give Him the worship, praise, and honour, for they are not and will not be such  
aforementioned thieves of God's honour and shall not and do not want to mete out fame and  
praise for themselves. The world is now full of such thieves of God's honour. Therefore let all  
who have eyes to see and ears to hear keep watch and listen, for God will shortly lay a  
foundation or cornerstone through his true servants, witnesses, and workers (Psalm 12, Isaiah 8,  
18, Romans 11, Psalm 118, Matthew 21, Mark 12, Luke 10.) And on this rock of God's Word all  
the wise men of the world will come to shame and folly, obstinate and blinded, yea they will  
begin to stumble against it and be angry, and they will break themselves on this rock.

Further each lover of God should know that this aforementioned Lienhard Jost has a very  
high prophetic strength and actions through the Holy Spirit are shown by 113 visions, which will follow after the prophet's words, and these  
prophecies belong only to the faithful (1 Corinthians 14), yea to the hungry souls (Matthew 5,  
Luke 1, Ecclesiastes 2, Psalm 19, 1 Samuel 2) who carry an earnest desire for God's great  
wisdom. There are also now many rebellious blasphemers of God, who make abominable fools  
of themselves and rage and rave when one tells them that God has now awakened His prophets.  
They let out a great howl and say "Oh, but we have Moses and the prophets. That is well  
sufficient for us, we need no more." I believe, however, that the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ  
demolished such men (Luke 1), who will be found to be vain, empty, lacking, and hungry, and  
this in a very short time. The Saviour Jesus Christ also speaks about such blind spirits through  
His Spirit (Revelation 3). "You do not know that you are miserable, wretched, naked, poor,  
blind, and pallid." For the Jews also had Moses and the prophets, even more so than we do, but  
they quickly murdered the prophets and the Son of God, yea even the limbs of the Lord Jesus  
Christ (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19) and most roughly withstood the Holy Ghost

(John 8, Acts 7, 13, Isaiah 63). For if writings and words and tongues have divine power and the Spirit were tied to these things, then the Jews, Greeks, and Latinists would be the best, most pious, and holiest in God's wisdom. But against this false belief the prophet and the great prophetess have a laid clear foundation, as everyone can read (4 Esdras 6, Luke 1, 2, 1 Samuel 2), all of which has been ordained for this time.

For so it is these days that the pigs have so gorged themselves on draff, chaff, dross, and leaven that they do not watch for wheat, yea and also trample all noble pearls underfoot. And they are also mightily angry with God that He does not let them be with the garbage that they ate, and the grace He might further share, they neither want nor need. But such Pharisaical behaviour will soon be overthrown by the hand of the wrath of God, and they will abundantly reach [the same fate] as the pigs of the Gerasene demoniac (Matthew 8, Mark 5, Luke 8). And it is also known that such aforementioned spirits have seen or known neither God nor the Saviour Jesus Christ, but rather they are naked, blind, and poor when it comes to all God's wisdom, even if they could speak in the tongues of angels (1 Corinthians 13).

Thus it must now be known that this aforementioned prophet Lienhard Jost is first of all sent from God to rulers of the city of Strasbourg, in order to proclaim and reveal to them the will of the Most High. God has looked at, chosen, and selected this city to be the true new Jerusalem (Revelation 12), out of which the true apostolic ministry will go out into all the world at this time (Revelation 14, Matthew 24). And this is also certain, that the wall of the city of Strasbourg will and shall surround the whole circle of the earth (Revelation 21). And this wall will be made up of 144,000 sealed apostles and servants of the Most High, who will all carry the testimony of Jesus Christ and will preserve the commandment of God unburdened (Revelation 12). They will also be a noble crown of joy for the city of Strasbourg, just as the Roman and Italian prophet who was

in the city of Strasbourg a few short years ago thoroughly indicated with sealed words and also clearly said.<sup>860</sup> And these words forever neither will nor can fail, but like the other prophecies will be mightily fulfilled.

Many lovers of God doubt this, that Strasbourg is the city of the High God, on account of the tyranny it has inflicted on God's children and holy ones, but heed my warning that no one should stumble or be angry about this. For it will soon be as it was for Jerusalem in the time of Christ and the apostles, that Caiaphas, Annas, Pilate, and King Herod will live in Jerusalem, and still the rose of the Lord amidst and underneath thistles and thorns will grow (Song of Songs 2). For around the garden of God the hedges of thorns must also be endured, and also the vessels of wrath (Romans 9). Yea also the vessels of unworthiness in the house of God, which are joined with God's servants and children partly as rods, torment, wood, and fire, through which God's holy ones are refined and tested, and become ever more and more purified (Ecclesiastes 2). And then even these tools of God will in the end attain their just reward, as those in Jerusalem did, for before God no person's outward appearance counts (Romans 2), but rather each man will inherit a just reward according to his works (Revelation 22).

It should also be known that this aforementioned apostolic ministry will not earlier flow and make its way out of the city of Strasbourg (Revelation 22, Matthew 24, Revelation 14). It must first be fulfilled that the Egyptian king Pharaoh, yea the great red dragon,<sup>861</sup> must take steps toward it (Ezekiel 29, Revelation 12) and make the city afraid. For so will the small child and the small host of true Apostles be born out of the aforementioned city of Strasbourg (Revelation 12) and will march out of there with power, and the child will shepherd all the nations with the rod of

---

<sup>860</sup> Hoffman likely refers here to the itinerant preacher Venturinus, who was in Strasbourg in 1530 (see Deppermann, 185).

<sup>861</sup> Hoffman refers here to the emperor.

iron (Revelation 3, 19, Psalm 2). And it will also not happen before the exodus from the land of Egypt and the kingdom of Satan has happened, for earlier the time will have been fulfilled that all Israelites have eaten the Passover lamb (Revelation 12, Exodus 12, Matthew 24), yea, and been strengthened and satisfied with it, and also sealed with its blood.

At the same time thus will the wrath of God come in through the King of the North (Daniel 11, Revelation 17, Exodus 12, Revelation 16, 18-19) and also through still others, who will cast down the firstborn of Pharaoh and Satan from his seat and will disturb Babylon, and further all firstborn throughout all of Egypt's land will encounter such wrath that in that same hour the journey of all the lovers of God will be prepared (Revelation 15), to journey out of Egypt through the Red Sea to the promised kingdom of God (Exodus 12, Revelation 15, 19), yes through the high covenant of God into the spiritual wilderness, under the banner of godly righteousness. And after this the dragon and Pharaoh shall and will also take up his reward in the Red Sea. Then will the Alleluia be sung with a joyful sound and rise up to God from the hearts of all who love Him.

Many of you now feel a great bewilderment, as it was proclaimed and revealed to you that the right and true ministry is not yet at hand, but you should recognize this order well. For just as the ministry before Pentecost and before the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, so is the ministry now being done through God's true servants. But as after Pentecost the apostles cut and bound the sheaves and closed the gathering and enacted the covenant, the ban, and the breaking of bread along with all of God's orders, and they gathered the wheat stalks out of the thistles and thorns in small bunches (Acts 1) and afterwards threw all the weeds into the darkness and into the fiery furnace, and they left the good fish in a barrel and threw out the bad ones.

Furthermore this is certain and fast, that in this time this will advance and will be mightily fulfilled, for it is so to this day that the whole Lutheran and Zwinglian host does not yet have a single sheaf of wheat, yea they have not sown so much that they could cut a single sheaf of true wheat. For the two hosts have no true wheat to sow, what then should they cut? Nor are they capable of the ministry of sowing, for God will send others who will carry out the same ministry shortly. For the whole sod and seed of the Lutherans is nothing more than sand, refuse, chaff, blood, leaven, and accursed human teaching.

The blind spirits cannot be considered otherwise, for they already have the right ministry, but it is so far from them as heaven from the earth, for there are many ministries in Jerusalem and in God's temple (3 Kings 6), as at first those who cut trees in the Lebanese forest and those who break stones and carry loads, those who prepare mortar and lime, and those who work with iron, and those who handle silver and gold and also precious stones, and carry out their ministry working with images, foliage, drawings, and silk, and also yet first in all other orders, yea in very many.

For first there are those who dig, cut up, plow, toss, and prepare the field, then are those who sow the true wheat of Jesus Christ, yea they proclaim that Christ Jesus, God's eternal Word, is redemption for all men, yea the salvation and reconciliation of all of them, and absolutely no one is left out. Then there are the harvesters, who cut (Revelation 14, Joel 3, Matthew 13) and bind the wheat (Psalm 126) and bring it into God's storehouses. And it must always be seen with tears that the messengers of peace cry bitterly, as is now at hand (Isaiah 33) and that even those who plow persecute and murder the true servants who sow. But soon with great joy the harvest will reach its conclusion and they will come rejoicing bringing in the sheaves.

What are the Lutherans and Zwinglians other than the uncircumcised Gentiles of Tyre and Sidon, who had to cut the wood in the forests of Lebanon (3 Kings 5, 3 Esdras 4, 5). And they are also the wild hornets who cleared the way to take up the promised land (Exodus 23, Wisdom 12, Deuteronomy 7). And, had they in this office truly stood in the fear of God, they might have been further ordained by God, but as they were not found faithful in small things, instead in these tasks a part of them became scoundrels. Who will now entrust them with a great task? Therefore they will shortly see their reward, and it has already in part come over them (Matthew 24, 25).

For it is at hand that all the mountains and hills will be brought low (Luke 3) all that is crooked will become smooth, yea every valley will be filled, and all flesh will see God's Saviour (Revelation 1). Then the poor will become rich, and the rich poor. Then the dead will become living, and the living dead. Then the blind will gain sight, and those with sight become blind. Then the hungry will become full, and those who are full become hungry and empty. (4 Esdras 6, 1 Samuel 2, Luke 1, Psalm 69, Matthew 5). And the lame will stand upright, and those who stand upright become lame, and the high brought low, and the lowly brought high, and the first last, and the last first. Therefore all who love God should purify themselves from all the abominations of the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Sodomites, so that they will be found wholly clean and pure stalks of wheat (2 Corinthians 6, Revelation 18, Jeremiah 51). Thus at harvest time they will faithfully be gathered by God's servants for the Lord in His storehouses (Matthew 13, Revelation 21).

Further every man should know that at this time I have not found any help to bring the interpretation of these two books into the light, and for three years I cried out, all pathetically, to so many all around, but most of them made a mockery of it. Well enough, I have done as much



as I could in my capacity, and the rest as God lends me mercy and aid in bringing the interpretation of the divine revelation with its figures into the day. For I also believe that they are not yet worthy of such nourishment until the cleansing is passed and they have the fear of God. What sunlight there will be for them!

I also, in accordance with the will of the blasphemers, allowed things to unfold so simply, for I also omitted [in earlier publications] what the prophet said, that when his daughter was 14 years old God would bring joy to His people and in the fullness of time<sup>862</sup> all people would see Him in glory. At the time the foolish engaged in a great outcry, shame, and blasphemy. Well enough, they allow time to pass, for I have trustworthy knowledge from the prophet and the prophetess that this same daughter Elizabeth now in the 32nd year will turn 14 years old on Saint Gall's day, as the Holy Spirit has testified over her. I do not believe that Spirit of God will prove itself untruthful because of the will of the blasphemers. I also know more than I wish to say at this time, and it is certain that God will so bring joy to His people that the blasphemers together with the world must stand in the highest affliction, those who laugh and mock beforehand and those who will laugh afterwards. Hopefully some will be the better people. I believe that the foolishness of these mockers will be rightly cut down. For I know, in God's mercy, that not one letter of the prophecies of this prophet and prophetess will fail. Our understanding may well be foolish, but the eternal wisdom of God is not. And to me these two books are worth as much as Jeremiah or Isaiah, yea as any prophet in the Old Testament, for they are books of the prophetic power of God, therefore they will soon have their fulfilment and be most dreadfully recognized. Yea even those who shamed and blasphemed the High and Holy Ghost, held by the wrath of God, will most earnestly [recognize them]. But that all of us who love God from our hearts will

---

<sup>862</sup> *die zeitt der ioren*

be found in alignment with God's will until the end, may God help us through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Eternal Redeemer and that of all the world. Amen.

## **The Prophet Lienhard Jost from Strasbourg**

### **The first chapter**

It came to pass, as one counts 1500 years after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the end of the 22nd year, on the Thursday before Christmas day, I, Lienhard Jost, was in the village of Hanau on the Rhine, which is a mile away from Strasbourg, in order to cut wood for a burger from that city, whose name is Pox Hans.

And on the same aforementioned Thursday, in bright daylight, as I was working at cutting wood, there was a great and terrible earthquake, as many from Strasbourg and its environs know. And that Thursday night I stayed in Hanau with my cousin Brother Klaus, and that same night, lying awake in bed, my heart weighed down, I thought of the aforementioned earthquake and said in my heart:

O Lord God and Father, give us the comprehension to know how we ought to behave, and what is in fact Your will. For You know what is broken in us, and what is sinful in me and against the Holy Christ and the other articles [of faith] as they are known today. My heart is pressed within me. Please, since You have always left knowledgeable servants and witnesses for the small household of Your chosen people, would You also give us all such a knowledge of Your secrets? For we are so worn out and afraid of the heavy judgment with which You have entrusted us, namely the great flood, which many men say will come over us. But You alone O Lord know how it is. Please do not will us to perish, dear Lord, from these and other perils.

And after my heart was filled with the love of God I fell asleep. Where my spirit led me in my sleep I do not know, but I heard a great cry, crying thus to God the Father:

Oh God, You created us and set us above all creatures, and You placed us on this earth in Your goodness. But hear us true—we do not have the use of all the earth, and we must labour and serve on all these good lands, which You as a good, kind-hearted Father gave to us, and we earn our daily bread with difficulty. But see, O Lord, they have built great vaults and storehouses, they oppress us and give us hardships and crush us utterly with great force. Therefore, o Lord, have mercy, have mercy on us! Free us from their lashes! For you see how they boast as though You were not God, and they say “come here to us and gather all the musicians, let us revel and rejoice, for our coffers are full, and we have all manner of servants and workers, who must richly provision us, and more than we can eat.” O Lord, have pity and be merciful to us!

After this I heard a reply with a very loud voice speaking thus: Go forward, I am with you, and you will receive great power. For I will break their vaults and frustrate their plans.

As soon as I heard this voice I awoke, and the glory of the Lord immediately surrounded me and overcame my heart and spoke to me, using these words: “Go to the leaders of your city, who are the leaders I have chosen and tell them to speak and proclaim the following to all the great cities: ‘we have taken much interest, and also many goods. Now you shall raise up the banner of godly righteousness and mercy, on which is inscribed the eternal Son, the Spirit with His righteous ones, and the Father of mercy. You shall place the banner well on the city’s right altar and send for your lord, that is the bishop, that he might behold the banner of godly righteousness.

He shall take the banner in his right hand and quickly ride to his own lands. He will show his flock godly righteousness that they might recognize him as a spiritual man. But if he will not

bear the banner of godly righteousness, his robe of splendour will be taken off of him, and he will never receive honour, neither before God nor before the world.

After such a revelation I still went out in the morning to my work, cutting wood until Christmas Eve. Then the glory of the Lord did not allow me to make merry in my heart, but rather urged me heavily to pass on the aforementioned command.

Then on Saint John's Day during the Christmas holy days I went to Master Philips the burgomeister of Strasbourg and showed him the aforementioned command of God. Then he said to me concerning it that all the rulers and lords would not suffer it that we should carry upright and lead around the banner of godly righteousness, and that he, Master Philips, had no command to inform me forcefully<sup>863</sup> and sent me to Conrad Thomsen the burgomeister. And when I came to this Master Thomsen, and fully showed him the command of God, then he sent me to the city scribe. But since I did not find in myself a further urging from God to go to the city scribe, then on All Children's Day I went again to Hanau.

### **The other chapter**

And as on Saint Thomas of Canterbury's Feast Day I travelled by myself over the water and began to cut wood, a great storm wind came that, it seemed to me, broke open the earth. Then in my astonishment I went from the wood to the water to see what had actually broken, but I saw nothing. Then I went back to the wood and began to cut wood. I had two axes and I struck soon and in a hurry, such that as I was cutting they broke and I could no longer cut. Then the wonder and the glory of God pressed on my heart and spoke thus: stop cutting wood. You must cut the shrine in which I locked away My chosen ones from this world. Then the truth will flow out over all people. And I was further pressed by the glory of the Lord speaking to me thus: in a

---

<sup>863</sup> *"kein beffelh hab/nach gwalt mir bescheid zu geben"*

hurry and soon this will be fulfilled [with regard to] my leaders of your city. And at this urging I sat in my little boat and travelled over the water, and when I had crossed over the glory of the Lord pressed on my heart and gave me knowledge that I should tie up the little boat well and high, for a great watery storm will come over us. Then I tied up my little boat. Then the glory of the Lord said to me another time that I should tie up the boat higher still. Then I tied up the boat in the highest spot on a hedgerow.

After this the glory of the Lord urged me mightily to walk to the city of Strasbourg, such that I could not stay anymore. The glory of the Lord also urged me to throw away a brand new pair of gloves, speaking to me thus: “throw the gloves away from yourself. You may not have them anymore. There will come one who needs them more than you.” Then I threw them down as I was almost halfway to Strasbourg.

And when I arrived at the city I was all wet from sweating, and I had to greet whoever encountered me on the way. And there came to me three people who were riding together and two of them thanked me, but the third did not want to thank me. And further came to me three lepers who thanked me. Then the glory of the Lord urged me to speak thus to them:

See dear brothers, this is the city from which the banner of all truth will go out, that is to say where you are coming from. This was proclaimed to me by God in the little village of Hanau.

After this I came home and asked my wife, did no one come and ask for me? And she told me no. Then I said to her, go out quickly and soon, so that my godfather the city councillor Herrto Ludwig comes to me. Then my wife left for the house of a neighbour, named Orthelss Jacob, whom she sent to the aforementioned city councillor. That hour the city councillor and the same Orthelss Jacob with him came to my home. I told them the story and expressed my wish to them that they help me so that this story might make its way to the lords of the city of the

Strasbourg and that I might proclaim this to them. In this one matter they had goodwill, and on the sixth day after the aforementioned Christmas Day the aforementioned city councilman came with me to the lords of the city of Strasbourg, in their building called the *Pfalz*.

I had wished to explain all of these dealings out loud very thoroughly word for word to the lords of the city of Strasbourg, but they did not wish to hear it from me out loud, but rather said that I should go to the city scribe and give my story to him and let it be written down. And while I would much rather have explained it to them out loud, for the reason that I would have liked to say it freely one word after the other as it was laid on my heart, to which passion writing brings a hindrance.<sup>864</sup> But afterwards with the aforementioned city councillor I went to the city scribe in his office, and gave him my story. That same hour I had so much grace in my thoughts and I said this to the city scribe: If you or milords of this city do not understand these dealings, send for me, and I will explain it well to them and to you. But until now no one has come to me to ask me about these dealings.

### **The third chapter**

After I had shown this, as mentioned above, to the lords and leaders of the city of Strasbourg and passed on the message, in the night the glory of the Lord surrounded me one more time and spoke to me forcefully in my heart: Well, up! You must go there stark naked and unclothed. The *Mord Glock* must be rung before it is day.<sup>865</sup>

That same hour I had to wake, and I could not stay according to my preference. And I said to my wife: Ursula, I must go out stark naked, as I was told. When I came out onto the

---

<sup>864</sup> "*welches am schreiben verhindrung unn entzueckung bringtt*"

<sup>865</sup> The *Mord Glock* was a silver bell used to warn the citizens of Strasbourg in times of crisis or sedition. See Grandidier, 242-243.

streets of Strasbourg in the open air, my arms immediately moved apart from each other and I went from there [so quickly] that I cannot know whether I remained on the ground or not.

That same hour my mouth opened and I had to speak and yell at the top of my voice: Murder upon murder! The child in its mother's womb must and shall be terrified before the word of the Lord comes to pass. Murder once again! If the rulers and lords only knew that their princely clothes will be removed from them before God and the world, that they might seek God again, they would all cry along with me: murder upon murder!

But after this the child in its mother's womb will rejoice again and there will be much peace for all who have been sad.

In this midst of this aforementioned crying out I was snatched in this state, naked, and captured by my neighbours and handed off to the aforementioned city councillor Herrto Ludwig, and he handed me over to the hospital the next morning and recommended me to its overseer.

#### **The fourth chapter**

But further on the first night that I was in the hospital the glory of the Lord came over me and urged me to cry out with great storminess: Strike dead, strike dead, across the width of the earth, all priests who have ruled contrary to God and His sheep out of a desire for silver and gold.

Well, up, dear brothers! We want to go to them! Take your swords, sticks, and clubs, we want to be up.

But when I wanted to send my sword to the military band, I stood there abandoned and had no sword.

Then it was said to me through the glory of the Lord, and I had to cry out thus: we must let them be awhile still.

This apparition occurred between the aforementioned Christmas Day and the eighth day following and stood thus.

Further on the eighth day, as I was lying in the hospital in the large room, the glory of the Lord awakened me again in the daylight early in the morning and cried out loudly from my heart, with such an outcry that the whole town could hear.

Dear Christians, God grant you all a blessed new year, a wonderful year, the likes of which has never happened from the beginning.

Dear Christians, throw away your stinking robes. The Lord will lead us to a new robe and will clothe us anew.

Dear lords of this city, open the shutters of your ears. The Holy Ghost will surround you so that you can recognize the righteousness of God your Father.

Give your servants brooms in their hands and tell them to sweep your city in all places and down below tell them to sweep it out all the way to the gates, everything that is dirty. When God your Lord will take your city home [let it be] naked and unclothed, so that He does not find us unclean, when He has chosen your city for Himself.<sup>866</sup>

They must brandish and go [out with] the banner of godly righteousness and salvation of all the world.

After such an outcry those who were in the room with me said: Aye, if God wants to give us new clothes, it's a good thing. For in part we have bad clothes on, and we want to take them off. That hour the glory of the Lord gave me this to answer them: It is not such a robe as you mean. It will be to an inner robe [of the heart] that the Lord will lead us.

---

<sup>866</sup> Lit. "he is naked and unclothed."



After this a sick priest, who lay beside me sick in the hospital, also spoke out: Oh dear brothers, you do not understand what he says, but I understand it, for it will happen, and it is written, that the word of the Lord will be break forth through those who have not reached maturity.

### **The fifth chapter**

After this I laid down again to rest. Then they began to ring [bells] in all the churches and cloisters, and this uproar and bell-ringing so hurt my ears that I did not know where I ought to stay.

But then the glory of the Lord moved my heart to speak: I will end the bell peals, which are rung to the detriment of my little sheep, so that my little sheep might have rest day and night.

Then after a short rest my heart began to shiver and become feverish and cried out: I have lost my Lord! They crucify Him in their idolatrous masses!

A little while after the church ceremonies had ended, my Lord came again to me and brought joy to my heart again. Then I began to be hungry and I took bread from my little basket that I still had from the day before. And when I wanted to eat, the first three mouthfuls turned to bitter gall in my mouth.

Then I took those three mouthfuls and I gave them to one of the city messengers by the name of Marczolff, who at that time lay sick in the hospital, and exhorted him to help me to ponder that these three mouthfuls of bread turned to gall in my mouth, until the Lord Jesus gave me to understand what it meant.

After this, as was the custom, they brought me soup, and as I wanted to eat it, it seemed to me as though it were also nothing but gall. Then the glory of the Lord gave me [this command] in my heart: throw the bowl onto the ground. For today all whom the lords meant to

coerce into their masses, have eaten bitter death. From now on and going forward He will no longer be strained and squeezed through their false writings, which are written against God. And then my heart rejoiced.

### **The sixth chapter**

After this—since they believed I was out of my wits, God alone knows how it was—they placed and led me to a further prison, that is the asylum.<sup>867</sup>

When I came before this prison, my heart began to speak and the glory of the Lord spoke through me: to the left of me there lies a man, who will say why I am here, and will betray me. As I came into the asylum and they all mocked me, I spoke to my neighbour Erasmus Lentz, who was then across from me in the asylum: give me your hand, and I will show you that these things are not from me but from God. And he still remembers and can speak of these things.

When everyone had gone from me a voice came to me and said: turn your bed around, and to the right side of your [place of] rest lies Adam, and to the left Cain, who was the first one who began to rule against God.

And when the voice[‘s message] was over, I heard a man lying on the right side of me in a bed, whom I did not know, and I still do not know who he was. This man began to cry out with a loud voice, and did it all day twice in the evening and in the morning, speaking thus: fire! Fire over my children! Help me to return to them! Lienhard of Strasbourg has forsaken wife and child for the sake of God’s will.

And when night fell and I had eaten supper and laid myself down to rest, the brilliance of the lord once again permeated and surrounded my heart, and my heart and my mouth began to speak loudly and I spoke thus: are you a mercy from God? What do you want to work through

---

<sup>867</sup> *“betzen heusslein”*

me, such a poor and despised creature? For I have been placed here so that no one can see or hear me, and I am utterly despised.

Then the wonder of the Lord said and spoke to me: many will hear you and yet not hear. Many will see you and yet not see. Many will hear you and yet not see. Many will see you and yet not hear. You have a daughter named Elizabeth. When she is fourteen years old the people will see Me in my brilliance and will recognise great wonders, and at the same time I will turn the sorrows of all people into joy. For when I awakened you at Hanau on the Rhine, in the twenty-second year, My heart had mercy on for the people of Israel.

But I have let out My breath over them, and have enlightened My little sheep. I have awed them in their work, and in their homes, and in the hedges, so that from now on they will speak divine truth in all their writings and will recognize Me, from the least to the greatest.<sup>868</sup>

### **The seventh chapter**

And the glory of the Lord spoke further to me: it should not surprise you that you have been placed in this despised place. First and foremost you have been placed in your heavenly Father's school. Now I will write a letter deep in your heart, and you must give testimony concerning all I have written.

I alone possess the small cities, but the prince of this world has taken for himself all My large cities. They have wiped out and darkened all My goodness, which I gave to my house, that is Israel. There the prince of the darkness stores the weapons of his haughtiness. He advised his own, such that they hung many signs on themselves. My little sheep are also marked off, and I know them in their hearts. But the prince of darkness has marked off his own outwardly, with

---

<sup>868</sup> C.f. Jeremiah 31:34. "No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more."

outward signs. But now I will send the prince of darkness, the devil, discord in his houses, and they must strike at each other until I destroy them.

The weapons that I hung in My houses have been damaged<sup>869</sup> by the false prophets, and have been damaged from the beginning, more than five thousand years. But now is the time to strike. Now many prophets will speak, and no one will overcome them.

The glory of the Lord spoke further to me: Rejoice, when you lie within My hands. From the beginning I have sent many prophets and have opened this shrine to them. They have spoken through me, and I through them. But they fought against and killed both my prophets and their words, and damaged this shrine much, much worse than before. I sent them My only begotten Son, and He opened this shrine, and brought My little sheep into godly truth and obedience. He made them one with Me. I sent my own Son into the world and the world did not recognize Him. He came to His own, and they did not receive Him. He came into the world, and found there lying nearly dead the human race. He gave them the power to become children of God, and rescued them from eternal death, and He brought and carried them back into this shrine and into the houses of God the Father.<sup>870</sup>

But soon after His death, Resurrection, and Ascension, in the 99th year, they began again to hurt Him, and this has lasted for well [nigh on] 1400 [years]. At this time, all together, I came again into my rest.

## **The eighth chapter**

---

<sup>869</sup> *verwelbt*

<sup>870</sup> C.f. John 1:10-13 "He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God."

The next evening the glory of the Lord surrounded me again and spoke in my heart, which words I had to speak with my mouth at the top of my voice thus: As Noah stepped out of the Ark that he built with his children, the glory of the Lord came over him and surrounded him and gave him a command to raise up the other Ark, and that in brotherly love. And He ordered him to learn from both the ants and the bees, how they carry [their loads] and, when one of them becomes tired, he stays in their home and eats and rests. So also should you teach your children, so that they might find in this Ark God's Word. For since your birth is surrounded with many tribulations, therefore, if one is born tired and sick, he shall live and rest [thanks to] the others.

And when thus in brotherly love you bring your children into the Ark, you will then become tame little bees of God your Father, and tame little sheep. And since the Ark, this house, was so endowed with gifts by God, you shall live by and with them and nourish yourself. You shall say this to the pious Christians, the trusty rulers. Thus did Noah teach his children and led them into the Ark. He lifted his hand over them and taught them, and after him [so did] all the prophets. And after awhile the rulers began to circumcise the bees and little sheep of God. There have been some prophets in this Ark who have not wished to place themselves in the hands of the rulers. They wished to be free and unhindered and not undergo this circumcision, and they fell and gave themselves up to the haughtiness of the spirit of darkness.

In their pride they sheared their heads and learned by the wild hornets to be so tightly bound that no one could overcome them. They went out into the world and on the way began to build divisions. And when God's sheep went out to seek their nourishment, they stung them with their horned beaks and cried out to them: you are the way to salvation. We want to build arks here and we want to do much good for you in them. We cry out day and night to God. We do

much good for you. These [people] persuaded God's little sheep with their mumbling,<sup>871</sup> that they brought their goods to them and gave them up and with them built the temple of repulsiveness, that is the houses that are built up against the Saviour Jesus Christ, wherein the sheep carried [so much of] their soul's nourishment, since they persuaded my sheep. They do this in service of God, but they have done it nothing but abundantly against God, in pride, in avarice and all manner of evil. They mumbled on so much day and night and they persuaded the leaders and lords, such that they robbed the Ark of God, which was built up by the true Noah, that is the house of Israel. They pruned too much the tame little bees and sheep of God.

Further so the brilliance of God spoke loudly through me: they took this understanding and gave it to the wild hornets that they might build up their houses all the better and persuaded the people that they were the true houses of Israel and that they did much good in them. They hung up their shields and their power on these houses. Then they first came in greater pride and greed, since they had received power from the lords and leaders. Then God's little sheep thought that their mumbling was correct and was the right way.

The brilliance of God and the glory of the Lord spoke further: they moved from the woods into the cities and built for the house of the Lord. For the little sheep wanted to go down the right way and to the right well. And they walked over and stung them with their horns and beaks and said "you have the truth in your houses, and salvation" (which went up against God the Lord.) And with this, early and late, they robbed and impoverished the house of Israel. Now our house stands all naked and bare, and they have been mixed up together, the house of God and the house of contradiction, and their coffers are now full.

---

<sup>871</sup> *brummen*

Further spoke the brilliance and the glory of the Lord: the little sheep are lost and are tired, and they will stand up in all Israel and will cry out: We seek Christ, and we do not know where He is. Lord, we are lost, and we do not know where we are. We are very despised on this earth. Show us the way of Your truth and godly righteousness.

### **The ninth chapter**

Another time, while I was still in the asylum, the grace of the lord came over me and said to me in my heart that I should say this very loudly, speaking thus:

I will destroy the swarm of hornets and their nests and thrust them into the forests and the wilderness, and I will hang my shield and my weapons again in the houses of Israel and will destroy, uproot, and break up their vault.

At once the glory of the Lord came over me and spoke to me in my heart and overpowered it, but I cast my eyes down and said: Ah Lord, must the heart of your servant be pressed? Then I saw come over my heart a vision, in appearance like a one-year-old child, and I saw how it beat its chest with its hand, and this strike three times. But when I finally wanted to look at it properly, it was taken from me and I saw the figure no more. Then I heard an outcry three times in a loud voice: great miracle, great miracle, a great miracle must be accomplished on the earth. And again: great miracle, great miracle, I will bring a great miracle with me, since God the Father wants to have it [thus]. A third time: great miracle, great miracle, I will accomplish a great miracle with my little sheep, I will test them on the earth, and I will bring them into a new state [of being].

Then as I pondered what this miracle might be and my mind wandered here and there in contemplation, I heard cry out to me another voice before the door of the asylum, speaking thus: Lienhard, forgive me my sin! And I replied: Why are you tempting me? Shall I forgive your sin?

I myself a poor sinner and I lie here in great tribulation. But beg God my heavenly Father, and he will maybe forgive your sin, for I have no power to do it.

Then he lamented greatly and put himself in a bad state. Then I asked, what have you done against God, that you lament so much? And the voice said: I have broken the commands of the Lord God, with overeating and drinking, with pride and greed.

Then the usual voice that had always spoken with me before gave me such an utterance in my heart, saying: answer this voice: you should not ask a man to forgive your sin, but rather the Heavenly Father, against Whom you sinned. Ask for His mercy and it will be given to you.

Then the same voice answered me: if only you had forgiven my sin, I would have had the power to let you out. And I said to him: I do not need you to release me. I lie here in the power of God, my Heavenly Father. In His time He will allow me to go free, according to His will. And after this I had peace.

### **The tenth chapter**

Further this wonder and glory of the Lord came over me again and surrounded my heart and said to me: speak and say to your brothers, go forth into the house of Israel and tell them to hold themselves to my path alone. You shall no longer bless water and salt, for I have blessed the whole earth. They have obscured my word and spread out their word, but few are the words through which one is saved.

They have sought after their honour and their greed, but I will destroy the false writings they have made, which they introduced next to My Word. And also tell your brothers to no longer allow lords and great priests to blaspheme, when God, your Father [and the Father] of all is the only Lord, and Christ the High Priest and the greatest.



You shall guard yourselves lest you eat unworthily the bread of the Supper, which was blessed through the word of the gospel and the Lord's Supper, but rather you shall share it also with others present, who are hungry and thirsty, and further more at eight or nine o'clock, when the little sheep are coming from their rest, you shall share with them the holy Gospel and teach them all the doctrines of the faith and hope, and to trust in Me alone.

I showed this to the man who was waiting on me with food and drink, how the glory of the Lord and the wonder of God had come over me, and asked him for paper and ink in order to write it down. Then he said to me: you are fantasizing! You cannot even read! Then came to me a good brother named Veith Schelhamer, to whom I told this whole story. And he went out and brought one of the preachers, and he wrote down the whole story [that I told him], including this speech and these words.

Then, when I had come out of the asylum and was brought again into the hospital in the common room, I had come to me one of the preachers, the Doctor and also Zimprion,<sup>872</sup> and when they came to me I asked them, speaking thus: what do you think concerning the brilliance that impels me to speak and to cry out, namely the three voices and the other one above me. To this they answered me and believed that it was the ghost of the devil, and I should test it well and then spit it out.

Then I said to them, if this is a ghost, then all our faith is nothing. For I have always spoken and prayed thus when it came and still comes to me: Almighty eternal God, You have created me and all my footsteps were taken in Your power. I do not ask you for temptation. Is this a grace from You? Yea, what You want, I want too. And so come, and stay with me, and teach me Your will. But if you are not a grace from God, then go far away from me. The

---

<sup>872</sup> Symphorian Altbieser, or Pollio

aforementioned men did not answer me concerning this. Then I asked them to pray to God the Father for me, that if it was a ghost and a tribulation, that He might release me from it. And I further asked them that, if they were our shepherds, they would have the princes and lords and the pious governors and regents of all the cities before their eyes. And with this they left me.

### **The eleventh chapter**

The night of the same day when they had left me, the brilliance and glory of the Lord came to me, pressed my heart, and impelled me to speak: tell the supervisor to tell the lords that they should lay their hands and their power on all the goods of the churches, and on all their power, so that God's Word, which they have concealed in their houses, will be used again in the right sheep pen. And that they do not remove anyone wildly, whether princes or lords or others, so that no one can speak against them. I did as I was commanded, and in the morning when the supervisor came out of his house and into the hospital, I encountered him by the steps and stopped him with this command and admonished him as much as I could admonish him for God and for Christian duty to show the lords of the city of Strasbourg all these words.

Once again the glory of the Lord came over me and spoke to me in my heart, which I then had to speak out as loudly as possibly in my hospital room: when God the Lord created the wolf, he gave him strong paws, that he might subdue the animals of the wilderness and the wasteland and keep the whole earth pure. He also gave him a warm coat, more so than the other animals, and he promised God [that he would have] the piety to keep the world free from wild animals. But when [the wolves] became many and a large number, they formed a council and gathering and advised [each other] against God and set aside their earlier piety. And they said, God has now done much for us. For we have achieved this: that all animals—sheep, oxen, and humans—flee from us, are subject to us, and fear us. We no longer wish to constrain ourselves to

eat only worms and grass. For in addition to this we want to eat meat and other things, since we have the power and want to subjugate all flesh. And the wolves joined with each other and bound themselves together and celebrated with great joy, speaking thus: now you all rejoice, that we have subdued and have power over all things. Now we want to live in luxury. Let each one [of us] move into his own land, and eat and drink everything that occurs to you, cows, calves, sheep, livestock, and people, so that your belly becomes full.

### **The twelfth chapter**

And further it happened that the glory of the Lord had not yet finished with me, but rather came over me again and said through me very loudly: The children of Israel who went out from the house of Israel have not wanted to be under the yoke and law of Jesus Christ, but wanted to be free and unhindered and subject to no one. They removed themselves from the community and dug around here and there in the appearance and the meaning as though they wanted to serve God with this, and thereby blinded the world. Then they tested and regarded themselves [as wanting to serve God] and while they were so in appearance among men, in their hypocrisy they considered themselves above their holiness, since the whole wide world had brought to them all manner of goods and animals. And when they saw that princes and lords and all the power of the earth was subject to them, and [they had grown nicely accustomed] to purple and silk, then their haughty heart said: the whole world is subject to us, and a great many [things] are ours. Who will act against us? Who will drive us away? Rejoice that you have lived this day. Our coffers are also full. Now we want to live according to our lust for comforts. We want to move our homes and no longer [build] houses in the wilderness, but rather we want to build and raise up our houses next to and before God's house, Israel. Observe, thus did the cloak of haughtiness seduce them and cause them to sin against God their Lord, and mix themselves with those who were in

the house of Israel. They cry out and do not stop. Our coffers, our coffers are full. We have much silver and gold and we want to trust in it. They have erred and made others err against the law of God the Lord.

But now the little sheep cry out: we are tired and lost and have given up our goods and lost the right path. They stood on the path and led us here and another over there, and from this misstep came great pain, for as a result we came under the command of the rapacious wolf, and woe to us! But now I will come, says God, and will destroy them, since they are just like rapacious wolves. This word was impressed on my heart by the usual glory of the Lord on the Tuesday of the fifth week of the twenty-third year.

### **The thirteenth chapter**

After this the glory of the lord still did not give me a holiday, but rather led me further and further in order to teach me and laid me on my back, and said to me: place your hand and foot on or take a quick look at your stomach, and I either did not want to or could not do this. As as I sat there motionless, I became very afraid and preoccupied and thought: O God, what have I done against You and angered You?

Then the glory of the Lord answered me: see what you [humans] are, and what you can do on the earth without Me. You place all hope and confidence and action and capability on yourselves, and forget God your Father, who alone has all power.

You do not wish to marry or give yourselves into marriage. The one gives himself to this, the other into the family cloister, which to Me are houses of abomination. You want to live virginal and chaste, against God your Father, who has not given you His grace.

Those who gave themselves into marriage, which I created, are my virgins. I tell you truly, when God created humans in the beginning, He created them with His loveliness, and

when God creates a man in his mother's womb, He also gives him loveliness and the desire for marriage. But they want to live in chastity against Me and without My grace in their hermitages and their veils. But they do this to great ruin. For I will bring about the hour when they will need to take their ears in their hands and march to doors and gates and will cry out: open up and let us out, so that the anger of God does not encompass us.

Further said the glory of the Lord, he who stands without grace and remains without marriage, he does harm to Christ the Lord, but he who gives himself into marriage keeps the grace and blessing of God the Lord, and those who by name keep my signs and my weapons<sup>873</sup> in brotherly love and faithfulness, those are my virgins, and I will place on them the crown of eternal life.

That same hour the glory of the Lord became a beautiful wreath, as though made of roses, as evidence and a verbal sign that He will crown them in eternity. No one should be without the work of marriage, for [in marriage] he will then have the grace of this glory of the Lord, and since he already has this grace, he will still incline his heart to the command and behest of God [in part] so that he does not sin against God the Lord. So that you might proclaim and find these words to be true, go to the women's chamber and ask for the most distinguished names of my young maidens, and you will find that some will name themselves wrongly and will deny and forget their names.

When I came to the women's chamber in the hospital and asked around for the most distinguished names, I found one woman who said derisively that her name was Lupffe, and another who called herself Blitzauff, and a third who called herself Schnepffauff. Then I said: Lord Almighty God and Father, now I have [seen] what you told me, that some will not be able

---

<sup>873</sup> *woffen*

to name themselves, truly, I have here three who have denied their names. Then it was answered me through the glory of the Lord: thus there will be those who call themselves virgins on the last day, and I will not know them. I showed this vision in its entirety to Lord Peter, the hospital preacher, and I did this in the courtyard where one exits the women's chamber.

### **The fourteenth chapter**

It came to pass on the evening of the priests' fasting night in the aforementioned twenty-third year, the aforementioned Lord Peter carried around little cakes in the hospital and gave each man specially five little cakes, and gave them to me as well. When I saw the little cakes, I acquired a great wish and desire for them, and began to eat with much greed. And though they tasted most delicious to me, in my mouth they turned to bitter gall. I threw that mouthful out of my mouth and onto the ground, since I no longer wished to eat it due to bitterness. Then I struck [myself] on my heart and my heart also began to quiver and spoke fearfully: how are you so greedy?

Then the glory of the Lord said to me: do you not know Who moves your heart? That we are three, namely God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and you lie within Our hands. They behave themselves as though they wish to gobble up everything alone and at once, and My little sheep suffer a great many things, and barely have dry bread. Then I found that I still had four and a half little cakes in my hand, and I lay myself down on my bed and considered how in greed I had overstepped, and my heart came under great compulsion and said: why must my heart suffer such great persecution? Then my heart was almost completely enraptured and began to say: O Lord, what You now want, do that with me, I want it too. Then the glory of the Lord was soon present and turned over my heart in me, such that I felt it noticeably, and the glory of the Lord

said to me: Now I will turn over your heart and lay it on its other side, and will also write on its other side.

Then my heart had an objection and asked with me: to whom should the half little cake go? I was soon informed of this by the glory of the Lord concerning the little cakes: the first and greater portion, said the glory, belongs to God the Father, the other to the Holy Ghost, and the third to Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and the half belongs to Mary, the blessed maiden, his beloved mother, who gave birth to Him in His human form, in which He redeemed the people. Now you will understand what that means, and also what those three mouthfuls [of bread] that became bitter on the eighth day meant, which you gave to that man. Therefore ask him for them again. Now you have four mouthfuls next to each other, and you will finally find out what they mean.

[With] the first mouthful, which they ate, they ruined the virginal hearts who then went between marriage. Now they cry out to God and lament and say: they have taken the wreath and stolen it from us, because they prevented us from marriage, [and the wreath] is given to those who live in the state of matrimony. O Father, crown us also with the crown of matrimony!

They also took in the other mouthful. They let out their bad breath and drowned and hid from us brotherly love, so that we are all mixed up and are tyrants and persecutors, and through their bad example of haughtiness, greed, unchastity, hatred, and frivolousness they led us astray and into contradiction and disobedience to God and to the leadership. Out of this has come and will come great worry and suffering.

They also took in the third mouthful, since for the length of many years they led my little sheep around the houses of Israel but not into them. They sought there the right little cake, but

they could not find it, because their hearts were filled with so much idolatry that the holy heavenly bread and the pure word of God tasted paltry to them.

The fourth mouthful is still at hand and will be theirs if they will not believe God's pure word, which has now been sent to you in your city. Sinners will speak against it and will fight against Christ and will prove themselves wrong [when faced with] the unconquerable steel. Thus will the fourth mouthful be sufficient for their damnation and the Word will judge them. But the Lord will bring joy to His little sheep, and bring them peace and salvation. But to those who speak against Him, if they do not obey and give Him their faith, He will destroy them in their old armour<sup>874</sup> and will comfort those who are sad.

### **The fifteenth chapter**

It further came to pass that a picture of the rulers of the world was hung on a wall. Then I was compelled by the glory of Lord to tear down this same drawing and picture and the glory of the Lord spoke through me with these words: thus must the images and the kingdom of men be destroyed, for God will raise up the true sign of men.

It happened on the first day of their fast, called Ash Wednesday, in the aforementioned twenty-third year, that this glory of the Lord spoke into my heart, which I as before had to speak out very loudly with these words: I will exterminate all their falsehoods and wash away all false teaching and appearances, which they brought about without me.

When on the aforementioned Ash Wednesday the monk [in charge of] the High Mass wanted to begin to celebrate Mass in the hospital chamber, he stood there in the midst of his Mass, and for a good while he could not come from his place, neither behind him not in front of him, in order to bring about his mass, and he [stood] by the altar entirely scattered. Then I

---

<sup>874</sup> *in yhrem althen trab*



thought it was the Word of God already at hand, since He says He will wipe away all that that they brought about against Him and without Him.

Since I had now heard this same Mass almost to the end, my heart began to quiver and that same hour the glory of the Lord threw me back into the bed, and all the people in the chamber saw this.

Then the glory of the Lord gave me these words in my heart to speak very loudly: thus they shall and will be thrown back and scattered, when they think they are at their best and at peace, then will this food turn into unforeseen destruction for them, will break in their hearts and become entirely bitter to them.

And when it became evening, then I fell asleep, and the glory of the Lord impressed on my heart this voice and taught me to ask and to speak very loudly: “O Lord Jesus, O Lord Jesus, have mercy, have mercy on us” and to ask this with those words three times. Then the voice of the glory of the Lord said to me: if you will not convert, the Eternal Father will strike and move the four elements and both heaven and earth. Then you will cry out in distress until all idolatry is uprooted from your hearts. And they themselves shall and will ruin and exterminate each other.

### **The sixteenth chapter**

It further came to pass on the following Thursday that once again at night the glory of the Lord came over me and swiftly awakened me and two men beside me as we lay in the hospital chamber, and compelled me to awake and to speak to them these words:

Listen to me, listen to me dear brothers. Great wonders will show themselves. Heaven and earth will crack, for such a disgrace will there be.

Tell the pious Christians of this city to take good care [to know] God’s Word, and thereafter to take good care [to gather] everything that they would need for their upkeep, whether

to eat or drink. For it will come to be that they will suffer great duress, hunger, and scarcity. [And they should also take good care to] protect the city with muskets and all manner of weapons, so that not even one uncircumcised man might move in or require this house of God, Israel, and there drive off the holy and precious Word of God and abuse and blaspheme against God the Lord the Redeemer and His Word

When it will happen that the rapacious wolves, who will come from everywhere, will terrify you, the Lord will test you just as silver through fire, so that he can find out whether you will stand firm with Him or not.

You will come in need and in great fear, and in your great need you will raise up the banner of godly righteousness, as it was announced to you. Thus will you be victorious and will overcome when this shall and will happen, so that my little sheep recognise me as Most High Lord.

For with this banner I will ride around the whole earth.

Then I will say, take that with which you defended yourselves and also your [brooms]<sup>875</sup> and tools with which you built up the whole earth, and hack away faithfully, for you must uproot all who acted against me.

You will hack to bits the carbuncle stone, but the whole earth must become clean and pure. On it shall live first and foremost the noble blood that did the will of my Father and those who desire [to be] under the banner of godly righteousness. I will not abandon them. And immediately the glory of the Lord turned into a lovely, beautiful crown before my eyes and hovered in front of me. I said these words to Lord Peter in the stone house and asked him to say and proclaim them to the lords. These things appeared to me around midnight.

---

<sup>875</sup> Kerst

On another night in the same week the it was once again said to me through the glory of the Lord: stand up and dress yourself well. Gird yourself and take the stick, the stick of affliction with which they robbed the children of God. You will find this same [stick] in the common secret little house.<sup>876</sup>

Then I went into the secret little house and found there the staff. This same staff was peculiar and very rough, as though set in defense for the purpose of subjugating. Then the glory of the Lord compelled me to speak and I had to yell and sing very loudly:

Rejoice, rejoice greatly you children of Israel, rejoice greatly you children of Israel. The Father has chosen you, and the Lord Christ has presented you to the Father. Praise the day on which this message was proclaimed to you, so that you were not destroyed through the tempest of the water.

### **The seventeenth chapter**

And the glory of the Lord still did not leave me alone, but rather impressed upon my heart a great voice [whose words] I had to cry out, such that I thought that all who were in the chamber heard it: God the Father will blow the horn of terror<sup>877</sup> over all the inhabitants of the house of Israel and over all main cities, because they have taken in many goods in my name. I will blow the horn of terror over them in part because they did not recognize my little sheep's attempts to find home. In a time of great need and hunger I sent them home to you, and they sought mercy from you. They cried out: "We are hungry and thirsty, but you have filled your coffers. Have mercy on us!" They cried out day and night to you in the cloisters and hermitages

---

<sup>876</sup> *den gemeinen heimlichen heusslein*

<sup>877</sup> Lit. *greuselhorn*. The greuselhorn was sounded during the expulsion of the Jews in the fourteenth century, and this act was still remembered by the city's inhabitants over a century later. It figured, for instance, in one of Geiler von Kaysersberg's sermons. See Franz Xaver Kraus, *Kunst und Alterthum in Elsass-Lothringen: Beschreibende Statistik* (Strasbourg: Friedrich Bull, 1876), 384.

here through the storehouses, but you did not answer them. But many of My leaders of the main cities, which did not take in their goods unjustly, answered them and had mercy on them.

The glory of the Lord spoke further with me, worked through me, and said very loudly: God the Father has made his little sheep into a mirror for sinners. He hung his shield and helmet on them, but this insignia was full of boils and ulcers. He sent them to the large main cities, to cloisters and other houses that went up without Him. Yet another time they cried out: your coffers are full, and we are covered in ulcers and boils. Have mercy on us!

And they answered them again, we do not recognize you. Our coffers are full. They blocked their ears so that they could not hear the cry of the poor, and they all cried out against those in distress, drive them out, so that we do not all come to ruin with and because of them. They erected their huts on the streets, and then my cities, which, according to God's will, had not unjustly taken their goods, had mercy on them and fed them. And thus they paid great tribute to God the Eternal Father.

Once again the glory of the Lord spoke through me: a third time God put forward His little sheep in poverty and great suffering, and they cried out and spoke loudly as before, [asking] whether they might find some mercy after all, but they did not recognize them.

But my city opened up its gates and houses and let them in, and gave them food and drink. This was prescribed by God our Father, who protected them from the tempest of the water.

But once again the glory of the Lord came over me and said to me and through me: know this truly, now I will be merciful to My little sheep. But first they must be made to suffer once more and cry out to all the main cities and desire mercy from them and desired to be released from the bonds of human statutes.

Know this truly, they will cry out, we have carried our goods with us and are now tired and have lost the right path. But now we are standing up and we want to seek Christ and place Him again in His house.

But the false witnesses stand against us and say that we have set ourselves against rulers and lords and against the main cities, and brought us [almost] to death. No one has had mercy on us.

They think that they have oppressed and gotten rid of Christ and His people, but something else is at hand for them, and without their foreseeing it their destruction will be seen by all.

And as I lay in this clamour, the glory of the Lord penetrated my heart with great tempestuousness, such that I thought the day of the Lord was at hand and that very hour before my eyes. But the Lord showed me great miraculous things, and showed me this with candlelight in the hospital chamber, which was then extinguished and lost its light. And when one tried to light it, it would not burn, and no one knew what this meant. Then two men who lay by the chamber door said that they had seen the door open and close, and yet no one had come in, but by the womens' chamber door, it was as if someone had gone in and brought with him a wind, and the light was extinguished by this wind. Then I said to them: truly dear brothers, great things are revealed to me in my heart, and you will see and experience them. Think on this.

Further a vision was presented to me by the glory of the Lord and I saw that the Kaiser and the Pope came against Strasbourg and there hung up their shields and insignias.

### **The eighteenth chapter**

After this time the glory of the Lord gripped me again and preoccupied me a few days more and spoke into my heart and also gave me this to speak out with my mouth: As you have

experienced much and all of my righteousness, inside and outside, the time draws near and is here when [each man for himself]<sup>878</sup> will know what the Mass and the Lord's Supper are and how he shall observe it.

He who wishes to observe the Supper shall wash his hands in tears from his eyes. His locks of hair should shine and be wet from love of God and neighbour. His heart shall be bathed in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And before all this he shall remind himself of all the prophets until now, from Noah until now, and thereafter all those who foretold all these things. And his heart shall recognize the twelve messengers and evangelists so that he recognizes the righteousness of God. As an offering of praise, his tongue shall cut towards righteousness like a sword and shall hate unrighteousness. He shall wear the robes and the innocence of the prophets, so that he may be irreproachable and so that the path and journey of his footsteps bring fruit, and that the people can surely entrust themselves to him when he brings forward the bread of life, the holy Word of God. And his heart shall give itself to matrimony so that he might be sure. His heart shall be encircled by the bond of matrimony and the love of God.

His eyes shall be sharp so that he sees and recognizes injustice. His flowers shall be like the flowers of the white way, so that he teaches this to those subject to him, that they lift up their hearts to God against the day and give thanks to God their Father that He safeguarded them from the darkness of the night and allowed the daytime to come, and they shall bow down at night time and ask God the Father to bring them through the darkness of the night into the day again.

One such flower was the Lord Christ. He bowed down in the day and prayed to God the Father for us poor sinners. And he bowed down in the night, when he knelt sadly on the Mount

---

<sup>878</sup> *Ein ichelicher*

of Olives. And he was handed over to the men of darkness and there prayed for the unrighteousness of the people.

Further thus the glory of the Lord lamented and said loudly through me: O you foolish prophets, both men and women, what have you thought to yourselves, that you have set out against God into the houses of contradiction.

What have you thought, that you broke and ignored the greatest command of God and matrimony when even all the animals testify to and confirm matrimony?

When you stepped into this house of darkness, you wiped out of your hearts the bond of God. You tonsured yourselves and put on other things than what God called you to, and what joy you found in your grave secret sins in the houses of darkness.

What did you foolish people think against the clear word of God, which [even] those who sin openly recognize? They will precede you into the kingdom of Heaven.

O you foolish ones, will you now acknowledge that God the Lord our merciful Father now seeks to bring us home and allows to shine for us the light of the bright word of God, and wants now to lead you out of the darkness and into the light? Will you now acknowledge this and turn yourselves around?

But now you shall say, O you false prince and bishop of darkness, how you have misled me and made me loathsome to God and the world.

Now I can recognize that we robbed the widows and the orphans and did not feed the house of Israel [but rather] fed the house that went up next to the house of God and adorned it. I acknowledge that I have broken the command of my Lord in that stinking house. Now I will help to eradicate the houses of abomination and help to build up the house of God. This house shall be adorned for the comfort and good of the widows and the orphans. Now I will acknowledge

openly in the house of God that I am a sinner and will make visible all my secret sins before all the world. Lord God, be gracious and forgive me all my sin and ignorance.

### **The nineteenth chapter**

This place shall have a bishop, so that he might observe the Lord's Supper. His eyes shall be sharp. He will carry around across the land the banner of godly righteousness and will faithfully teach the idle to work. And those little bees that he finds tired out from work he shall lead into the houses of God and there let them rest and feed them with the Word of God. He will shield his little sheep from the approach of the rapacious wolf. Such a man is worthy to observe the Lord's Supper.

After this the glory of the Lord urged me to celebrate Mass and I was obedient and did this until [the point when] the Lord Jesus said with his disciples the word of thanksgiving, and, at the call of the glory of the Lord, I had to take the little pitcher and sing these words:

Holy holy holy is the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Come to the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is made holy through Him.

Proclaim the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us. He has rescued us from eternal death, rejoice over this you children of Israel.

Rejoice, rejoice, and rejoice greatly. Savour the bread of our Lord Jesus Christ, that was given for us. Savour the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that was poured out for us.

In this speech I had to lift up the little pitcher above itself. Then the glory of the Lord opened itself in the little pitcher and swept over me and then my heart said: Is this the mirror of God? Then it was answered to me through the glory of the Lord.

I am a light for the children of God and food for the soul and way to the righteousness of the body.



I will feed in eternal life he who acts mercifully. But the mirror of God is man.

As you eat this bread, you should not pray to stone and wood, but you should bow before your rulers, who have been established for you by God.

But the mirror of God is man, who is next to you and around you. Look at this mirror from bottom to top, and so you will see that a master workman created you and him. You shall look after him and have mercy on him and, when you feed him, God will give you in your heart his free shield, so that you do not become a mirror of the world. As you act mercifully, God will lead you from one freedom into another, all the way to eternal life.

Those who were around me in the hospital chamber did not believe these things. Then the glory of the Lord said to me: you must perform a miracle for them. And they all looked at me to see what I would do. And I said: O God eternal Father, my doing and undertaking is nothing, but Your will be done. Then I had to take the little pitcher and turn it around and upside down, and no liquid ran out of it.

Then those who were around me answered all together: Now we see that you are a sorcerer, and Lucifer your father, and your power comes from the devil.

Then I said to them: if this power is from the devil, then why do I not speak his word? I have the Word of God, and you incite the word of the devil and his work, from one midnight to another. My words are from God and cause you pain, and your words that are from the devil cause me pain. If my power is from the devil, why do your words not please me? Since I see that you do not want to believe me, I will not speak with you anymore until you speak with me.

Then began the woe and lament of those who were around and next to me in the hospital chamber, and they were greatly overwhelmed until the third day.

On the third day one of them came to me and to my bed and said: Lienhard, when you are sad, we are also sad. How does this happen? Then I said, I already told you that you should let me do what I do. What I do and allow is not from me, but from God. When I go out from among you, out of this hospital and prison, you will all be glad.

But in these aforementioned three days I lay in such distress and agony as can scarcely be described.

And I also in those days noticeably felt the wounds on Christ in my hands and feet and side, and a tangible reminder<sup>879</sup> was given to me on my right foot, and in this the glory of the Lord spoke through me to those who were around me: watch! This wine must now be spilled in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

And the glory of the Lord moved me, so that I had to spill the little pitcher of wine, with which I had held Mass and performed a miracle.

And I poured it onto my bed. Then the glory of the Lord said in me: this wine will flow across the width of the earth, and after this time all things will grow sufficiently. Wine, oil, and fruit will be sufficient. Then you will live in peace and you will lie in the sunshine, and there will be such an abundance of sufficiency that the grapes will hang over your mouths.

Then the time of the Lord will approach. Think on this: the Lord is not far away and will come to wake us from the dead and to save us.

### **The twentieth chapter**

And further the glory of the Lord said through me: and the goods that were brought into the chapels, hermitages, cloisters, and ecclesiastical foundations, you shall bring again into the

---

<sup>879</sup> *denckzeichen*

right sheep pens of Christ, so that these same widows are orphans are fed. Thus will you rightly observe the Lord's Supper.

In the morning the glory of the Lord came to me and said to me: now you know all things, how you should behave. When you eat or drink, give praise and thanks to God the Father and Christ our Lord and ponder His suffering. Think on it and be grateful to Him. Then you will observe the Lord's Supper day and night and the angels will sing to you in your matrimony.

This banner of godly righteousness that you explained here, take it in your right hand and hold it steady and fast until I awaken you again and you are given a testimony.

After this on the last day of February in the twenty-third year, I was released from the prison in the hospital and let out. And the glory of the Lord gave me a holiday for a long time and I had rest and peace from prophecy.

After Saint Michael's Day in the twenty-fifth year, the glory of the Lord awakened me again and reminded me of all these things and once again heavily compelled me and began to speak with me of a new thing. And in this aforementioned year in the time right before Christmas, as I was pondering these things, the grace of the Lord gave me [this order] in my heart. I had to sing in the cathedral all the messages and acts that were given to me by Him, so that the people could understand such things and thoroughly undertake them.

Then I said to my wife: the grace of God compels me that I should sing these things, but I cannot sing and I don't know any tunes. And we practiced with our voices and with tunes, so that we could both sing it in the morning. And we both went and sang it that same day in the morning in the cathedral, openly before all the people, and on the next day we both sang in St. Stephen's for all the people, and afterwards one day we both sang it again in the cathedral before all the people, which song one could not hear more purely.

## **The song of the prophets**

Listen dear Christians/and hear great miraculous things/How it happened at Hanau on the Rhine/great wonder compelled me/and I held it with great joy.

The shrine is cut open/the truth is here/two axes struck it open/it cannot be other than it is/many branches struck/at Hanau well on the Rhine.

These branches that God meant before/are His most beloved brothers/they will speak great wonders/in Strasbourg in the shrine/ righteousness compels us/and truth stands at our side.

The branches have bloomed well/and the fruit tastes good to us/we wish to honour Him/I say this to you truly/ God the Father will reward us/and will not abandon us in eternity.

God the Father has written a letter for us/deep in our hearts/and on there stand written/great and wonderful things/the testimony must be given/concerning this holy writing.

God the Father compelled me/in Hanau on the Rhine/well, up my beloved servant/it cannot be otherwise/the message must be concluded/for my beloved overseers.

That they proclaim well to all the main cities/we have taken in much interest/and also many goods/our coffers are filled/the little sheep have become tired.

You shall now raise up the banner of godly righteousness/on which is inscribed/the eternal Son/the Holy Ghost with His righteous ones/the Father of mercy.

You shall place the banner well on the right city altar/and send for your lords/that is the bishops/that they behold the banner/of godly righteousness.

They shall take the banner/in their right hand/ and ride all quickly to their own land/and instruct their little sheep in godly righteousness.

They shall teach the little sheep/godly mercy/so that they may be fed by the eternal Father/and that they may recognize them as a spiritual man.

If they will not take up/the banner of godly righteousness/their lordly robes will be taken off of them/and they will nevermore be honoured/before God and also the world. Amen.

When my wife and I sang this song for the second time in the cathedral, the glory of the Lord inspired me and said: the people cannot understand it. You must lay it out for the people.

Then I said to the people: We will come here tomorrow and I will lay it out for you. And I went out of the cathedral. Then a man hurried after me and he stepped over to me before the cathedral and spoke to me and said: what do you mean by singing and preaching? Do you know more concerning the law [of God]? Then I said to him: it is written that we should not add to the law or take away from it. How should I then know or teach more concerning the contents of the law? And I asked him who he was. Then he said to me that he was a priest. Then I said to him: if you are a priest and a learned man,<sup>880</sup> why do you ask me? You should teach me. And he went away.

### **The twenty-first chapter**

When I came home I wanted to explain the song the next morning. But that same night the glory of the Lord gave me [this command], that I must give the people another interpretation, namely this one:

The Lord came into the world and found the human race wounded to the point of death. He saw that the priests went by and did not have mercy on them. He saw that the [wielders of] the earthly sword went by and also did not show mercy. And He saw that the human race was wounded to the point of the death of their hearts. But then came Christ our Lord and He had mercy on the human race. He lifted them onto His shoulders and carried them into the right sheep pen and acquired new stablemen and gave them two pennies, that is the New Testament

---

<sup>880</sup> *schriftgelerder*, an epithet used by sixteenth-century religious radicals against magisterial reformers, indicating a deep knowledge of the letter of the Scriptures but ignorance of their true meaning.

and the Old Testament. And He said [to the shepherds], you shall once again hold the human race in esteem and do much good for it. I will return this to you thousandfold when I come again. They promised to do this.<sup>881</sup> If they have kept their promise, they will have succeeded well, but if they have not kept it, they will stand in great punishment and come against God our heavenly Father.

I said these words in the morning in the cathedral, openly before all people, and when I had spoken them out there came Master Matthis, one of the Strasbourg preachers. He drove the people away from me and said that I spoke out of my dreams and against the Law, and out of the writings of my heart and the dreams of my head.

And concerning a small thing the grace of the Lord gave me an answer to give, under the cathedral door before the people, as He had also given me to understand before in the night. The Lord showed me and said to me last night that today a man would say to me that I spoke against the Law out of the writings of my heart and the dreams of my head and I should answer him, you have long spoken out of the writings of your hearts and against the Law, and out of the dreams of your heads. You will speak the truth before him and stand before him, but they will stand before you red with shame.

And when I came home again the glory of the Lord fell on me and said: next Sunday, when the people are together in the cathedral, you shall cry out to them three times.

First: oh you great *schriftgelehrten*, tell me how we can all live under God's law. Next: oh you great *schriftgelehrten*, how do the children of God stand against God our Father? Third: oh you great *schriftgelehrten*, tell me, how does our house stand against God our Father?

---

<sup>881</sup> C.f. the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)

For I say to you truly, when the Lord awakened me in Hanau on the Rhine, He removed Himself from the shrine of truth and looked over the whole earth and saw how we conducted ourselves. He cried over us from the rising of the sun. If we will not better our lives, penalties will come over us. From the sunrise to the sunset He cried over us and over the whole world: if you will not better yourselves and place yourselves under the banner of godly righteousness and truth, a great tempest of rushing water will come over you and you will be up to your ears in affliction.

I called out these words in the cathedral on a Sunday, when the noon sermon had been preached and was finished and the people were still together.

### **The twenty-second chapter**

After this Sunday, at the incitement and urging of the grace of the Lord, I got up again as a man obedient to my God and wanted to sing and also speak of these things in the cathedral for the betterment of the people. Then a servant of the lords of the city of Strasbourg came to me and said to me: Did you place this folly in your foolish head? I have an order and, if you will not stop, I will lead you [out through] the doors. Then I stopped because they would not have it.

Soon after this on a Sunday, I went into the cathedral on the choir steps. Then Master Matthis the preacher encountered me as I had planned.<sup>882</sup> And I said to him: they will not let me come before them [to give] the teaching to the people, as it was revealed to me to proclaim, and I want to let such teaching and things be written down. Then he said to me: I would do it, so far as God impelled me and the writing were suitable.

After some time with Herto Ludwig I went once to the house of Master Matthis the preacher, and all the preachers were gathered there, and I asked them to allow me to teach and

---

<sup>882</sup> *wie dan andes mein furnemen zu yhm was*

proclaim the truth to the people. Then they gave me an answer amongst themselves that [if I did this] God's word and I myself would be despised and asked me to remain silent. And when I had allowed a greater part of these things to be put into writing, I put it in the hands of Master Matthis the preacher, and that same man kept it at hand for awhile.

After this, when I was once again in the house of Master Matthis, he went out with me into his courtyard, and I asked him, speaking thus: dear brother, how do you like my writing? Should I allow more to be written down of what God gives me through His grace? The he said to me that the writing was meaningful and I might well allow to be written down what God showed me and allow the spirits therein to be thoroughly tested.

Now follows a song partially laid out by me, Lienhard Jost, but not called out publicly by me.

Whoever wishes to behold the miracle/heed or hear it/be they woman or man/they shall know and ponder/how wonderful is God the Father/ and how wonderfully He will deal with us.

And each one shall ponder well this shrine/for we are all together the shrine of God the Lord/although we do not all hold and submit to this in the same way.

When God the Father created humankind/He poured into them the truth of life/so that it would recognize God/and praise and worship and give Him thanks.

Thus will each one see/that with our hearts we have distorted this same truth with many rocks and stones of contradiction/until this very day.

Now you shall recognize the goodness of our God/who called us to Himself and sent His Holy Word to bring us to Him/and allows it to be opened abundantly by us/so that we recognize/and through this come to His grace.



When you behold these wonders of God/you will strike together the two axes/and will open the shrine of your heart and the shrine of truth.

And there you will cut many green branches/that is/you will take in all of the grace of God.

And His word will bloom and bear much fruit/you will speak and say many wonders from God your Lord/in Strasbourg in the shrine so that you may also be a brother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when you have thus given yourself to God/ and you recognize and profess His wonders/your soul, which bears the robe of God the Father/the Son/and the Holy Ghost/will finally bear much fruit/and the fruit will taste good to them/and the word of God and His righteousness will make you laugh and bring you joy/for this reason you will hold them in great honour/thus will God our Father reward you well for it.

And when you thus give honour to God and His righteousness/He will write for you the letter of His law and bond deep in your heart so that you know and firmly recognize testimony given concerning Holy Scripture/and He will awaken you to be a messenger and will attach His command to you/and call you to proclaim it to all the children of God and also His servants/for the message must be completed.

They have taken in much interest and many goods/and taken it from the little sheep of God/and not given it out mercifully/we have distorted the shrine with much idolatry and now our coffers are full.

This shall you put up again in the hospital/and in all the house of Israel/all of us who are God's guardians/have taken in many goods from the great mercy of our God/and the bitter suffering of our lord Jesus Christ/our coffers/our coffers are full of idolatry/haughtiness/greed/envy/hatred/anger/and unrighteousness/and with our idolatry we have made tired the little sheep of God/This is our soul.

But now we will raise up the banner of godly righteousness and take in the grace that has now appeared to us/and praise and honour it/and we will put behind us the path of darkness.

Send for your spiritual bishop, for Christ the Lord/beg the Eternal Father/that He forgive and absolve you/for so distorting the shrine/allow to come to you the bishop of darkness/say to him: I have now grasped the banner of Christ my Lord/you will not mislead me/and you will have no part of the children of God/and you will live in eternal damnation/but by this banner on the last day God our eternal Father will recognize us/to Him be worship/honour/and praise from eternity to eternity. Amen.

**An explanation of how the glory of the Lord comes and reveals itself to me.**

The grace and glory of the Lord always comes with a white little cloud to me in the chamber, in the house, in the wood, or wherever I am in the land. And the cloud is around it or surges and hovers before it. And the glory of the Lord is in the middle. And when the glory of the Lord is there, one sees the cloud hovering before it. And when it comes near to me it opens itself up and becomes so bright that I can no longer see the cloud. And when the glory of the Lord is here and has come over me and has given the word of command into my heart, then after this the glory of the Lord has always disappeared again, such that I have not known where it comes from or where it goes. And the more the glory of the Lord finds me acting rightly in my heart before God, the more joyful, light, and wonderful does it wave and show itself to me. And when I am experiencing a period of worry and my heart has wandered from God, the glory of the Lord abandons me and does not come, until I have again struck myself and asked for grace and help. Then the glory comes to me again and comforts and brings me joy.

I Lienhard Jost earlier allowed many parts of this prophecy to be written down. While some things happened with lack of diligence and forgetfulness, with half of it I moved as soon as

I heard it and then had it written down most earnestly. And what I earlier allowed to be released I have also brought to [this writing].

### **The twenty-third chapter**

After the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as one counts 1531 years, I Lienhard Jost was in a vision. I saw a lovely and beautiful wall, this same wall was made of shining brilliance, and I saw that on top of this wall was nothing but heads, or faces. Then I had a thought of M.H.,<sup>883</sup> whether I might see or find his face there. And I wanted to look for this very diligently. Then I saw that these aforementioned faces, which had grown out of the aforementioned wall, all looked like M.H. And the length of the wall the faces were dead, and the dead faces also looked like M.H., except for the fact that they were not alive. And then one after another they became alive and all laughed in my direction in a friendly way with great joy.

### **A command of God**

As one counts 1531 years after the birth of Christ our Lord, I was urged by the glory of the Lord to go to Master Matthis Zell the pastor in the cathedral and tell him that he should now stand up fully, for [the Lord] has chosen him to be a labourer and that he should tell me when he has bettered himself. Then he answered me that he did not know any of you<sup>884</sup> for he could not see into anyone's heart and there were many good and evil people mixed together. Then I said to him: the Lord says: the time now comes when you shall recognize your sheep, but if you will not recognize them and they you, they will strike back at you and scatter away from you.

Then he [asked] me how he should do this and whether he should leave it be. Then I said to him: I have no command to call you to leave it be, but rather you should stand up fully and remove your hand from the seat of power. For the Lord wants you to stand fully for yourself,

---

<sup>883</sup> Melchior Hoffman

<sup>884</sup> *Er kennet yhr keinen*

without any power. Ponder how He has preserved you a thousandfold when you have stood alone. Thus will He also now preserve you, and He commands you to raise up the banner of godly righteousness, as I proclaimed to you.

Then he said to me that he knew of no better banner than the one he now knew. Then I said to him: see that you do not speak against your conscience. For I tell you, the Lord commands his disciples to teach and to baptize believers. Then he said: I do not have the power to raise up the banner. For, if I should baptize [believers] so openly, many thousands would stand against it. Then I said to him: Do you not think that God will preserve you? Do you not know that as he preserved you in your labour, so will He also preserve you when you carry out His work as He commanded you. Then he said to me that I had a fault in this regard, but I had no fault. At this I said: I am not here because of my fault. What God has allotted to me I will indeed receive. But I am here at [His command], to call you to stand up fully and proclaim His word to the people and to no longer be a labourer, for from now on you shall recognize your sheep and they [shall recognize you] once again as a true shepherd. All those who sat at the table with him on that same Sunday heard this proclamation.

### **A vision**

I was in a vision and saw that M.H. lay on white sticks and they were his bed, and I felt pity for him, that he had such a hard surface to lay on. And I further saw someone come who brought with him another bundle of white sticks and spoke to M.H. that he should lie on them. And the sticks in that place were crooked.

### **Another vision**

In the hospital was presented to me a great host of priests who went along and all had hoods over their eyes.

### **Another vision**

I also had an urging from the Lord to say that the oath was the key to the band of the people.

### **Another vision**

As one counts 1531 I was in a vision for three days and nights. I had to cut a circle around a land and it was said to me that the teachers had left standing much rubble and I should sweep this rubble up and cut it away. And another cut behind me, and he urged me to cut thoroughly and quickly, so that I became very lame and weak from hard work.

Here ends the prophet Lienhard

**A True Prophetess in these Last Days/The Wife of the Prophet Lienhard Jost from Strasbourg/To Whom/Through the Divine Holy Ghost/And the Will of the Most High God/A Great Revelation of Prophetic Visions Were Opened Up and Shown/Yes All the Events of These Last Days/And the End of All Things Clearly Revealed/As their True Fulfillment Is Already Visible and Known/And Those That Remain Will Be Fulfilled Any Day and Recognized as Truth.**

Thus speaks God: After this I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Then your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. Yes, I will pour out my Spirit on manservants and maidservants at the same time. Joel 1. Acts 2.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Matthew 11, 13. Mark 4, 7. Luke 8, 14. Revelation 2, 3, 13. Ezekiel 3.

1532

### **Foreword**

The following visions, revelations, and prophecies of the great prophetess Ursula, the wife of the prophet Lienhard Jost of Strasbourg, I also had printed earlier in that same city. These visions and revelations were then seventy-seven in number, but by the grace of God through the Holy Ghost of the Most High they have been greatly increased. At the time of their first printing, these great and noble gifts were persecuted, forbidden, suppressed, maligned, dismissed, and carefully watched by the blind, fat, rich, and supposedly wise and clever *schriftgelehrten* of the aforementioned city. But this is no great surprise, for it has happened from the beginning that the earthly, fleshly, natural man has not recognized the Spirit of the Most High (1 Corinthians 2, Galatians 4) but rather stood against Him, and even envied and persecuted His children.

It is far better to deal rightly as God does, Who chose a poor peasant's wife, who has eight small children (and the ninth is not far off) and who must live with everyday struggles, for such a high prophetic office. And she cannot even read or write, and there are so many haughty, proud, learned spiritual women to whom such an office might have more easily been given. But it is as Saint Paul writes (1 Corinthians 1): God chooses the one whom the world counts as nothing, and guides that person towards what is and will be, but obscures this from the one who seeks it with a proud heart (1 Samuel 1, Luke 1, Romans 9). And take heed, lest it come to nothingness and folly and remain that way forever.

Furthermore, in these days, such prophecies of the wisdom of the eternal God are cruelly despised by many. Half of them [despise these prophecies] because their allegiance to the light is poor and not deep. This is my true and earnest warning to them: they ought to be very careful and not quickly form conclusions with rash judgment about that which they do not wish to recognize or understand, in order that they might not have their hand burned by the high and holy Ghost of the Most High God. And half of them, for reason of their horrible blasphemy, will be

stricken with blindness to God's laws. For this is firm, knowable, and revealed to us: that the precious<sup>885</sup> prophet Moses received the whole plan of the tabernacle in a vision from God through the Holy Ghost (Exodus 25) in the same way as the aforementioned prophetess received her prophetic visions and even as the apostle Paul received his gospel (Acts 9). The Apostle Peter also received in such a manner [news of] the entry of the Gentiles [into the church] (Acts 10). Yes, even the holy evangelist and apostle John received his heavenly revelation on the Isle of Patmos in this manner (Revelation 1). This is how God has acted from the beginning of the world, and how He will act until the end of the world. For since the Most High Spirit has been released by God and poured out on all flesh, He does not wish to hide His fruit and works, but must immediately reveal Himself and his great strength through His noble and holy gifts, as from forever until now. Yes, equally through man and woman, maidservant and manservant, young and old, poor and rich he allows His gifts to be evident. All are suitable to Him who display a true hunger and thirst for righteousness (Luke 6, Matthew 5, 1 Samuel 2).

However, some are bewildered and angry that God works and lays out his plans through such a poor and simple little woman. This is nothing new, however, but an old story, for from the beginning of the world God has shown visions to womanly people in all sorts of ways. The very first one was Eve (Genesis 3), who prophesied of this to those who would follow her. And what a noble prophetess was Sarah, Abraham's wife, to whom [the triune] God appeared in the form of three angels (Genesis 18), and even spoke audibly with her. He did the same also with Hagar (Genesis 16 and 21) and again with Rebekah, Isaac's partner (Genesis 25), in whose womb God announced [the origin of] two people groups, and Myriam, the sister of the prophet Aaron (Exodus 14). What a prophetess was the mother of Samson (Judges 14), and Hannah, whom the

---

<sup>885</sup> *dewre*

priest Eli mistook for a drunk woman (1 Samuel 2). From her womb God brought forth the great prophet Samuel. And what a comforting teacher was Judith (Judith 8). Through this widow God brought salvation to the whole Jewish people. Deborah was also a great prophetess (Judges 4), yea a great teacher of Israel. And God also brought down Sisera through the woman Jael. The noble woman Esther risked death for her people (Esther 5), and God brought salvation to all of Israel through the same woman (Esther 7). And what a comforting heroine was the woman who, with knightly bravery, permitted the seven sons born from her womb to die for the law of the Most High and to suffer as martyrs (2 Maccabees 7). She even gave herself, with manly courage, as an offering unto death.

Further, there is the great prophetess Mary, the blessed young woman and mother of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1), and also Elizabeth, who recognized the true Son and Eternal Word of the Most High in Mary's womb. And there was the widow Anna, who waited for the coming of Jesus Christ and, when he came, she openly praised Him (Luke 2). Mary Magdalene also praised Him, and after He rose from the dead Jesus Christ appeared to her first (Mark 16) and sent her with a lofty message to the apostles, to share the news of His resurrection (Matthew 28), though they did not yet believe or grasp it. The four daughters of the deacon Philip, who were all prophetesses, had the same [gift] (Acts 21). Our saviour Jesus Christ also most lovingly revealed Himself to the little Samaritan woman (John 4), and she also preached and proclaimed Jesus Christ in her city. And were not twelve Gentile prophetesses thoroughly reported in the histories? Indeed, many more such will be found, for in Jesus Christ all are one (Galatians 3). And womankind is in no way locked out of the prophetic ministry, but may well stand in their calling and prophesy in their turn (1 Corinthians 14) and, when there are no enlightened men, they can also gladly take up the ministry of teaching.



And now in these things there is no better counsel than this, that one must always very earnestly search out and test the spirits (1 Thessalonians 5) and that one also not snuff them out (1 Thessalonians 5). And those who do not have the gift of discerning spirits with true and right judgment must be very careful and guard themselves from blasphemy, for all blasphemy will cost them a price. Yea, they must also receive from the Lord what is known and firm. For when one cannot immediately grasp or understand [a teaching], then one should hold still and each man should call out to God for wisdom and mercy (James 1, Matthew 7), who can, will, and must give it freely and abundantly. Yes, each man should carefully watch and guide himself, that he not behave like the swollen, rich, blind, naked, murderous, haughty, bloodthirsty, Satanic spirits who dance back and forth on the honeycomb of the noble and lofty wisdom of God (Proverbs 27) and trample the true Word Jesus Christ underfoot (Hebrews 6). Yea, they crucify the Son of the Most High in their hearts and hold Him in contempt and most abominably shame and blaspheme Him. But it will not be long until each man sees how he has dealt, worked, and behaved, and Whom he has pierced (Revelation 1, Zechariah 12, John 19) and received from the Lord a reward according to his works (Romans 2, Revelation 2, 22, Psalm 62, Ecclesiasticus 12, Proverbs 11, 12, 17, 24, Matthew 16, Isaiah 3, Colossians 3, 1 Peter 1, 2 Corinthians 5, Job 34, Jeremiah 17, 25, 32, 1 Samuel 27, Isaiah 40, 62). For good reward follows good works, and does not merely demand faith (Matthew 25) but also true love [of God], which is activated by true faith—the faith that obediently works through real love to bring the whole will of God to fruition (Galatians 5). Those who do these things will be saved by their deeds (James 1, 2). Yea, they are the true justified or righteous ones (John 3). In order that all those who love God, in great fear of God, seize all the gifts of the high and Holy Ghost with great thankfulness and take them up

earnestly with all joy, may God the merciful Father, the Day and the Light, help us through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and eternal Redeemer and that of the whole world. Amen.

**First, a short foreword from the aforementioned prophetess Ursula, the wife of the prophet Lienhard Jost, concerning the following visions, stories, and revelations, which were explained and revealed to her by the Spirit and will of the True God. Indeed, in her simplicity, she calls this holy and noble Spirit of the Most High the glory or brightness of the Lord.**

After my husband and partner was released from his confinement in the Strasbourg hospital and given his freedom by the lords, he and I prayed together with great diligence to God the almighty merciful Father, that He might also allow me to see the wonders His hands had made. God well and truly answered my prayer, and the following visions appeared to me, and I saw all of these visions and wonders in the glory of the Lord, which opened itself up to me in all directions. I received the meaning of these wonders from Him, indeed He showed me this pictorial revelation from God and its knowledge. Then the glory of the Lord closed upon itself and went off and disappeared. This revelation, vision, and story took place after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, as one counts 1524 years.

### **The first vision**

The glory of the Lord came upon me and opened itself up, with such a bright glory and shine that due to the brightness I did not recognize the figure in the glory of the Lord. Thereafter the same brightness of the Lord became a lovely and beautiful wreath over me. After this the vision disappeared again and went off.

### **The second vision**

On the night of Saint Michael's Day in the aforementioned twenty-fourth year, I saw appear by my bed a light, and I feared that it was a spirit of affliction or a ghost, and I was in a state of great fear and terror.

### **The third vision**

Further I saw, as I was, of course, in my bed, that the glory of the Lord came over me and showed itself to me in the form of a cloud, and it was as though this cloud filled the whole room. And this same cloud came apart and divided itself, and I saw a great unspeakable brilliance, just like the light of the sun.

And in the brilliance of that light I saw a figure like a trellis, and in the holes of the trellis stars appeared. These stars were just like burning lights. And in the center of this trellis I saw God the Almighty Heavenly Father. He stretched out His right hand, and I saw that in His left hand was a globe, and He spoke to me thus: if I drew My hand back to Myself, what would all of you on this earth be? All of you together would come to nothing.

### **The fourth vision**

After this my husband and I prayed most earnestly to God the merciful Father that He would show us his godly judgment, His will, and His anger. I saw these things the night after the aforementioned one, and I saw a great crowd of evil spirits. They stood around me and grasped at me, as though they wished to take me away. Then I cried out to God from the bottom of my terrified heart. I cried for help twice, and again for the third time I cried "Oh everlasting God, help!" Then the demons immediately fell away from me, as though someone had tied their feet with a rope and was quickly pulling them back.

### **The fifth vision**

After this the glory of the Lord came upon me again, and opened itself up, and I saw a green moor, and on this moor many scorpions and toads.

### **The sixth vision**

Later I saw on the same aforementioned night, in the glory of the Lord, a dried-up moor, which was scorched by the glare of the sun, and lying on that moor I saw a great multitude of dead men.

Then I saw two stone troughs, which were full of blood, and standing over these two troughs I saw the likeness of a woman. This woman was mixing the blood from one trough into the other and sprinkling the same blood over the aforementioned dead men. Then I saw standing a great host of black men; these figures looked as though they had been burned by fire.

And after this I saw a great multitude of riders, who ran over the aforementioned dead men.

### **The seventh vision**

Afterwards the glory of the Lord came over me a third time and opened itself up, and I saw a lovely and very pretty house, and going out of the house I saw a handsome young man. This same man was leading a well-dressed young woman, and many pretty, well-dressed young women followed the two of them out of the aforementioned house.

I further saw coming out of the aforementioned house what appeared to be the shape of a wagon, but one without wheels. This wagon was very well-decorated with bright and pretty, lustrous colours, particularly yellow, red, rosy red, and white, and on this wagon sat all the aforementioned young women, and the aforementioned young man sat himself in the middle of the young women.

### **The eighth vision**

On the Tuesday before Christmas in the aforementioned twenty-fourth year, I saw that the glory of the Lord came upon me and opened itself up, and there appeared a large cross, and on it the image of a martyr with nails through his hands and his feet and also with a crown of thorns.

#### **The ninth vision**

On the Friday after the aforementioned day, the glory of the Lord came upon me and opened itself up, and I saw very many—a great crowd of—bishops and spiritual prelates. These men all carried ropes under their arms, and many common folks were tied to these ropes. These common folks were pulled and yanked by the aforementioned bishops and the other prelates over sticks and shrubs.

#### **The tenth vision**

Further, in the glory of the Lord, I saw a garden appear in a place, and in this garden I saw a great multitude of people, and all those present were crowned one after the other. And I saw that these people ascended from earth to heaven.

#### **The eleventh vision**

The Saturday night after the aforementioned Friday the glory of the Lord came over me once again and opened itself up. And I saw the image of a woman, as though she were the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I saw that she carried a child.

Further I saw that the aforementioned image of a woman became a bird.

And following the aforementioned vision I saw a cross, and on it the figure of a martyr, and next to it on either side a person.

#### **The twelfth vision**

On Christmas day in the aforementioned twenty-fourth year the glory of the Lord appeared to me and opened itself up. Then I saw God the Father sitting, and on his lap his beloved son Jesus Christ, and over Him appeared the Holy Spirit.

### **The thirteenth vision**

Further I saw on the same aforementioned night a large and highly built-up house, and on the house stood many people and one of them always looked out over the others, so that one was always higher than the others. In the end one of the same aforementioned men on the house became a half goat buck and had one rosy red and one white horn, and from his hindquarters down he was human. And I saw that one of the men on the house sat on the buck, and this man was dressed in a white robe, and he rode out with the buck over the aforementioned men and let himself onto the ground.

### **The fourteenth vision**

On the Thursday after the eighth day of Christmas in the incoming twenty-fifth year, the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself and I saw a wide moor, and on it stood a large empty cross, and there was absolutely nothing on it.

### **The fifteenth vision**

On the Saturday after the aforementioned Thursday the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and after this pressed my eyes shut, speaking thus: you will see great wonder through your eyelids. Then I thought and worried about whether it was a deception, and I spoke internally thus: O almighty God, save me and do not lead me into temptation. Then the glory of the Lord answered me and said: it is no deception, nor a temptation. That very hour the glory of the Lord took my heart and spoke into it thus: you will see great wonders and the brilliance of God.

And then I saw an image like that of the mother of the Lord Jesus. This same woman carried a little child, and there were many chosen people with her. And when I saw this, the glory of the Lord lifted my heart very severely and shook it and said to me: do you wish to see wonders? Then see the brilliance of God the Lord and the Holy Ghost, who is sprinkled with fatherly love with the blood of Jesus Christ. And there the glory of the Lord shook my heart and said to me: now you see the brilliance of the Lord. And the glory of the Lord further moved my heart so that I also joyfully began to laugh in a gentle way.

### **The sixteenth vision**

The glory of the Lord came over me once again and opened itself up before me. Then I saw a great crowd of people. These people laboured with mattocks and ploughshares and as they laboured very faithfully I saw them break up and dig the earth.

I further saw a great host of bishops and spiritual prelates and also *schriftgelehrten*. They were all joined together and they stood and looked at the aforementioned labourers.

### **The seventeenth vision**

After this on an evening, at the time when one turns on the light, the glory of the Lord surrounded me and opened itself up, and in it I saw a moor, and on this same moor I saw a skull, and out of this same dead head grew two animals. These same animals were joined together. Then I saw one come, who was like the image of a man. He carried a rod and he struck<sup>886</sup> these two animals.

### **The eighteenth vision**

---

<sup>886</sup> Or slew (*shlug*)

Further after this the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a great crowd of people with muskets, and halberds, and I also saw many cities that had fallen lying to one side, and I also saw many cities that still stood upright.

### **The nineteenth vision**

I further saw that there came a great crowd of people, and these people were clothed with many colours, and before them went a tall black man, and he and the crowd with him were darkened in their countenance. And I saw that this same man became a stick and his head nothing but male genitalia.<sup>887</sup>

### **The twentieth vision**

After this I saw that there came another great crowd of people. They were very ill clothed, and yet they were surrounded with much brightness. And I saw that before this crowd went a good-looking handsome man, who carried in front of him a lovely cross made of light. And they went to an outcropping, on which I saw standing the figure of a person. He had a little wreath on a stick, to which little wreath they all stretched out their hands.

### **The twenty-first vision**

On Candlemas in the twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came to me during the day and opened itself up. I saw a table prepared with wine and bread and I saw two men sitting across from it, and I saw still another figure of a man. He wanted to sit with the aforementioned two men, and I saw that he had a toad hanging on his back. He would have gladly shaken it off of himself, but he could not do it. And this same person and toad turned into a toad, and the toad turned into a sow, and the sow turned into a black, distended animal, in appearance like a bear.

---

<sup>887</sup> Lit. stomach spigots (*bauchzapffen*)



And standing before this aforementioned animal I saw a lion. This lion scattered fire over all the aforementioned others, such that everything in that place was on fire.

### **The twenty second vision**

On the Sunday after Candlemas in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year, I sat down in the evening at [lamp-]lighting time. Then the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up, and I saw that the dead rose up out of the graves and lifted their hands to God.

### **The twenty-third vision**

On the Tuesday after the aforementioned Sunday I saw in the glory of the Lord that much water poured from heaven just like a cloudburst. And I saw that the earth was full of water, and in the water I saw people drifting and flowing in the water just as though they would go under. And I saw a hand emerge out of the clouds, on which hung a little wreath, and to all those who swam and reached out above the water's waves the aforementioned hand stretched out and set them on the little wreath, and led them into heaven.

### **The twenty-fourth vision**

The glory of the Lord further came over me and opened itself up and I saw men sitting, as though in a boat, but there was no boat, but rather something that looked like it was a four-edged cloth, that was tied together in all four directions. And the men who sat in it all had books, and each one his own Bible, and I saw that they opened the meanings of the writings in the books, and these men travelled into swift and rough waters.

After this I prayed with diligence to the Lord that He give me to understand what the men in the boat meant. Then it was revealed to me through the glory of the Lord that they were apostles and proclaimers of godly righteousness.

### **The twenty-fifth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me once again and opened itself up, and I saw two great mountains, and between these two mountains I saw a great crowd of people, all of whom were white as snow, beautiful and bright.

And before these mountains I saw a moor, on which appeared a great crowd of people who were all black, and I saw that they carried a large fat man. This man lay in a trough. Then afterwards I saw coming a young man, and he was dressed prettily in white. He laid hands on the aforementioned man in the trough and pushed him from behind, and I saw that they pushed him into a dark hole.

After this I further saw being pulled and dragged on a large stool a bishop whose head was split open. And I saw that this same bishop was also pushed into the same hole as the aforementioned man was.

### **The twenty-sixth vision**

On the night of the Friday before Saint Matthew's Day in the twenty-fifth year at dusk, the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and divided itself into three parts. And I saw three glories and lights standing one above the other, and in the middle glory there appeared a figure like a newborn child, appearing as small as though it had just come from its mother's womb, but it had a great bright shine and glory. And I saw that the three glories put themselves back together again and out of the three lights there was once again one light and glory.

### **The twenty-seventh vision**

On the Saturday after the aforementioned Friday, at night, the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up, and I saw that a threefold rainbow stretched itself out over me, composed of many and all kinds of colours together. And in the night, at around one o'clock, I saw a large crowd of people, and in the middle of the crowd I saw a male figure who carried a

blood red coat, and on his side was the sign of a wound. And I further saw that a crowd of riders came running against this aforementioned crowd, yea a host of riders. They all had peacock feathers sticking up out of their hats, which hung down onto their backs.

And after this aforementioned crowd I saw coming a large man who blew out wind and water with a great strong blast.

### **The twenty-eighth vision**

At night on the Tuesday after the aforementioned Saturday the glory of the Lord came over me again and opened itself up. Then I saw a lovely beautiful rainbow—yellow, red, rosy red, white, blue, and green. Its colour and appearance was lovely, light, and bright.

I further saw that many animals appeared beside the rainbow, and on the animals sat men, who were all entirely [made] of fire, and I saw that these men ran through a blue burning fire. And I saw that this same fire divided itself, and the fire turned into two paths, and the one smallest path was all well adorned and beautiful, and the other path to the left side was wide and also large, and stretched itself out to its entrance into great darkness.<sup>888</sup>

### **The twenty-ninth vision**

The glory of the Lord further came over me and opened itself up and I saw the image of a man who carried a circular or round mechanism, which ran around and was adorned with many people.

### **The thirtieth vision**

---

<sup>888</sup> C.f. Matthew 7:13-14. "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw the whole earth as though it were razed, and I saw that the fish lay dead on dry land and I also saw that all the animals went about in disarray and appeared very tired.

#### **The thirty-first vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw two young women standing who were crowned with wreaths of fire. And afterwards I further saw that a man came who was wildly and unusually dressed. He led the two young women onto the aforementioned large wide path, which was well paved, and led them into the darkness.

#### **The thirty-second vision**

It happened afterwards at another time that I once fell asleep at night, and then the glory of the Lord swept in and I awoke as a result, and its crackling and noise was similar to a burning fire, that crackled in a great blaze, such that I had no other thought but that the house was full of fire.

#### **The thirty-third vision**

In the week after Saint Matthew's day in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw in the heavens many containers large and small. Between the containers I saw a path that was entirely of light and adorned with many colours, and this path was very small and narrow. And I also saw that the clouds were entirely the colour of blood.

#### **The thirty-fourth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw that boiling hot water flowed over the whole earth and I saw that the people burned their feet on the fierce hot water and were felled down as a result.

### **The thirty-fifth vision**

On the Sunday after mid-Lent in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw that much water and fire [came] down from the heavens.

### **The thirty-sixth vision**

On the Wednesday after the aforementioned day the glory of the Lord came once again over me and opened itself up, and then I saw that it rained water, fire, brimstone, and pitch.

And I further saw that the people raised their hands and heads to God. Then the glory of the Lord closed itself up and, thus closed, came over me. Then my heart said in wonder: oh Almighty God, what is this and what might it mean? Give me the knowledge of your secret judgment. Then the glory of the Lord said to me: there you will see the judgment and wrath of God, which is written in Scripture.

After this wonder I saw lying the people who were burned by the aforementioned fire, brimstone, and pitch, and I saw that this same mixture flowed around and around as wide as the whole earth.

### **The thirty-seventh vision**

On the next night after the aforementioned day the glory of the Lord came over me once again and opened itself up and I saw a great lovely well-adorned hall, and in it many handsome young men with much and all kinds of string music.

### **The thirty-eighth vision**

On the Friday before Palm Sunday in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up, and I saw a beautiful green tree with many green branches. And I saw that a spring sprang from this same tree.

After this I saw coming two men who were very well dressed, and I saw that they brought beautiful green grass from the earth and with it closed and stuffed up the aforementioned spring.

And I further saw that the water from the aforementioned spring rose up above itself and ran out a thousandfold from the tree's branches.

And after this I saw that there came a great crowd of folks who were all from the common people. They drank the droplets of water that flowed from the aforementioned branches and they were all satisfied. And I saw that after this they raised up their hands and heads to God the eternal Father and very greatly gave Him praise and thanks.

#### **The thirty-ninth vision**

On the Wednesday after the aforementioned Friday the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw coming a great crowd of people, and I saw preceding them a handsome, well-dressed young man of shining brilliance. He had a large handful of rods and he brought them [with him] with the might of a hero.

#### **The fortieth vision**

On the Crooked Wednesday after Palm Sunday in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year in the morning the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a very great chasm or abyss, and over and under it hung many people.

#### **The forty-first vision**

On the day after this, on the morning of Maundy Thursday, the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a man who was wholly the colour of blood.

#### **The forty-second vision**

On the Good Friday after this the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw that God the Almighty Father and Ruler of Israel shot fiery arrows.

### **The forty-third vision**

On the next Wednesday after Easter in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord showed itself to me wonderfully big and awoke me from sleep, and I saw it so wonderfully big that from fear sweat poured from me. Then I turned my face to the light of day and meant to shake off or free myself from the vision. Then my face was taken with power by the glory of the Lord and turned to the glory. Then that very hour I saw a large city, and going out of this city I saw a great crowd of young people, who all looked to be under seven years old. And I saw that they went away as they wished over the Rhine. Then the glory of the Lord took away the wonder and established and showed me another wonder in the city.

And I saw a great moor and on it a great crowd of riders, and I saw drawn from the aforementioned city a great crowd of people, who carried in the middle of their host on a high and long pole a cross. When the riders saw it, they fell down with their horses and with all their power and lay and rolled around as though they were wounded to the point of death.

### **The forty-fourth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and thereafter divided itself up more than a thousandfold, just as the dawn unfolds and through it the sun divides itself into rays. And in each place [marked by] the glory and the spread out brilliance I saw appear a bright light, just as the stars in the heavens.

### **The forty-fifth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw the Pope show himself in a threefold crown, and I saw that a cord was thrown onto his neck and he was pulled into the darkness.

### **The forty-sixth vision**

I further saw the image of a man with a handsome face that was adorned with black locks [of hair]. He tread into the Pope's place and I saw that a crown was let down from heaven and was placed on this aforementioned man by the glory without any human hands.

#### **The forty-seventh vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up, and I saw riding hither a small host of people. And I saw that one rode in front of all of them who was very well dressed. And I saw that this aforementioned crowd was followed by a large host of warriors.

#### **The forty-eighth vision**

After these aforementioned [visions] my eyes closed and I wanted to fall asleep. Then the glory of the Lord surrounded me and it was as though the glory of the Lord tickled me and as I pondered this to myself I began to laugh very loudly. And I saw a great burning fire, and in this fire sat many naked people, and at the front many old patriarchs, and the glory of the Lord led them all out.

#### **The forty-ninth vision**

On the Saturday after Easter in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw white and black thrones that stretched from the vision onto the earth. And rainbows in all colours also appeared, and the earth was white and yellow from the brilliance. And I further saw that in the glory of the Lord came hither a shining young man. He carried a piece of wood that was full of holes and he threw it onto the necks of many people.

#### **The fiftieth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw lying there a large barrel, which was very well bound many times over. Then I wondered to myself and



thought what this might mean. Then the glory of the Lord settled into me and spoke to me thus: the barrel you saw signifies the people who are righteous in right faith and in right words and works. God will bind them thus in many ways, that is, He will endow them with His grace in eternity so that they might fight against all temptation on earth.

### **The fifty-first vision**

Eight days after Easter Monday in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up, and I saw a beautiful green tree, walking over all the branches of the tree I saw a large spider, and I saw that there was a snake coiled around the trunk of this same tree, and this same snake stung the trunk of the tree. Then my heart spoke and said: O Lord Eternal God and Father, give me to understand what indeed this is and what the green tree and the venomous animals on it signify.

Then the glory of the Lord settled into my heart and spoke thus: the tree signifies all who are righteous in their own eyes, but it soon happens that their concealed evil perverts all godliness, and then comes the venomous snake and destroys the all appearances of the person and stings all good out of their heart.

### **The fifty-second vision**

On the Wednesday after the aforementioned day the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a large circle, which was adorned in the likeness of a cloud with many and several pictures that appeared like people. Then it was given to me by the glory of the Lord that these were the planets and I saw that the heavens also coloured themselves with several colours and showed themselves thus revealed: now cloudy, now blue, now dark, now sun, now rain, now still, now wind, and as the Lord willed it, so it happened.

### **The fifty-third vision**

On Saint George's Day in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw two great rays coming down from heaven as they habitually came down from the sun, and these rays stood next to each other just like a ladder. And young tender children climbed up and down this same ladder.

### **The fifty-fourth vision**

On the Monday of the next week the glory of the Lord came over me once again very powerfully and opened itself up, and I saw coming or flying very nimbly and quickly a large bird, which was all snow white like a dove. This bird carried or brought in his claws a very sharp stone, which had three edges.

Then I thought in my heart and said: O God Eternal Father, how shall I understand this that I might reveal it to the world? Then the glory of the Lord spoke to me thus: this is the cornerstone that God the Father has sent and laid on the foundation of Zion, for the rising up of many, and, since it is sharp, many will crush themselves against it.<sup>889</sup>

### **The fifty-fifth vision**

Further it happened on Cross Sunday that the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and even showed itself in many and several colours and awakened me from sleep. Then I saw a great darkness that was all awful and heinous. And in the darkness appeared a city that was kicked down into a heap and entirely felled down, such that this same city disappeared entirely and became nothing, as though the wind had carried it off.

After this I saw a large rock fall from the darkness onto the earth, and after it many small rocks, and still further out of the darkness became visible a large and severe rod. After this the darkness went back and disappeared.

---

<sup>889</sup> Cf. Luke 20:17-18. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone' Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls." See also Matthew 21:42-44.

### **The fifty-sixth vision**

I further saw come up after the aforementioned darkness a beautiful brilliance, just like when the sun habitually rises in its might, and I saw that it was such a beautiful and bright brilliance that from it the whole earth became alight and bright.

### **The fifty-seventh vision**

I further saw that many rays and beams showed themselves out of the aforementioned bright brilliance. On these same rays I saw climbing up and down as though on a ladder many small children who were adorned with wings that had all manner of colours and decoration.

### **The fifty-eighth vision**

On the Tuesday after the day of the Lord's ascension in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and awakened me from sleep and I saw a large, well-adorned circle, all lovely and beautiful. But this same circle soon became discoloured and there became visible many rainbows in all directions with rain, wind, and bad weather. And I saw that the circle went around, and in the circle were created things and creatures, [that looked] as though they were the aforementioned planets. And after the aforementioned bad weather I saw beauty and brightness, and then again soft rain, now both mixed together, and further I saw a mixture of the firmament, like a cloud formation, and in it there were and appeared men and cattle. And I saw that they fell against each other as though they were struck by the smoke of a fire.

### **The fifty-ninth vision**

On the Friday after the aforementioned Thursday in the twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me once again and opened itself up, and I saw a great moor that was very wide.

And on this moor I saw many great crowds of people, and they struck each other almost entirely together under a distressed sky.

I further saw that under this sky the glory of the Lord made itself massively bright and large, and I saw riding a handsome attractive young man. He bore a large beautiful flag or banner, striped white and rosy red. And I also saw riding a valiant man clothed in black who gave the young man the flag or banner.

### **The sixtieth vision**

On the Monday before Corpus Christi Day in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and awakened me from sleep. Then I saw in the glory of the Lord a bright light stone, which was brighter than the sun, and standing before it I saw a great crowd of people who were tender like young children in infancy. Then I saw that this same stone opened itself and took the crowd of young ones into itself, and in it from far I saw such a brilliance as cannot be defined.

### **The sixty-first vision**

On the next Thursday before Saint Margaret's Day in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up very powerfully, and I saw two men with swords. They cut into a circle and broke off a very large circle in Israel.

### **The sixty-second vision**

In the next week before Saint Michael's Day in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a large, high, and firm wall from the earth to the heavens, which was built up with lovely and beautiful roses. Then my heart wondered and asked: O Lord what wonder is this?

Then the glory of the Lord talked to me and spoke thus: the wall signifies our Lord Jesus Christ, the white roses His tender body, and the red roses signify the rosy-coloured blood that He poured out for all of Israel. For He is the firm wall of paradise. All who believe in Him and have a good trust in Him will rise up on Him to the Eternal Father.

### **The sixty-third vision**

On the next Sunday before Saint Martin's Day in the aforementioned twenty-fifth year the glory of the Lord came once again over me and opened itself up, and I saw a large mighty hand and in it a large rod. Then I asked what it meant and wondered to myself a great deal, but at that time there was no answer for me from the glory of the Lord.

### **The sixty-fourth vision**

On the third day after this the glory of the Lord came over me and awakened me from sleep and talked into my heart, speaking thus: do you know what that strong hand and the large rod signify? Then I answered and said: O Lord, how can I know it, when it has not been explained to me? Then the glory of the Lord said to me: it was the strong hand of the Most High, the God of Israel, and He is angry at all the people, and if they do not better themselves He will punish them severely.

### **The sixty-fifth vision**

In the twenty-seventh year, at night on the very beginning of the eighth day, the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up, and I saw a lovely vineyard. And I saw three men lying before this vineyard. One of them was old and another had on armour, and these two lay as though they were dead. And the third was a young man, and he still had human colouring.

### **The sixty-sixth vision**

In the twenty-ninth year, in the eighth week after Christmas, the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw three formal<sup>890</sup> rods that stood in the heavens with their shoots against each other. There also stood a cloud of blood, and these things were joined in the front between the rods.

### **The sixty-seventh vision**

On the next night after the aforementioned one the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw two streets of blood in the heavens that went crosswise one over the other and stretched over the earth.

### **The sixty-eighth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a man who was adorned with a lovely green wreath, which he bore on his forehead. And this man dug graves and lay the dead in them and buried them with a rake.

### **The sixty-ninth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a large city and around this same city I saw very large and hostile dogs, who had a loud cry and a hostile bark, just as though they wanted to devour the city. And I saw that this same city was surrounded with blood.

### **The seventieth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a great lord with a great train of people who moved through a land and mountain range. And I saw that this lord left many people laying [on the ground] behind him, who lay there fallen on their faces. And before the lord and his crowd [of followers] there moved darkness and gloom.

---

<sup>890</sup> *folliger*

### **The seventy-first vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a man who was very dreadful, large, and black, and the man turned into a unified darkness, and this darkness unleashed itself onto the world. And behind the man and the darkness appeared dark tears and streams, and these streams dangled full of Eucharistic wafers.

Further I saw that at the end of the black streams and rays appeared a person clothed all in white, as though in an alb. And I saw that a cover hung in front of his face and he went around with an idol and took it in his arms and placed it before him in a place as though he wanted to pray to it. Then bright tears appeared on it and these streams [of tears] knocked the idol off of its place.

### **The seventy-second vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw three rainbows that were as white as snow. They stood over me all night until the light of day and one stood above another and the other still higher.

### **The seventy-third vision**

I further heard a great noise and a great crack as though all the earth fell in on itself and all the elements went out. And after this I heard a dreadful [trumpet] blast, and thereafter yet another blast sounded, which cry was not as severe as the first one, and then the third blast, which was gentler still than the first two.

### **The seventy-fourth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw that the sun and moon in the heavens lost their brightness and became darkened.

### **The seventy-fifth vision**

It further happened in the twenty-ninth year that the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a large mountain that was the colour of blood, and I saw standing on it the image of a man who was just as red as blood, and I wondered at this. Then the glory of the Lord spoke into my heart: this mountain signifies the Mount of Olives of all people who walk in the fear of God and in love. Sweat must also pour out from them as it poured out from Christ their Lord on the same mountain.

### **The seventy-sixth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a great tower and on it a black cross, and the cross was lowered and placed in the middle of the tower. And I saw a deep vault, and into it they led captive people. And afterwards I saw a hall, and in there stood many fierce lords who were full of wrath. The captives were unmercifully ordered in that same hall before the fierce lords to pull themselves up so that one let them violently onto their faces before the feet of the tyrants.

After I saw in the glory of the Lord that a great fierce redness opened itself up and divided itself and there was within it a great brightness, and onto it affixed themselves like a ladder very beautiful rays and beams. Then I saw coming springing and dancing the spirit of God, and He led the elect up the ladder, even with very great joy and glad jubilation.

### **The seventy-seventh vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw that rays stretched out of the glory of the Lord together with the Spirit, and afterwards I saw the soul go off to its conception in the mother's womb.

### **The seventy-eighth vision**



I saw Casper S.<sup>891</sup> riding on a white horse, and he was all black, and I saw that he turned into a scale. Thereafter I saw that he again turned into a person and that he clothed himself in armour. And I saw two standing beside him who smeared his armour black and dark so that he might carry out his trade through all the land. After I saw that he turned into the image of an old deformed and gruesome woman, concerning whom the glory of the Lord mightily warned me about false advice and guile.

### **The seventy-ninth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw that out of the brightness went rays like the sunshine. And flakes flew hither in these same rays and beams in appearance like snow. And that very hour it was revealed to me through the glory of the Lord that God the Lord thus wants to feed His own, who have true trust in Him, abundantly with the true bread of heaven, yea with the eternal food of the Spirit.

### **The eightieth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw a wide and large moor, and on this moor I saw moving forward a large, fierce, and black man, in very gloomy darkness. And before this man went a bright light, and I wondered what this might mean. Then it was revealed to me in my heart by the glory of the Lord that this man was the lord of the Turks and the light the might of God, which went before him, and that he will exercise great power and proffer misery before he then brings to pass his own end.

### **The eighty-first vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me and opened itself up and I saw coming a great crowd of people from strange lands who seemed to have a humble appearance. And I prayed thus

---

<sup>891</sup> Presumably the Spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeld. In the 1530 edition of Ursula's visions the man is not named.

to God: O merciful Father, how shall I understand this? Is it Your will and for the welfare of my soul? Almighty God, Your will be done! Then the glory of the Lord spoke into my heart: these are those who take the yoke of Christ and the cross and then wander among His sheep as though they were gentle. But they are slanderers and faithless rogues, and they are unfaithful in their hearts.

### **The eighty-second vision**

Further there appeared to me in the glory of the Lord a vision that was nothing but brightness and a pure shine, and it was in the form of a child. It then became a beautiful wreath.

### **The eighty-third vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me in the thirtieth year and opened itself up, and I saw a lovely beautiful wreath, very big. It stood in the heavens and was divided into colours like a rainbow, and many branches went out of this rainbow or wreath. Part of the branches were green, part like burning fire, and part white like crystal, and part like a rosy red, and part as blue as the colour of hail, thunder, and fire. And on one branch that was rosy red I saw two men riding on rosy red horses, and their clothing and adornments were also rosy red. These same fighters turned against each other on the branch that was rose red with fierce fighting and combat, so that blood flowed and sprang out everywhere from them.

And I saw a man on another branch that was green. He was large and blown up and his face was the colour of ash. He laughed at and greatly reviled the tempestuous fighting of the aforementioned two men.

Then I wondered what this meant and prayed to God the Father in my heart for understanding. Then there was an answer for me in my heart that this wreath was the aforementioned circle through which the two men with swords had torn, and the same wreath

hung over me and the glory of the Lord spoke to me: when this wreath is placed on the forehead and each one prepares himself for betterment, then at that time will the Lord be revealed and known and seen in great might.

### **The eighty-fourth vision**

Further the glory of the Lord came over me in the thirtieth year and opened itself up and I saw appear a small, narrow, and slender path. I saw two men standing before the same path who were crowned with green wreaths, and these men had ploughshares and dug a grave in front of the narrow way.

Then I further saw that there came a young man who wanted to traverse the narrow way. Then the two aforementioned men stood in front of him and wanted to push him into the grave that they had made. But at length the young man came through and went forward by himself onto the narrow path unhindered.

Then I saw that the aforementioned men remained standing by the grave they had made, and I saw that the green wreaths that they bore on their heads became very withered, as though they had been burned by the heat of fire and dried up.

### **The eighty-fifth vision**

I further saw in the thirtieth year that there came riding through the city of Strasbourg a great crowd of lords, always two by two. They bore their swords in their hands and their spikes were carted around with them,<sup>892</sup> and their swords were unsheathed.

After this I further saw a great crowd of servants who moved up the path on which the lords had moved, and they went in order two by two and, in a servantly way, had thrown out their weapons behind them. This apparition happened in the week before Palm Sunday.

---

<sup>892</sup> *und yhre spitzen uber sich gekart*

### **The eighty-sixth vision**

I further saw on the Wednesday after Palm Sunday the image of a woman who stood in the heavens in the sun, like the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, and had the moon under her feet and a crown of brightness on her forehead, and she carried her child.<sup>893</sup>

### **The eighty-seventh vision**

On the Thursday after the aforementioned day I saw coming a young woman who was very prettily made up and adorned with a white dress. After this I saw coming many men like pilgrims with staffs, and they had neither heads nor faces. After them appeared much darkness and gloom, and thereafter the brilliance with the spirit of the Lord.

### **The eighty-eighth vision**

It further came to pass in the aforementioned thirtieth year that the glory of the Lord came over me very threatened,<sup>894</sup> and I saw [a vision] as though I walked in Strasbourg on the merchants' street. And there I myself saw many piles of apples, from the cathedral square all the way to the merchants' street, and I saw that the apples were vine red and all appeared to be very sour and flecked as though they were internally foul. And I saw women who wanted to make sauce with these same apples but could not fill [the pot]. And there stood many onlookers, and some who grabbed the apples such that they remained glued to their fingers and that the apples dangled from their fingers.

And I further saw that M.H. came to me and had a letter in hand and a work to accomplish. And I saw after this a man coming who led an oxen bound to a cord. And this ox was very enraged, and he ran to M.H. and pounced on him and also pounced on me and shook

---

<sup>893</sup> C.f. Revelation 12:1-2 "A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth."

<sup>894</sup> Or "very threateningly" (*gantz bedreupt*)

the man who had led him as though he wanted to rip him in two. And he [then] led the ox on through the merchants' street.

### **The eighty-ninth vision**

I saw many lords sitting in a room, and to the right sat some in a row who were darkened and looked as though they slept. And on the left sat a man on a stool who was large and blown up. This man had a book in his hand, and he closed it and threw it down before him in anger. And there was a young man in white clothing standing before this man on the stool. This young man drew a sword, and I saw that M.H. stood before him as though headless. Then the vision disappeared.

### **The ninetieth vision**

I further saw that a crowd was taken up into heaven, and [I had seen] this now for the third time.

### **The ninety-first vision**

I was in a vision, as though I had a trough with prepared dough, and I hoped that it would rise greatly, yea high above all measure. And I had a great worry in this, for I did not yet know of any oven wherein the bread might be baked. But when I looked to the dough, it had still not risen at all, and when my hand struck the dough it was very rough and strange, and I was very afraid. Then I heard a voice that said that I should let it stand yet another day or three and it would rise well. Then my spirits were comforted that I would also in this time surely find an oven.

### **The ninety-second vision**

I saw that Dr. Hedio preached in the cathedral and the other *schriftgelehrten* listened to him, and also a great crowd of people. After this I saw coming another great crowd of people. They cast Dr. Hedio down from his pulpit, and I saw that they beat to death the *schriftgelehrten*

together with Hedio and the crowd of listeners. And then I saw that so much blood was poured out into the cathedral that they waded in blood that went past their shoes.

### **The ninety-third vision**

On Corpus Christi Day in the thirtieth year I saw the image of a woman, in the likeness of St Anne, in a trio with Mary and Jesus, and the three became one woman.

### **The ninety-fourth vision**

I had [an order] in the vision to heat an oven and a bathchamber, and when they were heated I came to the aforementioned dough, which had flown out so wide that it was almost to the cathedral, so that I did not trust myself to bring it together. Then came Sigmund and he helped me. And when the oven was burning clean I had no cloth with which to clean it. Then S said we can get a cloth.

### **The ninety-fifth vision**

I saw a man in the likeness of a king who was black and in a short robe and bore a short knife. He stood before me and was always lifting and putting down his knife, but never took it from its sheath.

### **The ninety-sixth vision**

I saw a pillar, and another one that was higher, and on the lower pillar sat one who looked like a man and like an idol. He sprang onto the higher column. And under the columns went a black rooster and, as the idol had sprung from the lower column to the higher column, so did the black rooster go from the lower to the higher, and the columns burned from within with black fiery flames.

### **The ninety-seventh vision**

I saw flying a red bird, and another bird, as white as if it were the colour of crystal, followed this bird, and the third bird was all black as coal.

### **The ninety-eighth vision**

In the twenty-ninth year a man was placed before me and it was revealed to me through the glory of the Lord that this man would testify to my visions. Then M.H. came to me and I recognized him that very hour from the vision, and knew that he would be the witness, as the glory of the Lord had explained to me.

### **The ninety-ninth vision**

I saw in the thirtieth year a well-dressed young woman, yea like a bride, who wore a beautiful wreath of roses, and this same rose wreath became nothing but long spears.

### **The hundredth vision**

I saw on a moor many beautiful Scotch roses and the middle of each rose was like a bunch of grapes. And I saw that these same roses all became black men, and I saw that afterwards they became roses again, and one more time black men. Finally, they became the aforementioned Scotch roses once again and remained thus thereafter.

### **The hundred and first vision**

I saw many people lying on a moor. They were slaughtered like sheep and there were many people in a circle around them.

### **The hundred and second vision**

I saw a small little host of people with little Turkish hats, and tucked up little robes, and I saw that another host came to shoo them away.

### **The hundred and third vision**

I saw a beautiful young woman kneeling on a green lawn, as though she was to be beheaded, but yet no one was doing anything to her. And around her like a fence were many who seemed like they were beheaded, and yet thereafter appeared unharmed.

#### **The hundred and fourth vision**

I was compelled by M.H. to go to a house and to climb in by going up between two walls, and the walls were moving together so narrowly that I came through with great difficulty. And when I had to go back down again, the walls were entirely together and I had [still] great[er] difficulty before I got through. And there were still many up there who could not come down through [the walls]. Then I saw coming a great [stream of] water. In it flowed a man who was bundled up like a child, and he floated as though he slept. And I saw that through the water there was room for the aforementioned others who wanted to come down. Then the aforementioned man near me became a chopped and gutted snake, in appearance just as though the oil were ready for it to be cooked. And it crawled behind me and though it wanted to [coil] around my neck. Then came a man who threw the snake from my neck with a stick. Then I saw [that it was] as if my black cat without a tail ate it and that she died. As a prophetic sign that same little animal also died [in real life].

#### **The hundred and fifth vision**

I saw that A wanted to help me for my children. Then I saw the wife of Master M.Z.,<sup>895</sup> who threw me two snakes into my skirts and said that I should eat them with my children. Then a man came to me who showed me [how to remove] the poison in the snakes, and the snakes were also ready to cook as [in] oil.

#### **The hundred and sixth vision**

---

<sup>895</sup> Presumably Katharina Schütz Zell, the wife of the Strasbourg reformer Mathis Zell.



It was revealed to me in the glory of the Lord that M.H.'s wife is pregnant with a little boy, and that this same little boy will be a young apostle of the Lord.

#### **The hundred and seventh vision**

I saw four men who slaughtered so many chicken and geese that they could not be counted, and they all lay in disarray in piles.<sup>896</sup>

#### **The hundred and eighth vision**

I saw sitting on a wide plain a large crowd of pilgrims. They were clothed all in white and had staffs in their hands.

#### **The hundred and ninth vision**

I saw a great crowd of riders who all wielded bloody spears and swords.

#### **The hundred and tenth vision**

I saw the image of a man in a grey robe and many reached out to him as though they wanted to stretch out and tear him apart. And I saw that he turned here and there to defend himself, and no one could injure him.

#### **The hundred and eleventh vision**

I saw the moon in the heavens as dark as blue fire, and the sun became the colour of blood for the third time.

#### **The hundred and twelfth vision**

There was presented to me something like a grey cat that stood under me in order to choke me, but at the last [minute] I was saved from it.

#### **The hundred and thirteenth vision**

---

<sup>896</sup> *tzaplen*

I saw in the thirty-first year after Saint Martin's Day, [standing] on a bulwark in Strasbourg looking out over the city wall, that there was a great darkness to the left side in the direction of the setting sun, and many people looked at the darkness. And on the right side I saw that there stood a beautiful garden with two trees that bore beautiful blood red apples, and onto this same garden the sun shone in beautiful brilliance. And there was a small little host who had turned themselves to the trees to look at the trees and the apples, and a voice said to me: you will yet see great wonders. And everywhere around in was winter, and only in the garden was it summer. And it discouraged me greatly that the aforementioned large host did not wish to look at and behold the beautiful sun and the garden.

End of the prophetess Ursula

### **An old prophecy from Erfurt**

In the 1372nd year, as one counts, an old man named Albrecht Gleicheisen from Erfurt made a prophecy: that once one counted 128 years, and 28 again, a great and powerful wonder would occur in the German lands. It would have strength and power from God Himself over all things. It will be so strong that it will not suffer any other power, and it is and will be over all powers, and whoever comes against it with power does wrongly and must cede power.

At the same time there will be a child Emperor and a malleable ruling class composed of spiritual and secular men, but, due to the spiritual men and to the Pope, they will be against this divine power. But this power will overthrow the child Emperor and his friends from their position and extend it to one who carries a crown on his shield and a great and strong power from God Himself. He will find cities under the leadership of the aforementioned lords, and the great power given to him by God Himself will win for him the old free cities. And in these cities

many sinners will be in need due to the great power, but the power of the cities will be cast off through the great power from God Himself.

### **The Italian prophet**

The Babylonian prophet prophesied this to Strasbourg in the thirtieth year: that they should send messengers to Martin Luther, that he might hear and learn the truth in Strasbourg. But Strasbourg will not want to do this, but will show itself to be disobedient.

The prophet from Strasbourg further says that they should count<sup>897</sup> the stones that they brought out of the cathedral.

The prophet further says to the people of Strasbourg that they should repent. If not, their city shall become like the field before the city that was once—woe!—named Meczker.

The same prophet further says that the Turk will behead Ferdinand if he does not better himself.

The prophet further says that Babylon, or Rome will be destroyed, so that not even farmers will live there, and also many other prophecies.

### **Another prophet named Bundt Hans, two miles from Strasbourg**

Bundt Hans prophesies [with the help of] astronomy [what he has seen happen] in his spirit: how the Emperor will have his first port in Augsburg, and the other in Cologne, and Swabia will also largely honour the red and white tripartite shield, says the same prophet, and the Emperor will rejoice with Strasbourg and Kassel.

This Bundt Hans also prophesies that a judgment of boils will come, and for this reason he carries the signs on the sleeve of his robe. He is also a wonderful prophet with many other prophecies.

---

<sup>897</sup> *zellen*

### **A prophet from earlier times in the land of Wurttemberg, a farmer and a vintner**

This prophet made many remarkable prophecies, [including] that such an uproar would come over the authorities that, as a man sees his children lying in a fire, it will suddenly become most urgent to him to kill the authorities in order to rescue his children from the fire, and over a hundred miles the people will have this one opinion at one time.

### **The prophet from Eckelsheim, a quarter mile from Strasbourg**

This same prophet predicts that the emperor will come for Strasbourg, and also the duke of Lorraine.<sup>898</sup> And the Emperor will have his head cut off outside Strasbourg as some strike, and the duke of Lorraine will not know how he can leave. [The prophet also says] that Ferdinand and the landgrave of the Palatinate will be beheaded.

The prophet further says that the Peasants' War will shortly have its continuation and that in a hundred mile radius of Strasbourg priests and spiritual men will be brought down and slain, and that a great host will come from the Netherlands to persecute, and the Swiss—though a small crowd—will very fearsomely burn all around them and destroy the Alsace.

The prophet further says that it was shown to him a blood moon, until it had waned to a crescent, and he says that grain will be worth twelve shillings in Strasbourg, and this will lead to trouble.

He also says that he saw a priest who rendered a judgment that the peasants of Alsace would be slaughtered, and he knows this priest well. And he also said that the people of Strasbourg will soon build the gates of their walls and afterwards one will come to quickly dig graves for those who wanted the walls.<sup>899</sup>

### **But an old prophecy**

---

<sup>898</sup> *Der Luthrynger*

<sup>899</sup> *und darnach einer komen werd der da beger die mawren den graben gleich zu Machen.*

The Spirit of God indicated from the mouths of prophets how the Emperor Charles will make for Jerusalem and before the same city will hang his shield on a simple tree.

### **The Vision of B**

There appeared a great heap of wheat, and on this heap lay a large armed man. And I saw that two people went past the heap of wheat. The man laying on the heap beckoned them to himself, but they passed him by. Then I saw a third man come and he hacked<sup>900</sup> the man on the heap of wheat into smaller bits.

### **A Vision About Switzerland**

At first there appeared a bright shining sun, and around the sun a pretty rainbow, and through the rainbow was a path. On this path appeared many people who seemed to fly, and there was such a crush of people that they cut each other off from the path. And on one side stood a large Swiss cross, and on the other side beside the rainbow, the sun, and the path stood two small Swiss crosses and, surrounding the large cross, stood powerfully over it. But in the end it was seen that the big cross ate the two small ones and destroyed them. After that the large cross stood for awhile on the ground. After this appeared a Burgundian cross that went to the large Swiss cross, ate it up, and utterly destroyed it.

Praise be to the everlasting God.

Through His Word Jesus Christ

Amen

---

<sup>900</sup> *zuhyb*