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Lutheran Exiles of Christ in the Sixteenth Century

A Survey

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Abstract: During the sixteenth century Lutheranism experienced expulsion and exile also within the Holy Roman Empire though considerably different from Calvinist or other Protestant experiences of exile. In Lutheranism mainly the theologically educated elite was concerned: professors, parsons, deacons or school assistants. Aside from transconfessional clashes with Catholic or Calvinist authorities conflicts with Lutheran authorities escalated severely thus resulting in the dismissal or resignation of the theologians concerned. With the self-identification as *Exul (Christi)*, that appeared around 1550 and that was still in use until the late eighteenth century, a great number of Lutherans in exile articulated – and claimed – their right to be regarded as upright confessors and living martyrs of the true (Lutheran) doctrine. The focus of this essay is on the cultivation of the experience of exile by these *Exules* who were an exceptionally belligerent group of theologically educated Lutherans who developed a new understanding of martyrdom in Lutheranism drawing on a theology of the little flock.

Keywords: exile, confessional migration, *Exul (Christi)*, Lutheranism, martyr, confessor, theology of the little flock

1 Introduction

Expulsion, exile and voluntary migration for religious reasons recur throughout the history of Christianity. This phenomenon has been researched for some time. Individuals and families were concerned as well as small or large groups of people with a varying degree of interrelation and different social statuses or political or religious identities. Categories for the description of different migration patterns were provided by migration research, amongst others by Klaus

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Bade.¹ Research on early modern confessional migration has focused primarily on migratory phenomena in Calvinism. So far there has been very little attention paid to Lutheran confessional migration. A systematic account is still missing as well as a classification of the phenomenon concerning migration history and an exploration or analysis of the theological implications of exile and expulsion in Lutheranism.

Expulsions and exiles of adherents of Lutheran ideas took place as early as the early decades of the Reformation. These incidents were primarily directed at or concerned the leading theologians, but also included lawyers or doctors, who fled persecution by authorities critical of or opposing the reformation. Theologically educated Lutheran elites and professionals experienced exile more frequently than “common” adherents of the tradition, due to the enforcement of the imperial religious law of 1548, the so-called Augsburg Interim.²

Resistance to this religious law was by no means confined to a radical minority. It was opposed by a large number of Lutheran theologians and other professionals, who recognized an existential threat to the Protestant faith and to core elements of their doctrine in the changes promoted by Charles V. Tracts printed in Magdeburg from 1548 to 1550 addressed this situation with a profoundly apocalyptic tone.³

The Peace of Augsburg (1555) granted the Lutheran Protestants not only a *ius reformandi* for their princes, but also provided a *ius* or *beneficium emigrandi*, that was intended for their subjects. Within certain limits this important *ius*

¹ Klaus Bade, “Einführung: Migration in der europäischen Geschichte seit dem späten Mittelalter,” *IMIS-Beiträge* 20 (2002): 7–20 (7–16); Klaus Bade, “Historische Migrationsforschung,” *IMIS-Beiträge* 20 (2002): 21–44 (30–32). For different types of sixteenth century migration, see Charles Tilly, “Migration in Modern European History,” in *Human Migration: Patterns and Policies*, ed. William H. McNeill and Ruth S. Adams (Bloomington, IN/London: Indiana University Press, 1978), 48–72.

² Joachim Mehlhausen, *Das Augsburger Interim: Nach den Reichstagsakten deutsch und lateinisch*, 2nd ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996); Irene Dingel and Günther Wartenberg, eds., *Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim: Der interimistische Streit (1548–1549)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Luise Schorn-Schütte, ed., *Das Interim 1548/50: Herrschaftskrise und Glaubenskonflikt* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005).

³ Thomas Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation: Magdeburgs “Herrgotts Kanzlei” (1548–1551/2)*, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie 123 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 437–48; Anja Moritz, *Interim und Apokalypse: Die religiösen Vereinheitlichungsversuche Karls V. im Spiegel der Magdeburgischen Publizistik 1548–1551/52* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 211–81. On apocalyptic tendencies in sixteenth century Lutheran pamphlets in general, see Volker Leppin, *Antichrist und Jüngster Tag: Das Profil apokalyptischer Flugschriftenpublizistik im deutschen Luthertum 1548–1618* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), passim.

emigrandi legitimized voluntary migrations for religious reasons.⁴ These migrations became even more frequent after 1555, particularly in the context of the intra-Protestant dogmatic controversies of the late sixteenth century. These controversies were a critical part of the process of Lutheran confessional formation,⁵ which in this context can be described more accurately as the formation of various confessional cultures within Lutheranism – as Thomas Kaufmann has demonstrated.⁶

There is a broad consensus that research on these controversies should consider not only the influence of secular rulers,⁷ but also the role of theologians involved. In her research on court chaplains as opponents of secular authorities and on the protestant “Wächteramt” (i. e. the office of a guardian over purity of doctrine and morals), Luise Schorn-Schütte has shown that Lutherans were not merely compliant subjects who simply yielded to their princes or other authorities.⁸ Moreover, Irene Dingel has pointed out that there was confessional

4 It has been legally stipulated in § 24 ARG (Peace of Augsburg). On the *beneficium (libere) migrandi* and the Diet of Schweinfurt (1532), see Bernd Christian Schneider, *Ius Reformandi: Die Entwicklung eines Staatskirchenrechts von seinen Anfängen bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 109–11, 157–64; Alexander Schunka, “Glaubensflucht als Migrationsoption,” *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 56, no. 10 (2005): 547–64, esp. 552; Martin Heckel, “Augsburger Religionsfriede,” in *Evangelisches Staatslexikon*, 3rd ed., ed. Roman Herzog (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1987), 2:111–17.

5 For a short summary of the history of concepts of confessional formation, see Rudolf Leeb, “Vorwort,” in *Staatsmacht und Seelenheil: Gegenreformation und Geheimprotestantismus in der Habsburgermonarchie*, ed. Rudolf Leeb, Claudine Pils, and Thomas Winkelbauer (Wien/München: Oldenbourg, 2007), 7–10.

6 Thomas Kaufmann, *Konfession und Kultur: Lutherischer Protestantismus in der zweiten Hälfte des Reformationsjahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 14–21.

7 Wolfgang Reinhard, “Konfession und Konfessionalisierung in Europa,” in *Bekenntnis und Geschichte: Die Confessio Augustana im historischen Zusammenhang*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard (München: Vogel, 1981), 165–89; Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionspolitik und Staatsbildung: Eine Fallstudie über das Verhältnis von religiösem und sozialem Wandel in der Frühneuzeit am Beispiel der Grafschaft Lippe* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1981); for a summary see Heinz Schilling, “Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche, Staat und Gesellschaft: Profil, Leistung, Defizite und Perspektiven eines geschichtswissenschaftlichen Paradigmas,” in *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung: Wissenschaftliches Symposium der Gesellschaft zur Herausgabe des Corpus Catholicorum und des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1993*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995), 1–49.

8 Luise Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geistlichkeit in der Frühneuzeit: Deren Anteil an der Entfaltung frühmoderner Staatlichkeit und Gesellschaft; Dargestellt am Beispiel des Fürstentums Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, der Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel und der Stadt Braunschweig* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996); Luise Schorn-Schütte, “Glaube und Obrigkeit bei Luther und im Luthertum,” in *Religion und Politik: Zu Theorie und Praxis des theologisch-politischen Komplexes*, ed. Manfred Walther (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004), 87–103.

migration in Lutheranism, and with it, an exceptionally belligerent group of theologically educated Lutherans who experienced exile and expulsion time and again.⁹

Investigating this group of Lutheran exiles, which is well identifiable by their demonstrative use of the self-identification as “Exul” or “Exul Christi” may help us to better understand the mutual influence of migration and a theological interpretation of reality found in Lutheranism in the late sixteenth century. The focus here is on the cultivation of the experience of exile by the exiles themselves. It led to a new Lutheran conception of martyrdom drawing on a theology of the little flock based on 1 Kings 19:18, where God comforted Elijah by telling him: “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.”¹⁰

Outside of a few prominent theologians, for example, Nicholas of Amsdorf (1483–1565) or Tileman Heshusius (1527–1588), the vast majority of the Lutheran exiles of the sixteenth century are only known by their names and the title “Exul,” occurring in subscription lists or even only by the numbers of exiles mentioned in exul-publications.¹¹ Both the events that led to their exiles, as well as the names and fates of individuals or groups of Lutheran theologians have to be collected from various sources. These sources are varied and include: pamphlets and prefaces to treatises by the exiles; some extensive tracts in German and Latin; visitation protocols and other magisterial documents; funeral sermons for or by the *Exules*; writings of consolation and also hand written legacies¹² of the affected theologians or of princes involved in the course of events. The territorial church historiography of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century also reported some migrations and these accounts are often quite detailed. At that time historians could access archival material that is partly lost today. However, they were influenced by the research interests of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Therefore, their insights must be revised in order to obtain a

⁹ Irene Dingel, “Die Kultivierung des Exulantentums im Luthertum am Beispiel des Nikolaus von Amsdorf,” in *Nikolaus von Amsdorf, 1483–1565: Zwischen Reformation und Politik*, ed. Irene Dingel (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2008), 153–75.

¹⁰ KJV. See Vera von der Osten-Sacken, “Die kleine Herde der 7000 – Die aufrechten Bekenner in M. Flacius Illyricus konzeptionellen Beiträgen zur Neuformulierung aus Protestantischer Sicht,” in *Matija Vlačić Ilirik [III]: Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Matthias Flacius Illyricus*, ed. Luka Ilić (Labin, Croatia: Grad Labin, 2012), 184–212.

¹¹ So far approximately 500 Lutheran *Exules* could be identified, of whom about 50 persons have come forward with their own writings. Lists of subscribers who called themselves “Exul” can be found in polemical writings, written comments and petitionary letters.

¹² An in-depth analysis of handwritten legacies could only be done selectively due to the abundance of the material.

systematic description of the Lutheran confessional migration, which corresponds to the current state of research and one that is less inclined to confessional bias.

2 Causae exulandi Exulum

The migrations of the *Exules* can be assigned to a number of different causes.¹³ These are not only dismissals and expulsions in the context of recatholicization, but also exiles after a dismissal or expulsion as a result of conflicts with Protestant authorities. From a retrospective point of view reference to the Augsburg Interim (1548) – and especially to the efforts by Protestant authorities to exercise the imperial law – is made quite often in the writings of the *Exules*. But the first one to call himself an *Exul* in a printed book was Nicolas of Amsdorf in his anti-Adiaphorist pamphlet, *Das Doctor Martinus kein Adiaphorist gewesen ist* (1550).¹⁴ So exile and expulsion in the context of the Augsburg Interim (1548) and mainly of the Adiaphoristic controversy may, among other factors, have led Lutheran theologians to invent and use the title of an “Exul (Christi)”. But it became much more popular in several of the later post-Interim intra-Protestant controversies.

The dispute over the doctrine of original sin of M. Flacius,¹⁵ which lasted for almost thirty years and was raging in many places throughout the Empire and

13 See Vera von der Osten-Sacken, “Exul Christi: Konfessionsmigration und ihre theologische Deutung im strengen Luthertum zwischen 1548 und 1618,” *Europäische Geschichte Online* (EGO), 2013-04-18, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/ostensackenv-2013-de>.

14 Nicolas of Amsdorf, *Das Doctor Martinus kein Adiaphorist gewesen ist/vnd das buch on namen jhm/gewalt vnd vnrecht thut. Nicolaus von Amßdorff/EXUL V. NOVEMB.* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1550). A German version of the Exul-title can be found on the title of an anti-Interimist pamphlet in the shape of a private confession by Amsdorf: *Antwort/Glaub vnd Bekenntnis auff das schöne vnd liebliche INTERIM. Niclasen von Amßdorffs/ des verjagten Bischoffs zur Naumburgk. Anno M. D. XLVIII* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1548).

15 Luka Ilić actually stated that “the doctrine of sin, and particularly that of original sin, eventually emerged as the linchpin for much of Flacius’ theological work” (*Theologian of Sin and Grace: The Process of Radicalization in the Theology of Matthias Flacius Illyricus* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014], 234). See also Thomas Kaufmann, “Matthias Flacius Illyricus: Lutherischer Theologe und Publizist,” in *Mitteldeutsche Lebensbilder: Menschen im Zeitalter der Reformation*, ed. Werner Freitag (Köln: Böhlau, 2004), 177–99; Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*, 2 vols. (Erlangen: Bläsing, 1859–1861).

the Habsburg ancestral lands,¹⁶ might be the most pivotal event concerning the Lutheran *Exules*. It caused the separation of the true Flacianists – i. e. of the followers of the doctrine of original sin developed by Matthias Flacius Illyricus¹⁷ – from a large contingent of *Exules* who were willing to agree with the Formula of Concord and with its accompanying condemnation of Flacius' doctrine in its first article. Flacianist *Exules* migrated into the Habsburg ancestral lands, where the destructive elements of their theology shattered the group and ultimately caused its complete disappearance by the end of sixteenth century.¹⁸ Those *Exules*, who supported Lutheran unification efforts remained in the territory of the Empire and formed a continuing group. They also continued to claim the title of an Exile of Christ. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century they produced a distinctive theory of exile and martyrdom deeply influenced by Lutheran efforts to find a common interpretation of the Augsburg Confession. The most important contribution to this approach was John Wigands *De persecutione piorum* (1580).¹⁹ He explicitly represented the number of *Exules* who signed the Formula of Concord, while the Flacian *Exules* protested vociferously.

Other controversies also generated a large number of dismissals and expulsions which caused Lutheran theologians to call themselves *Exules (Christi)*, such as the efforts of the Ernestine and Albertine Saxon princes to achieve a uniform confessional basis – each in his own territory.²⁰

16 See Irene Dingel, *Concordia Controversa: Die öffentlichen Diskussionen um das lutherische Konkordienwerk am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), 472–76; Rudolf Leeb, “Widerstand und leidender Ungehorsam gegen die katholische Konfessionalisierung in den österreichischen Ländern,” in Leeb et al., *Staatsmacht* [see n5], 183–201, esp. 197–98. For a special case of Crypto-Flacianism within the borders of the empire, see Robert J. Christman, *Doctrinal Controversy and Lay Religiosity in Late Reformation Germany: The Case of Mansfeld* (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2012).

17 On the different concepts of the German terminus “Flacianer” (flacianists), see Daniel Gehrt, *Ernestinische Konfessionspolitik: Bekenntnisbildung, Herrschaftskonsolidierung und dynastische Identitätsstiftung vom Augsburger Interim 1548 bis zur Konkordienformel 1577* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2011), 242–46, 317–22, 388–94, 417–76.

18 Dingel, *Concordia*, 467–541; Vera von der Osten-Sacken, “Concordia oder Constantia? Johann Wigands Exilstypologie von 1580 und die flacianische Formula Veritatis (1582),” *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte des Protestantismus in Österreich* (JGPrÖ) 131 (2016): 52–71.

19 Johannes Wigand, *DE || PERSECUTIONE PIORVM. || EXILIIS PIORVM. || EXILIIS FACINOROSORVM. || MARTYRIIS PIORVM. || PSEUDOMARTYRIIS. || FUGA MINISTRORVM VERBI. || CONSTANTIA. || APOSTASIA. || PATIENTIA. || PER || IOHANNEM VVIGANDVM, D. || Episcopum Pomezaniensem.* || (Frankfurt am Main: Georg Corvinus [Georg Rab, d. Ä.], 1580).

20 For the history of events from an Ernestine perspective, see Gehrt, *Ernestinische Konfessionspolitik*, passim.

In addition to political considerations, the role and self-understanding of some secular employers of the *Exules* could be affected by a clearly perceptible personal religious conviction.²¹ This can be seen particularly well using the example of Ernestine Saxony. In the sixteenth century the Saxon Dukes clearly supported the *Exules* and their very strict brand of Lutheranism. The personal papers of the Ernestine court preacher Bartholomew Gernhard – who was an *Exul* himself – contain handwritten correspondence with the widowed Duchess Dorothea Susanna of Saxe-Weimar.²² Gernhard also compiled documents of dismissals and expulsions of Ernestine theologians for the Duchess in a collection entitled “Das grosse Passional” (The Great Passional).²³ This illuminating correspondence between the Duchess and the theologian shows that the Duchess tried to preserve the doctrinal and personnel unity of the Ernestine church as far as possible. However a large part of the clergy had been removed from office by the Elector Augustus of Saxony when he gained influence on the Ernestine territory in 1573.²⁴ Bartholomew Gernhard, the former court preacher of the Duchess, became the advocate of the displaced clergy in their exile. Documents in his personal papers list the names of exiles still without a living, which suggests that the Duchess and the theologian successfully pursued a common strategy of keeping the Ernestine clergy together and bringing them back into office one at a time. This was only possible because the negotiations between the Duchess and the Elector – for a variety of reasons – reached a successful outcome.²⁵ So this is an example of how what was once an *Exul*-group was restored and reintroduced into their previous status within the territory. But this restoration did not end the controversy, not even from the Ernestine *Exules*’ point of view. Gernhard continued collecting documents for his “Great Passional” until nearly the end of his life in 1600.

21 Vera von der Osten-Sacken, “Herzogin Dorothea Susanna von Sachsen-Weimar (1544–1592) und die ernestinische Bekenntnisfrage,” in *Fürstinnen und Konfession: Beiträge hochadliger Frauen zu Religionspolitik und Bekenntnisbildung*, ed. Vera von der Osten-Sacken and Daniel Gehrt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 253–67.

22 Personal papers of both the Duchess and Bartholomew Gernhard can be found in Gotha research library (FB Gotha).

23 FB Gotha Chart. A 51–58.

24 Gehrt, *Ernestinische Konfessionspolitik* [see n17], 436–525; Osten-Sacken, “Herzogin Dorothea Susanna,” 261–66.

25 Irene Dingel, “Dorothea Susanna von Sachsen-Weimar (1544–1592) im Spannungsfeld von Konfession und Politik: Ernestinisches und albertinisches Sachsen im Ringen von Glaube und Macht,” in *Glaube und Macht: Theologie, Politik und Kunst im Jahrhundert der Reformation*, ed. Enno Bünz, Stefan Rhein, and Günther Wartenberg (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005), 175–92; Osten-Sacken, “Herzogin Dorothea Susanna.”

3 The self-understanding of a martyr

Lutheran *Exules* considered themselves to be living martyrs.²⁶ This claim was commensurate with the concept of martyrdom held by the Lutheran theologian Ludwig Rabus and used as a basis for his Protestant martyrology as early as 1552–1558.²⁷ Unlike other Protestant martyrologists Rabus explicitly went back to the ancient idea of a Christian confessor, who suffered any sort of persecution giving that witness.²⁸ According to Rabus martyrs were divinely inspired heroes, who “joyfully and fearlessly not only confessed but for the sake of that confession have lost their goods and chattels, husbands, wives, children, houses, farms and fields, and even this temporal live.”²⁹

Both, the wider definition of a martyr by Ludwig Rabus and the demonstratively expressed claim of the *Exules* to suffer persecution and expulsion for the sake of faith, and to be proven witnesses for the sake of true salutary doctrine (*testes sincerae doctrinae*) suggests that the interpretation of exile and migration in Lutheranism were fundamentally different from their understanding in Reformed Protestantism or in the various groups associated with the so-called Radical Reformation. Accordingly, the exilic experiences of Lutheran theologians had different effects on their self-understanding, on their general theological orientation, and on their definition of reality. The Exiles of Christ

26 Wigand explicitly refers to the exiles of the pious as μαρτυρία (testimony/confession) and δοκιμασία (scrutiny) (*De persecutione* [see n19], 81, 125). On the problem of martyrdom in early Lutheranism, see the wide and illuminating oeuvre of Robert Kolb, esp. *For All the Saints: Changing Perceptions of Martyrdom and Sainthood in the Lutheran Reformation* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987) and “God’s Gift of Martyrdom: The Early Reformation Understanding of Dying for the Faith,” *Church History* 64 (1995): 399–411.

27 Ludwig Rabus, *Historien der Heyligen Außerwölten Gottes Zeügen/ Bekennern vnd Martyrern* ..., 8 vols. (Strasbourg: Emmel, 1552–1558). See Kolb, *For All the Saints*, 9, 41–83; Robert Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530–1580* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1991), 82–91; Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 165–74; Peter Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit: Zur Kultur des Martyriums in der frühen Neuzeit* (München: Oldenbourg, 2004), 51–81.

28 This can be seen clearly by the Latin title of his martyrology: *Tomus I de S. Dei confessoribus, veterisque ecclesiae martyribus* (Strasbourg: Emmel, 1552), see the typewritten doctoral thesis by Gerhard Dedeke, “Die protestantischen Märtyrerbücher von Ludwig Rabus, Jean Crespin und Adriaen van Haemstede und ihr gegenseitiges Verhältnis” (thesis presented to the department of Protestant Theology of Friedrichs-University Halle-Wittenberg in 1922), 50.

29 “[... those, who] mit freüden/vnd vnerschrocknem hertzen/mit allein bekennet/sonder auch vm der bekanntnuß willen/all ir Haab vnd Güter/Mann/Weib/vnd Kinder/Hauß/Hoff vnd Acker/Jha auch diß zeytlich Leben/verloren haben” (Rabus, *Historien* [see n27], vol. 1, f. 3r).

interpreting their own expulsion as a kind of martyrdom, by which they were identified as true witnesses of the pure doctrine of Luther and of the gospel not only cultivated their exilic experiences but used it to confirm their own doctrinal opinions. They committed themselves uncompromisingly to their own positions, especially their interpretation of Luther's writings, teaching, practice, worship and religious life. Representatives of other doctrinal perspectives were depicted as victims of deceit by the Antichrist or even as his adherents. Theologians who were not sufficiently aggressive in advocating the concerns of the *Exules* or who avoided openly criticizing their opinions, were called "creutzflüchtige Manenten"³⁰ – i. e., people who prevaricated instead of committing themselves to a necessary confession, because they feared the consequences. Some *Exules* even seem to have used the polemic title of dishonor of a martyr of the devil.³¹

The parish office, but especially preaching, was understood as the means of teaching and preserving Luther's salutary doctrine. According to John Wigand this understanding of the clerical office meant that the Lutheran *Exules* expected the radical attitude of a confessor only from their pastors or ecclesiastical

30 Bartholomew Gernhard, *DE EXILIIS. || Christliche || Erinnerungeñ aus || Gottes Wort. || In etlichen furnemen Artickeln zu || ende der Vorrede verzeichnet. || An die Enturlaubten || vnd Vertriebenen Prediger aus || D[ue]ringen/ Francken/ vnd Meissen/ || der vnm[ue]ndigen Hertzogen zu Sach= ||sen [et]c. F[ue]rstenthumb. || Bey Ausspendunge der Contri= ||buirten Stewer gehalten. || Durch || M. Bartholome Gernharden || Exulem Christi (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1575), 29v–30r: "Das sollen die falschen Brüder vnd Creutz=[30r]flüchtigen Manenten auch erfahren/wo sie nicht Busse thun/die das Elende schewen/vnd anderer Elende verursachen vnd vermehren/die Schwachen ergern/die Gottlosen stercken/vnd die vnschuldigen leidenden mit jhrem bösen Exempel de facto verdammen/Wehe denen/so sich hie ergern."*

31 The German phrase "Teufelsmartyrer" (martyr of the devil) was reinterpreted by Martin Luther. Its original function was to denote a person who produced much effort without having achieved anything. See David Bagchi, "Luther and the Problem of Martyrdom," in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 1993), 209–19, esp. 215 with n32. Luther used it in a more literal sense – and according to Hildegard Hebenstreit-Wilfert, "Martyrerflugschriften der Reformationszeit," in *Flugschriften als Massenmedium der Reformationszeit: Beiträge zum Tübinger Symposium 1980*, ed. Hans-Joachim Köhler (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 397–446, esp. 426, re-using a roman-catholic argumentation – for all those, who in his opinion suffered prosecution for their confession of a false doctrine given to them by the devil. See e. g. Martin Luther, *Eine schreckliche Geschichte und ein Gericht Gottes über Thomas Müntzer* (1525), WA 18:362–74, and Martin Luther, *Kurtzes Bekenntnis* (1544), WA 54:155.1–8, on the death of Huldreich Zwingli. In a letter to Philipp of Hesse Philipp Melancthon complained of Joachim Westphal in Hamburg and several preachers in the city of Bremen, who affronted English Protestants calling them "martyrs of the devil" (CR 9, nr. 6710, p. 778–81).

ministers.³² To some extent this distinction can be traced back to Luther as well.³³ Lutheran *Exules* derived from this idea their elevated understanding of the role of the clergy, which led them into conflict with the claims of secular authorities and caused exiles as a result of disputes between theologians and rulers over the understanding of ministry and / or the consequences of political authorities who sought to exercise authority over the pastors and theologians in their territories. Those conflicts frequently arose from the fact that *Exules* protested vigorously against their opponents doings, which were obviously morally inappropriate from their point of view, e. g. in the course of the Rudolstadt dispute on usury (1565–1566).³⁴ Other conflicts concerned certain punitive measures which Lutheran clergy took executing the Office of the Keys.³⁵

But there also were conflicts of competence. As an employer, secular authorities assured the *Exules'* existence. At the same time Lutheran clerics as well as Lutheran princes had to negotiate the scope of their respective competences in the rise of political sovereigns' authority over the church with the emerging theologically functional elite. This can be seen particularly well in public

32 According to Wigand, the devil mainly attacked preachers and doctors of the church, due to the fact that being multipliers of the true doctrine these persons contravened his interest most forcefully (*De persecutione* [see n19], 50, 164). Wigand also stated that *Exules* should not make their parishioners feel obliged to follow them into their exiles. These expectations concerned every pious Lutheran cleric in person irrespectively of whether at that time he was holding an office or not (*De persecutione*, 99–100).

33 Kolb, "God's Gift of Martyrdom" [see n26], 399–411, esp. 405.

34 Bernhard Anemüller, *Bartholomäus Gernhard und der Rudolstädter Wucherstreit im 16. Jahrhundert: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gräfin Katharina der Heldenmüthigen* (Rudolstadt: Hofbuchdruckerei, 1861); Vera von der Osten-Sacken, "Erzwungenes und selbstgewähltes Exil im Luthertum: Bartholomäus Gernhards Schrift 'De Exiliis' (1575)," in *Religion und Mobilität: Zum Verhältnis von raumbezogener Mobilität und religiöser Identitätsbildung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, ed. Thomas Weller and Henning P. Jürgens (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 41–58, esp. 50–51.

35 E.g. in the course of the so-called "Wesenbeck'scher Taufstreit", see Rudolf Herrmann, *Thüringische Kirchengeschichte* (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 2000; reprint of Weimar: Frommannsche Buchhandlung, 1947), 2:152; *Geschichte der Universität Jena 1548/58–1958: Festgabe zum vierhundertjährigen Universitätsjubiläum*, authored and edited by a team of authors of the Department of History of Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena under the direction of Max Steinmetz (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1958), 1:40; Dingel, "Dorothea Susanna" [see n25], 180–81 with n21. Tileman Heshusius developed a radical doctrine of the Office of the Keys. Its goal was to protect freedom of the church from roman papacy attacking it and from the "new political (or secular) antichrist" (newe politische Antichrist), see Heshusius, "Wer macht/ fug vud // recht hab Pfarherrn zuberuffen," in *Vom Ampt vnd ge=||walt der Pfarherrn.|| Auch || Wer macht/ fug vud // recht hab Pfarherrn zuberuffen* (Königsberg: Hans Daubmann (heirs) / Christoph Hoffmann, 1575), f. 50v; Peter F. Barton, *Um Luthers Erbe: Studien und Texte zur Spätreformation; Tilemann Heshusius (1527–1559)* (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1972), 80 with n1.

disputes about the *ius vocationis* of candidates suitable for ministry, e. g. in the Magdeburg controversy in the 1560s. To replace Sebastian Werner, who was a minister at St. Ulrich in Magdeburg, by the *Exul* John Wigand Tileman Heshusius, who at that time was a minister at St. John and his chaplain Batholomew Strele willfully escalated the controversy into a struggle for power against the city council. This led to civil commotion and incarceration of some of Heshusius followers. Heshusius himself earned a ban on preaching. Strele responded to that ban by excommunicating the city council and several ministers. Both, Heshusius and Strele were expelled from the city in 1562. Heshusius, who did not obey, was forced to leave Magdeburg in 1562.³⁶ That controversy produced a number of polemic pamphlets,³⁷ in which Heshusius and other *Exules* did not only assail secular authorities, but they also answered objections by Nicolas of Amsdorf, who like Heshusius himself to some extent was a mastermind of the Exiles of Christ.³⁸

4 Profile in terms of migration history

The historical profile of migration for the Lutheran “*Exules*” in the second half of the sixteenth century differs significantly from Lutheran migrations which took place later at roughly the same time in other Protestant confessional cultures, e. g. in Reformed Protestantism. Lutheran *Exules* in the sixteenth century were a comparatively small group, but almost exclusively composed of theologically

36 Joh. Georg Leuckfeld, *HISTORIA HESHUSIANA, Oder Historische Nachricht Von dem Leben/ Bedienungen und Schrifften Tilemanni Heshusii/ S.S. Theol. hochberühmt gewesenen Doctoris und Professoris der Evangel. Kirchen/ ...* (Quedlingburg/Aschersleben: Gottlob Ernst Struntzen, 1716), 31–36.

37 For a list of 23 polemical pamphlets related to the Magdeburg controversy, see Leuckfeld, *Historia Heshusiana*, 34–36 with note h.

38 See Nicolas of Amsdorf, *Eine Vermanung || An den Rath vnd || die gemein Buergerschafft || zu Magdeburgk* (Magdeburg: Joachim Walde, 1563); Matthaeus Judex, *Eynfeltiger Vnter = richt fuer die Christen in Magdeburg/ Was von deß herrn Amßdorffij vermeintem vrteil/ nach Gottes Wort vnnnd dem heiligen Catechismo zuhalten sey ...* (Regensburg: Heinrich Geißler, 1563); Tileman Heshuius, *Gründliche widerle=gung des falschen vnnnd selbst ange=masten vermeinten vrtheils/ Herrn Niclassen von Ambsdorff/in der Magdeburgischen sache* (Magdeburg, 1564). For Amsdorfs role in that controversy, see Hartmut Kühne, “Nikolaus von Amsdorf im Streit zwischen dem Magdeburger Rat und lutherischen Theologen um die Amtsenthebung des Tilemann Heshusius,” in *Nikolaus von Amsdorf, 1483–1565: Zwischen Reformation und Politik*, ed. Irene Dingel (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2008), 281–306.

educated adherents. They were very active in publishing and often also members of influential circles of society.

Depending on the behavior of the exiled theologians, the exile experience could have been a self-chosen option as a matter of conscience or the result of a deliberately induced escalation by the concerned theologians themselves, e. g. by Tileman Heshusius and Bartholomew Stele in the Magdeburg controversy. But there were also confession-related evictions by Calvinist or Catholic political authorities.

Besides fleeing re-catholicization or conflicts with Reformed rulers, as in the Palatinate, Lutheran exiles after 1555 were often compelled to leave by intra-Lutheran conflicts – i. e. conflicts between Lutheran theologians among themselves or with their princes – that led to dismissals and expulsions, whose severity varied from escape to threat to life and limb, especially in the context of re-catholicization, or expulsion and to some sort of “friendly dismissal”. This means, for example, that the exile – despite the dismissal from his office – continued to receive support from his home territory, as happened to the Ernestine *Exules* in the years following their dismissal in 1573 or in several dismissals in the context of the Interim. In those cases, very often a return of the exile was planned at the same time.

These exilic experiences were typically individual migrations. Usually they involved the theologically educated elites. Rare and rather late, there were group migrations of Lutherans, who called themselves “Exul”, e. g. of a group of citizens in the wake of the controversy over the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in Augsburg (1583).³⁹

In late sixteenth century Lutheranism, however, there were almost no migrations of entire communities comparable to the famous example of the Reformed theologian John a Lasco (1499–1560) in 1553,⁴⁰ although there were later, e. g. in the wake of the 30 Years War. Exiles of entire communities were also discussed as an option within the sixteenth century Lutheran literature.⁴¹ Lutheran theologians left their communities and their secular employment but often retained parts of their public offices, such as preaching or publishing comments on current controversies, as long as they were given opportunities to do so, because they believed that these duties were part of confessing the

³⁹ Martin Kruse, *Speners Kritik am landesherrlichen Kirchenregiment und ihre Vorgeschichte* (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1971), 52–53, 70–78.

⁴⁰ See Menno Smid, “Reisen und Aufenthaltsorte a Lascos,” in *Johannes a Lasco (1499–1560): Polnischer Baron, Humanist und europäischer Reformator*, ed. Christoph Strohm (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 187–98, esp. 194–95.

⁴¹ Wigand, *De persecutione* [see n19], 98.

(Lutheran) truth and that as such they were ultimately bestowed by the Holy Spirit.⁴²

So in case of the sixteenth century Lutheran *Exules*, i. e. of those Lutheran exiles, who used the title of an *Exul* in the second half of the sixteenth century, religious motives were uniformly crucial for their decision to leave home. Economics and social considerations rarely played a role in their decision-making.⁴³ Neither were those theologians who used the *Exul*-title settled in the host society in terms of a new home, but Lutheran parishioners did, e. g. in the city of Antwerp living under a Church Order established in 1566 by the gnesio-lutheran theologians M. Flacius, C. Spangenberg (*Exul*) and H. Hamelmann (*Exul*).⁴⁴ However, the theologians themselves did not form exclusive communities, but strove for new parish or teaching positions in their host territory. Lutheran *Exules* compensated for their foreignness in the host territory – if they felt foreign at all – by their participation in networks of mobile academic elites. These intellectuals had already changed their location to acquire a university education, and continued to pursue cross-border alliances and networks with like-minded persons.⁴⁵ *Exules* also replaced pastors who had been expelled themselves or emigrated voluntarily in their host territory, as happened several times e. g. in the Saxon territories in the sixteenth century.⁴⁶ Some *Exules* were

42 Tileman Heshusius, *Vom Ampt vnd Ge=||walt der Pfar=||herrn.* || D.Tilemanus Heshusius.|| ... || (Magdeburg: Wolfgang Kirchner, 1561), f. A1v–2r. John Wigand developed a kind of code of conduct for Lutherans *Exules*. According to Wigand, an *Exul* should continue to confess Lutheran doctrine in his exile, but he also should carefully mind, not to come into conflict with secular authorities and official preachers (*De persecutione*, 101).

43 This was the case in later Lutheran migratory phenomena, as Alexander Schunka has shown. See Alexander Schunka, “Pragmatisierung konfessioneller Autorität: Zuwanderer im Kursachsen des 17. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel des Supplikenwesens,” in *Glaubensflüchtlinge: Ursachen, Formen und Auswirkungen frühneuzeitlicher Konfessionsmigration in Europa*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke (Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2008), 235–56.

44 Eckhard Düker, *Freudenchristentum der Erbauungsschriftsteller Stephan Praetorius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 112; Rudolf Keller, “Lutheraner in Antwerpen 1566–1585,” in *Evangelium in Flandern: Eine Geschichte des belgischen Protestantismus*, ed. Edouard Pichal (Moers: Brendow, 1993), 219–21, esp. 220; Preger, *Flacius* [see n15], 2:564–65.

45 Alexander Schunka, “Migrationen evangelischer Geistlicher als Motor der Wanderungsbewegung,” in *Konfession, Migration und Elitenbildung: Studien zur Theologenausbildung des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Hermann J. Selderhuis and Markus Wriedt (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2007), 1–26.

46 Osten-Sacken, “*Exul Christi*” [see n13]; Gehrt, *Ernestinische Konfessionspolitik* [see n17], 262–64. On Ernestine territory in general, see Thomas Klein, “Ernestinisches Sachsen, kleinere thüringische Gebiete,” in *Die Territorien des Reichs im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung: Land und Konfession 1500–1650*, vol. 4, *Mittleres Deutschland*, ed. Anton Schindling and Walter Ziegler (Münster: Aschendorff, 1992), 8–39.

supported by new patrons or even by their former employers, who continued to inform them of the situation in their home communities – the so-called “friendly dismissal” mentioned previously. Even during repeated instances of exile – a very common occurrence – the *Exules* usually relocated comparatively short distances from their homes and kept close contact to their areas of origin.

By their publishing activities Lutheran *Exules* could – within certain limits, e. g. under censorship regulations⁴⁷ – take part in the controversies they were engaged in and personally remain in places far away from the geographical centers of the conflict. Not only preaching or disputing in person, but also by distributing a great number of tracts and pamphlets they were able to influence different controversies at the same time. Separating the place of their body and actions from the places of their various impacts they created and occupied a location-independent “literary space”. Via this literary presence the persons themselves and, even more, the idea of *Exul Christi* also gained time-transcending prevalence. But this rarely was the main intention of sixteenth century *Exules*, as can be seen clearly by the very concrete polemic they waged in the vast majority of their publications.⁴⁸

Theological reflection on the exilic experience and expulsion dealt mostly with the specific experiences of migration constructed by the theologians themselves. They were involved in numerous post-Interim controversies, but they were not all of the same mind. Therefore no particular doctrinal opinion should be linked directly with the claim to be an Exile of Christ.

⁴⁷ Following an electoral order to stop trading of so-called “flacian” (i. e. polemical gnesio-lutheran) books the Leipzig city council enacted a prohibition of sale in the eve of Leipzig book fair (30.04.1569). The document listed “suspicious” works among others by Matthias Flacius, who did not use the title of an “Exul”, and the *Exules* Simon Musaeus, Cyriacus Spangenberg and John Wigand. See Hans-Peter Hasse, *Zensur theologischer Bücher in Kursachsen im konfessionellen Zeitalter: Studien zur kursächsischen Literatur- und Religionspolitik in den Jahren 1569 bis 1575* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 71, 383–84. Some *Exules* protested vigorously against censorship regulations concerning theological publications writing experts opinions and publishing polemical tracts – e. g. Tileman Heshusius did so, see Felix Bidembach, *Consiliorum Theologorum Decas. VIII: Der achte Theil Theologischer Bedenken; Bericht oder Antwort auff mancherley in Glaubens- oder Gewissenssachen zutragende Fälle ... biß auf achtzig continuieret ...* (Frankfurt: E. Kempffer, 1612), 97–132; Kruse, *Speners Kritik* [see n39], 51 with n14 –, but *Exules* rarely challenged the censorship prerogative of political authorities in general.

⁴⁸ For an especially dramatic example see Johann Georg Leuckfelds narration of the Mansfeld controversy on original sin in the 1570ies: Johann Georg Leuckfelds, *Past. Prim. Gröning, Historia Spangenbergensis, Oder Historische Nachricht Von dem Leben/ Lehre und Schrifften Cyriaci Spangenberges Gewesenen Manßfeldischen DECANI Auch Berühmten THEOLOGI und HISTORICI ...* (Quedlingburg/Aschersleben: Gottlob Ernst Struntz, 1712), 30–80.

Nevertheless, there are common characteristics. Essentially, all of the known Lutheran *Exules*, belonged to strict Lutheranism or at least subscribed to publications which were written in a strictly Lutheran tone. They had significant doctrinal and personnel similarities with the so-called Gnesiolutherans – but they were not identical to them. In the crisis-laden experience of the Interim the later *Exules* responded with the development of enforcement rather than adaptation strategies. In the context of resistance against the Interim, which concentrated in Magdeburg and was actually staged by theologians and local magistrates⁴⁹ – Lutheran theologians started to interpret their current presence as a matter of confession (*casus confessionis*⁵⁰), which was accompanied by the self-designation as *Exul* in their writings, as illustrated by Amsdorf as early as 1550.⁵¹ During the process of formulating the *Magdeburg Centuries*,⁵² nearly the same circle of theologians developed a Lutheran theology of the little flock against a background of apocalyptic interpretation of their present time.⁵³ Moreover, in historical arguments within the prefaces of the later polemics of the *Exules*, alluding 2 Cor 6:15, reference is often made to the Interim as a misguided attempt to reconcile Belial or the Antichrist with Christ and as the beginning of a long series of errors and calamities in Lutheran doctrine and church administration.⁵⁴ Subsequent experiences of controversy were seen as more recent manifestations of the same difficulties. This characteristic demand for uncompromising confession of Lutheran doctrinal truth survived the tacit abrogation of the Interim (1552) and the Peace of Augsburg (1555) by decades.

49 Thomas Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation* [see n3], 41–118.

50 E.g. Johannes Meckhart, *Was es für ain || sondere grosse gnad/ Eer || vnnd würdigkait seye/ die aller di = ||ser Welt herrlicheit weit vbertrifft/ ge = ||mainschafft vnd tayl haben/ mit/ denen/|| Gottes wort rain vnnd lauter gepredi = ||get vnnd fürgetragen wirdt/ auß || dem LXXXIII. Psalm/ ai = ||ner Christenlichen per = ||son/ Durch || Johann Meckhardt auß seinem || exilio zügeschriben.|| ... / (Augsburg: Uhart, 1552).*

51 See n14.

52 Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Johann Wigand, Mattheus Judex, and Martin Köppe, eds., *Ecclesiastica Historia integram ecclesiae Christi ideam quantum ad locum, propagationem, persecutionem, tranquillit., doctrin., haereses, ceremonias, gubunationem, schismata, synodos, personas, miracula, martyria, religiones extra ecclesiam: singulari diligentia et fide ex vetustissimis et optimis historicis, patribus et aliis scriptoribus congesta per aliquot studiosos et pios viros in urbe* (Basel: Oporinus 1559–1574); Harald Bollbuck, *Wahrheitszeugnis, Gottes Auftrag und Zeitkritik: Die Kirchengeschichte der Magdeburger Zenturien und ihre Arbeitstechniken* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 80–98.

53 Osten-Sacken, “Kleine Herde” [see n10].

54 Wigand, *De persecutione* [see n19], 53, 130 and passim.

The title *Exul* became quite common during the second half of the sixteenth and even more in the seventeenth century. It enjoyed various kinds of renaissances and variations mainly in Lutheranism during the following decades.⁵⁵ Only in the seventeenth century, especially in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War, did the number of Lutheran exiles increase dramatically. In this later time the self-designation "Exul" was used by different educational and social classes and not only by Lutherans but also by Catholics, especially by Jesuits. But the term was not used in the so-called Radical Reformation or in Calvinism,⁵⁶ so it did not become a general protestant habit. From the seventeenth century onward, the phenomenon expanded significantly, so that the self-chosen title "Exul" can even be found into the nineteenth century.

55 Osten-Sacken, "Exul Christi" [see n13]. Kruse also depicts Philip Jacob Spener's re-lecture of works by *Exules* for his criticism of the principle of the summepiscopacy (*Speners Kritik* [see n39], 57–69).

56 Osten-Sacken, "Exul Christi."