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Here I Rest: A New Perspective on Fine Art during the Reformation Era

Martin Luther had barely breathed his last when images of him lying on his deathbed were already being produced. These depicted the great Reformer in quiet repose, as a direct and intentional response to those who expressed hopes that Luther might have been taken in his death throes by the devil for having renounced the true and Catholic faith. This view was advanced in the late nineteenth century by Paul Majunke, a priest who was active as a politician and publicist on the Catholic side during the so-called *Kulturkampf*, the clash of cultures that divided Catholic and Protestant Germany. According to his interpretation, these paintings were a piece of spin by the reformers, designed to "silence the lying mouths of the devil and his associates" who would inevitably claim that Luther had died a "sudden, unexpected and, above all, undignified death."[1]

When we turn to the bare facts, we find that contemporary sources do indeed mention the presence of two painters at the time and place of Luther's demise. One of these was an anonymous artist from Eisleben, and the other was Lucas Furtenagel from Halle (Saale) (fig. 1). In fact their sketches were used as the template for paintings that were in turn to become the foundation for a specific iconographic tradition of deathbed portraits of Luther.[2] Such portraits were subsequently churned out by the Cranach workshop in astonishing numbers (fig. 2).[3] They did in fact proclaim a uniform message: in death as in life ("Here I stand"), Martin Luther had remained true to the new evangelical creed. Had he indeed been possessed by the devil, he surely would have died with a twisted grimace on his face. But, as Luther's quiet and composed mien in the paintings demonstrates, this had definitely not been the case.

But back in the nineteenth century, Majunke was intent on revealing these deathbed portraits as historical fakes. As an experienced protagonist of the *Kulturkampf*, he even revived the outdated claim that Luther had died by his own hand.[4] He did so with all the outward signs of an earnest scholar, even claiming in his foreword that his study was "not intended for popular consumption, but only for an academic audience."

In the course of the *Kulturkampf*, which had been stirred up by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck after the successful founding of the German Empire in 1870/71, quite a number of such absurdities began to resurface from where they had been buried in the refuse of history. In this light, it is slightly ironic that there was also a debate over the official deathbed portrait of Bismarck himself, which eventually grew into a full-fledged media scandal. Two "paparazzi" had gained access to his dying room and made unauthorized photographs that showed the deceased in a realistic manner, with his chin bound up. This was in stark contrast to the "official" and popular image, which depicted the revered founder of the German Empire serenely lying in state, as painted by Emanuel Grosser or Franz von Lenbach.

Interpretation, Exploitation, and Polemics

As with many other academic subjects, a proper understanding of the age of the Reformation is not really possible unless the story of its perception by scholars of history is taken into account. In Germany, more than anywhere else, interpretations proliferated as a direct result of political circumstances.[5] Perhaps because it was so obvious, one particular question related to our topic has largely been ignored in art history, or was only addressed in passing: how exactly was artistic production, especially the famous works created by Lucas Cranach the Elder, harnessed by the respective ideologies? Another constant in these interpretations is the supposed friendship between Luther and Cranach—a construct whose evolution into a given certainty can be traced by research over many generations and in various media.[6]

Much of what is currently being published on the occasion of the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation fits seamlessly into this tradition of ideologically biased and schematic interpretation. One example is the way that the term "German" is still being interpreted as referring primarily to a political nation, much as the nineteenth century would have seen it. In the light of recent insights provided by the discipline of cultural-historic geography,[7] which defines space and time as dynamic historic entities, this interpretation is certainly obsolete.

When 2017 has passed, we may need to ask ourselves if this so-called Luther Decade (the designation under which the preparations for the Reformation Jubilee took place in Germany) has squandered a host of opportunities for real academic research. This includes above all the fact that an earlier approach, summarized under the term "transitional period", was not always kept in mind.

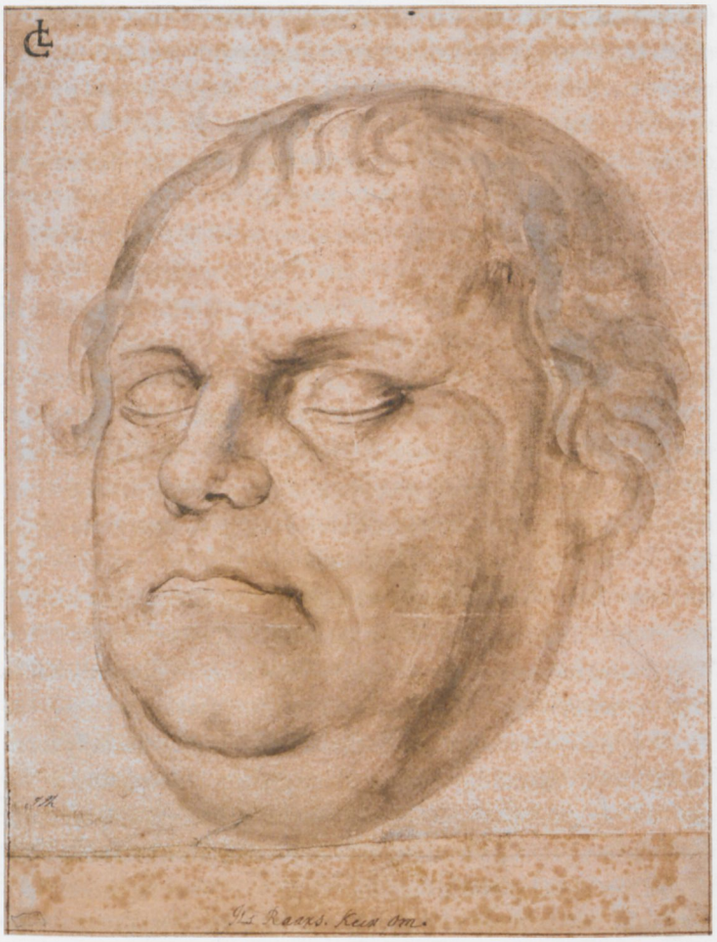

Fig. 1 Lucas Furtenagel, Martin Luther on his Death Bed, February 18 or 19, 1546

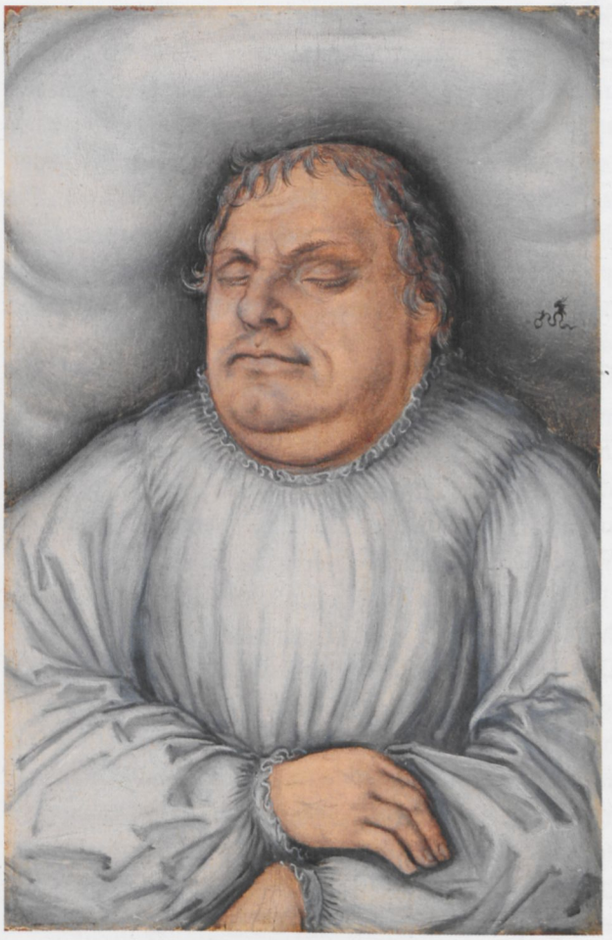

Fig. 2 Lucas Cranach the Elder – Workshop, Martin Luther on his Death Bed, 1546

This perception understands the year 1517 as one component of a lengthy and ongoing process *(longue durée)*[8] instead of the nineteenth-century tradition of emphasizing this year as an epochal watershed. When we turn to the artistic production of this particular year, we can clearly observe that there were no sudden changes from one day to the next, as traditional religious subjects were still being produced alongside the new images. A near-ideal example of this continuity is provided by the famous workshop of Cranach the Elder in the town of Wittenberg.[9] Surely the time is ripe for art history as a discipline to finally shift its perspective and focus research on these hitherto neglected aspects.

Considering the long-term structures of European history, the controversies surrounding the deathbed images of both Luther and Bismarck may be taken as prime examples of how defamatory mechanisms can make appearances throughout history recurrent simply because of their inherent suitability as ideological weapons. Obviously, it has been accepted practice throughout history to denounce and vilify opponents in any serious debate—and this holds true for theological disputes as well!

Luther himself was an eloquent proponent of this method of denunciation, which he employed in both spoken and written statements, but also in the imagery that was inspired by him or his fellow reformers. He would readily pour out all manners of insults over his theological and political opponents.[10] Chief among these was Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg: as this "bishop of shit was a false and lying man," Luther exhorted his audience to abstain from "publicly praising or exalting this pernicious, shitty priest," lest one make a saint out of the very "devil".[11]

1 Majunke, *Lebensende*, p. 10. **2** See Dieck, *Totenbilder*. **3** For a listing of these portraits, visit the research data compiled by Dr. Michael Hofbauer (Heidelberg), which is hosted as a research Wiki "CranachNet" by the Library of the University of Heidelberg. This site is certainly set to benefit the international research on Cranach. Available: http://corpus-cranach.de [11/02/2015]. **4** Majunke, *Lebensende*, p. 28. **5** For this reason, the contributions on the art of the Reformation period made by Anglo-American scholars in the last few decades cannot be overestimated. A few are named in the notes below, but the following are recommended in general, for example: Wood, *Altdorfer*; Koerner, *Reformation*; Silver, *Maximilian*. **6** For further information, see also a doctoral thesis (supervised by the author) currently being written in the Department of Art History of the University of Trier: Anja Ottilie Ilg, *Cranach der Ältere in Bildern, Literatur und Wissenschaft*. **7** Kaufmann, *Geography*. **8** As reported in: Winterhager, *Ablaßkritik*. **9** Tacke, *Stamm*. **10** The use of the term "devil" in Luther's diatribes differs from the one assumed by Lyndal Roper in her studies: Roper, *Body*; id., *Körper*. **11** *WA* 50, 348–351; see Tacke, *Rollenportraits*.

The Reformation was marked by massive polemics from its very first years, good examples being Luther's *Passion of Christ and Antichrist* (1521) and the illustrations made for his so-called *September Testament* (1522). Cranach's woodcut images for the later publication were so explicit in their agitation against the Pope that those pictures showing the Beast and the Whore of Babylon wearing a papal tiara had to be toned down for the second edition, the *December Testament* (1522). This was probably done at the insistence of Elector Frederick the Wise, who was still hoping to somehow contain the confrontation over religious policy between the Emperor and the Pope. In this case, we observe Lucas Cranach the Elder firmly by Luther's side as a creative inventor of imagery that unambiguously expressed the Reformer's anti-Roman stance.[12] His attitude had been clearly stated as early as *Passion of Christ and Antichrist* in May 1521, and now culminated in the equation of the Pope with the devil. Consequently, the last pair of woodcut images depicts Christ ascending to heaven as the disciples and Mary look on, while the Pope, again identified by his tiara, descends to hell surrounded by infernal creatures.

These two pictures are representative of the tone of the entire book, in which thirteen antithetical images on paired pages draw comparisons between the life of Christ and the doings of the Pope. Each picture is accompanied by a description (lat. *subscriptio*) which, like the image itself, proclaims a clear message. In *The Descent of the Pope into Hell*, for instance, the caption identifies him as the "beast" and a "false prophet." As Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg was the highest-ranking representative of the Papal Church in the empire, he was definitely in line to receive his share of anti-Roman polemic. Considering this, it is quite astonishing that the cardinal himself did not stoop to reply to Luther's rough style in kind. While those theologians who were allied to him (such as Hieronymus Emser, who was in the employ of Duke George of Saxony) did try to react in a similar manner, none of them came close to matching the wit and compelling strength of expression given to the Reformer.

Yet although this has long been ignored by scholars of the period, Albert of Brandenburg did react to Luther's attacks, as the cardinal attempted to refute him through the medium of fine art. In marked contrast to the Reformer, Albert did not put his trust in the emerging mass medium of printed images, especially pamphlets, but preferred paintings as his vehicle. The Cranach the Elder workshop alone was to produce some 180 paintings commissioned by Albert, with which he intended to influence a smaller and more elite audience. Consequently, Cranach's paintings were designed to be displayed in the enclosed spaces of either churches or princely palaces.

Cardinal Albert was one of those contemporary opponents of Luther whose fate it was to be belittled and villainized in the Prussian-dominated German national historiography of the nineteenth century. The overpowering desire to elevate the importance of Luther and the significance of the Reformation to the status of a nationwide movement by sidelining contesting historical personages was a phenomenon that persisted far into the twentieth century. In the case of Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg, this aspect has fortunately become the subject of recent in-depth studies.[13] In the course of these analyses, it has also been recognized that a whole bundle of related subjects had been left unexplored by past generations of scholars. In the German Empire, in order to stay within our nineteenth-century academic context, universities had little inclination to study the Catholic side of the process of confessional formation. Since then much progress has been made. In 1990, on the occasion of Cardinal Albert's five hundredth birthday anniversary, an international conference[14] and an exhibition[15] in his honor took place in Mainz. Another exhibition was hosted in Halle in 2006,[16] preceded and accompanied by no less than three separate symposia in 2003, 2004, and 2006,[17] all of them dedicated to the subject of Albert of Brandenburg. If we add to this the exhibition "Cranach im Exil" ("Cranach in Exile"), which took place in Aschaffenburg in 2007,[18] we can confidently state that from the point of view of cultural and art history, Cardinal Albert is now finally and firmly established as a historical protagonist. His example allows us to assert that representatives of the Catholic Church during the first years of the Reformation did not merely stare dumbly at Luther as if they had somehow been hypnotized,[19] as many scholars of cultural history and art history have assumed until recently. They actually seem to have retained some degree of initiative, and eventually acted on it—even in the very heartland of the Reformation movement.

It would be wrong to judge these Catholic patrons only from the ultimate outcome—the loss of large parts of Germany to the new faith—without taking the entire dynamic process into account. Only by this latter approach can we hope to reach a balanced evaluation. Yet the Catholic protagonists did "lose," and were therefore judged by the winners in the history books. In our case, Cardinal Albert eventually capitulated before the ascendancy of the Reformation in Halle and retreated to his remaining Catholic archbishopric of Mainz in 1540/41, to spend most of the rest of his life in his castle at Aschaffenburg. Prior to this, his main ally in Central Germany had already passed away: Duke George the Bearded of Saxony had been a man whom the Prussian historians would later brand as a "hater of Luther." The Reformer himself had mocked George without mercy,[20] and it must have given him great satisfaction when George's successor, Duke Henry the Pious, joined the cause of the Reformation. Both Albert and George are suitable examples of how Catholic patrons in the heartland of the Reformation reacted to the spread of the new creed[21] by commissioning works of art as a direct countermeasure.

Some Research Questions on the History of Art in the Age of the Reformation

Even though the subject of works of art with a Counter-Reformation bias in the period "preceding" the Council of Trent has been neglected by scholars in the past,[22] recent research now enables us to make two basic assertions: first, were we to employ only the traditional methods of analysis, a dilemma would immediately ensue where those works of art chosen for examination did not clearly and completely differ from older, preceding works. Surely, a mere retention of some traditional ways and methods of depicting subjects in art or architecture should not be taken as immediate proof of an opposition to Luther. If we wish to ascertain an intentional reaction to the Reformer or a rejection of the Reformation itself, we need to carry out

a comprehensive analysis of the respective context of each particular work of art. Consequently, any new approach to the research dilemma defined above would have to target specific case studies, which in turn would need to employ methods of context analysis.

Such an approach allows us to discern that the adherents of the established church in Germany did indeed react during the first years of the Reformation. Lavishly endowing churches with paintings was one way of influencing the faithful. In this endeavor, the Catholic protagonists basically stuck to conservative and often retrospective subjects and styles. Certain subjects only became Catholic causes when their rejection by the Protestants made them controversial. There were even some positive reactions to the criticism of the reformers, such as an increased striving for simplicity and austerity. But Catholic reactions also included a marked increase in the range of expression and the sumptuous execution of paintings. This direction can clearly be discerned in works such as the cycle of saints and passions painted by the so-called Meßkirch Master in 1536–40. These few remarks should suffice to show that the actual position of apparently Catholic-commissioned works of art can only be judged after a comprehensive appraisal of their context.

Our second basic problem, from an academic point of view, is directly connected to the question of the religious position of works of art discussed above. It concerns the position of artists who created them. This problem stems from the traditional preoccupation of art history with the persona of the artist. In nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany, this inevitably led to attempts at defining the religious identity of Reformation-era artists. Today, we can calmly assert that past scholars were rather too keen on reducing the subject of confessional strife and art to a matter of religious affiliation of the individual artist.[23]

It is a fascinating aspect no doubt, but today's history of art needs to concentrate more on structural and less on personal matters. It is not the artists who should be the primary focus of research but the works they created. For a discipline that has traditionally concentrated on writing the "history of artists," this is new terrain indeed; this approach practically amounts to an act of liberation, as we are no longer forced to pursue controversial and often unsubstantiated theories on how the artist was positioned in his time. Instead, we can now analyze which specific theological positions are contained in a particular work of art. From this, we can then make deductions concerning its impact.[24]

It should be obvious that the religious attitude of an artist and the religious message proclaimed by a work of art pose two entirely different sets of problems. Nevertheless, they have been lumped together, without comment or justification, in research studies until recently. As a result, a lopsided perception of the religious attitudes of the era, the artists, and their works of art persists to this day.[25] In terms of the question we are pursuing here, it is actually irrelevant whether, for example, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Albrecht Dürer, or Matthias Grünewald served two different masters or whether they would have been willing and able to work for adherents of the two different creeds simultaneously. Dominated as it was by Prussian views, German national historiography in the nineteenth century (whose basic currents persisted well into the twentieth century), would certainly have given this particular aspect precedence. Only recently has art history as a discipline begun to free itself from this kind of moralizing and judgment so typical of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This has allowed it to reconstruct the phenomenon of the liberty of the artist in this time of religious schism through individual case studies such as Sebald Beham,[26] Hans Baldung Grien,[27] or Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder.[28]

The Cranach Workshop: Open to All Sides

This assertion certainly holds true for Cranach the Elder. On the one hand, his Wittenberg workshop continued to produce commissioned works of art for Catholic customers, while on the other it had no qualms about working for Luther and his allies. This was probably inevitable given that the two branches of the Wettin dynasty, the Ernestine and Albertine lineages, for which Cranach worked as an official court painter of the Saxon electors, represented the full range of potential subjects, representative techniques, and customer personalities that were to be found in both camps in the religious conflict (and all of this to be served by a single workshop).

The Ernestine branch of the Wettin dynasty, which resided in Wittenberg and Torgau, joined the cause of the Reformation, first in the person of Frederick the Wise, and then of John the Steadfast and John Frederick the Magnanimous. The Albertine lineage in Dresden, on the other hand, remained militant protagonists of the Catholic Church until the death of Duke George of Saxony in 1539. In a similar way, neither of the Saxon lineages and their respective courts presents a homogenous picture of religious adherence. Hieronymus Rudelauf, a councillor of the Saxon elector mostly active in Torgau, is a good example. He is known to have commissioned a painting on a subject that was decidedly Catholic from Cranach the Elder in the 1520s (fig. 3). He was also generally mistrusted by Luther and Georg Spalatin for his faithful adherence to Rome.[29]

But the workshop of Cranach the Elder went even further than this by accepting commissions from Catholic customers outside the circle of their Wettin patrons. One of these was Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg, who kept the workshop busy for a number of years with his decidedly Catholic commissions. These included a cycle of

12 Russell, *Understanding*. **13** Jendorff, *Verhältnis*. **14** Jürgensmeier, *Erzbischof*. **15** Reber, *Albrecht*. **16** Schauerte/Tacke, *Kardinal*. **17** Tacke, *Kontinuität*; id., *Zeitenwende*; id., *Liebe*. **18** Ermischer/Tacke, *Exil*. **19** Tacke, *Bildpropaganda*. **20** Id., *Konfessionalisierung*. **21** For the sake of convenience, I use this simplistic designation here. For a differentiated approach, see Jörgensen, *Terminologie*. **22** For a comparison including examples from other countries, see Tacke, *Auftragswerke*. The research question for counter-reformatory art was first outlined by the author in: Tacke, *Stift*. **23** Packeiser, *Austausch*. **24** The futility of any such discussion was brought home to me by some of the reactions I received when I presented my doctoral thesis in art history on the "Catholic Cranach" in 1989: Tacke, *Großaufträge*. **25** This is discussed in detail by Münch, *Leid*, pp. 11–23. **26** See Wiemers, *Weibermacht*; id., *Meßgebetbuch*. **27** Weber am Bach, *Baldung Grien*. **28** Muller, *Vogtherr*. **29** Brinkmann/Kemperdick, *Städel*, pp. 235–242.

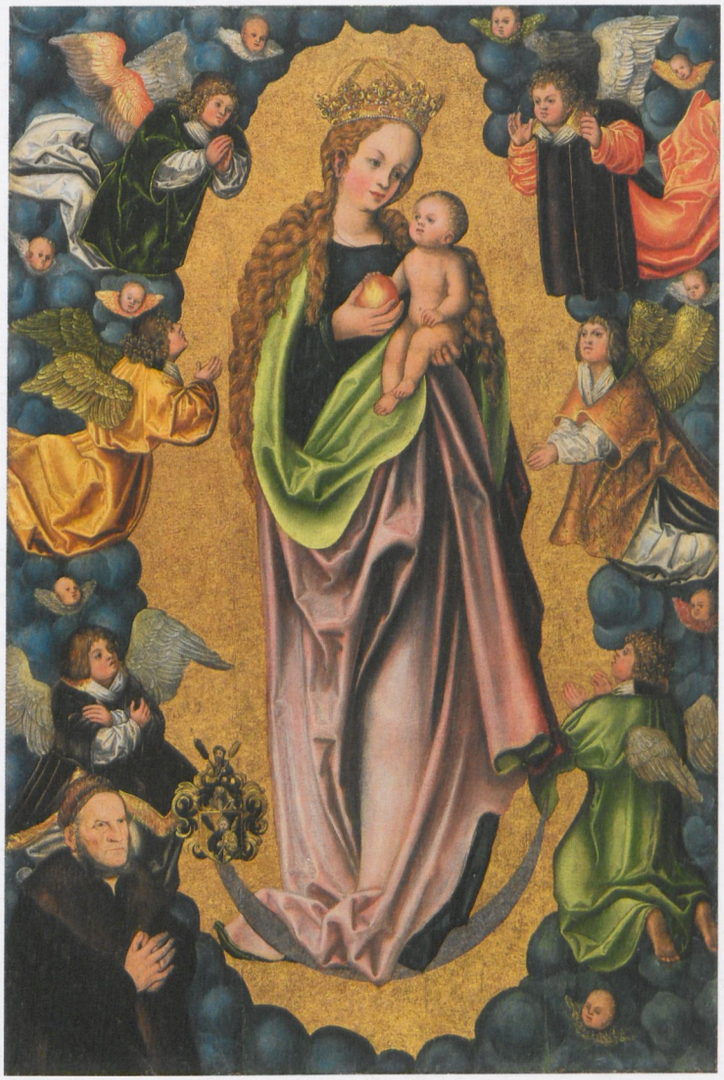

Fig. 3 Lucas Cranach the Elder – Workshop, Virgin on the Crescent Moon worshipped by the Donor Hieronymus Rudelauf, c. 1522–25

paintings for the cathedral (or *Stiftskirche*) in Halle (Saale), which comprised 142 depictions of saints and scenes of the Passion, most of them intended for the sixteen altars that had been newly raised in this edifice.[30] While this cycle of paintings has largely been destroyed, one altar dedicated to Mary Magdalene has survived (in Aschaffenburg), along with some individual panels[31] and fragments. A magnificent painting of Saint Maurice, now in New York (fig. 4),[32] can also be included in the context of the works that Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg commissioned from Cranach for Halle Cathedral.

Completed between 1519/20 and 1525, the Cardinal's paintings received the full disapproval of the Wittenberg reformers, as they were clearly intended to be used for prayer, ritual, and the adoration of relics according to the traditional ways.[33] Their inclusion in a cult of saints along late-medieval lines[34] was reason enough from a Wittenberg point of view to oppose Albert's cathedral as a citadel of the old creed.

Although the veneration of martyrs was reevaluated in the age of the religious schism, it was continued in the form in which it was practiced in Halle an der Saale[35] (Halle on the Saale) and this was understood in Wittenberg. Yet further commissions of paintings from the Cranach workshop for Halle Cathedral show that Cardinal Albert was not about to simply give in to the growing Reformation movement in Central Germany.[36] The Reformer himself or Philipp Melanchthon needed only to step out of their houses in Wittenberg and walk a few paces in order to see for themselves the numerous Catholic paintings ordered by the cardinal that were under preparation in the spacious Cranach workshop. These paintings included not only the 142 pieces mentioned above (some of them of extreme size), but also a group of four pictures, signed and dated, of Cardinal Albert in the guise of Saint Jerome. Two of these (now in Darmstadt and Ringling) show the church father (actually Albert) in his study, while the other two (now in Berlin and Zollikon) place him in a countryside setting.

The latter two do not show Saint Jerome in the traditional role of a penitent, but, again, as a scholar engaged in writing (fig. 5).[37] This would have seemed fitting, as Cardinal Albert had himself adopted the role of an official translator of the Bible in 1525, 1526, and twice in 1527. This was a direct consequence of the condemnation of Luther's German translation as false and void by representatives of the Catholic Church. The message borne by these paintings of Saint Jerome was therefore clear: if the Latin *Vulgate* was to be translated at all, this could only happen under the authority of the official church, whose highest-ranking representative in the Holy Roman Empire was none other than Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg. And, as it happened, an official Catholic Bible translation from Latin into German was indeed compiled under the patronage of the cardinal in the very years when he had himself portrayed in the guise of the venerable translator. Hieronymus Emser's edition of the New Testament was published as early as 1527, while Johannes Dietenberger's complete Bible was available by 1534.

The reformers may also have wondered at two other paintings, both of which depicted the patron, Albert of Brandenburg, in the company of another church father, Saint Gregory. Once again, these two works are an unambiguous testimony of the patron's Catholic position during the great religious struggle of this period. In this case, Cardinal Albert had asked Cranach the Elder to emphasize the sacrificial aspect of Holy Mass.[38] Albert was obviously commenting on an ongoing debate with these magnificent large-formatted depictions of Saint Gregory celebrating Mass, and his urgent appeal was to adhere to the divinely ordained and exemplary theology and practice of the church fathers. Albert's portrait for the pulpit of Halle Cathedral, which depicts him in the guise of the saintly Pope Gregory, may well be yet another expression of this concern. The list of Catholic works of art commissioned and influenced by Cardinal Albert could easily be expanded. The above examples should suffice, however, to assert a prominent place for Albert of Brandenburg in any future history of "Counter-Reformatory Art of the Reformation Era."[39]

Another essential candidate for such a study would be George the Bearded, Duke of Saxony, Albert's closest ally in Central Germany. Like the cardinal, he was an opponent of Luther who was not only versed in theology himself, but ably advised by Hieronymus Emser and later by Johannes Cochlaeus. The latter was to become well known for his "commentaries on Luther," as he was the first to discuss the life and doctrine of the Reformer and the history of the

religious schism from a distinctly Catholic point of view. Just like Albert of Brandenburg, Duke George saw art as a weapon in the struggle with the new creed. This can easily be discerned in the case of the newly-established cult of Saint Benno in Meissen Cathedral, which was lavishly endowed and celebrated. Luther himself condemned this adoration, a mere eight days before the ritual enshrinement, in his treatise "*Widder den newen Abgott und alten Teuffel, der zu Meyssen sol erhaben werden* (Against the new idol and the old devil about to be canonized in Meissen)."[40] Another example is the decoration of Duke George's personal funerary chapel in Meissen Cathedral, for which Lucas Cranach the Elder produced an image of the Schmerzensmann (Man of Sorrows).[41]

Clearly, these two examples need to be seen in the context of the ongoing battle with Luther's theological position. This holds true as well for the contemporaneous decoration of the façade of the ducal palace in Dresden. Here, the George Gate of the George Palace, both named after their princely builder, was used by George the Bearded as a canvas for the visualization of a complex theological agenda. This was intended as a direct Catholic answer to the provocation of the Reformation, especially to the new Lutheran creed, and the subject executed by Cranach the Elder, "Law and Mercy," could well be understood as a correction of deviations from the Catholic point of view.

Any attempt at a comparative study of "Counter-Reformatory Art Preceding the Council of Trent" needs to pay particular attention to those regions of the empire in which the territorial rulers remained Catholic. In Central Germany, these comprised, among others, the members of the so-called Dessau League, who had earlier convened in Mühlhausen, and who were later to form the League of Halle. This circle consisted of Catholic princes and church dignitaries who did not confine themselves to taking political and clerical action against the Reformation, but also pressed the fine arts into service for their defensive ideological struggle against the expanding new creed that was threatening their territories.

Their number should by rights include some of the princes who were later to be labeled as supporters of Luther by the Prussian-dominated historiography of nineteenth-century Germany, such as the Elector of Brandenburg, Joachim II. He is actually an ideal example for this "period of transition," a prince who was open to religious changes for mostly political reasons, even receiving the communion under both kinds in 1539, while "personally" remaining attached to traditions in ritual matters. His collection of relics was comparable in importance and size to the one that his uncle, Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg, had amassed.[42] And, like his uncle, he commissioned the workshop of Cranach the Elder with the creation of a large number of paintings of saints and scenes of the Passion. These were meant to adorn the altars of the cathedral in Berlin (the *Stifts-*

Fig. 4
Lucas Cranach the Elder – Workshop, Saint Maurice, c. 1520–23

30 Tacke, *Großaufträge*, pp. 16–169. **31** The recent attribution to this cycle of a painting by Dr. Bettina Seyderhelm (Regional Church Office of the Evangelical Church in Central Germany) received a lot of media attention but does not stand when formal and stylistic criteria are taken into account: Seyderhelm, *Kreuztragungstafel*. **32** Ainsworth/Waterman, *Paintings*, pp. 73–77; Ainsworth et al., *Maurice*. **33** Hamann, *Liber*. **34** See the contributions in Tacke, *Reliquienkult*. **35** Following the Council of Trent the Catholic Church rearranged the veneration of saints and retained only those saints that were "historically" documented. This was a reaction to the "ridicule" by Luther's followers, who mocked the veneration of saints, such as Luther did himself in the case of Albert of Brandenburg's *Hallesches Heiltum* (a collection of relics in Halle). **36** An overview of this process is given in: Chipps Smith, *Scheitern*. **37** Tacke, *Hieronymus*. **38** Hecht, *Gregorsmessen*. **39** Tacke, *Hilfe*; id., *Help*. **40** Volkmar, *Heiligenerhebung*. **41** Koeppe, *Discovery*. **42** See Tacke, *Reliquienschatz*.

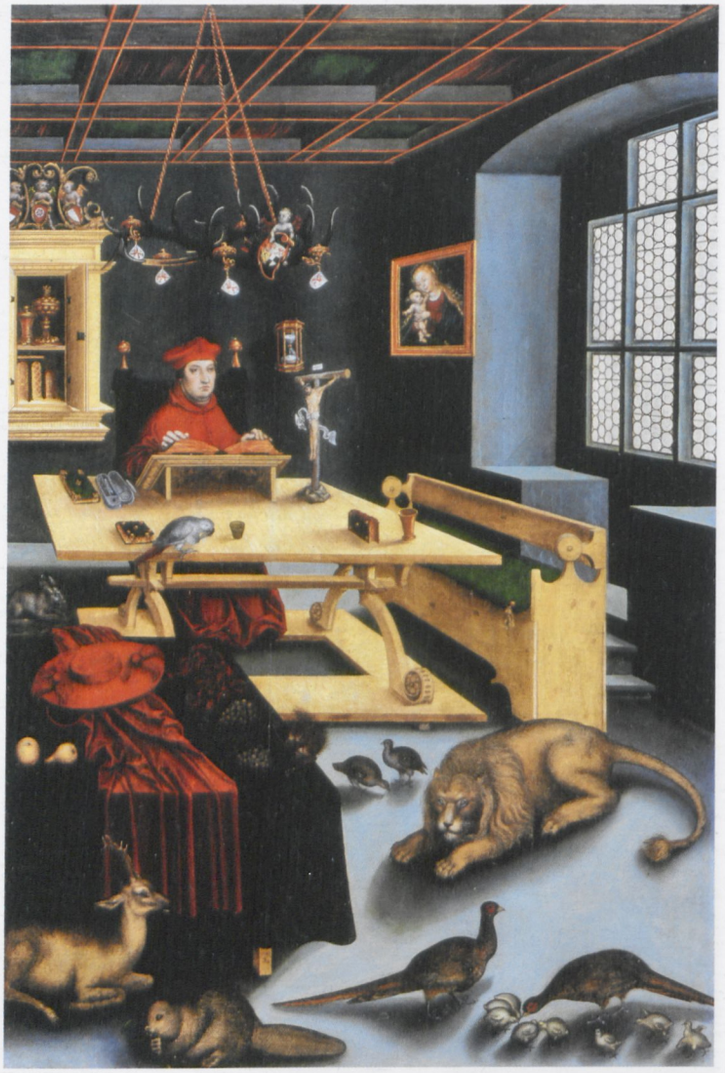

Fig. 5 Lucas Cranach the Elder – Workshop, (Archbishop) Albert of Brandenburg as St. Jerome in His Study, 1526

kirche),[43] for which he also established a specific liturgy, again following the lead of his uncle in Halle. Surprisingly, this endowment of the Berlin *Stiftskirche*, which Joachim had accomplished in the space of but a few years, survived his death in 1571 (at least partially) by many years. This is just one striking example that Catholic works of art were still to be found in the heartland of Brandenburg-Prussia even after the conclusion of the Council of Trent. It can be surmised that they formed an integral part of a liturgy that continued to follow the old creed.

The Effect of the Reformation on the Artists

We can now attempt to outline the conditions that would confront those artists who were determined to keep up their creative production in these changing times. We should probably start with the collective and individual lament of artists, an inevitable reaction to the Reformation's huge impact on the "art market," which could influence individual biographies in a massive way.[44] To this day, the negative repercussions of the Reformation have hardly been touched upon by scholars, apart from indicating the preferences or dislikes of individual artists, such as Jörg Breu in Augsburg.[45]

Another aspect that would deserve scholarly attention is the high level of adaptability that an artist would have needed in order to stay in business. One facet of this was the increased mobility demanded by the "job market."[46] Only by frequently shifting his workshop (and setting his personal religious beliefs aside) could an artist stay in touch with those prospective patrons who alone provided the basis for his creative existence. Consequently, Hans Holbein the Younger gave up Basel for London to attend upon King Henry VIII of England, the sculptor Daniel Mauch followed Prince-Bishop Érard de la Marck from Ulm to Liège, while the brothers Hans Sebald and Barthel Beham, who had been evicted from the imperial city of Nuremberg for their radical support (!) of Luther's cause, were forced to seek employment respectively from Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg and the Catholic Duke of Bavaria, William IV, in Munich.

Yet many an artist would also embrace the opportunity to try out new subjects as a way of cornering new segments of the "art market." The workshop of Cranach the Elder, for instance, increased its production of profane subjects from the mid-1520s on, for instance, with its images of ill-matched lovers.[47] In general, it seems that German Renaissance art tended to become more erotic or even pornographic during this period, likely following the ancient economic adage that "sex sells".

Along with these new subjects, artists were also trying out an array of new techniques. Friedrich Hagenauer, for example, specialized in both carved wood and small-format cast-metal medallions. He had originally learned the art of sculpting from his father, who had created the wooden statuary for Matthias Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*. But when his hometown turned Protestant, the demand for religious sculptures dried up and he had to leave Strasbourg in order to try his luck as an itinerant craftsman. With his very specific niche art, the point of saturation would inevitably come after a few years' stay in any city. Thus, he had to adapt to a life of mobility in order to make his living.

Cranach the Elder was spared these hard choices. He managed to retain his extremely productive base in Wittenberg throughout the years following 1517. For him, the Reformation developed into a win-win situation as his sales actually increased.[48] His documented real estate and housing property as well as his tax revenue all suggest that his economic fortunes were constantly on the rise.[49] This favorable creative situation is echoed by his hasty reply to a letter he received in December 1537, some twenty years after Luther had posted his theses: "There is a lot indeed that I should write, but I simply have too much work on my hands."[50]

43 Id., *Großaufträge*, pp. 170–267. **44** Id., *Querela*. See also the contribution by Katrin Herbst in this volume. **45** Morall, *Breu*. **46** Tacke, *Auswirkungen*; id., *Impact*. **47** See Stewart, *Unequal*. **48** Statistical material documenting this aspect is given in: Tacke, *Auswirkungen*. **49** See contributions in Lück et al., *Spuren*. **50** Tacke, *Auftragslage*.

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