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Fire, Wolves, and Antichrist

Representing Lutheranism in the Works of Johannes and Olaus Magnus

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Abstract. The Swedish brothers Magnus (Johannes, 1488–1544 and Olaus, 1490–1557) are best known as the authors of two enormous works on Swedish and Scandinavian history. They spent a considerable part of their lives in the shadow of the advent of Lutheranism in Sweden, which was a crisis on a political, religious, and personal level for the brothers, being devout Catholics.
Johannes arrived in Sweden in 1523 and was soon elected archbishop of Uppsala. Only three years later, however, he left Sweden and never returned, and Olaus joined him. The brothers were to spend the rest of their lives abroad, in Poland and in Italy. The entire time they kept trying to convince the Pope and the cardinals to help them reinstate Catholicism in the northern countries, and to make the Swedish king, Gustavus Vasa, mend his Lutheran ways. These two campaigns of persuasion both involved representing the advent of Lutheranism as a crisis, which is visible in Johannes Magnus' extant letters and the works of both brothers. The aim of this article is to demonstrate how the brothers represent crisis in their works and writings and how their depiction relates to that found in a few other works from the Reformation period.

Keywords: Johannes Magnus, Olaus Magnus, Catholicism, Lutheranism, crisis, fire, animal metaphors

Introduction[1]

Johannes and Olaus Magnus, brothers and sixteenth century archbishops of Uppsala in direct succession, were deeply affected by the advent of Lutheranism in Sweden in the early 1520s. They were to spend most of their lives abroad doing everything in their power to reinstate Catholicism in their home country. As devout Catholics, the brothers were personally impacted by the upheaval in the wake of the Reformation. This personal crisis, that turned their lives in an unexpected direction, has political and religious aspects. As they were clergymen, their responsibility and authority in religious matters surpassed that of laymen. On a political level, Reformation

1 I thank Dr. David Bell for correcting my English.

ideas influenced the balance of power between church and state, which impacted the brothers, Johannes in his role as an adviser to the Swedish king, and both of them as diplomats. To them, the Reformation proved a crisis of lasting and severe effect politically, religiously, and personally.

The aim of this article is to show how they represent the crisis in their works. The findings are related to a few contemporary works of Catholic as well as of Protestant authorship. To the Protestants, the religious crisis of course consisted in certain features of the Catholic Church, not in the advent of Lutheranism, but it is a crisis all the same. The representation of the crisis in Protestant literature for a later period (1620–1720) has been studied by Hans Helander, who noted the less than flattering ways of depicting Catholics after Sweden had become Protestant.[2] The research on this topic for the earlier period seems to be scarce, but it has been noted by Sandblad that the interpretations and descriptions of the religious opponent in sixteenth century Sweden drew heavily on eschatology.[3]

The present article is divided into two main sections. First, I provide a biographical overview of the lives of the brothers and introduce their works as well as those used for comparison. Second, I analyse their works and relate the representation of crisis to that in a small selection of other sixteenth-century works.

Material for the study

The material used for this study is the greatest of the historical works by the brothers, around 800 pages each: Johannes Magnus' *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque regibus* [History of all the Kings of the Goths and the Swedes] (1554), from now on *Historia de regibus*, and Olaus Magnus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* [Description of the Northern Peoples] (1555), abbreviated as *Historia de gentibus*. In addition, I have studied two letters by Johannes Magnus from 1527, because they contain lengthy descriptions of the Lutherans in Sweden. Johannes' other historical work about the history of his diocese, the *Historia metropolitanae ecclesiae Upsalensis* [The History of the Archiepiscopal See of Uppsala] (1557) and Olaus' *Carta Marina* (1539) are excluded for reasons of space.[4]

The number of possible sixteenth century works for comparison is so large that a selection will always be arbitrary. In order to ensure that the works contain representations of religious crisis, I have opted for polemical theological treatises.

2 Helander, *Neo-Latin Literature*, 319–44.

3 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna*.

4 The versions of the works used here are the first editions, printed by Olaus in Rome in 1554 and 1555 respectively. For the convenience of readers using another edition or a translation, I refer to the book and chapter in each work. As chapters are often short, this reference style is often as precise as a page reference.

Given the genre of the brothers' works, historical works might seem a more obvious choice, but early modern works of history tend to be voluminous and non-searchable, making it an overwhelming task, and possibly a wild goose chase, to use them for this purpose.

The works I use for comparison are all from the early days of the Reformation. Johannes' and Olaus' works were not published until the late 1550s, but their anti-Lutheran engagement was vivid from the very beginning of the Reformation, so it is reasonable to presume that their thoughts were developed then. The brothers Magnus spent most of their adult lives abroad, and their correspondence and efforts at gathering support for the reinstatement of Catholicism in Sweden is usually directed at non-Swedes, so they need to be understood in a European context, not only in a Swedish one. The selection of works for comparison to their ideas was made accordingly: works by non-Swedish Catholics and Protestants. I chose two exchanges of opinion known to have been somewhat aggressive to ensure as much polemic as possible. Luther in particular is known for his frequent defamation of his opponents.[5]

To the first exchange belongs Luther's 1520 *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae* [On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church], which discusses the sacraments, refuting the ones without support in the Bible. It sparked Henry VIII's 1521 *Assertio septem sacramentorum* [Defence of the Seven Sacraments], which earned him the title of Defender of the Faith. Luther replied to the king's treatise in his *Contra Henricum Regem Anglie* [Against Henry, King of England] from 1522. The second exchange features Luther and a Catholic opponent, this time Johannes Cochlaeus, a German acquaintance of the brothers Magnus who wrote numerous pamphlets attacking Luther.[6] Luther only replied once, in his *Adversus Armatum Virum Cocleum* [Against the Armed Man Cochlaeus], published in c. 1523, and Cochlaeus responded in the same year in his *Adversus cucullatum Wittenbergensem Minotaurum de sacramentorum gratia iterum* [Against the hooded Minotaur of Wittenberg once more about the grace of the sacraments].

Living through Crisis: a biographical overview of the Magnus brothers

In the following, the brothers are treated together because they spent so many years in each other's company, particularly after they left Sweden for good. As their major works were written during this later period, after 1526, it is the most important for this article.[7]

5 Dietl, "Deconstructing Memory," 105.

6 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, letter to Cochlaeus, 153–54; Dietl, "Deconstructing Memory," 107.

7 The biography is based on Nilsson, *Composition of Truth*, 36–50. See also Salvadori, *Le Nord de la Renaissance*, 356–89.

Johannes was born in 1488 and Olaus in 1490. The brothers originated from the Swedish city of Linköping, which is a cathedral city, the centre of the diocese of Linköping, one of the oldest dioceses in Sweden.[8] Eventually, their engagement at the cathedral chapters in Linköping and in the city of Skara provided them with the means to pursue higher studies on the continent. They spent years at various universities. Johannes ended up in Rome, working as a Swedish representative at the papal curia in 1518, whereas Olaus travelled the north of Sweden as a subcollector for the papal collector Arcimboldi. The brothers' different experiences during this time—the political machinations at the papal curia and the journey to the north respectively—were to prove of great importance for their later scholarly work.

In 1523, Johannes Magnus arrived in Sweden as a legate of Pope Adrian VI, with the mission of countering Lutheranism. There, in close connection to the election of Gustavus Vasa as king, Johannes found himself appointed Archbishop of Uppsala, and Olaus was made dean at the cathedral of Strängnäs.

As archbishop, Johannes was a self-evident member of the royal council, and a very wealthy man in possession of, for example, the entire city of Uppsala. Both brothers were sent on foreign diplomatic missions in the service of King Gustavus Vasa. In 1526, Johannes left for Poland to negotiate a marriage for the king to the Polish princess Hedwig.[9]

This diplomatic mission was to be an important point of division in Johannes' life, because he never returned to Sweden again. Instead he remained in Poland, later joined by Olaus, and they took up residence in Gdańsk.[10] In 1533, the brothers travelled together to Italy, and Johannes was finally consecrated as archbishop. In the eyes of Catholics, the consecration made him the rightful archbishop of Uppsala, and under normal circumstances he would have taken full possession of his diocese. After the return from Italy, he wrote to Gustavus Vasa, informing him of the consecration and offering to come to Sweden to resume his duties. By then, however, the first Protestant Archbishop of Uppsala, Laurentius Petri (1499–1573), had already been appointed. Johannes did not receive a reply.

Four years later, the brothers were summoned to Italy to attend an ecumenical council, which was ultimately held in Vicenza in 1538 after several delays and a change of location. Johannes and Olaus arrived among the first delegates and departed among the last, desperately trying to garner support for their dream of averting the Lutheran crisis and reinstating Catholicism in Sweden. Their constant

8 Schück, *Ecclesia Lincopensis,* 43.

9 On Johannes' diplomatic mission, see further Carlsson, "Johannes och Gustav Vasas polska frieri."

10 On the brothers' time in Poland, see also Szarcherska, "Uczeni szwedzcy."

efforts to bring about the change they desired can be traced in Johannes' letters, where he often refers to the miserable condition of Catholicism in Sweden.[11]

Nothing of consequence was accomplished in Vicenza, however, because ultimately, the Pope did not come, leaving Johannes and Olaus to plead their case with the cardinals. After the council, they received an invitation by the Patriarch of Venice, Hieronymo Quirino (1468–1554), to stay as his guests.[12] They spent a couple of productive and comfortable years in his Venetian palace, where Olaus' famous map *Carta Marina* was printed and Johannes completed his great historical work.[13] In 1541, they left Venice for Rome as the Pope sent for Johannes, but did not bother seeing him. The brothers remained in Rome, changing lodgings several times, in constant financial difficulties, wholly dependent on the charity of wealthy friends. Johannes fell ill and had to be tended by Olaus, but his frail health did not prevent him from fighting for Catholicism. It is clear from Johannes' correspondence that he kept reaching out to cardinals and bishops and to the Pope himself, advocating for their support in reconverting Sweden to Catholicism, and for financial assistance.[14]

Three years later, Johannes passed away, but never gave up: his last letter is written in early March 1544, and he died in mid-March that same year, a few days after turning 56. Olaus took over as archbishop in title. In the following year, the ecumenical council of Trent began, and was to last until 1563, 18 years later, with interruptions. During this council, the assembled clergy discussed what was to be done to counter Lutheranism. Olaus attended for some of the time, but eventually returned to Rome, where he was appointed manager of the House of St Bridget after the death of the previous one in 1549. Olaus set up a printing press, publishing among other things his own work, the *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* [Description of the Northern Peoples] and those by Johannes Magnus, the *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque regibus* [The History of all the Kings of the Goths and the Swedes] and the *Historia metropolitanae ecclesiae Upsalensis* [The History of the Archiepiscopal See of Uppsala].[15] He remained the manager there until his death in 1557. As is evident from their biography, both brothers were strongly affected by the advent of Lutheranism and its establishment in Sweden. It is usually depicted

11 His Latin letters (save one) were edited and published in Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, in 1992.

12 His name exists in numerous variant spellings, for example Gerolamo/Girolamo Querini/Quirini.

13 *Historia de regibus*, XXIV. 4.

14 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, e.g. the three letters on pages 159–62.

15 On his printing press, see Almqvist, "In aedibus Sanctae Brigittae."

as a swift, politically initiated process, but was, in fact, a gradual one, debated and criticised every step of the way, as is evident from a recent source publication.[16]

In the city of Västerås in 1527, the Swedish parliament assembled for what came to be known as the "Reformation parliament". This meeting has often been described as the establishment of Lutheranism in Sweden.[17] That claim does however not hold up to scrutiny. The decisions made were of a more political and economical kind: there was no question of terminating abbeys or breaking with the Pope at this point.[18] On the doctrinal side, the decision contained the diplomatic expression that "Guds ord skulle renliga predikas", "the pure word of God should be preached".[19]

A similar approach can be gleaned from the ecumenical council in the city of Örebro, held in 1529. Even the decisions from the meeting in Uppsala in 1536 are trying to balance between reforming the faith and retaining the support of the Catholic clergy.[20] It would take the better part of the sixteenth century for the Reformation to be established in Sweden. The formal decision to adhere to the *Confessio Augustana,* "Augustan confession" was made at an ecumenical council in Uppsala in 1593, aiming to standardise the doctrine and practices of the Swedish church.[21] The importance assigned to this ecumenical council can be seen in the celebrations, held in 1693, 1793 and 1893.[22] But even after this famous ecumenical council, it would take long before Lutheranism was generally accepted by the people, and the new Swedish king, Sigismund, a Catholic, took steps to return Sweden to Catholicism, acting on a plan originating with the Pope.[23] By the end of the seventeenth century, however, it was of prime importance to defend Lutheran orthodoxy against heretical movements, including Catholicism.[24]

The question of Lutheranism remained to be solved at Olaus' death in 1557, so the possibility of reinstating Catholicism was not lost during the lifetime of either brother. Had they succeeded, Johannes would probably have spent his whole life in Uppsala as a wealthy archbishop, sought-after diplomat, and member of the

16 Pahlmblad, *Spelet om den rena läran*.

17 Rooth, "När kom reformation," 9.

18 Nyman, *Förlorarnas historia,* 73; Rooth, 31–33.

19 Larsson, *Gustav Vasa*, 137. The translation from Swedish is mine.

20 Nyman, *Förlorarnas historia*, 75, 80.

21 Jonsson, *Uppsala möte,* 9, 28; Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 3, 215.

22 Jonsson, *Uppsala möte*, 52–56, 75–77, 99–103.

23 Nyman, *Förlorarnas historia*, 11; Piltz, "Sigismund," 74–76. (Sigismund became King of Poland in 1587, there under the name of Sigismund III Vasa, and King of Sweden in 1592, there known as Sigismund).

24 Helander, *Neo-Latin Literature in Sweden*, 319.

royal council, and Olaus would have had a career of clerical duties and diplomatic missions, possibly succeeding his brother, not just in title. Instead they spent two decades in foreign exile, constantly in financial difficulties, constantly trying to garner support for the reinstatement of Catholicism in Sweden. It is in other words justified to name the Reformation a major crisis in their lives.

Lutheranism as fire

In the following, I present the results of my analysis of the *Historia de regibus*, the *Historia de gentibus*, and two of Johannes' letters, to establish how Lutheranism is represented by the brothers. My analysis focuses on figurative language or any other kind of representation. I shall present one element of the depiction of the crisis at a time, and compare it to the works mentioned above to show whether or not the element is found there. In the end, I shall discuss the representation of crisis as a whole and its relation to the lives of Johannes and Olaus.

The works of the brothers Magnus are not overly rich in figurative language. In cases where it is used, it often describes something negative. A dramatic image employed by them both is that of fire, which can invoke disaster and destruction. In modern times, the fire metaphor and the interpretative frame of words pertaining to it are used to describe civil disorder, and "in discourses where issues of power, authority and legitimacy are at stake".[25] This can be discerned in the *Historia de gentibus*, where Olaus uses the fire metaphor to describe Lutheranism:

> "Sed nunc vnius perditissimi fratris apostatae Lutheri, **tantum vbique incendium excitatum est**, vt nec monachi, nec fratres vniuersi, vel ciues, vel magistratus, Duces, Reges, aut Imperatores, aut Summi pontifices totaliter illud ipsum **extinguere** possunt. Adeo voluptuosum est miseris apostatę sequacibus, **ardenti rebellione** ruere in **ignes & flammas**, quibus **comburentur** peccatores […]."[26] "But now, **a large fire has been kindled** by one apostate brother beyond salvation, Luther. Its size prevents monks, all the brothers of the world, citizens, magistrates, dukes, kings, emperors, or even popes from **extinguishing it**. This is so delightful to the unhappy followers of the apostate, that they rush in **ardent rebellion** into the **fires and flames** in which sinners are **burned** […]."

25 Hart, "Riots," 283.

26 *Historia de gentibus*, XII. 22. All translations are mine. This also applies to the boldface in quotations, used to highlight important terms.

Olaus touches on several elements that can pertain to fire.[27] It is not only the phenomenon itself (*incendium, ignes & flammas*), but a corresponding verb (*comburentur*), its start (*excitatum est*), and the impossibility of extinguishing it (*extinguere*). Finally the whole Lutheran movement is referred to as *ardenti rebellione*.

Through this description, not least through the reference to burning sinners in fires and flames, which conjures up thoughts of purgatory, possibly of hell itself, it is evident that the fire is apocalyptic, and that Lutheranism is threatening to destroy the entire world. In Olaus' time, when fires could and did reduce entire cities to ashes, the imagery can be expected to sway the reader's imagination to an even greater extent than now.

Olaus uses the same metaphor in his introduction to the *Historia de regibus*:

> "[Regna Aquilonaria] haeresum incendiis conflagrare videntur […]", "The northern kingdoms are seen burning with the fires of heresy […]".[28]

The present tense of *videntur* emphasises the urgency in addressing the fire, and is an exhortation to act before the north is beyond salvation; Olaus continues with the suggestion that after the flames have been extinguished, harmony will be restored.

Johannes uses fire as a metaphor in the *Historia de regibus*. There, he describes his departure for Poland and says that he brought old documents with him on the trip.[29] When Johannes describes it, however, he writes as follows:

> "Verum cum persecutio in me, & totam Christi Ecclesiam, a reprobis **excitata**, non permitteret me intra patriae terminos patriae historias conscribere, quicquid mea, vel amicorum opera, ex veterum monumentis conquisitum erat, subito in sinum corripui, & more eorum, quos vndique **flamma inuadit**, **confestim exilire** curaui […]", "But the persecution of me and of the entire Church of Christ, **started** by ill-willed men, would not allow me to write the histories of my fatherland within the borders of that fatherland. Instead I hurriedly gathered into my arms all the records of old that had been collected through my efforts or those of my friends, and in the way of those, who are **attacked by flames** from every side, I made sure **to leave speedily**."[30]

The scene now holds a great deal more drama, because of the addition of elements relating to the metaphorical frame of fire. Flames (*flamma*) are closing in on the archbishop. Persecution (the activities of the Lutheran reformers in Sweden)

27 Hart, "Riots," 284, Figure 1.

28 *Historia de regibus*, Olaus' *praefatio* to Pope Julius III, unpaginated.

29 Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans*, 285; Ericson Wolke, *Johan III*, 143.

30 *Historia de regibus*, Olaus' *praefatio*.

has been kindled (*excitata*). The archbishop hurries (*confestim*) as if he were fleeing from actual flames. Johannes Magnus narrowly escapes the persecution of himself and of the entire Church of Christ, further emphasising the seriousness and danger of the situation.

In the writings of Johannes and Olaus, the fire metaphor represents destruction, Lutheranism threatening to turn the whole world into ashes. I have not found the fire metaphor in the works used for comparison. This is not to say that it was not used—it would seem an apt metaphor for the spread of Luther's potentially dangerous ideas and the social unrest and conflicts in the wake of the Reformation—but it is not found in these quite early exchanges. A metaphor that *is* used for describing Lutheranism in the comparative material, by Cochlaeus and by Henry VIII, is however that of pestilence.[31] It can be found in Johannes' letters too.[32]

Pestilence or illness as a metaphor is related to that of fire in its destructive sense: pestilence could be described as fire.[33] This can be observed from the fact that the words forming their metaphorical frames partially overlap. Pestilence can spread, it can be difficult to stop, it can begin and eventually die down, it can cause destruction, leaving desolation if it is a serious enough illness, and it can be similar to flames because it too can flare up again when danger was thought to be over.

Lutherans as Antichrist

From Lutheranism, we now continue with Luther and his followers, who are addressed by Johannes both in the *Historia de regibus*, where he draws parallels from historical events to his own time, and in his letters.[34]

In book fifteen of the *Historia de regibus*, the first chapter is devoted to the Arian bishop Wulfila, who translated the Bible into the Gothic language in the fourth century. Arianism had been declared heretical at the First Council of Constantinople in 381.[35] This had dire consequences for the biblical translation, according to Johannes, as the fact that the translator was an Arian made him defile the Scripture, infusing it with the dangerous poison of Arianism:

> "[…] idque per Vlphilam suae gentis Episcopum, quem etsi credebant [Gothi] esse verum Christi Apostolum, erat tamen sub pelle ouina **verae fidei hostis, & indubitatus antichristus** […] diuinarum literarum

31 Cochlaeus, *Adversus Minotaurum*, 21; Henry VIII, *Assertio,* 153.

32 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 75.

33 Frymire, "Pestilence and Reformation," 104, and note 49 on that page, 115; cp. 84.

34 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 69–87.

35 "First Council of Constantinople."

> sacratissimum thesaurum in Gothicam linguam transfudit, immixto […] pernicioso veneno."[36] "[…] and this through the bishop of their people, Wulfila, whom the Goths believed to be a true apostle of Christ. He was, however, an **enemy of the true faith and an obvious Antichrist** in sheep's clothing. He translated the most holy treasure of the divine Scripture into the Gothic language, and mixed it with dangerous poison."

The Goths believed Wulfila to be a true apostle of Christ, but he was not: Johannes instead describes him as Antichrist, corrupting the Goths through his insidious, poisonous translation of the Bible. This makes him a devil, disguised as a human. The idea of depicting the influence of Lutheranism as poison is found in Henry VIII too.[37]

Johannes has certainly not provided a depiction of the Lutherans here, but of Wulfila. The link is provided in the continuation, where he draws a parallel to his own time and explicitly mentions two prominent Swedish reformers and translators of the Bible: Laurentius Andreae and Olaus Petri. They did exactly the same as Wulfila, Johannes says: corrupted the Scripture through their translation. This explicit parallel expands the demonising, denigrating epithet of Antichrist to encompass the Swedish reformers.

Likening the opponent to Antichrist, or suggesting that his ideas originate from Satan, is a frequent figure of thought in the works studied for comparison. It is found in Luther's works, both as a description of the Pope in the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church,* and in the response to the work of Henry VIII.[38] Luther himself was depicted as Antichrist too, not least by Cochlaeus.[39] Associating someone with the ultimate evil is a severe accusation, perhaps not fully fathomable in the secularised world of today. Luther himself hesitated for quite some time before finally naming the Pope Antichrist: it was a gradually developing idea, which had several functions in Luther's writing: from an explicit warning to bring about change, to distancing himself from the Pope, to an apocalyptic discourse about the end of the world.[40]

Johannes enters the same linguistic domain in his letters from 1527 where he describes the horrors he witnessed in Sweden. The vivid descriptions take up several pages, showcasing Lutherans at their worst: they disrespect the Church and the

36 *Historia de regibus*, XV. 1.

37 Henry VIII, *Assertio,* 153.

38 Luther, *Contra Henricum*, 2, 12 (The original is unpaginated and has been consulted in electronic form. The page numbers are from the file.); Luther, *De Captivitate*, unpaginated, 51, 58, and 71 (The original is unpaginated and has been consulted in electronic form. The page numbers are from the file.).

39 Dietl, "Deconstructing Memory," 105, 116–17.

40 Richardsen-Friedrich, *Antichrist-Polemik,* 121–30.

king, indulging in all sorts of unsuitable, despicable and lascivious behaviour, and severely mistreating the faithful Catholics still in the country. Olaus follows up by suggesting that Lutherans are frivolous, unbridled heretics, insane, and fraudulent merchants.[41]

This godless behaviour shows that the Lutherans are connected to the Devil, as expressed by Johannes: "Lutherani (seu verius Luciferani) …", "Lutherans (or rather Luciferans)…".[42] Calling the Lutherans *Luciferans* links them to the Devil just as much as associating Wulfila with the Swedish reformers connects them to Antichrist. The term *Luciferans* was used by one of Johannes' colleagues, Bishop Hans Brask of Linköping, as well.[43] A staunch Catholic, who actively opposed the Lutheran reformers, he had anti-Lutheran pamphlets printed at the printing press associated with his cathedral city, and possibly founded by the bishop himself. There is a related reference where the Lutherans are called "furie infernales", "furies from Hell".[44] Godlessness is a trait Luther frequently ascribes to the Pope and the Catholic Church.[45] In addition, Luther often refers to his very difficult "encounters with Satan".[46] The references to Antichrist are apocalyptic in nature just as much as the fire metaphor. The last days of the world, as depicted in the Bible, most prominently in the Book of Revelation, would feature signs announcing that the end of the world was near. The arrival of Antichrist was one of them, as well as the well-known four horsemen of the Apocalypse.[47] And so, the reference to Antichrist is both a demonisation of the other party and a hint at the approaching end of the world. This ties Johannes' and Olaus' work neatly to the escatological nature of religious invective in the Reformation.

Lutherans as non-humans

The connection established between Luther, Lutheranism and the Devil associates the Reformation with the personification of evil: Lutherans are monsters, as exemplified in treatises where Luther is painted as a monster and the Catholic author Cochlaeus as a hero, following the pattern of heroic epic.[48] There are however other

41 *Historia de gentibus*, XIII. 50; XIV. 15; IV. 19, XX. 7, and XIII. 47.

42 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 84.

43 Stobaeus, *Hans Brask*, 152, note 22.

44 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 73.

45 Luther, *De captivitate* (The original is unpaginated and has been consulted in electronic form. The page numbers are from the file.) 46, 50.

46 Springer, "Luther's Latin Poetry," 380.

47 Richardsen-Friedrich, *Antichrist-Polemik*, 54–59.

48 Springer, "Arms and the Theologian," 51.

cases too of representing the Lutherans as non-human, either in general, or as animals. Metaphorically depicting humans as animals has been, and is, a frequent method for dehumanisation.[49] In Johannes' letters from 1527 we find both forms of representation.

The Lutherans are accused of having abandoned their human ways. Connecting them to Satan demonises them, and claiming that they are giving up human ways altogether dehumanises them, as in this quotation from one of Johannes' letters: "mores humanos […] abiecerunt.", "They have thrown aside the ways of humans."[50]

Another case of dehumanising the Lutherans, and demonising them, is found in Johannes' letter, where he likens them to wolves:

> "crudeles illi **Lutherani lupi** simplicem gregem Christianum […] miserabiliter dilaniarent […]", "those cruel **Lutheran wolves** miserably ripped the simple Christian flock to pieces".[51]

The Lutherans are wolves against the Christian flock, wild and cruel beasts set on destroying the (presumably) Catholic congregation. A similar representation, but with the word *pestis* instead of wolves, is found in Henry VIII's *Assertio septem sacramentorum*: there, the king suggests that Lutheranism, a dangerous illness, has attacked the flock of Christ.[52]

The wolf is found among the animals represented in the first printed book in Sweden, the *Dyalogus creaturarum moralizatus* (1483), a collection of short discussions between anthropomorphised animals or various natural phenomena, each dialogue provided with a moral ending. The wolf is described as cunning and cruel, like a more dangerous and vengeful version of a fox.[53] In the *Aberdeen Bestiary*, a work of a similar kind that represents ideas still current in Johannes' and Olaus' time, the real (or imaginary) habits of real (or imaginary) animals are interpreted as moral lessons.[54] There too the wolf is represented as cruel, rapacious, cunning, and even as directly associated with the Devil, a less than flattering connotation for the followers of Luther. Henry VIII refers to wolves in his descriptions of Lutherans.[55] In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the treacherous, cruel nature of his daughter Goneril is illustrated by animal metaphors and she is said to have a "wolvish visage".[56] As a

49 Oliver, "Dehumanization," 88.

50 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 73.

51 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 79.

52 Henry VIII, *Assertio,* 189.

53 *Dyalogus creaturarum moralizatus*, dialogue 106–7, 119.

54 *Aberdeen Bestiary,* wolf: f. 16v–f.18r.

55 Henry VIII, *Assertio,* 189 and 225; cf. Sandblad, 64.

56 McCloskey, "The Emotive use," 323.

symbol, the wolf was always pejorative.[57] It was the incarnate danger to the Christian flock and the enemy of a good shepherd as seen in the reference above. It carried connotations to greed, one of the seven deadly vices, to gluttony, and could be interpreted as a symbol of hypocrisy, so creating a direct link to heretics.[58] This showcases the effectiveness of likening Lutherans to wolves: it invokes an animal associated with cruelty and treachery, willing to attack the innocent Christian flock, and connects them to Antichrist.

Another animal used as a likeness for Lutherans, now in the work of Olaus, is a pig, more specifically a sea-pig, a monster claimed to have been sighted in the "German Ocean" in 1537. The sea-pig was interpreted by the Catholic Church and the interpretation published in a pamphlet that same year.[59] The sea-pig symbolises heretics, according to Olaus as well as to the pamphlet: heretics are unclean and filthy, like swine. A similar image of dirty pigs is found in the *Dyalogus creaturarum moralizatus*.[60] The association between pigs and filth is related to their habit to roll in the mud. It was used to create a parallel between the natural behaviour of pigs and sinners rolling in the metaphorical filth of sin.[61] Pigs were associated with the sins of gluttony and voluptuousness; moreover there was a connotation between pigs and the Devil.[62] The link between sin and filth, and so implicitly to pigs, in the *Historia de regibus* can be gleaned from Johannes' use of the word *spurcissimus*, "very filthy" as a description of Mohammad, which connects sin and filth to non-Catholic beliefs.[63] Luther refers to filth in his *Babylonian Captivity*, and calls his adversary Cochlaeus "porcus indignus", "unworthy swine"—unworthy of the pearls of wisdom, that is.[64] Cochlaeus returns the favour as he too uses the word *porcus*.[65]

For the most part, however, Cochlaeus instead likens Luther to the Minotaur or calls him a calf, another animal frequently used in the Reformation debates,

57 Cohen, Animals, 209–10.

58 Cohen, "Titian," 54, 56, 59; Idström and Piiranen, "The wolf," 93.

59 *Historia de gentibus,* XXI. 27. The "German Ocean" could refer to any location off the German coastline, Olaus is unspecific as to the exact location. It is also found on the *Carta Marina.* The pamphlet *Monstrum in Oceano Germanico* can be accessed via the Digital Library of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

60 *Dyalogus creaturarum moralizatus*, dialogue 114–15.

61 Cohen, *Animals*, 221.

62 Cohen, *Animals*, 220; Richard, "Le jeu des aveugles," 541–42.

63 *Historia de regibus*, VIII. 40.

64 Luther, *De captivitate,* 15, *Adversus Cochlaeum*, 10 (*porcus*), 15 and 16 (filth) (The original is unpaginated and has been consulted in electronic form. The page numbers are from the file.); cp. Luther, *Contra Henricum,* 11.

65 Cochlaeus, *Adversus Minotaurum*, 35.

but not by the brothers Magnus.[66] Cochlaeus passes himself off as a hero, as a new Theseus facing his own Minotaur in the form of Luther.[67] Finally, this representation of the enemy as a monster is found in Johannes' expression "illa Lutherana portenta", "those Lutheran monsters".[68] This dehumanises the Lutherans by likening them to animals, and demonises them through the link to the Devil and through calling them monsters. Furthermore, the symbolic significance of the animals connect them to sin. This complex of interlinked symbols ties the representation of Lutherans to the apocalyptic tones of Reformation invective.

O tempora, o mores, or Time is out of joint!

Finally, Johannes expresses his abhorrence and shock at everything that is wrong in the world in one of his letters by quoting Cicero, the famous words "O tempora, o mores!", "O times! O customs!"[69] from the first Catilinarian speech (paragraph 2). Time is indeed out of joint, which is apparent from a relatively frequent expression relating to time: "infelicia tempora", "woeful times" (with variants like "temporum infelicitas", "the woefulness of the times" or "in hoc nostro infelici seculo", "in this, our woeful century").[70] The expression is normally linked with religious upheaval or the dissemination of questionable or heretic religious beliefs or practices, and mainly used by Johannes. He connects it to the crisis that was Lutheranism.

The idea of living in woeful times aligns well with the contemporary apocalyptic visions of an aging, decaying world whose end inexorably approached.[71] With the advent of Christianity, the circular conception of time of Antiquity was exchanged for a linear one: time on Earth now began with Creation and would finish with the Apocalypse.[72] The Bible offered help in calculating the time from the beginning to the end. There were different ways of calculating, but here, the Four Empires theory will suffice.

This theory is founded on the book of Daniel, chapter 2, and the interpretation of Nebuchadnessar's dream about the large statue with a golden head and clay feet. It symbolised four great empires on earth, and when the last empire fell, the end had come. The Roman Empire was thought to be the last. The fact that the world did not

66 Cochlaeus, *Adversus Minotaurum*, 41, 42, 48, 51 (*vitulus)* 14, 16, 17 (*Minotaurus*).

67 Springer, "Arms and the Theologian," 50.

68 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 73.

69 Larsson, *Johannes' Latin Letters*, 75.

70 *Historia de regibus*, VIII. 40; XVI. 14.

71 See in general Dean, *The World Grown Old*.

72 Nilsson, *Royal Marginalia*, 58.

end in 476, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire, could be explained through a principle called *translatio imperii* "transfer of rule".[73] The fallen mantle of the original Roman Empire had been transferred and in the sixteenth century belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, which explained why the apocalypse had not yet come.

The expression "woeful times" is found in the *Historia de regibus*, book eight, chapters 39 and 40, where Johannes narrates the story of the awful Gothic king Gostagus. He was a tyrant, dreadful in every imaginable way, cruel and greedy, and would dress as a bandit and rob or kill anybody he encountered just for the fun of it. He would take somebody to bed every night, indifferent to whether or not his choice of partner made it incest. In the end, Johannes says that he will keep quiet about the rest of the unspeakable horrors.

He connects Gostagus' awfulness to religion: the king lived when Mohammad started spreading Islam:

> "[…] ob summam illorum **temporum infelicitatem**. Ethnicus enim erat, & **illi infelici tempori** reseruatus, quo spurcissimus Mahumetes suae vesaniae doctrinam seducendis hominibus obtrusit.", "[…] because of the **extreme woefulness of those times**. He was namely a pagan, and reserved for **that woeful time**, during which the most filthy Mohammad spread his doctrine of madness to seduce humankind."[74]

Johannes suggests that Gostagus' awfulness was in essence the result of woeful times, a period when heresy spreads, and the times turn sour and affect the whole world. Johannes juxtaposes these earlier woeful times with his own:

> "Nec multum differre illa secula ab **hoc infelicissimo aeuo nostro,** in quo Lutheranae haereses […]", "This time does not seem to be particularly different from **this our most woeful time**, during which the Lutheran heresies […]."[75]

Lutheranism is similar to Islam in Johannes' eyes, a heretical movement. The parallel to Islam, when the expanding Ottoman empire posed a very real threat to Europe, further emphasises the havoc that non-Catholic beliefs tend to wreak on society, on top of the apocalyptic connotations. While it is doubtful that the beginning of a new religion in the Middle East in the seventh century would have had any discernable effect on the king of Sweden, the connection is symbolically strong. When it is used to represent the impact of heresy and its devastating consequences for the world, it is a representation just as terrible as that of fire. Johannes' parallels

73 Richardsen-Friedrich, *Antichrist-Polemik*, 64; Notari, "Translatio imperii," 148, 152–54.

74 *Historia de regibus*, VIII. 40.

75 *Historia de regibus*, VIII. 40.

to his own woeful times suggest the terrifying prospect of having the entire world come crumbling down due to Lutheranism.

Johannes returns to this figure of thought when he discusses the aforementioned Bible translation by bishop Wulfila: Wulfila was evil because he was an Arian, i.e. a heretic, and mixed poison into his translation. In Johannes' own time, in a perfect parallel, the Bible is being translated into Swedish by Protestants, and Laurentius Andreae from the city of Strängnäs is *imitating* Wulfila by corrupting the gospel:

> "**Cuius execrandam impietatem nostro aeuo** quidam Laurentius Andreae Strengenensis Archidiaconus imitatus, **sanctissimum Christi euangelium […] corrupit**."[76] "**In our time,** Laurentius Andreae, archdeacon of the city of Strängnäs, imitated his [i.e. Wulfila's] **horrendous impiety and corrupted the most holy gospel of Christ**."

Laurentius Andreae (1470s–1552) was not alone, although the Bible translation tends to be attributed mainly to his efforts. He worked in close cooperation with the younger Olaus Petri (1493–1552), who had studied in Wittenberg, from where, according to Johannes, he had brought heresy to Sweden:

> "[Olaus] Petri […] **ex Vittembergensi gymnasio nefandam haereticorum impietatem** in patriam, quam in vera Christi religione conseruare debuisset, reportauit."[77] "Olaus Petri brought with him that **unspeakable impiety of the heretics from his studies in Wittenberg** to the fatherland, which he ought to have kept in the true religion of Christ."

The connection between *infelicia tempora* and religious upheaval is evident from the fact that the only historical time period referred to as "felicia tempora", "happy times" is the advent of Christendom to Sweden in the ninth century. From this, the importance of belonging to the correct faith becomes abundantly clear: the happy times bring about blessings and spread joy in the world, whereas the woeful times connected to non-Catholic religion subvert society, give rise to tyrants and their ill-willed advisers, and bring about frivolousness, adultery, cruelty, greed, and irreverence for the Church, signalling that the apocalypse is near.

I have not been able to locate the expression *infelicia tempora* or a similar expression in any of the works used for comparison. The notion could easily be inferred from the descriptions of the religiously coloured horrors found in those works, but it is not explicitly used.

Woeful times of crisis and disaster can be linked to the world growing old, with the advent of Antichrist an indication that the end was approaching. The

76 *Historia de regibus*, XV.1.

77 *Historia de regibus*, XV.1.

representation of Lutheranism and the Lutherans by Johannes and Olaus make for an ominous depiction of the nearing apocalypse: the woeful times they live in hint at an aging world, apocalyptic fires are spreading, Antichrist, monsters and animals associated with the Devil are roaming freely. The eschatological overtones bring the entire representation of the ongoing crisis together.

In the following, we shall see a few more examples of the pervasive presence of the Lutheran crisis in the world of the brothers Magnus, this time in the work of Olaus Magnus.

Concealing Criticism: Lutheranism and the *Historia de gentibus*

The representation of Lutheranism in the works of the brothers Magnus is usually covert. Their scholarly works of history are not intended as polemical pamphlets. The existence of such representations in unexpected locations in Olaus' work will now be used to explicate the unrivalled importance of the Lutheran crisis in the lives of the brothers: virtually anything can be associated to Lutheranism. This is accomplished through addressing it under seemingly innocuous chapter titles.

Olaus has a book entitled "De structuris aquilonaribus", "On buildings in the North" (book 12), where two related chapters are found. The first one is about houses that have caught fire and what is done to resolve the situation. The following chapter deals with how friends are tested when called upon to help extinguish the flames.[78] The end of this second chapter associates fire with Luther and finishes with the previously discussed description of Lutheranism as an enormous fire, an unexpected feature of a chapter in a book entitled "On buildings in the North".

In the following, a few chapter titles from the *Historia de gentibus* are presented, chapter titles that look entirely innocuous, but which contain anti-Lutheran comments. A case in point is the chapter "De arte, & ingenio fabrorum", "On the art and skill of blacksmiths".[79] Olaus praises the art of the blacksmiths of the north and describes their great skill in ironwork. Then he informs the reader that instruments of torture are made of iron and reveals that cruel Lutheran princes have had such instruments made because they want to torture people. Nothing in the chapter title suggests that this information would be present.

Another case is the chapter "De difficultate aduehendi salis in Aquilonaria regna", "On the difficulty of transporting salt to the northern kingdoms".[80] This chapter starts with a description of how Johannes Magnus as archbishop taught people in the north

78 *Historia de gentibus*, XII. 21 and 22.

79 *Historia de gentibus*, VI. 6.

80 *Historia de gentibus*, XIII. 44.

of Sweden how to extract salt. Some merchants intervened, because they wanted to make a profit from importing salt and selling it in the north, after which some evil Lutherans entered the stage, and had Johannes Magnus exiled from Sweden.

Even the chapter "Adhuc de Pictoribus Aquilonarium regionum", "More on the painters of the northern lands" contains a reference to Lutheranism.[81] Olaus explains that the painters in the northern realms are few in number, but skillful, and well liked by the Goths, who love depictions of kings and heroes of old, role models of virtue and heroism. Olaus rounds off this implicit praise of the Goths with an out-of-the-blue attack on the Lutherans: they prefer scandalous pictures of naked women.

Finally there is the entire chapter where Olaus describes a sighting of the so called monstrous sea-pig, claimed to have taken place in 1537. What is interesting here is the chapter title: "De porco monstroso", "On the monstrous sea-pig". From this title alone, just one of the many chapters in book 21, entitled "De piscibus monstrosis", "On monstrous fish", it is impossible to guess that what will follow is a derogatory description of Lutherans/heretics through an emblematic interpretation of the sea-pig.

There is no corresponding feature of hidden invective in the treatises I chose for comparison; with polemical titles such as *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* or *Against Cochlaeus*, invective is to be expected. But these seemingly innocuous chapters are laced with criticism against Luther, Lutherans, and Lutheranism, and show the pervasive role of Lutheranism in the brothers' works: the crisis that shaped their lives finds its way into anything and brings to mind the escatological scenario discussed throughout this article.

Conclusion

The metaphors used by the Magnus brothers to describe the Lutheran crisis are for the most part found in contemporary polemical works and so connect them to the politico-theological debate on Luther's ideas. Just like Luther, Cochlaeus and Henry VIII, they refer to unwanted religious opinions and to those holding them, as filthy, as monsters, as similar to the Devil, and as animals. Furthermore, the Lutherans are portrayed as non-human and have a number of unflattering character traits ascribed to them, for example lasciviousness and cruelty. So far, correspondences in the use of figurative language can be found between the works used for comparison and those written by Johannes and Olaus. The other works contain invective without parallel in Johannes' or Olaus' works, and Luther and Cochlaeus in particular are brimming with irony, but that is beyond the scope of this investigation.

81 *Historia de gentibus*, XIII. 50.

All in all, the brothers adapt themselves well to contemporary representations of crisis, except for the reference to fire, which I have not found elsewhere. The fact that this metaphor is not found in the works I chose for comparison for this study does however not exclude that it was used elsewhere for describing crisis.

There is another feature I have found to be absent in the works selected for comparison, namely the expression *infelicia tempora*. It could be inferred, but is not expressly stated. The Magnus brothers do however speak explicitly of woeful times, Johannes more so than Olaus. In their works, the advent and spread of Lutheranism or other non-Catholic beliefs is connected to a plethora of other problems not usually regarded as related to religion. Non-Catholic beliefs are a sign of *infelicia tempora*, and their appearance make times woeful.

On the whole, the metaphors they use are interconnected and aligned with the apocalyptic tone frequent in religious debate during the Reformation. The importance of the crisis is highlighted even further in the anti-Lutheran attacks concealed under the most innocuous headings throughout Olaus' work: through them, it becomes clear that to the Magnus brothers, Lutheranism could taint anything not remotely religious.

To be sure, anti-Lutheran content is not frequent in either work—they are after all works of history, not polemical treatises on theology. The number of times anti-Lutheran invective or comments can be made is limited, and a majority of the works is taken up with historical data (in a very broad sense). What matters is however not the frequence, but the fact that it exists, that the Lutheran crisis that upended the lives of the brothers is addressed throughout their works. This is not to say that the depictions of Lutheranism are consistently linked to the life histories of the brothers. Sometimes they are, as when Johannes had to flee persecution by leaving Sweden, but more frequently, Lutheranism is represented in a way that highlights its generally negative impact on society, politically and religiously. This links the representation of Lutheranism to Johannes' and Olaus' political and religious roles, going beyond the personal aspects of the crisis.

The system of apocalyptically coloured metaphors used to depict religious opponents showcases Lutheranism as a horrible threat to the world. This mirrors the brothers' experiences as the advent of Lutheranism prevented them from continuing the glittering careers they had begun as men of the Church, diplomats and councillors. Their representation of Lutheranism, although far from always linked to specific events in their lives, is clearly a part of their constant, politico-religious struggle for reinstating Catholicism in the North – including reclaiming their ecclesiastical posts in Sweden. In that respect, it touches on all three aspects of the major crisis in their lives: the personal, the political, and the religious.

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