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# “zu grob gewest”: Metainvective Communication in Confessional Disputes over Narration of the Saints in the Sixteenth Century

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**Abstract:** The article is devoted to coarse uses of language as a subject of dispute in confessional controversies over legendary narration. Such metainvective forms of communication are systematized, and questioned with regard to their functions: in the Protestant *Lügenden* (word combination of “legend” and “lie,” lying legends) and their Catholic replies, the “true” faith and its defense are connected with communicative behavior. Whereas Lutherans are above all effective at adopting coarse speech and the metainvective reproach of lying, the Counter-Reformation argumentation develops the strategic potential of metainvective communication in very different ways. Metainvective statements become a weapon particularly when they are absorbed into figures of meta-metainvective, which not only display the coarse speech but reveal and then criticize the strategy behind it. The tension between polemical prefaces and annotated miracle narratives in the *Lügenden* as well as the thematic proliferation of the legend discussion in the Catholic reports and sermons are ultimately shown to be genre-dynamic effects of the use of metainvectives.

**Keywords:** legend, *Lügende*, saints, invectivity, metainvective communication, Reformation

## 1 Introduction

The point of contention in the controversial theological disputes of the sixteenth century is the religious truth that each confessional camp claims for itself. Fundamental modes of these disputes include antithetical portrayals and the use of rigid dichotomies, first and foremost the juxtaposition of divine truth with devilish lies, as well as binary codings such as the asymmetric distinction between “us” and

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“them.” The aim of interconfessional dispute is no longer a consensus but demarcation.<sup>1</sup>

The escalatory dynamics of confessional demarcations may be observed in manifold forms of disparagement, particularly in their linguistic and rhetorical aspects. They are accompanied by a shift in communicative norms and licenses in theological discussions: personal defamations, crude insults, and insinuations that are hardly justified or bound to the rules of learned dispute.<sup>2</sup> Former research describes linguistic invectives as *affective outbursts*, thus dismissing them as communicative disturbances.<sup>3</sup> However, already in the confessional disputes of the sixteenth century, both the own and the opponent’s inappropriate expressions are being addressed. It is remarkable that the manner of disputing can become a topic of discussion and can be used as an argument in dispute. This is particularly relevant for the debate about the cult of saints and about legendary narratives. This discourse is central to the success of the Reformation: the disparagement of traditional legends as “lying legends” or so-called *Lügen* as well as the rejection of the cult of relics, of the veneration and invocation of the saints decisively changed the everyday practice of piety. The Reformation’s critique of the cult of the

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1 See Antje Sablotny, “*Doing the Other: Zur kommunikativen Praxis der Grenzziehung in Erasmus Alberus’ Barfuser Münche Eulenspiegel vnd Alcoran und Hieronymus Rauschers Papistischen Lügen,*” in *Entscheidung zur Heiligkeit? Autonomie und Providenz im legendarischen Erzählen vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Daniela Blum et al. (Heidelberg: Winter, 2022), 111–36. This article was translated from German by Dr. David Heyde. All quotations from research literature have been translated into English; quotations from early modern German sources have been supplemented with English translations. The translation was generously funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – Project-ID 317232170 – SFB 1285.

2 Especially on Luther, see Markus Hundt, *Sprachliche Aggression bei Martin Luther: Argumentationsformen und -funktionen am Beispiel der Streitschrift “Wider das Papsttum zu Rom vom Teufel gestiftet” (1545)*, *Lingua Historica Germanica* 27 (Berlin and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2022); Heike Plaß, *Luther: Wer wettet am originellsten?* (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 2016); Johannes Schwitalla, “Brutalität und Schamverletzung in öffentlichen Polemiken des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Gewalt in der Sprache: Rhetoriken verletzenden Sprechens*, ed. Sibylle Krämer und Elke Koch (Paderborn and Munich: Fink, 2010), 97–123; Constance M. Furey, “Invective and Discernment in Martin Luther, D. Erasmus, and Thomas More,” *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005), 469–88; Olaf Roynsdal, “Luther’s Polemics,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (1992), 235–55; Heiko Oberman, “Teufelsdreck: Eschatology and Scatology in the ‘Old’ Luther,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988), 435–50; Johannes Schwitalla, “Martin Luthers argumentative Polemik: Mündlich und schriftlich,” in *Kontroversen, alte und neue*, vol. 2, *Formen und Formgeschichte des Streitens: Der Literaturstreit*, ed. Franz Josef Worstbrock and Helmut Koopmann (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), 41–54; Martin Brecht, “Der ‘Schimpfer’ Martin Luther,” *Luther: Zeitschrift der Luthergesellschaft* 52 (1981), 97–113; Herbert Wolf, *Martin Luther: Eine Einführung in germanistische Luther-Studien* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980), 50–51.

3 See, e.g., Thomas Murner, *Von dem großen Lutherischen Narren*, ed. Paul Merker (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1918), 15.

saints is about nothing less than the central question of how man can justify himself before God and how he should form his impact on earth.

A debate has developed between the Protestant and Catholic sides around the *Lügen*, which on the one hand involved more and more persons and issues, but on the other hand this debate was conducted in a special way, which I characterize as “metainvective communication,” following Joachim Scharloth’s definition:<sup>4</sup> Metainvective communication is part of the linguistic-rhetorical repertoire of invective forms. They show how differently one can disparage someone or something.<sup>5</sup> Metainvective communication is fundamentally linguistic in nature and marks preceding acts of communication as vituperation, insults, or disparagement. Thus it is at the same time itself highly disparaging and has the potential to dynamize the invective. Metainvective communication can not only be used to change social positioning but also to effect community-stabilizing distancing. Its use makes an invective interaction perceptible and thus relevant to reality. Invective speech acts are often performed in the context of metainvective communication via “making emotions relevant or making affective practices believable.”<sup>6</sup> They increase the already high invective potential of explicit thematizations of experienced or observed disparagement, and thereby can lead to corresponding follow-on communications. “This potential is fed by the declarative nature of [metainvective] expressions.”<sup>7</sup> Not infrequently, the subject of debate

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4 Joachim Scharloth was a member of the concept group and thus involved in the elaboration of the concept of invectivity, especially in the theoretical reflection of metainvective communication. However, Scharloth then moved to Waseda University Tokyo and is therefore no longer involved in the Collaborative Research Centre. See Joachim Scharloth, “Sprachliche Gewalt und soziale Ordnung: Metainvective Debatten als Medium der Politik,” in *Sprachliche Gewalt: Formen und Effekte von Hassrede, Pejorisation und verbaler Aggression*, ed. Fabian Klinker et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2018), 7–28; Joachim Scharloth, “Hassrede und Invektivität als Gegenstand der Sprachwissenschaft und Sprachphilosophie: Bausteine zu einer Theorie des Metainvektiven,” *Aptum* 2 (2017), 116–32; Dagmar Ellerbrock et al., “Invektivität – Perspektiven eines neuen Forschungsprogramms in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften,” *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 2 (2017), 2–24, here 17–18. The latter is a synthesis of the invectivity concept developed by the research group. Gerd Schwerhoff, “Invektivität und Geschichtswissenschaft: Konstellationen der Herabsetzung in historischer Perspektive – ein Forschungskonzept,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 311 (2020), 1–36 again offers a summary.

5 The concept of invectivity places emphasis on the different media, forms and modes of disparagement, while the term polemic is usually used to describe specific antagonisms carried out in controversial writings. See Jürgen Stenzel, “Rhetorischer Manichäismus: Vorschläge zu einer Theorie der Polemik,” in *Formen und Formgeschichte des Streitens: Der Literaturstreit*, ed. Helmut Koopmann and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), 3–11.

6 Scharloth, “Sprachliche Gewalt,” 17.

7 Scharloth, “Hassrede und Invektivität,” 123. “In order to become hegemonic, the claim to validity associated with the declarative character in metainvective expressions must be implicitly or explicitly justified. In the case of strongly conventionalized forms of pejorative positioning, it is

changes from the content-related to the metacommunicative.<sup>8</sup> The modality of metainvective is then not just a means of agreeing or disagreeing with the invective nature of an utterance. Rather, metainvective forms of communication, on account of their both implicit and explicit reference to norms, are “media in which ideas of social order and the mechanisms of their constitution can be negotiated. If they are initiated intentionally, they can be a strategic resource.”<sup>9</sup>

In Reformation research, metainvective forms of communication have certainly been identified, but without being systematically examined and questioned as to their function. As a rule, these are concise references to or descriptions of devaluations of the opponent’s invective or justifications of one’s own.<sup>10</sup> However, it is worth pursuing the topic in more detail. For the repertoire of the invective forms of the *Lügen*, metainvective communication is of great explanatory power: for it is an essential site of negotiation of religious truth and shows how differentiated the methods of disparagement are in the dispute over the legends and veneration of the saints.

In this paper, I would like to demonstrate that metacommunicative speech acts have an essential function for the confessional dispute over the narration of the saints: they are not only catalysts of the debate but are also used as a strategic resource. I argue that the dispute about the right way to portray and handle saints

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merely implicit. In situations where an unambiguous definition is being disputed, however, these validity claims must be explicitly justified. Dimensions of conventional methods (linguistic means, communicative roles, conversational norms), situational aspects of utterance (forms of utterance, context of utterance, speaker positions, social structures), postulates of communication ethics (modalities, intentions, licenses, social norms and values, etc.), and notions of language and its power in metainvective utterances are often marked as relevant in this context. In the arguments for or against the invective potential of certain linguistic means and practices, the enabling conditions of invective speech acts thus also become an issue, and with them notions of social and cultural order,” Scharloth, “Sprachliche Gewalt,” 17–18.

<sup>8</sup> See Walther Dieckmann, *Streiten über das Streiten: Normative Grundlagen polemischer Metakommunikation* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005), 79.

<sup>9</sup> Scharloth, “Hassrede und Invektivität,” 124. Schwerhoff, “Invektivität und Geschichtswissenschaft,” here 13–14, follows Scharloth.

<sup>10</sup> See, in particular, Kai Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten: Volkssprachliche Kontroversen zwischen altgläubigen und evangelischen Theologen im 16. Jahrhundert*, Frühe Neuzeit 104 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005); Timothy Nelson, “O du armer Luther...”: *Sprichwörtliches in der antilutherischen Polemik des Johannes Nas (1534–1590)*, Sprichwörterforschung 15 (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1992), 21–22; see also the following studies written in the context of the SFB: Uwe Israel, “Defensio oder die Kunst des Invektierens im Oberrheinischen Humanismus,” *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 46 (2019), 407–41; or Alexander Kästner and Gerd Schwerhoff, “Der Narrheit nährisch spotten: Mediale Ausprägungen und Invektive Dynamiken der Öffentlichkeit in der frühen Reformationszeit,” in *Reformation als Kommunikationsprozess: Die böhmischen Kronländer und Sachsen*, ed. Petr Hrachovec et al., Norm und Struktur 51 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2020), 37–74, here 64 and 73–74.

and their legends is connected with *disputing about disputing*.<sup>11</sup> Metainvective statements are used to negotiate or declare interpretive sovereignty, which is based on the *correct* religious norm in each particular case and at the same time defends this norm. In addition, the controversialist has the opportunity to affect his readership with them.<sup>12</sup> Metainvective communication may therefore be placed in the field of rhetoric and fulfill a strategic function that is by no means anachronistic.<sup>13</sup>

In the context of Marina Münkler's sub-project *Sacredness and Sacrilege: The Disparagement of the Sacred within the Interconfessional Dispute of the Sixteenth Century* as part of the Dresden Collaborative Research Centre 1285 *Invectivity: Constellations and Dynamics of Disparagement*,<sup>14</sup> I have developed a theoretical classification of the *Lügende* as a metagenre.<sup>15</sup> Focusing on invective genres, invective paratexts, communicative practices of boundary setting, as well as iterativity and fictionalization, I have described essential modes of disparagement in the *Lügen* and their functions.<sup>16</sup> The following study on metainvective communication is intended to supplement the previous analyses by a further important invective mode and show how differentiated the techniques of disparagement are in the discourse on *Lügen*. Here, I place greater emphasis than before on the Catholic counter-invectives and

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<sup>11</sup> Following Dieckmann, *Streiten*.

<sup>12</sup> On the affective quality of invective utterances, see Dagmar Ellerbrock and Silke Fehleemann, "Beschämung, Beleidigung, Herabsetzung: Invektivität als neue Perspektive historischer Emotionsforschung," in *Politische Bildung mit Gefühl*, ed. Anja Besand et al. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2019), 90–104.

<sup>13</sup> See Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 110, n. 415; Schwitalla, "Luthers argumentative Polemik," 52; Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 80, against Kästner and Schwerhoff, "Narrheit," 65.

<sup>14</sup> See above, introduction.

<sup>15</sup> See Anje Sablotny, "Metalegende: Die protestantische Lügende als invektive Metagattung," in *Beiträge zur mediävistischen Erzählforschung* 2 (2019), 148–200, <https://doi.org/10.25619/BmE2019228> (accessed 12 July 2022). Münkler has already exposed the genre-dynamic context: Marina Münkler, "Legende/Lügende: Die protestantische Polemik gegen die katholische Legende und Luthers *Lugend* von St. Johanne Chrysostomo," in *Gottlosigkeit und Eigensinn: Religiöse Devianz im konfessionellen Zeitalter*, ed. Gerd Schwerhoff and Eric Piltz (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2015), 121–47.

<sup>16</sup> See *Invektive Gattungen: Formen und Medien der Herabsetzung*, ed. Albrecht Dröse, Marina Münkler and Antje Sablotny, Sonderheft der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift 6 (2021), <https://kulturwissenschaftlichezeitschrift.de/ausgaben/invektive-gattungen/> (accessed 12 July 2022); Antje Sablotny, "Das mustu glauben, oder der Teufel beschiesst dich: Die invektiven Paratexte der protestantischen Lügen und ihre gattungskommunikative Funktion," in *Invektive Gattungen*, 107–29, <https://doi.org/10.2478/kwg-2021-0014> (accessed 12 July 2022); Antje Sablotny, "Corpus corruptum: Die Herabsetzung heiliger Körper in den Papistischen Lügen Hieronymus Rauschers," in *Körper-Krankungen: Der menschliche Leib als Medium der Herabsetzung*, ed. Uwe Israel and Jürgen Müller (Frankfurt/Main and New York: Campus, 2021), 227–56; Sablotny, "Doing the Other."

expand the text corpus accordingly. This allows me to do more justice to the dynamic character of the disputes.

It is necessary to begin with a concise overview of the *Lügenden* in order to introduce the literary setting of the controversy over saints and thus demonstrate the fundamental correlation between metacommunicative forms of utterance and the Protestant *Lügenden*. Following the systematics of the linguist Walther Dieckmann in his monograph *Streiten über das Streiten* (“Disputing about Disputing”) on German polemic texts of the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, I will then go into the different types of metainvective utterance that play a part in the legend/*Lügende* discourse. The selection of sources is oriented toward the premises of exemplarity and – with regard to the text types – relative breadth. The texts I will consider include the *Lügende* editions of Martin Luther and Hieronymus Rauscher on the one hand and Catholic replies on the other, including Johannes Cochlaeus’ *Bericht* (report) against Luther’s *Lügend*, Friedrich Staphylus’ counter-report in response to various defamatory writings against his person, a sermon by Martin Eisengrein that also includes an attack on Rauscher, and Johannes Nas’ *Evangelische Wahrheiten* (“Evangelical Truths”), which refers back structurally to Rauscher’s *Papistische Lügen* (“Papist Lies”).<sup>17</sup> The authors skillfully apply the whole gamut of metainvective and pursue very different strategies. The tendency that emerges is that destructive argumentation increases not only the frequency but also the legitimacy of coarse speech. The significance of metainvective in confessional disputes over narration of the saints is shown not least – and this is my follow-up thesis – in the fact that this significance is conveyed in the texts themselves by figures of meta-metainvective. Then the invective speech as such is not

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther, “Die Lügend von St. Johanne Chrysostomo, 1537,” in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (WA), ed. J.K.F. Knaake et al., vol. 50 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1914), 48–64; Hieronymus Rauscher, [...] *Papistische Lügen* [...] (Regensburg et al.: Heinrich Geißler et al., 1562–1564) (VD16 R 399, VD16 R 400 et al.); Johannes Cochlaeus, *Bericht der warheit, auff die vnwaren Lügend S. Johannis Chrysostomi* [...] (Leipzig: Nikolaus Wolrab, 1537) (VD16 C 4268); Friedrich Staphylus, *Christlicher gegenbericht an den Gottseligen gemainen Layen* [...] (Ingolstadt: Alexander und Samuel Weißenhorn, 1561) (VD16 S 8571, S 8572); Martin Eisengrein, *Ein Christenliche predig, Ausz was vrsachen, so vil Leut, in vilen landen, vom Papstumb zum Luthertumb fallen* [...] (Ingolstadt: Alexander und Samuel Weißenhorn, 1562) (VD16 E 781); Johannes Nas, *Das Antipapistisch eins vnd hundert: Außserlesner, gewiser, Evangelischer wahrhait* [...] (Ingolstadt: Alexander und Samuel Weißenhorn, 1565–1570) (VD16 N 96, VD16 N 99 et al.). The preface to Rauscher’s second *Centurie* states that Staphylus discredits Rauscher’s print as “hundred novellas” (“Centonouela”), “made-up fables” (“Erdicht Fablen”), or “fluff” (“Zotten”), and himself as “Brother Rausch” (“Bruder Rausch”) and “fabulist” (“Fabelhansen”), although it is not clear to which of Staphylus’ works Rauscher refers. See Rudolf Schenda, “Hieronymus Rauscher und die protestantisch-katholische Legendenpolemik,” in *Volkserzählung und Reformation: Ein Handbuch zur Tradierung und Funktion von Erzählstoffen und Erzählliteratur im Protestantismus*, ed. Wolfgang Brückner (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1974), 178–259, here 193 with note 61.

only displayed, but its strategic use and its effectiveness are also reflected upon and the opponent reproached for it. This can, as in the case of Nas' *Evangelische Wahrheiten*, even be realized poetically in the broadest sense, thus promoting genre-dynamic developments.

## 2 Lügende!

In his *Lügend von St. Johanne Chrysostomo*, published in Wittenberg in 1537, Luther reprinted a legend taken from *Der Heiligen Leben*, a popular legendary written around 1400, and added an invective preface, afterword, and marginal annotations. The title *Lügend* goes back to the play on words *Lügenlegende* ("lying legend"), which had already been established as an invective pattern of language use several years ago.<sup>18</sup> The pun *Lügende* successfully superimposes itself over the noun *Legende* (legend) in that it is always conveyed along with the word legend. The genre of the *Lügende* manages to build on this communicative success, while at the same time perpetuating the pattern of invective language use.<sup>19</sup> The *Lügende* is an expression of the changed theological view about the cult of saints and the premises of hagiographic narration. With the *Lügend*, Luther clearly marks his rejection of the sale of indulgences, the cult of pilgrimage, the veneration of saints, and especially their function as mediators between God and mankind for the attainment of salvation – hence, of what he saw as the economization of salvation by the institution of the Church. In this respect, the word *Lügende* does not only imply the assertion that the traditional or Catholic legends are untruthful and improbable stories, but also always connotes an outrage – as if it were with an exclamation mark. *Lügend!* carries the assertion that those who spread and believe these stories are themselves "veritable liars who lie in earnest and want to deceive and

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<sup>18</sup> See Münkler, "Legende/Lügende," 132. Noah Bubenhofer, *Sprachgebrauchsmuster: Korpuslinguistik als Methode der Diskurs- und Kulturanalyse* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 24: "A pattern can only be established at an analytical level in retrospect. This pattern functions hardly visibly for the speakers at the level of language use. 'Patterned language use' therefore emphasizes that, apparently, instances of a particular phrase repeatedly served as patterns (as models) for the production of further instances in the analyzed language excerpt. In retrospect, however, it is no longer possible to identify which instances ever served this pattern function. But the effect of these innumerable instances, which on the one hand followed a pattern and on the other hand took on a pattern function, is visible at the level of analysis as a phenomenon of a typical or, more precisely, patterned language use."

<sup>19</sup> For details, see Sablotny, "Invective Paratexte," 119–20.



damage the people.”<sup>20</sup> Their lies are “devilish,” because they remain undiscovered “until they have done damage to what is eternal and invincible, and there is neither consolation nor help for evermore.”<sup>21</sup> Being deceived by them means nothing less than losing one’s salvation. The *Lügend!* thus becomes an abbreviation of meta-*invective* reproaches to the confessional opponents, who lie, deceive, and mock not only the saints but also the faithful with their miracle legends.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, Luther’s publication indicates that a radical redefinition of religious norms is at stake: the certainties of faith that are conveyed with the legends of the saints, and specific patterns of narrating the sacred, such as miraculous episodes, lose their validity and are discarded as lies.<sup>23</sup>

The *invective* paratext is a constitutive element of the genre of the *Lügende*. The marginal annotations and the *Erinnerung* recapitulating each *Lügende* in the editions of Rauscher in particular multiply the meta-*invective* reproach of the lie and perpetuate it throughout the reading process. As a rule, the *Lügende* is accompanied by other disparaging speech acts. The numerous epitexts accompanying editions show that such provocations result not only in further disparagement but especially in meta-*invective* communications as follow-on *invectives*. These are Catholic replies, which the Protestant authors then respond to in the paratexts of their *Lügende* editions. The Catholic side uses other vernacular text types, such as sermons or (counter-)reports, which in their polemical density may be classified with Kai Bremer in the field of *Streitschriften* (“polemical pamphlets”).<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the Franciscan Johannes Nas gets involved

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20 “rechte lügener, die mit ernst liegen und wissentlich die leute betriegen und beschedigen wollen,” WA 50 (1914), 61.

21 “Teuffelisch;” “bis sie den ewigen und unuberwindlichen schaden gethan [haben], Und ist da kein trost noch hülffe mehr ewiglich,” WA 50 (1914), 62.

22 The defamation of the confessional opponent as a liar and his actions as malicious deception proves to be a popular, because effective, *invective* strategy that follows the dialectical logic of disparaging the other and self-promotion and has its roots in classical rhetoric. See, e.g., Stenzel, “Rhetorischer Manichäismus,” 7–9; following Stenzel, see also Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 45–51.

23 The fact that the Lutherans themselves come from the same tradition is of course a problem. In his foreword to Erasmus Alberus’ *Der Barfüßermönche Eulenspiegel und Alkoran* of 1542 Luther describes how he previously had a feeling of discomfort and doubts about the legends of Saint Francis and Saint Benedict in particular. He realizes that “these honorable holy fathers were still deeply rooted in the flesh” (“diese hohe heiligsten Veter noch so tieff in dem fleisch steckten”). An expression of such criticism, however, could have meant that he would be sentenced to death as a heretic. Martin Luther, *Vorrede zu Erasmus Alberus, Der Barfüßermönche Eulenspiegel und Alkoran, 1542* WA 53 (1920), 406–11, here 411. On the various forms of Protestant differentiation from the Roman tradition in the *Lügenden*, see Sablotny, “*Doing the Other*.”

24 Polemical pamphlets are “considerably longer than conventional pamphlets [...]. They are directed against a named enemy [...] and demand the competence to judge already in their title through the use of typical catchwords (‘rescue’, ‘impartial judge’). Polemical pamphlets are



in the controversy in the same genre with his *Gegenlügen* (counter-*Lügen*). His work *Das Antipapistisch eins vnd hundert: Außereßner, gewiser, Evangelischer wahrhait* copies the style of the *Lügen* to expose the lives of the Reformers and their conception of the new Gospel in a total of six *Centurien* (one *Centurie* has about a hundred *Lügen*).<sup>25</sup> In an ironic-parodic reversal of the *Papistische Lügen*, the *Evangelische* or *Evangelose Wahrheiten* simultaneously show<sup>26</sup> how virulent the theme of sacralization through narration and desacralization through the deconstruction of legendary narrative patterns is for the sixteenth century.

The authors are not concerned with convincing the confessional opponent.<sup>27</sup> Rather, the controversies are “a suitable means of explaining their particular theological standpoint and popularizing current theological points of contention.”<sup>28</sup> These functions can also be performed by sermons. The close relationship between sermons and polemical pamphlets may be seen not only in the numerous diatribes against “heathens,” “Turks,”<sup>29</sup> “papists,” or seductive lay preachers but also in their similarities with regard to the forms of address and the structural conception of the texts. Not infrequently, polemical pamphlets emerged from revised sermons.<sup>30</sup> The prefaces of the Protestant *Lügende* editions may be assigned to this text type field of polemical pamphlets, especially since they often discuss only little of what they are actually introducing. The destruction of the truth of the legend is here closely associated with polemical demolition of the confessional opponent. The publication of the *Historien* of “Protestant”

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fundamentally dialogic in conception, in the sense that they challenge opponents to respond in the same genre. They usually indicate the author, the opponent, and the theological point of contention, which, following the system of disputation, is called the ‘main point’ or the *status controversiae*,” Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 6.

25 Nas, *Evangelische Wahrheiten*.

26 See the corresponding titles of the stories in Nas’ second *Centurie*, e.g., no. 4, 6, 31, 34, 35, 40, 41. For the play on words, see note 84.

27 On the “logical irreconcilability” of confessional invectives in the sixteenth century, following the considerations of Georg Simmel, see: Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 213–21.

28 Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 194.

29 Both sermons and polemical pamphlets participate in the late medieval and early modern Turk discourse. As Beckert and Münkler show via corresponding entries in Latin-German as well as German dictionaries of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, the construction of the *Turk* is fundamentally invective against the background of the Ottoman expansion. See Theresa Beckert and Marina Münkler, “Die Türken in Wörterbüchern des 15.–17. Jahrhunderts,” *Lexicographica: International Annual for Lexicography* 38 (2022), 193–212.

30 For details, see Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 232–36.

confessors and martyrs, on the contrary, aimed at a new form of narration about saints.<sup>31</sup>

In the preface to the first *Centurie* of his *Hundert außerwelte, grosse, vnuerschempte, feiste, wolgemeste, Papistische Lügen*, Rauscher is not concerned with providing a differentiated discussion of the legendary narrative. The *Lügenden* printed in the following are set; he does not justify them. The main focus of the preface is a polemic against the “apostate Mameluke”<sup>32</sup> Friedrich Staphylus. Until 1541 he was a disciple of Melanchthon in Wittenberg, in 1546 he was appointed theology professor in Königsberg, converted back to the Catholic faith in late 1552, and then served as superintendent (curator) of the University of Ingolstadt from 1560 on:

But because you know the truth yet take money from your godless papist against your own conscience, and conceal the truth but attack the only true religion with devilish calumnies, and think that you want to bewitch the people to the point where everyone takes your papistical and diabolical lies for truth [...], you have made me want to collect one hundred plump, well-fattened, obvious papist lies from your own scribblers. [...] Someone will perhaps think that I

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<sup>31</sup> *Lügende* and *Historie* are nevertheless in a genre-dynamic interrelation. See (with corresponding literature and source references on *Historien*) Sablotny, “*Corpus corruptum*,” 248–51; Sablotny, “Invektive Paratexte,” 124f.; Sablotny, “Metalegende,” 166–69; Münkler, “Legende/Lügende,” 138–42; Marina Münkler, *Narrative Ambiguität: Die Faustbücher des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 134–42; Marina Münkler, “Sündhaftigkeit als Generator von Individualität: Zu den Transformationen legendarischen Erzählens in den Faustbüchern des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,” in *Literarische und religiöse Kommunikation in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: DFG-Symposium 2006*, ed. Peter Strohschneider (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2008), 25–61, here 40–46; Hans-Joachim Ziegeler, “Wahrheiten, Lügen, Fiktionen: Zu Martin Luthers *Lügend von S. Johanne Chrysostomo* und zum Status literarischer Gattungen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Mittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit: Übergänge, Umbrüche und Neuansätze*, ed. Walter Haug (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), 237–62; Hans-Peter Ecker, *Die Legende: Kulturanthropologische Annäherung an eine literarische Gattung* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1993), here 238–43; André Schnyder, “Legendenpolemik und Legendenkritik in der Reformation: *Die Lügend von St. Johanne Chrysostomo* bei Luther und Cochläus; ein Beitrag zur Rezeption des Legendars *Der Heiligen Leben*,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 70 (1979), 122–40, here 138–39; Schenda, “Hieronymus Rauscher,” 187–99; Rudolf Schenda, “Die protestantisch-katholische Legendenpolemik im 16. Jahrhundert,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 52 (1970), 28–48, here 33–40; Wolfgang Hieber, *Legende, protestantische Bekennerhistorie, Legendenhistorie: Studien zur literarischen Gestaltung der Heiligenthematik im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe* (Würzburg, 1970). On Protestant saints in early modern drama, see the studies of Cora Dietl, “‘Freundliche’ Nachbarn: Die Verfolger des ‘wahren Glaubens’ im Märtyrerdrama des 16./17. Jahrhunderts,” in *Interkonfessionalität in der Frühen Neuzeit: Kontexte und Konkretionen*, ed. Luisa Coscarelli et al., *Hamburger Beiträge zur Germanistik* 59 (Berlin et al.: Peter Lang, 2018), 193–213; Cora Dietl, “Nürnberg’s ‘zweite Stadtheilige’ im protestantischen Schultheater: Wolfgang Waldungs *Catharinæ martyrium*,” *European Medieval Drama* 19 (2015), 47–76; Cora Dietl, “Eine neue Heilige des Protestantismus: Die *Pura*-Tragödie des Hans Sachs,” *European Medieval Drama* 18 (2014), 111–28.

<sup>32</sup> “abtrünnige[n] Mameluck[en],” Rauscher, *Papistische Lügen*, I, bij<sup>v</sup>.

have been too coarse in this preface and also in the notes I have added to the following lies. He should know that it is absolutely essential, because the clergy in the papacy and their servant Staphylus are so stubborn, and thus besiege us with blasphemies.<sup>33</sup>

Rauscher calls the “Calumnien,” that is, the slanders and falsifications as well as the lies of the so-called papists (especially those of Staphylus) his motive for putting Catholic examples into print. They should provide evidence, as it were, of their mendacity and intention to deceive. Rauscher justifies his coarseness as a response to the preceding disparaging speech of Catholics, which he describes pejoratively as “lestern” and “stürmen.” Thus, a close connection becomes apparent between the *actual* invectives and the metacommunicative statements reflecting on one’s own invective mode of communication or that of the hostile other. With each side acting as though it were only responding to the coarseness of the other, it also becomes apparent how much the metacommunicative speech acts can dynamize the dispute. As a rule, they initiate the dispute and serve the function of legitimizing one’s own explications and modes of communication. In the following analysis of types of metainvective utterance, I will focus on the Catholic works due to their great variety in this regard.

### 3 Metainvective Forms of Utterance

Dieckmann provides a means of differentiating various types of utterance in polemical metacommunication that serve different strategic purposes.<sup>34</sup> These metainvective forms of utterance frequently overlap. All of them are based on a *normative reference* with which one’s own communicative behavior and that of the confessional opponent can be related and evaluated. The validity of the norm is often assumed without being specifically addressed or problematized. Dieckmann focuses exclusively on the normative reference with regard to communicative behavior. “The expression *norm* refers to expectations on the basis of which the members of a communication community judge communicative behavior as correct/appropriate or incorrect/inappropriate in relative agreement and with the

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33 “Dieweil du aber die warheit wol weist, doch wider dein eigen Gewissen von deinem Gottlosen Papisten Gelt nimpst, vnnd *die warheit verschweigest*, dargegen aber die allein Seligmachende Religion, *mit Teuflischer Calumnien angreiffest*, vnnd vermeinest du wollest *die Leut bezaubern*, vnd die handlung dahin bringen, das yederman ewre *Papstische vnd Teuflische Lügen*, fur warheit halte, [...] so hast du mich gleich lustig gemachet, das ich Hundert, feiste, wolgemeste, greifliche, *Papistische Lügen*, aus ewren eignen Schribenten zusamen gezogen [...]. Es möchte villeicht yemand geduncken, Ich were in dieser Prefation vnd auch in den Erinnerungen, welche ich auff die folgende Lügen gestelt, *zu grob gewest*, der sol wissen, das es die große noth erfordert, dieweil die Geistlichen im Bapstumb vnd Ihr Knecht Staphylus also haßstarrig sind, vnnd *also mit lestern zu vns ein stürmen*,” Rauscher, *Papistische Lügen*, I, cj<sup>v</sup>–cij<sup>r</sup> and cijj<sup>r</sup> [italics by A.S.].

34 See Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 95–110.

prospect of consensus.”<sup>35</sup> This plays a role for my subject matter as well. However, the communicative behavior is also bound up with the debate over content and – in the broadest sense – over theology.

Probably the most succinct example of this is Luther’s introduction of German into theological disputes. It should be emphasized, however, that Latin scholars were not his primary addressees. Very soon after the potential for disseminating vernacular writings was realized, it was necessary to educate the Christian laity in German about the abuses of the Church and introduce them to Reformational thought. As this was not the language and therefore not the public sphere in which the supporters of the Papal Church debated with their confessional opponents, the Catholic responses were initially printed in Latin. To remain competitive, however, Catholics had to accept the norm violation and practice disputing in the vernacular.<sup>36</sup> It may be seen, for example, in the reactions of Hieronymus Emser in the dispute against Luther and his 1520 letter to the nobility that this was quite a challenge and that the norm violation is often marked as such: in addition to exhortations to argue in a way that is more appropriate to one’s intellectual standing and references to an “unwritten code of honor” of argumentation,<sup>37</sup> Emser concludes his work *Auff des Stieres tzu Wiettenberg wietende replica*, with which he responded in 1521 to Luther’s *Auff des bocks zu Leypczick Antwort*, with three Latin epigrams.<sup>38</sup> In terms of content and argumentation, he thus participates in the demonization of Luther; in formal linguistic terms, he demonstrates and declares his humanist demand for communicative appropriateness, drawing an asymmetric comparison to *coarse German*.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, Emser announces in his penultimate writing in this controversy that he intends “to no longer write against the monk in German but in Latin.”<sup>40</sup> This of course does not change the fact that the

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<sup>35</sup> Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 84.

<sup>36</sup> “This necessity explains, among other things, the striking finding that it was precisely committed confessors and successful preachers who were among the prominent authors of polemical pamphlets,” Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 41. Catholics also attempted to compensate for the lack of German polemical pamphlets with translations of Latin texts into German. See Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 44–45.

<sup>37</sup> Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 85.

<sup>38</sup> Martin Luther, *Auff des bocks zu Leypczick Antwort*, 1521, WA 7 (1897), 266–83; Hieronymus Emser, *Auff des Stieres tzu Wiettenberg wietende replica* (Leipzig: Martin Landsberg 1521) (VD16 E 1087).

<sup>39</sup> See Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 87–88.

<sup>40</sup> “nicht mher tewtsch, sonder Lateynisch wider den monch tzuschreyben,” Hieronymus Emser, *Quadruplica auff Luters jungst gethane antwurt, sein reformation belangend* (Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, 1521) (VD16 E 1135). On the other hand see Hieronymus Emser, *Emser’s bedingung auf Luters orsten widerspruch* (Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, 1521) (VD16 E 1097). “Emser’s argumentation for Latin is remarkable. He wants to show ‘foreign nations’ that not all of Germany supported Luther’s Reformation movement. Emser thus does not argue that Latin is the lingua franca of

normative boundaries for religio-polemical writing shifted in the long term, leading to an “increasing permeability between Latin and German.”<sup>41</sup> With the polemical pamphlets of Staphylus in particular, the vernacular gained acceptance among Catholics, meaning that they used it less defensively but with more self-confidence for their own cause. Nevertheless, the provocation of using the German language continued to reverberate due to its programmatic connection to Protestant premises of faith. The Catholic side used it not least through metainvective communication that were concerned less with the inappropriateness of the German language but all the more with that of the level of speech. The normative reference remains constitutive and results from the respective side’s religious claim to absoluteness. The discrediting of the opponent as a liar and as a deceiver of the faithful who acts against his own conscience presupposes each side’s own norm of religious truth. The Protestants had reserved the right to use *coarse German*, so to speak. The Catholics had to accept the thereby initiated expansion of the communicative norm for theological disputes, which, however, should not be understood purely as a one-sided concession. Their initially reactive position in the dispute about disputing also had an advantage, which I will describe in the following with the strategic use of metainvective communication.

A fundamental operation of metainvective communication is the reproach, which serves to denigrate the communicative behavior of the opponent and thus also the person in question. This can be formulated more or less clearly – via unambiguous speech acts like reproaching, accusing, or blaming, or furthermore via complaining about something or advising or forbidding someone to do something. Sometimes, the reproach is “associated with the request to justify or apologize.”<sup>42</sup> Reactions to reproaches are varied and usually generate invective follow-on communications. For the question of hagiographic narrative, they are essential drivers of discourse and are accordingly staged as occasions for comment. Luther, for example, begins the preface of his *Lügend* with an exaggerated ironic “self-stigmatization,”<sup>43</sup> when he introduces himself as a “damned, cursed, dirty, stinking heretic” with an “obscene, stinking writing.”<sup>44</sup> He thus takes up vilifications of his person, exposes them as malicious slander, and makes them into the starting point of the dispute over his risky invitation to the Council of Mantua. In

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theologians and that it would therefore be customary to carry out disputes in it. This announcement is tantamount to an admission that he was not able to get the better of Luther,” Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 95–96.

41 Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 133.

42 Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 99.

43 Münkler, “Legende/Lügende,” 131.

44 “verdampfer, verfluchter, unreiner, stinckender ketzer” and “unfletige stinckende schrift,” WA 50 (1914), 52.

this way, Luther's *Lügend* is staged as an invective reply aimed at attacking Pope Leo X with a sharp polemic and disparaging the traditional legends as "lies and idolatry."<sup>45</sup> Still in 1537, Johann Cochlaeus responded with his *Bericht der warheit, auff die vnwaren Lügend*, in which he attempts to portray the legend of Saint John Chrysostom, which Luther chose for a malicious gloss, as an apocryphal and non-authorized source.<sup>46</sup> Here too, the justification is accompanied by metainvective utterances: Cochlaeus asks "how he can lie and deceive so blatantly," and characterizes Luther as an "insolent blasphemer," as a "gross calumniator," who "with his scribblings on the margins does nothing but sneer (after his manner) at the holy man."<sup>47</sup> In this respect, the dynamic of speech and counter-speech is not only a dynamic of mutual disparagement but a dynamic of metainvective reproach. Not infrequently, these reproaches are combined with a morally grounded rhetoric of affect. Thus, Cochlaeus' action against the "pinnacle of all the thousands upon thousands of lies Luther wrote"<sup>48</sup> is not based on envy or hate against Luther personally,<sup>49</sup> "but on charity to my neighbor, whom Luther deceives with lies, and out of zeal for the truth against the untruth."<sup>50</sup> He contrasts his behavior asymmetrically with that of Luther, whose mockery evinces malice and ill will.<sup>51</sup> The reproach of lying and cheating therefore always implies an immoral constitution of the opponent – especially when measured against the goodness of the love of truth in the *true* faith.

An example of an affect-based escalation in the mode of the metainvective is Martin Eisengrein's *Christenliche predig, Ausz was vrsachen, so viel Leut [...] zum Luthertum fallen*. In his public sermon of 1562, the Ingolstadt priest and professor of theology also attacks Rauscher and his *Papistische Lügen*, which the latter in turn parried in 1563 with his biting *Kurtze Wider Legung*.<sup>52</sup> In it, he confronts Eisengrein

45 "lügen und abgötterey," WA 50 (1914), 53.

46 See Münkler, "Legende/Lügende."

47 "Wie kan er denn so gar vnuerschempt liegen vnd triegen" – "vnuerschempter lesterer" – "grober Calumniator" – "mit seinen glößlein am rande nichts anderst/ dann das er des heyiligen mans hönisch [nach seiner art] spott," Cochlaeus, *Bericht*, A2<sup>v</sup>, A3<sup>f</sup>, B1<sup>f</sup>.

48 "kron aller lügen/ die Luther vber Tausent vnd Tausent geschrieven hat," Cochlaeus, *Bericht*, A2<sup>f</sup>.

49 The insinuation of being guided by hatred is also an issue in the dispute between Luther and Emser. See Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 79, 82.

50 "[s]ondern auß liebe gegen meinen Nechsten/ welchen Luther mit listen betreugt/ vnd auß eyfer gegen der warheit wider die vnwarheit," Cochlaeus, *Bericht*, A2<sup>v</sup>.

51 See Cochlaeus, *Bericht*, A4<sup>v</sup>, B1<sup>f</sup>.

52 Hieronymus Rauscher, *Kurtze Wider Legung, Der Gotslesterlichen Predig, so Martin Eisengrein den sonntag Inuocauit, zu Ingolstad gethon hatt* (Lauingen: Emanuel Saltzer, 1563) (VD16 R 406). The dispute between Eisengrein and Rauscher was renewed by the reprinting of the *Predigt* in 1563, by Rauscher's retort in the preface to his third *Centurie* in 1563, and by the printing of the *Predigt* again as a *Bericht* in 1565.

as a “gross fantasist” who – under the tutelage of Staphylus – purportedly raves and rages against him.<sup>53</sup>

Eisengrein uses metainvective communication as a text-internal strategy to emotionalize the Catholic congregation addressed by his sermon. Starting from the temptations of Jesus by the devil, Eisengrein wants to make his believers strong for the resistance against the temptations of the Protestant “sects” and their “tempting preachers.”<sup>54</sup> Again and again, he calls to mind their deceitfulness but also their raging, blustering, and shouting. This runs like a thread through the sermon, which draws its legitimacy not least from the inappropriate behavior of the Protestants. Nevertheless, it is addressed in large part to Christians of the Catholic Church in a rather matter-of-fact tone. Affective attacks are therefore all the more striking and point to a rhetorical strategy fed by the modality of the metainvective: when Eisengrein comes to speak of the “taunter” Hieronymus Rauscher and his “one hundred novellas” (“Cento nouella,” a cacography of *centurie*), he interrupts the practical instruction he is providing to “put up resistance.”<sup>55</sup> Eisengrein falls out of the sermon style, so to speak, to engage in a biting, seven-page polemic against the sacrilegious and insolent “Brother Rausch”<sup>56</sup> and “fabulist,” whom he addresses directly and disparagingly in the familiar second person singular.<sup>57</sup>

Oh Rauscher, Rauscher, how painful it will be once you are in the infernal flames: How much more right it would have been had you not written this poem of yours, which you published only for your own shame and mockery, and had you remained at home with your poor people.<sup>58</sup>

Eisengrein concludes his cascade of reproaches and vilifications with the following words, again addressed to the congregation: “In such a way, beloved ones, we must, following the example of Christ in today’s Gospel, put up resistance against the evil enemy.”<sup>59</sup> The formulation “in such a way” suggests that the presented invectives and metainvectives are legitimate means of putting up resistance for the laity

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53 “grogen Fantast,” Rauscher, *Kurtze Wider Legung*, Bi<sup>v</sup>.

54 “Secten” and their “verfürischen Predicanten,” Eisengrein, *Predigt*, Bii<sup>f</sup>.

55 “schmäher” – “widerpart halten,” Eisengrein, *Predigt*, Eii<sup>f</sup>, Ei<sup>v</sup>.

56 “Bruder Rausch.” “Rausch” is an acronym for Hieronymus Rauscher, but also means drunkenness.

57 “Fabelhansen.” See Eisengrein, *Predigt*, Eii<sup>f</sup>–Fi<sup>f</sup>. Eisengrein repeats this strategy when he criticizes the Gnesio-Lutheran Nicolaus Gallus and his “cock-crowing” (“Hanengeschray”) in an invective expression derived from his name. Eisengrein, *Predigt*, Liiii<sup>f</sup>–Mii<sup>f</sup>, here Mi<sup>f</sup>.

58 “O Rauscher/ Rauscher/ wie wirt drinnen inn der Hölischen flammen ain mal so wehe thûn? Wieuil rechter hettest du gethon/ wann du diß dein Gedicht/ so du nur zû deiner selbs aigen schand vnd spott hast lassen außgehn/ hettest lassen bleiben/ vnnd werest mit deinen armen leûten dahaimm gebliben,” Eisengrein, *Predigt*, Fi<sup>f</sup>.

59 “Auf solche weiß/ jr geliebten/ müssen wir/ nach dem exempel Christi imm heütigen Euangelio/ dem Bösen feynd widerstand thûn,” Eisengrein, *Predigt*, Fi<sup>v</sup>.



addressed in the sermon. Eisengrein thus uses metainvective communication specifically to arouse his own followers and thus mobilize them for the war of words against the *false* doctrine.

With regard to one's own communicative behavior, various reactions to actual or conceivable reproaches are possible: one can repudiate a reproach, justify oneself, ask for understanding, or even confess one's guilt.<sup>60</sup> The dominant reaction in the context focused on here is *repudiation and justification*. The justification of repaying like with like was already present with Rauscher – with Eisengrein less directly in the call to put up resistance “in such a way.” Repudiation and justification are often combined. The normative reference is twofold here as well, that is, the authors refer to both communicative behavior and religious truth. The opponent's communicative behavior is attacked as outrageous, while the author's own communicative behavior is justified by reference to the religious norm and its outrageous violation. Vilification is therefore legitimate if it is done in the service of religious truth and proclamation of the truth, as also emphasized explicitly by Johannes Nas in the preface to his *Evangelische Wahrheiten*:

This is to be heeded, however, as Paul speaks in Philippians 1. It matters little from what cause Christ's glory is preached, whether with quarrelling or with peace, whether earnestly or mockingly, as long as the truth comes to light.<sup>61</sup>

In principle, it would therefore also be possible to rely on communicative *norm conformity*, that is, to distance oneself from the “quarrelling” and to firmly refrain from breaking communicative norms. The two normative references are then connected in different ways: while religious truth also justifies coarseness, the observance of communicative appropriateness is now supposed to represent one's own religious norm. In this way, the preceding attack can be parried more in terms of content. This sovereignty strategy, which is fed by the fact that “the polemicist does not simply refrain but says that he is doing so,”<sup>62</sup> is frequently found on the Catholic side. It is of course no less invectively effective, because the positive self-attribution serves simultaneously to disparage the confessional opponent. Eisengrein's sermon shows that corresponding declarations of intent can nevertheless stand alongside obvious vilification. In the context of his polemic against the “raging and retching” Nicolaus Gallus, he states that he does not want to respond “with desacration and abuse, as is the custom of the heretics, but on the basis of

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<sup>60</sup> See Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 103–10.

<sup>61</sup> “Das ist aber zùbehertzigen/ wie Paulus daruon redt Phil. I. Das wenig daran ligt/ auß was vrsach Christi glori gepredigt werd/ es sey mit gezânck oder mit frid/ es sey ernstlich oder spôtlich/ wann nur die warhait an tag kompt,” Nas, *Evangelische Wahrheiten*, I, aiiii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 102.

God's word and the legitimate Catholic understanding of the same."<sup>63</sup> Rauscher draws attention to this contradiction with the proverbial reference to the cuckoo, which not only boasts about itself with its call, but also betrays itself.<sup>64</sup>

However, the strategic potential of metainvective communication is particularly evident when the norm conformity is actually used programmatically in the text and is closely tied to the premises of faith proclaimed therein. The emotion-alization strategy is then concerned less with stirring up anger and hatred toward the confessional opponent<sup>65</sup> than with initiating a feeling of charity among one's co-religionists and their religio-moral superiority over the others.<sup>66</sup> This in turn allows for a more substantial, instructional discussion of the religious points of contention.

In the *Christlicher Gegenbericht*, which, first of all, initiates Rauscher's first *Lügende* print and is a response to Jacob Andreae's *Bericht Von der Einigkeit vnd Vneinigkeit der Christlichen Augspurgischen Confessions Verwandten Theologen* of 1560,<sup>67</sup> Staphylus aims to counter the slander and defamatory writings against his person. He wants to take a stand on this matter, resolutely in the German language – "to present my necessary and proper counter-report in such a way that an unlearned layman can understand me (yet on the stable basis of truth, sincere, without a lot of scolding or vilifying)."<sup>68</sup> The propriety of the tone claims to be adequate to the truth here proclaimed. Staphylus is thus able to distance himself from the coarse tone of the Protestants, who have adopted it as a weapon. His own weapon is that of metainvective communication, which is morally grounded.

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63 "wütte[nden] vnnd würge[nden]," "mit schänden vnd schmähen/ wie der Ketzer gebrauch/ sonder auß grund des Göttlichen worts/ vnd rechtmässigem Catholischem verstand desselbigen," Eisengrein, *Predigt*, Niiii<sup>v</sup>, Oi<sup>f</sup>. This gesture of sovereignty is heightened here by the fact that he does not provide his answer immediately but promises it "at an opportune time" ("zû gelegner zeyt").

64 See Rauscher, *Kurtze Wider Legung*, Cii<sup>f</sup>.

65 "Hate is generally regarded as an affective binding agent in collectives," Robert Walter-Jochum, "Luther – ein deutsches Hass-Subjekt: Der Hass als Affekt des Reformators und seiner Wiedergänger in der Literaturgeschichte," in *Hass/Literatur: Literatur- und kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zu einer Theorie- und Diskursgeschichte*, ed. Jürgen Brokoff and Robert Walter-Jochum (Bielefeld: transcript, 2019), 235–59, here 239.

66 The construction of the opponent's amorality is a typical othering strategy. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory* 24 (1985), 247–72, here 252–57. In connection with *Lügenden*, see Sablotny, "Doing the Other."

67 Jacob Andreae, *Bericht Von der Einigkeit vnd Vneinigkeit der Christlichen Augspurgischen Confessions Verwandten Theologen* [...] (Tübingen: Ulrich d.Ä. Morhart, 1560) (VD16 A 2497).

68 "vnnd zwar der gestalt das mich ain vngelerter Lay vernemen künn (jedoch mit bestendigem grund der warhait/ auffrichtig/ on ainiges schelten oder schmähen) meinen notwendigen vnnd gebürlichen gegenbericht thûn," Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Aiii<sup>v</sup>.

Addressing the Christian laity, Staphylus thus begins his *Gegenbericht* with a reminder, locating the conditions of disparaging speech not only on the side of the ignorant and unprincipled producer of the invective but also on the side of the reader. He appeals to the moral behavior of the third and thus involved party of the communication. The invectives would not be so successful without the behavior of the Christian laity:

It is a conventional though very bad habit that those who do not like to hear the truth avail themselves of revilement and reproach, for mankind is by nature much more inclined to hear other people's vices than their virtues.<sup>69</sup>

Staphylus displays the reprehensibility of revilement along with the implicit offer to distance oneself from such behavior. The formation of the *affective community* in this passage proceeds through several interconnected components<sup>70</sup> that stage a very effective retarding element for affectation: first, a consensus over the correlation between revilement and lying is established with the “conventional though very bad habit,” thus providing a resource for community-stabilizing indignation over the inappropriate behavior of others. Immediately afterwards, however, shame and guilt are activated when attention is directed to the role of the audience in making the invective successful. For the “ordinary Christian layman,” this results in the moral requirement to distance oneself from it. The will to overcome vice in turn engenders a sense of superiority over the blaspheming Protestants.

Accordingly, the first and second parts of the *Gegenbericht* are dominated by more objective remarks on the interpretation of the Bible and its translation into German. Still, Staphylus does not refrain entirely from pejorative assertions concerning Luther and his followers. Not only do they “commit adultery, booze, gorge, rob, steal, profiteer, tyrannize,” but they also “lie, deceive, slander, calumniate, blaspheme, mock the name of God, bitch, moan, and countless other such things.”<sup>71</sup> He repeats the latter reproaches several times. In this respect, they may be understood as metainvective framings for the “decent counter-report.” With them, Staphylus continually contrasts his own norm-conforming communicative

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<sup>69</sup> “Es ist ain alt herkommende/ wiewol seer böse gewonhait/ das/ wer die warhait nit hören mag/ sich schmähen vnd scheltens gebraucht/ in sunderhait aber/ weil der mensch viel mehr von natur [...] anderer leütte laster/ als tugendt zûhören genaigt,” Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Ai<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> On processes of forming an affective community in the religious context using the figure of Luther, see Walter-Jochum, *Luther*.

<sup>71</sup> “ehebrechen/ sauffen/ fressen [...] rauben/ steelen/ wüchern/ Tyrannisieren” and “liegen/ triegen/ afterreden/ calumnieren [...] blasphemieren/ den namen Gottes verhönen/ schelten/ lästern/ vnnd dergelichen vnzellig mer,” Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Dii<sup>v</sup>. The strategy changes in the third part of the counter-report, however; here Staphylus takes aggressive-polemic action against Andreae. See Bremer, *Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 119–22.

behavior, which represents the true Catholic faith, asymmetrically with the “brutish and bestial”<sup>72</sup> speech of the Protestants and their corresponding faith.

## 4 Meta-Metainvectives

Finally, additional evidence that the communicative mode of the metainvective is a highly relevant parameter in confessional disputes is provided by an intensified form of its use that may be referred to as meta-metainvective communication. This strategy involves not only displaying the invective element of speech but revealing and condemning the strategy behind it. Staphylus’ *Gegenbericht* offers several examples: the “inflammatory heretics” expose the priests’ sins so selectively and manipulatively “that they cannot help but think that the lives and works of some priests is Catholic doctrine.”<sup>73</sup> Staphylus also touches on the topic of glossing and textual editing as invective strategies. In his translation of the Bible, Luther

[...] miserably misrepresented the text in many hundreds of places, added to it in some places, truncated it in others, and either garbled or cobbled together the Scriptures to such an extent that he might give his Lutheran doctrine a veneer and paint the abominable heresies with a pretty color.<sup>74</sup>

A particularly concise example of meta-metainvective communication, however, is offered by a passage in which the effectiveness of designations is reflected on in relation to a central slogan<sup>75</sup> of the Reformation: the papists.<sup>76</sup> At a purely

72 “viechhis[en] und Bestialisch[en],” Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Oii<sup>v</sup>.

73 “aufrürischen ketzer,” “das sie nit anderst mainen/ es sey der leerstül der Catholischen/ wie etlicher Pfaffen leben vnnd werck,” Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Kiiii<sup>v</sup>.

74 “den Text an vil hundert orten jåmerlich verfelscht/ an etlichen stöllen darzû gesetzt/ an etlichen herab gezwackt/ vnd die schrifft dermassen entweder gestumelt/ oder etwas daran geflickt/ damit ehr ja seiner Lutherischen leer ainen schein geben möcht/ vnd den grewlichen ketzereyen ain schöne farb anstreichen,” Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Mii<sup>v</sup>. See also the important observation by Cora Dietl, “in Lateinischer sprach/ durch die Römisch Kirch in sovil Barbarische Nationen gebracht: Friedrich Staphylus und der Streit um Luthers Bibelübersetzung im 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Dynamische Gesellschaften – dynamische Kulturen: Sprachliche Verständigung im globalen Zeitalter*; FS Withold Bonner, ed. Ewald Reuter (Tampere: University Press, 2017), 21–36, here 34–35: Staphylus “proves to be a master of the art of linguistic manipulation: he is able to detect it in others, but in turn uses it himself to support his argumentation.”

75 See Anja Lobenstein-Reichmann, *Sprachliche Ausgrenzung im späten Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, *Studia Linguistica Germanica* 117 (Berlin and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2013), 48–56; Jan Martin Lies, “Framing in den innerevangelischen Kontroversen (1548–1580): Die Verwendung von Schimpfwörtern im Kampf um die Deutungshoheit innerhalb der reformatorischen Lehre in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Invective Gattungen*, ed. Dröse, Münkler and Sablotny, 146–62, <https://doi.org/10.2478/kwg-2021-0022> (accessed 12 July 2022).

76 See also Sablotny, “*Doing the Other*,” 122–24.

morphological level, the German terms *Papist* or *papistisch* are derived initially from *Papst* and indicate affiliation with the pope, the Roman Curia, and its followers. In the confessional disputes, however, a negative evaluation inscribed in the terms is dominant, which may be seen, for instance, in how papists are often mentioned in conjunction with Jews, Turks, or other stigmatized groups.<sup>77</sup> As Staphylus explains, the pejorative effect is also generated from the asymmetric comparison of *Papisten* with *Evangelischen* (Protestants). He notes that it is

very surprising what Satan meant by this, when he gave the sectarians the idea of calling themselves and their followers Protestants [German: Evangelische] and naming the Catholics papists, although we sing, read, preach, and interpret the Gospels [German: Evangelium] in our churches. Luther was not unaware of this, so why does he pretend that he is: because he could all the more easily deceive the common laity with malicious deception.<sup>78</sup>

The strategic use of the Protestant invective is discredited and explained in more detail for this purpose. The designation of Catholics as *Papisten* in distinction to the *Evangelischen* aims exclusively at dividing the Church. This distinction suggests that the Catholics are affiliated with the pope on the one hand and the Protestants with the Scriptures on the other, which, from the Catholic point of view, is a presumptuous and mendacious use of the Gospel. The meta-metainvective communication consists in the reproach of deliberately exploiting the effectiveness of these designations and attributions for the *Lutheran cause*, and in making the “wicked sophisticated trick”<sup>79</sup> transparent for the Christian laity.<sup>80</sup> Hence, not only is the invective mode of a statement or action marked, but the strategy behind it is revealed and condemned. Such a procedure is again highly invective and can develop its own dynamic.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> See *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch online*: [https://fwb-online.de/go/papist.s.0m\\_1604997884](https://fwb-online.de/go/papist.s.0m_1604997884) (accessed 12 July 2022).

<sup>78</sup> “seer zûerwundern, was der Sathan mit disem gemaint, do er den Sectarijs hat in sinn geben, sich vnd die jrigen Evangelische/ vnd Catholischen aber/ die Papisten zûnennen, so wir doch das Euangelium in vnsern Kirchen singen/ lesen/ predigen/ außlegen [...]. Diß ist dem Luther nicht vnbewist gewesen/ Warumb dissimuliert ers dann? Derhalben, das er desto geschwinder den gemainen Layen mit arglistigem betrug hindergeen kûnte,” Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Bii<sup>v</sup> and Biii<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> “argen/ Sophistische[n] griff,” Staphylus, *Gegenbericht*, Biii<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> Dieckmann, *Streiten*, 82: “The strategic use of metacommunication (is) occasionally even meta-metacommunicatively continued at a third level [...], when a polemicist reproaches his opponent for this strategic use and thus, as a possibility, spilling the beans, makes the audience aware of it as well.”

<sup>81</sup> A meta-metainvective dynamic of this kind may be observed in the refutations of Nas’ first two *Centurien* by Georg Nigrinus. See Arthur Venn, *Die polemischen Schriften des Georg Nigrinus gegen Johann Nas: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der konfessionellen polemischen Literatur im Zeitalter der Gegenreformation*, Diss. Heidelberg (Witten: A. Lis., 1933), 32.

Johannes Nas' *Evangelische Wahrheiten* may also be understood as a form of meta-metainvective communication. It is implicit insofar as Nas responds to Rauscher's *Centurien* by imitating their style. Whereas Rauscher printed Catholic legendary and miracle narratives and added malicious commentary to them, Nas now reproduces the *Hystorien* about Luther's life and that of his followers and frames them with invective paratexts as well.<sup>82</sup> As in the preface to the first edition, Nas announces in the preface to his second edition that he will repay evil with evil. In an appeal to the friendly reader, Nas pleads:

Please do not blame me for including such disgraceful *hystori* and such impolite, coarse words from time to time, but they themselves give rise to it. The *hystorien* are for the most part taken from their own books and writings. So I have mixed in their pretty Rauscherian court flowers, because such is for him the highest art.<sup>83</sup>

The aim is to ironically mirror the Protestant strategy of falsification, to expose its "art." Accordingly, in his "Fourth *Evangelose* truth" about "How the *Evangelischen* do not address anyone reprehensibly or judge them outrageously,"<sup>84</sup> Nas can relate, on the contrary, how he himself was verbally and physically molested by a predicator and his companions on 2 May 1567 on the way from Ingolstadt to Hohenwart near Ebenhausen. However, Nas was able to ward off this assault in like manner and sums up: "There you can see whether it is *Evangelisch* or eternal-hellish people with whom one is most respected with such coarse foolishness; they need it most."<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> It may be assumed that Nas' use of the term *Hystorien* is aimed at the Protestant legends, with which the evangelical side tries to distance itself from the Catholic legends with regard to terminology as well.

<sup>83</sup> "du wöllest mir nicht verargen/ das ich so schenntlich hystori/ vnnd so vnhöfliche grobe wort/ offtermals laß mit eingehn/ dann ye sie selbst solches verursachen/ so sein die hystorien also das maist thail/ auß jren aigen büchern vnd schrifften genummen/ so hab ich jhre schön Rauscherische hoffblümlein darumb eingemischt/ dann solches ist bey jn die höchst kunst," Nas, *Evangelische Wahrheiten*, II, Vorrede, vii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> "4. Euangelos warhait." The word play relies on the analogy between *Evangelisch* and *Evangelos*, where the suffix "-los" is used to indicate the loss of evangelical truth among Protestants. The *Evangelischen* [literally: Evangelicals; correct meaning: Protestants] become *Evangelose*. The heading reads "Wie die Euangelischen niemandt sträfflich anreden, oder vnuerhört vrthaylen."

<sup>85</sup> "Da sehe ainer ob das Euangelisch oder Ewighöllisch leüt sein, bey denen ainer am maisten, solt sollicher grober dollen vberhebt sein, die brauchens am festesten," Nas, *Evangelische Wahrheiten* II, Biiii<sup>f</sup>. See also the anecdote about the quick-witted Franciscan in the sixth *Centurie*, with which Nas could be referring to himself. On this point, see Nelson, "O du armer Luther," 30–31. After Nas' *Evangelische Wahrheiten*, the genre format of the *legendary* narrative was taken up by Lucas Osiander, Georg Ecker, and finally Caspar Finck. See Lucas Osiander, *Ein schöner wolriechender Rosenkrantz* [...] (Tübingen: Georg Gruppenbach, 1591) (VD16 B 557); Georg Ecker, *Ein schöner Alcoranischer Nessel Krantz* [...] (Fribourg: Abraham Gemperlin, 1591); Caspar Finck, [...]

## 5 Conclusion

It has become clear in the preceding that metainvective communication in the confessional disputes of the sixteenth century are based on connecting communicative behavior with the respective true faith and its defense. The reproaches of lies and defamation are not only staged as occasions for countering the respective opponents and their reproaches and presenting the premises of one's own faith. Rather, they are always also used for social positioning aimed at enhancing one's own status and degrading that of the others. In this regard, metainvectives are functionalized for rhetorical purposes. Depending on the follow-up strategy of justified communicative norm violation or norm conformity, they can serve to emotionalize and involve one's own followers.

However, metainvective communication can be observed not only as a strategic resource in the struggle for the true faith and in the portrayal of the sacred. With regard to establishing a genre that carries the metainvective reproach of lies, deceit, and coarseness in its title or connotes it in the mode of irony, metainvectives furthermore become – in the broadest sense – a poetic resource. This is also evident in their potential to expand the thematic range of the legend/*Lügende* discourse. Although Rauscher follows Luther's prototype of the genre in formal terms, his first *Lügende* edition is already initiated by Staphylus' works. Many of the subsequent Catholic counter-invectives written not exclusively in response to Rauscher and his *Papistische Lügen* belong to the genre of polemical pamphlet and are called sermon, report, or refutation. On the one hand, this has an effect on the structure of the *Lügenden*, which is characterized not only by the annotated miracle narratives but also by the personal polemics in the prefaces. On the other hand, the counter-invectives show a tendency to digress from the subject of the legendary narrative for polemic purposes and to treat the *Lügenden* incidentally in favour of other points of contention. Not infrequently, they are embedded in

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*Papistische Unwahrheiten/Lügen* [...] (Gießen et al.: Nicolaus Hampel, 1614/18) (VD17 1:076768U et al.). They all use metainvectives rhetorically, sometimes to a greater and sometimes to a lesser extent, to justify their actions and to emotionalize their own followers. Ecker, for example, who responds to Osiander's *Rosenkrantz*, would have rather made his *Nessel Krantz* "Delicious and of roses, but because there were no roses to be found anywhere in Luther's weed garden, but only stinking nettles, one will be satisfied with me. Oat straw is proper for cows" ("Wolschmeckend vnnnd von Rosen [...] Weil aber in des Luthers Vnkrautgarten vberall kein Rosen, sondern lauter Stinckende Nesseln zufinden gewesen, [...] wirdt Meniglich mit mir zufriden sein. Für Küh gehört Haberstroh"). Ecker, *Nessel Krantz*, Aii<sup>v</sup>.



entirely different argumentative contexts.<sup>86</sup> In this regard, metainvective communication in confessional disputes over narration of the saints develop a weblike dynamic that favours both a formal hybridization of the *lügen*dary narratives and their thematic expansion and combination with other polemical genre formats.

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<sup>86</sup> An example is the controversy between Nas and Nigrinus. See Venn, *Die polemischen Schriften*, 25–67.