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“Nit allein den rechtgläubigen, sonder auch den irrigen: Two Sixteenth-Century German Catholic Prayer Books as Tools of Re-Catholicisation”

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Abstract: This article presents two German Catholic prayer books written by the two sixteenth-century priests Johann Faber OP and Peter Michael Brillmacher SJ – known for their catechetical and apologetical work in areas of confessional division. Adding to the claims by early twentieth-century researchers that these books were used for “resisting and combating Protestantism,” I argue that they were tools for the re-Catholicising of Protestant populations. By referring to the Church fathers “and the old Christians” as proof for the ancient origin and the orthodoxy of beliefs and practices questioned by the Protestant reformers, and by countering “misconceptions” about the Catholic faith, the authors strived to lead their readers in the direction toward “true religion and divine worship.”

Keywords: re-Catholicisation, confessionalisation, confessional culture, prayer books, devotional literature, catechisms

1 Introduction

Prayer books have historically been important tools for Christian spirituality and private and public worship. Alongside offering preformulated prayers to be used in the devotional lives of their readers, they also demonstrate the faith and practices of certain confessional milieus – and as such they have catechetical functions. Previous research has claimed that early modern Catholic prayer books were used as tools for resisting and fighting Protestantism, and as a means of Catholic *confessionalisation*.¹

¹ See for example: Paul Althaus, *Forschungen zur evangelischen Gebetsliteratur* (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1927); and Sigfrid Estborn, *Evangeliska svenska bönböcker under reformationstidevarvet* (Stockholm: Svenska diakonistytelsens förlag, 1929). For more recent work dealing with or mentioning devotional literature in relation to Catholic confessionalisation, see: Ute Lotz-Heumann and Matthias Pohl,ig,

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The historical sources themselves suggest that this was indeed the case, as prayer books were considered illuminating tools for instructing readers in the faith and practices of Catholicism.² Often, prayer books and other devotional literature could for non-Catholics be a first encounter with the Catholic faith and practices, and they were indeed used in the instruction of converts alongside catechisms.³ Furthermore, it was not uncommon that devotional literature was written and distributed by authors who were engaged in Catholic missionary efforts among Protestant populations in the Holy Roman Empire. Apart from observations such as these, the subject of Catholic prayer books as tools of *re-Catholicisation* has been mostly overlooked by previous research. One important question that has not been explored within these previous observations, is the question of *how*. The purpose of this article is to present some examples from two sixteenth-century prayer books that show how prayer books were used in this manner. The focus will be on the author's perspective, that is, on the *intention* of the author and not on the potential or specific influence the prayer books had on their readers. In the analysis of these prayer books, I will deal with the following questions: How do the prayer books reflect policies which aimed at persuading German Protestants to convert to the Catholic faith? What indicates that this was the intentions of their author? How are Catholic faith, spiritual practices and confessional polemics presented to the readers?

"Confessionalization and Literature in the Empire, 1555–1700," *Central European History* 40 (2007), 35–61; Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, eds., *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung: Wissenschaftliches Symposium der Gesellschaft zur Herausgabe des Corpus Catholicorum und des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1993* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995), esp. Dieter Breuer's chapter "Katholische Konfessionalisierung und poetische Freiheit," 166–83; Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. chapter 11: "The Catholic Book," 172–86; and Sandra Herron, "Keeping the Faith: Devotional Images and Text in the Service of Catholic Confessionalization and Piety in Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century Münster" (PhD diss., University of Saskatchewan, 2015).

2 One example is the correspondence between the Swedish Catholic priest Magnus Laurentii and the papal nuncio to the Nordic countries, Antonio Possevino, dated March 31, 1595. Magnus Laurentii had been sent by Possevino to minister for the last Birgittine nuns of Vadstena Abbey, and was also responsible for the Catholic mission activity in the town. See: Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), *Opera Nostrorum* 332 fol. 204.

3 See especially: Ricarda Matheus, *Konversionen in Rom in der Frühen Neuzeit: Das Ospizio dei Convertendi 1673–1750* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 313–15 and 359f. It is noted that prayer books were used in the same manner by Jesuit missionaries in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century China, see: Ana Carolina Hosne, "From Catechisms to Prayer Books in the Early Jesuit China Mission," in *Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures: The Expansion of Catholicism in the Early Modern World*, ed. Antje Flüchter and Rouven Wirbser, *Studies in Christian Mission* 52 (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2017), 311–30.

2 Re-Catholicisation

During the sixteenth century, the territories of the Holy Roman Empire were not only the main stage of the religious turmoil caused by Martin Luther's reform movement, but also very much the centre of the Catholic reaction and inner renewal that came as a response to it. Within only a few years, the ideas of Luther and other Protestant reformers spread to and took root in all parts of the Empire, also in areas that we often consider solidly Catholic. Not least after the Diet of Augsburg of 1555, the majority of the Imperial Estate ("Reichsstände"), a great part of the nobility and the city populations adopted the new teachings. The Habsburg hereditary lands ("Erblande"), Bavaria and the Ecclesiastical States of the southern and western parts of the Empire, were the only territories where the princes kept the Catholic faith as the official religion of the state.⁴ Early on, efforts were made to reach out to those who Catholic authorities considered "lost" and "led astray" from what they considered the one true Church, with the purpose of leading them back into the fold. This phenomenon is often described as *re-Catholicisation*. As a historical process, this term describes the actions taken by Catholic rulers and Church authorities to convert those parts of the population that had until then been Protestant, for the purpose of making the Catholic faith the sole religion of the realm.⁵ Such processes are closely connected with the phenomenon that the *confessionalisation thesis* intends to describe. One could thus define re-Catholicisation as a form of "Catholic confessionalisation." Often, these processes could be forced and even violent, but sometimes they were "soft" processes of missionary activity and the result of the diligent work of religious orders and zealous priests – also without the assistance of

4 Dieter J. Weiss, *Katholische Reform und Gegenreformation: Ein Überblick* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 32.

5 For works on the re-Catholicisation processes in the Holy Roman Empire, see for example: Arno Herzig, *Der Zwang zum wahren Glauben: Rekatholisierung vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Rudolf Leeb, Susanne Claudine Pils, and Thomas Winkelbauer, eds., *Staatsmacht und Seelenheil: Gegenreformation und Geheimprotestantismus in der Habsburgmonarchie* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007); Wolfgang Zimmermann, *Rekatholisierung, Konfessionalisierung und Ratsregiment: Der Prozeß des politischen und religiösen Wandels in der österreichischen Stadt Konstanz 1548–1637* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1994); Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); and Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). As an official state policy, campaigns of re-Catholicisation had its climax during the seventeenth century and lasted in the Habsburg lands until the Patent of Tolerance of Joseph II in 1781. In the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg it ended with the formal annexation to Austria in 1816. The expulsion of the Tyrolean Zillertal Protestants in 1837, is mentioned as a late example of forced re-Catholicisation.

secular authorities.⁶ With focus on local and individual confessional identity, faith, and devotional practices, as well as Catholic identity-making, this type of soft re-Catholicisation could also be tied to the concept of *confessional culture*.⁷ Both theoretical perspectives are relevant for describing this phenomenon.⁸ Re-Catholicisation could indeed be a tool of power politics, for the strengthening of the central authorities in the overall project of state-building, and as such one of the motifs of its implementation. But it was also a phenomenon very much fueled by a sincere concern for the salvation of souls, not only among the clergy and the religious but also among the princes themselves. Also, from the princes' perspective, a people united in the "one true faith" and one official state cult (cf. *Pietas Bavarica* and *Pietas Austriaca*) was generally believed to be a guarantee of divine protection for the state.⁹

Violence and force, expulsions or the threat of them, and the removal of Protestant clergy, were not unusual methods, but the use of force was often avoided by the authorities. Instead, softer methods would appear more appropriate for the long-term result, as the faith had to be accepted in the hearts of the people. During the main phase of re-Catholicisation as a state policy, which took off in the first half of the

6 Without denying the violent methods of the processes, Leeb et al., *Staatsmacht und Seelenheil*, point out that re-Catholicisation was certainly not only implemented by "sword and fire." See also the above-mentioned work of Zimmermann, about the "soft" re-Catholicisation of the city of Konstanz.

7 Originally a critique against the overfocusing on the role of state in Reinhard's and Schilling's confessionalisation thesis, this concept describes how the profession of a certain faith, in word and deed, shapes culture and identity. See: Thomas Kaufmann, *Konfession und Kultur: Lutherischer Protestantismus in der zweiten Hälfte des Reformationsjahrhunderts*, Spätmittelalter und Reformation 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006). For works on "Catholic confessional culture," see Andreas Holzem, "Katholische Konfessionskultur im Westfalen der Frühen Neuzeit: Glaubenswissen und Glaubenspraxis in agrarischen Lebens- und Erfahrungsräumen," *Westfälische Forschungen – Zeitschrift des LWL-Instituts für westfälische Regionalgeschichte* 56 (2006), 65–87; and Peter Walter and Günther Wassilowsky, eds., *Das Konzil von Trient und die katholische Konfessionskultur (1563–2013)* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2016). See also: Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550–1750* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

8 Another theoretical concept that may be useful for this subject is the concept of *confessional knowledge*, that has recently won popularity among historians in Sweden. If the concept of confessional culture describes the role of confession in the formation of culture and identity, the concept of confessional knowledge focuses on the process itself; *how* confessional knowledge is transmitted and adapted to specific contexts. See Kajsa Brilman, "Confessional Knowledge: How Might the History of Knowledge and the History of Confessional Europe Influence Each Other?," in *Forms of Knowledge: Developing the History of Knowledge*, ed. Johan Östling, David Larsson Heidenblad, and Anna Nilsson Hammar (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2020), 26–49.

9 Rudolph Leeb, "Re-Catholicization," in *Encyclopedia of Early Modern History Online*, ed. Graeme Dunphy and Andrew Gow. First published online: 2015, https://doi.org/10.1163/2352-0272_emho_COM_031135 (accessed 11 November 2021).

seventeenth century, the elimination of protestant ecclesial structures and the removal of “heretical” clergy were, however, in fact a prerequisite for the implementation of merely pastoral methods of re-Catholicisation. The main focus of this study is the soft form of re-Catholicisation as a pastoral phenomenon, regardless of whether it was a consequence of forced state policy or not. The clergy had of course a central role in the process, not only as preachers and instructors in the faith, but also as confessors and because of their sacramental and liturgical duties. Visitations in parishes and in private homes, frequent mandatory confession and communion were recurring strategies. New religious orders, not least the Jesuits and the Capuchins, were hugely important for pastoral care. As a part of the inner renewal of the Church, revived customs such as lay confraternities, pilgrimages and impressive processions, increased the attraction of the “old faith.”¹⁰ For the catechising of both Catholics and non-Catholics, literature of various sorts played an important role. Among such published works, aside from regular catechisms, not least prayer books and other devotional literature had catechetical functions in religious education.

As already stated, this use of prayer books has been suggested in several scholarly works, but how this was done is still very much an unanswered question. In this article, I will try to answer that question by presenting and analysing two influential sixteenth century prayer books by the Dominican Johann Faber and the Jesuit Peter Michael Brillmacher. According to earlier research, both books were published with missionary or even anti-Protestant (“antievangelischen”) purposes, aiming at combating Protestantism, and by authors known for their catechetical and apologetic works.¹¹ These claims make them especially interesting as objects of this study. I will argue that these books indeed had catechetical and missionary purposes and can thus be considered tools of re-Catholicisation.

3 Prayer Books in the Sixteenth Century

Regardless of confessional context, prayer books had a central role in the devotional practices of the Early Modern Era. As a collection of prayers intended for use either in private or in formal liturgical contexts (although distinct from service books such as missals and pontificals), this particular form of edificatory literature developed during the early Middle Ages. From having been exclusively used by clergy and monastics for the recitation of the *liturgy of the hours*, prayer books were eventually

¹⁰ Leeb, “Recatholicisation.”

¹¹ See the above-mentioned Althaus, *Forschungen*, e.g., 80 and 95; and Estborn, *Evangeliska svenska bönböcker*, 354.

adopted for use by the literate laity during the late medieval period, not least thanks to the increase of lay confraternities.¹²

A certain type of prayer book, in northern Europe often referred to as *Hortulus animæ* (German: *Seelengärtlein*), was hugely popularised during the late fifteenth century owing to the success of the printing press. These small books, often printed in the vernacular and designed for private day-to-day use, would become models for later prayer books of the Early Modern Era.¹³ Prayers for everyday situations, such as when waking up or going to sleep, when travelling, when going to church or when sick; intercessions against plagues, famine, war, heresy, or intercessions for the Church, the king, for the sick, for the dying or the dead; and prayers for certain individuals dependent on social class, occupation, age, estate or gender, were common categories. Aside from these specialised prayers, the penitential Psalms, offices for the dead or of *Our Lady*, Gospel pericopes and litanies (especially the *Litany of the Saints*), prayers to the three Divine Persons and to the saints, the prayer books often also contained examination of conscience before confession and prayers to be said at Holy Mass. Another recurring category are prayers attributed to various Church fathers, often with promises of indulgences attached to them.¹⁴ Catholic prayer books of the sixteenth century inherited much of the structure and content of these “Hortuli”-prayer books – which is also true of their Protestant counterparts.¹⁵

The sixteenth century meant an increase in the production and spread of Catholic devotional literature. Even though many popular prayer books were written or compiled by non-Jesuit authors and book producers, the book market of devotional literature became dominated by the Jesuits.¹⁶ The most prominent and influential Jesuit prayer book producer was the famous Peter Canisius (1521–1597). His way of combining catechisms with prayer books in the same binding, was not his own invention, but it was he who popularised this specific genre.¹⁷ Typical of Jesuit prayer books were their focus on meditation and self-perfection through the exercise

12 Michael Fischer and Markus Matthias, “Prayer Book,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Modern History Online*, ed. Dunphy and Gow, https://doi.org/10.1163/2352-0272_emho_COM_019650 (accessed 11 November 2021).

13 Alois Schrott, “Das Gebetbuch in der Zeit der katholischen Reformation,” *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 61 (1937), 1–28, esp. 3–5.

14 Stephan Beissel, “Zur Geschichte der Gebetbücher,” *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach* 77 (1909), 169–85, esp. 176.

15 For research on the continuity between late medieval and Protestant prayer books, see the above-mentioned Althaus, *Forschungen* and Traugott Koch, *Johann Habermanns “Betbüchlein” im Zusammenhang seiner Theologie: Eine Studie zur Gebetsliteratur und zur Theologie des Luthertums im 16. Jahrhundert*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 117 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

16 Schrott, “Das Gebetbuch,” 7–8.

17 Schrott, “Das Gebetbuch,” 217. Canisius’s influence is not least worth noting in the prayer books of Peter Michael Brillmacher.

of virtues as well as prayers during the day and in various situations of life.¹⁸ Canisius did not emphasise self-perfection as much as other Jesuits, but instead focused on knowledge of the faith and a “true way of prayer.” These features are, as we shall see, also very present in the prayer books dealt with in this article.

Although sixteenth-century Catholic prayer books were mostly conservative in their structure and content, they also contained some novelties. When comparing with late medieval prayer books, one can note that sixteenth-century prayer books often lacked what Catholic reformers considered as an exaggerated, if not superstitious, focus on the saints and the Virgin Mary. In some Catholic prayer books, Marian piety and prayers to the saints are thus completely absent. Another difference from earlier prayer books was a new focus on “biblical prayers.” These traits can of course be regarded as answers to Protestant criticism and a hallmark of Catholic biblical humanism, characteristic of that period. Furthermore, a didactic and catechetical approach was also introduced to the prayer books, not least in the form of introductory commentaries attached to certain prayers and various forms of pious exercises.¹⁹

4 Johann Faber’s *Vil schöner andächtiger vnd Christenlicher Gebet*²⁰

The first book to be presented is the prayer book of Johann Faber (1504–1558),²¹ published in Augsburg in 1558.²² A priest of the Dominican Order and preacher at the cathedral in Augsburg, from 1534, Faber was an outspoken polemicist against the Lutherans. After finally leaving his post in Augsburg in 1552 owing to the confessional

¹⁸ Schrott, “Das Gebetbuch,” 228–29.

¹⁹ Schrott, “Das Gebetbuch,” 250–55.

²⁰ Johann Faber, *Vil schöner andächtiger und Christenlicher Gebet/ zu trost vnnd heyl den Glaubigen/ auß heyliger Schrift/ vnd auß dem H. Augustino zusammen getragen/ vnd jetzt zum fünfften mal/ mit etlichen gar schönen andechtigen Gebetlin/ vnd vil hübschen Figurn gemehrt vnd gebessert* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1558) (VD16 ZV 32220).

²¹ Often latinised as “Johannes Fabri.” To avoid confusion with his contemporary, Johann Faber (1478–1541), Bishop of Vienna, the name of his hometown is sometimes added to his surname (i.e., Johann Faber von Heilbronn).

²² In 1549 Faber had published a much shorter first edition dedicated for the use of military personnel in Augsburg (VD16 ZV 32223). A re-print appeared in Augsburg around 1555 (VD16 32222).

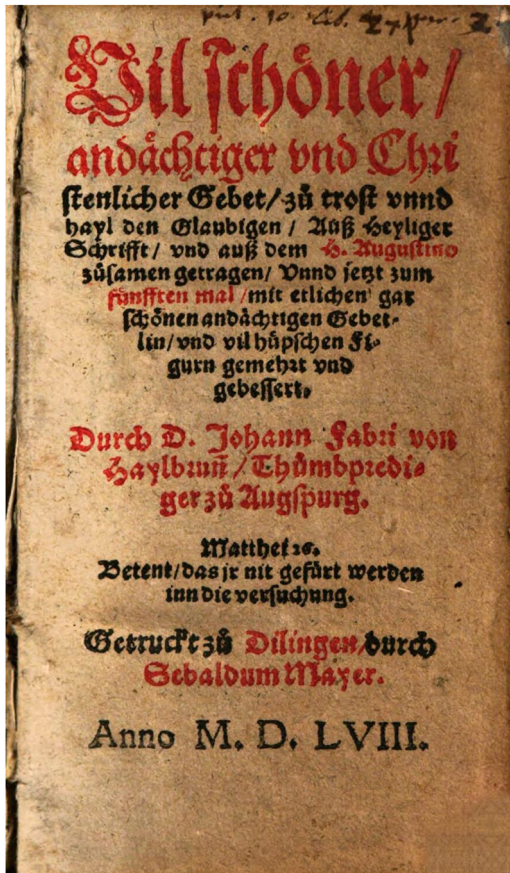


Figure 1: Johannes Faber, *Vil schöner andächtiger vnd Christenlicher Gebet* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1558). The title page. Staatliche Bibliothek Regensburg, 999/Asc.16, frontpage, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11081755-7.

unrest, he eventually received a doctorate in theology in Ingolstadt under Peter Canisius.²³

Faber does not claim to be the author of the prayers of this volume (Figure 1). Instead, the content of the prayer book is a compilation of prayers from various sources, mostly from Church fathers such as Augustine, Anselm, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose. While some prayers are indeed collected from Augustine's *Soliloquia* (often in abbreviated form) at least thirty are drawn from the so called *Meditationes Augustini* – a collection of prayers that despite its title mostly are derived from Anselm's *Orationes*. Together, these prayers make up one third of Faber's prayer

²³ Heinrich Kellner, "Faber, Johannes," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 6 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1877), 494–95; H.J. Schroeder, "Johann Faber," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909). Online version: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05741b.htm> (accessed 18 February 2022).

book. Regarding other prayers of patristic origin, their sources are mostly mentioned, but no source is mentioned for prayers collected from various “Hortuli”-prayer books. This is also true for prayers drawn from Faber’s more contemporary co-religionist Johannes Lansperger (1489–1539).²⁴

In both title and preface Faber underlines the importance of the Fathers and the “old Christians.” According to Faber, they are the guarantee of a “proper true faith,”²⁵ and it is of great importance for his contemporary Christians to see how “the old Christians prayed to God and his beloved saints”:

To God’s praise and glory, and to all the beloved faithful, [I have] for the fifth time extended and improved this prayer booklet with many beautiful, pious, pure, unadulterated Christian prayers, from St. Augustine and the Sacred Scriptures, in which the good-hearted Christian will find and see, with what words, devotions, tears and sighs the old Christians prayed to God and his beloved saints, so that we also with pious prayer can entrust ourselves and unite with God in Heaven, and seek grace and eternal life with him.²⁶

In his “epistle,” Faber declares that his “pure and unadulterated” prayers are an antidote to the “poison of error” in “this evil time” – clearly referring to the Protestants, without ever mentioning them by name. Moreover, it is worth noting that nothing in either title, epistle, or preface states that this is a Catholic prayer book. The claim here is that it contains “Christian” prayers – no more no less. Its Catholic identity is thus implicit. Instead, these typical Catholic traits are to be found in the content itself.

Most of the prayers are profoundly Christocentric or mostly directed to God the Father and could without any problem be used also by Protestant readers. As a matter of fact, the German Church historian Paul Althaus comments that some of the prayers are indeed of Protestant origin. At least one prayer is borrowed from the radical reformer Caspar Schwenckfeld, and others are derived from the works of the Reformed theologian Jakob Otter, as well as the Lutherans Andreas Althamer and

²⁴ Althaus, *Forschungen*, 79.

²⁵ “Es ist große andacht/ ernst und fleyß gewesen bey den alten Christen im gebet/ in dem sie Gott angerüfft haben/ tag und nacht/ dz er sie wölle stercken in einem rechten waren Glauben/ sie anzünden inn der lieb Gottes/ sie fruchtbar machen in gutten wercken/ und safftig in der gnad” (“There was great devotion, earnestness and diligence in the prayers of the old Christians, with which they have invoked God, day and night, so that he would strengthen them in a proper true faith, kindle them in the love of God, make them fruitful in good works, and strong in the grace”), Faber, *Gebet*, A6^v, the preface.

²⁶ “Gott zu lob vnd ehren/ vnnd allen lieben Glaubigen/ [habe ich] diß betbüchlin mit vil schönen/ andechtigen/ rainen/ ungefelschten/ Christenlichen Gebeten/ auß dem H. Augustino vnd H. Schrifft jetz zum fünften mal gemert vnd gebessert/ darinn der guthertzig Christ findet vnd sihet/ mit was worten/ andacht/ weynen und seufftzen die alten Christen zû Gott vnd seinen lieben heyiligen gebettet haben/ damit wir uns auch durch andechtige Gebet/ Gott im himel befehlen/ ergeben/ vnd bey jm suchen gnad vnd das ewig leben,” Faber, *Gebet*, A7^v–8^f, the preface.



Figure 2: Johannes Faber, *Vil schöner andächtiger vnd Christenlicher Gebet* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1558). Introduction to prayers at Holy Mass: “Was in dem ampt der Heyligen Meß gehandelt wüdt.” Staatliche Bibliothek Regensburg, 999/Asc.16, XXIII^r–XXIII^v, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11081755-7.

Otto Brunfels.²⁷ Other prayers are however distinctly Catholic in character, for example prayers to the Virgin Mary, to saints and angels, prayers for the deceased and devotions to the seven sorrows of Mary.

Distinctly Catholic are also the texts and prayers dealing with the Eucharist – not least its sacrificial character. One example is a catechetical introduction on the Holy Mass (“Was in dem ampt der Heyligen Meß gehandelt wüdt”), in which Faber, among other things, explains how one should understand the connection between the private prayers of the faithful and what happens at the altar (Figure 2). It is Christ’s unique sacrifice on the cross that should be in focus, represented (literally “bedeut und angezaigt”) at the altar by bread and wine.²⁸ Arguing for a Catholic understanding of the sacrament, Faber counters what he considers *misunderstandings* about the Church’s teaching and practice on points where Catholics and Protestants disagree.

²⁷ Althaus, *Forschungen*, 80.

²⁸ “Aber doch alles so wir begeren in disen stillen gebetten/ durch die krafft der opfferung des Brots und Weins/ wirt nit gezogen zu wein/ vnnd brot/ sonder zu der opfferung am Creutz/ welche wüdt durch die ding bedeut vnd angezaigt” (“But everything that we pray for in these silent prayers, through the power of the offering of bread and wine, is not connected to the wine and bread, but to the sacrifice on the cross, which is explained and displayed through the matter”), Faber, *Gebet*, XXV^r (= F^r).

One recurring theme which is emphasised throughout the prayer book is the fidelity to the Church and “the true faith.” The Christian should pray that he remains in the “true, living, one, pure, universal [*allgemeinen*], Christian faith.”²⁹ He should revoke any word or thought he has ever expressed against this faith,³⁰ and profess everything that God’s “holy Church teaches and confesses through the Spirit of the Truth.”³¹

Polemical themes are also recurring, often formulated as prayers against heresy. In a prayer for unity in the faith in times of religious conflict, God is asked to destroy and remove all error and vileness. But there are also intercessions for people of other faiths, as for example in the prayer starting on folio LXXXI^v (“Gebet für die so in jrrthumb des Glaubens seind”), where God is asked to make those who have left the “true faith” repent from error, and bring them back to the “one, true, Catholic, Christian faith”:

O almighty, merciful, gracious God and Father, we humbly beseech you with all our hearts, that you would, like a father, seek those who have strayed from the proper, Christian, one, universal [*algemeinen*], true pure faith, or who are in other ways erroneous on many points, tainted and misled by false teachings, and [that you] bring them back to awareness of their error, so that they with word and deed may confess the one, true, Catholic, Christian faith, with the whole Christian communion, to their eternal salvation. Amen.³²

It is worth noting that this prayer is one of few examples where the word “catholisch” is ever mentioned in Faber’s book. Mostly, the faith is described as simply “christenlich” or with the German translation of the term “allgemein.” From the mid-

29 “[...] das ich starck vnnd standhaftig bleib in dem rechten/ waren/ lebendigen/ einigen/ rainen/ allgemeinen/ christenlichen glauben” (“[...] that I stay strong and steadfast in the proper, true, living, one, pure, universal Christian faith”), Faber, *Gebet*, LIV^v (= Lij^v).

30 “Vnd ob ich auß anfechtung des feinds/ oder durch mein vnwissenheit/ wider disen allgemeinen Christenlichen glauben/ etwas wurde reden oder gedancken/ das widerrüffe ich jetzunder” (“And if I out of temptation by the enemy, or through my ignorance, would say or think anything contrary to this universal Christian faith, I hereby recant it”), Faber, *Gebet*, LVII^v (= Lv^v).

31 “[...] gib mir ein rechten/ waren/ Christenlichen glauben/ der rain sey vnnd unbefleckt von allen Jrrtumben [...] Das ich auch allem dem nachuolg und bekenn/ das dein heilige Kirch durch den Geist der warheit lehret vnd bekennt/ biß ich zu dir komme in dein Reich” (“[...] grant me a proper, true, Christian faith, that is pure and stainless from all errors [...] That I also follow and profess all that, what your holy Church teaches and confesses, through the Spirit of the Truth, until I come to you in your kingdom”), Faber, *Gebet*, CLXXXIII^{f-v} (= i iij^{f-v}).

32 “O Allmechtiger/ barmherziger/ gütiger Gott und Vater/ wir bitten dich demütiglich mit gantzem herten/ du wöllest alle die jhenigen/ so vom rechten/ Christenlichen/ einigen/ algemeinen/ waren rainen Glauben abgewichen/ oder sonst inn etlichen stucken jrrig/ vnnd mit falscher lehr behafft vnd verführet seind/ Vätterlichen heimsuchen/ vnd sie widerbringen zu erkanthuß jres jrrthumbs/ das sie den einigen/ rechten/ Catholischen/ Christenlichen Glauben/ mit der ganzen Christenlichen gemein/ zu jrem ewigen heil/ biß ans end mit worten und wercken bekennen/ Durch Jhesum Christum vnsern hailand/ Amen,” Faber, *Gebet*, LXXXI^v – LXXXII^f (= Pv^v – vj^f).

sixteenth century “Catholic” had started to become a confessional term, describing “the old faith” as opposed to that of the Protestant reformers.

The catechetical approach we saw in the lectures on the Eucharist, is also recurring when dealing with other topics of controversy between Catholics and Protestants. For example, we can see how Faber turns to Church fathers such as Augustine, Gregory Nazianzen, and Ambrose, as advocates for the invocation of Mary, saints and angels.³³ To underline the patristic origin of these practices, Faber emphasises that the quotes and prayers are these Fathers’ own authentic words, also by adding their years of death. This also applies to practices such as prayers for the deceased and pilgrimages to holy places.

Apart from the references to the Church fathers and the countering of (what is considered) misunderstandings about the faith, the recurring emphasis on God’s mercy and the downplaying of human merit, should also be noted: “nit mein verdienst” is an often-repeated statement. This can of course be found in pre-Reformation prayers, not least in the *Roman Canon* itself, and is also characteristic for Dominican Thomistic tradition, but considering how often it reoccurs throughout the book it is not unlikely that Faber underlines this as an answer to Lutheran allegations of “work righteousness.”

5 Peter Michael Brillmacher’s *Catechismus sampt einem andechtigen Bettbuch*³⁴

As a Jesuit priest Peter Michael Brillmacher (1542–1595) became a renowned controversialist and a Catholic apologist, in both his home town Cologne as well as in the city of Münster.³⁵ His catechisms and devotional works became widespread and

³³ See especially: Faber, Nos. 58–63 and 73–75.

³⁴ Petrus Michelis Brillmacher, *Catechismus, das ist Christlicher Bericht von wahrer Religion vnd Gottesdienst/ sampt einem andechtigen Bettbuch: In welchen kürztlich alle Lehrartikel der alleinseeligmachenden Catholischen Religion/ mit gründtlicher Widerlegung dargegen eingebrachter Irrthumben/ außgefüret/ vnd vil andechtige Gebett vnd Betrachtung begriffen* (Cologne: Gerwin Calenius, 1587) (V16 B 8314).

³⁵ Koch, “Betbüchlein,” 375; and Erwin Iserloh, “Brillmacher, Peter Michael,” in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 2 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1955), 613–14. In the sources and in the literature Brillmacher is often referred to with the latinised form of his name, “Petrus Michaelis.”

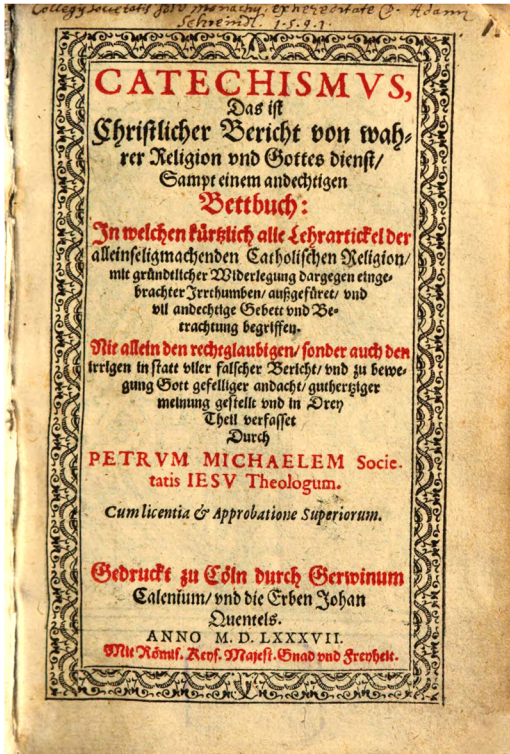


Figure 3: Peter Michael Brillmacher, *Catechismus sampt einem andechtigen Bettbuch* (Collogne: Gerwin Calenius, 1587). Title page. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Catech. 487, urn:nbn:de: bvb:12-bsb10537533-0.

influential also among Protestants.³⁶ His first one, *Serta honoris* was published in 1567 in Latin,³⁷ followed by his combined German catechism and prayer book of 1587,³⁸ which will be presented below.

Already in the title (Figure 3), Brillmacher states that this book is about the “true religion and divine service,” containing “all tenets of the alone-saving [*alleinseeligmachenden*] Catholic religion” and a refutation of errors opposed to it. Its missionary purpose is clearly expressed in the following subheading, where it is stated that the book is not only for people of the true faith but also for those led astray by false teachings:

³⁶ One example of its influence on Protestant devotional literature is Philipp Kegel's *Ein Neue Christlich unnd gar Nützlich Bethuch* (1592, in later editions better known as *Zwölf geistliche Andachten*), see Althaus, *Forschungen*, 138f.

³⁷ *Serta honoris et exultationis ad Catholicorum devotionem exornandam et exhilarandam*. A German edition was published in 1594 under the title *Christliche Catholische Ehrenkränzlein*.

³⁸ In 1589 a separate and extended edition of the prayer book was published under the title *Bett vnd Betrachtung Buch*.

Not only for the right-believers, but also for the erring in a state of many false teachings, kindheartedly compiled and written in three parts, for the purpose of God-pleasing devotion.³⁹

The book is dedicated to Johann Wilhelm, Hereditary Prince and subsequently the last Duke of Jülich-Cleves-Berg, and his wife Jacobe of Baden, a former Lutheran. In contrast to his predecessors, Duke Johann Wilhelm (1562–1609) would later seek to reaffirm the confessionally divided Duchy's loyalty to Rome and introduce the reforms of the Council of Trent, with the help of Jesuits such as Brillmacher (who had been his court preacher).⁴⁰

In the preface, Brillmacher emphasises the need for his catechism and prayer book in “this miserable time” and that he hopes that it will be a help to discern the “true religion,” especially for “the poor, confused Christian people coiled in error,” who are divided in various “mischievous sects.” Brillmacher underlines that the true faith and the apostolic teachings are found in the “allgemeine Christenliche Kirch,” which is founded by the apostles and preserved “to this day,” and in which the apostolic tradition, the Holy Scriptures, the succession and the “unbroken line of teachers” are kept intact. The faith and the Church are both described with the German terms “allgemein” and “catholisch,” and the latter is also used as an identity marker for the Duke and the Duchess and as a self-describing term. At one point (also in the preface), Brillmacher even mentions the opponents' use of the invective “Papist” for describing the Catholic faith: “die Catholische Lehr, welche sie Papistische nennen.”

Brillmacher expresses that his intention is to present the Catholic faith – and the points of controversy – with questions and answers especially for those who have “either embraced some of the errors” or have “fears about them in unexpected disputes.”⁴¹ To make his work even more useful, he has added prayers and

39 “Nit allein den rechtglaubigen/ sonder auch den irrigen in statt viler falscher Bericht/ vnd zu bewegung Gott gefelliger andacht/ guthertziger meinung gestellt vnd in Drey Theil verfasst,” Brillmacher, the title page.

40 Heribert Smolinsky, “Jülich-Kleve-Berg,” in *Die Territorien des Reichs im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung: Land und Konfession 1500–1650*, vol. 3, *Der Nordwesten*, ed. Anton Schindling and Walter Ziegler (Münster: Aschendorff, 1995), 98–101.

41 “Jn dem ich nach gelegenheit der zeit/ vnd wiewol kürztlich/ dennoch etwas gründtlicher alles was vnsern Christlichen Glauben vnd Religion/ sampt den streitbaren Punkten betrifft/ in Frag und Antwort fur den gemeinen mann/ der sich mit den gantz kurtzen Catechismus nicht ersettigen lesst/ darumb daß er eintweder der irrthumben etlich eingenommen/ oder vor denselbigen sich zu befürchten hat bey dem vnzeitigen disputiren/ außgefüret” (“In which I have, as much as the time has allowed, and though briefly, dealt somewhat more thoroughly with all that our Christian Faith and religion is concerned, and points of controversy, with questions and answers for the common man, who is not fed sufficiently by the quite short catechisms, so that he has either embraced some of the [Protestant] errors or has fears about them in unexpected disputes”), Brillmacher, *Catechismus*, *7^r, preface.

meditations for all sorts of pious exercises which he prays will bear “desired fruit” in the realm and among its subjects “for the salvation of many people”:

So that the work would be even more useful, I have for all sorts of pious exercises added several Christian prayers and meditations, as much as the size of this intended work has allowed, all to the glory of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Whom I hereby ask, that he through his Holy Spirit, as he promised through his Prophet Zechariah, [that] this work under the name of Your Royal Graces’s esteem, protection and shield, would grant to all Christians, especially Your Royal Graces’s beloved lord [and] father’s principalities and subjects, desired fruit for the salvation of many people.⁴²

The catechism is not only a presentation of the Catholic faith according to the Apostolic Creed, an explanation of the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the seven sacraments, but it is also an apology of certain points of controversy aimed at the Protestants (e.g., the authority of the tradition, the Petrine ministry, the apostolic succession, the Church as a visible community, the sacraments, the real-presence, eucharistic sacrificial theology, the saints, the Purgatory, indulgences and celibacy). Clearly, it is “wir Catholischen” who constitutes the Church and who has preserved her in the only true faith against all errors in this “dangerous time” of many sects and false teachers.

The prayer book itself follows in the second and third part, divided in prayers and meditations respectively.⁴³ As stated in both title and preface, Brillmacher emphasises the importance not only of the “one true faith,” but also of a true way of worship: “wahrer Religion vnd Gottes dienst.” This is a key to understand Brillmacher’s errand and intention with his prayer book. With it, he wants to teach his readers a true form for Christian prayer, and offer them a reliable Catholic alternative to the many prayer books produced by Protestants.⁴⁴

42 “Damit das Werck aber desto nutzlicher wer/ hab ich zu allerley andechtiger vbung etliche Christliche Gebett vnd Betrachtung hinzu gesetzt/ als vil die furgenommene grösse dieses Berichts hat müßen fassen/ alles zu ehren Christi Jesu vnsers Heylandts. Welchen ich hiemit bitte/ er wölle durch seinen heiligen Geist der Andacht vnd des Gebetts/ welchen er durch seinen Propheten Zachariam versprochen/ schaffen/ daß diese arbeit vnder Ewr FF. GG. herrlichem Namen/ ansehen/ schutz vnd schirm bey allen Christen/ beuorab Ewr FF. GG. lieben Herrn Vatters Fürstenthumben und Vnderthanen gewünschte frucht möcht schaffen zur seligkeit viler Menschen,” Brillmacher, *Catechismus*, *7^v–8^r, preface.

43 The meditations of the third part will not be subject to this study.

44 “Dann die so mit Ketzerischen irrthumen vermischet/ wie vil auch bücher von derselbigen geschrieben werden/ bringt dem menschlichen hertzen kein liecht vnd andechtigen Gottes dienst/ sonder mehr finsternuß [...]” (“But those who meddle with heretical errors, by whom also many books are written, does not bring any light and pious divine service to the human hearts, but more darkness [...]”), Brillmacher, *Catechismus*, *4^v, preface.



Figure 4: Peter Michael Brillmacher, *Catechismus sampt einem andechtigen Bettbuch* (Collogne: Gerwin Calenius, 1587). Title page of part two: “Der ander theil Christlichs Berichts/ von ubung Christlicher Andacht durch Gebett.” Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Catech. 487, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10537533-0.

The second part, *Der ander theil Christlichs Bericht/ von ubung Christlicher Andacht durch Gebett*, begins with a catechetical introduction on prayer, by asking the question “How should a Christian perform his daily devotions to God?” (Figure 4).⁴⁵ After this introduction, morning prayers to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit follows, as well as prayers to the saints and the angels, to the Virgin Mary and to the guardian angel.

The next section consists of meditations and prayers for Holy Mass, with a catechetical introduction referring to the Church fathers. At Mass, the Christian should visualise the altar as the cross, the priest as Christ (with each of his vestments interpreted symbolically), and the eucharistic sacrifice as the true Sacrifice of Christ at Golgotha really present among us. The third section concerns the sacrament of penance, containing prayers before and after confession, the seven penitential psalms and a litany.

⁴⁵ “Wie soll ein Christ sich in der Andacht zu Gott täglich verhalten?,” Brillmacher, *Catechismus*, 321.

The fourth section contains several prayers of various subjects and categories. For example, prayers at receiving communion; when using holy water; for protection against sin and temptations; at meals; in times of famine and pestilence; against “the Turks”; in times of war; illness; for pregnant women and for preparation for death. Especially interesting is a prayer concerning the strengthening of one’s faith and another concerning the “destructive division in the Christian religion.”⁴⁶ Both prayers are polemical and apologetical in character, by emphasising the Church headed by the Bishop of Rome as the only true Church. The first prayer is formulated as a profession of faith, where the Christian expresses that the faith of this Church is sufficient for him: “Es ist mir gnug/ daß ich nach meinem einfalt glaube was sie [i.e., the Roman Church] glaubt.” Further, he declares that he will never abandon this “mighty fortress of the heavenly Father” and its “infallible faith,” in union with Christ’s “visible governor on Earth.”⁴⁷

In the second prayer, God is asked how long he will be asleep and leave his people in ruin – this “scattering of the Christian people,” this “harmful division,” this “distortion of your holy Word [and] desecration of your most holy sacraments.”⁴⁸ God is further asked to have mercy on his people “who still have not bowed their knees to Baal and the Golden Calf of the new sects.” And not least, God should also:

Have mercy on the ignorant misguided sheep, those who have been led astray from your sheepfold, and are erring badly, and let them through your faithful servants be found and provided with good ways and teachings. Protect [them], O Lord, from the raging wolves, and reveal [to] the world, how they under sheep’s clothing give a false impression of the truth, the Word of God and the Gospel, [and] terribly scatter, rip and strangle the people.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ “Gebett für stercke des Glaubens/ wider alle anfechtungen demzelbigen zu wider” (p. 422) and “Gebett vmb abwendung der schedlichen spaltung Christlicher Religion” (p. 439).

⁴⁷ Brillmacher, *Catechismus*, 423.

⁴⁸ “Ach Herr wie lang wiltu schlaffen? Wann wiltu auffwachen vnd vns nicht in grund verderben lassen? Was sollen wir sagen von der heimlichen zerrüttung deines Christlichen Volcks/ von der schedlichen Spaltung/ von verfelschung deines heiligen Worts von schendung deiner hochheiligen Sacramenten [...]” (“How long will you sleep, O Lord? When will you wake up and not leave us in total ruin? What shall we say about the scattering of your Christian people, about the harmful division, about the distortion of your holy Word, about the desecration of your most holy sacraments [...]”), Brillmacher, *Catechismus*, 439.

⁴⁹ “Erbarne dich der vnuerstendigen irrigen Schäflin/ die aus deinem Schafstall verfür/ vnd schwerlich irren/ Vnd lasse sie durch deine trewe Diener mit gutem wandel vnd lehr versehen vnd funden werden. Wehre O Herr den reissenden wölffen/ Entdeck der welt/ wie sie vnder den schafskleidern/ falschem schein der warheit/ des worts Gottes vnd Euangelio/so schrecklich das volck zerstreuen/ zerreißen und würgen,” Brillmacher, *Catechismus*, 440.

6 Conclusion

The polemical and apologetical tone in these prayer books is characteristic of the period's religious climate. With the phraseology of early twentieth-century research (as cited in the introduction) both Faber's and Brillmacher's prayer books could indeed be deemed tools of resisting and "combating Protestantism." But it is interesting to note *how* this polemical language deals with the non-Catholics. These are mostly considered victims of heretical teachers and are described as "lost sheep," "estranged," "scattered," "coiled in error," "been led astray." The non-Catholics are thus objects of pity and in need of intercession for the sake of their salvation. Prayers for the conversion of people of other faiths (often referred as the "erroneous," "schismatics" or "heretics") and against "division in religion," were recurring in many prayer books of the era – also in prayer books of the following centuries. Even if this approach is found in both books, it is Petrus Michaelis Brillmacher who specifically mentions this group of "irrigen" as a possible target audience.

This outreach to non-Catholic readers is not unique to Brillmacher. Decades before him, his late colleague in the priesthood Johann Faber clearly argues for his faith by countering what he regards as misconceptions of Catholic teachings. Quoting the Bible and the Church fathers plays an important role in his argument. The idealisation of the "old Christians" and the Church fathers was a common trait of late medieval Humanist and Renaissance thinking, inherited also by the Protestant reformers.⁵⁰ But Faber – as well as Brillmacher – clearly identifies the faith of the "old Christians" and "the Fathers" with that of the Roman Catholic Church. By doing so, Faber counters Protestant claims that "papist" teachings and practices would be "late abuses" with no basis in the early Church.⁵¹ Instead, their ancient origin is underlined by quoting Church fathers, as proof of their orthodoxy.⁵²

50 For an overview on the reception of the Church fathers through the centuries, including the Early Modern Period, see: Irena Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

51 See for example *Confessio Augustana*, where it is stated that the confession itself does not vary from the faith of "the Church Catholic, or from the Church of Rome as known from its writers [i.e., the Fathers]. This being the case, they judge harshly who insist that our teachers be regarded as heretics. There is, however, disagreement on certain abuses, which have crept into the Church without rightful authority."

52 The Lutheran theologian Andreas Musculus (1514–1581) used patristic texts in the same manner, see: Angela Baumann, "Zum Rezeption patristischer Texte in den Gebetbüchern des Andreas Musculus," in *Gebetsliteratur der frühen Neuzeit als Hausfrömmigkeit: Funktionen und Formen in Deutschland und den Niederlanden*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen and Cornelia Niekus Moore (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 226–58.

By offering pedagogical introductions Faber gives his prayer book a catechetical function by which he leads his readers in the “right direction,” teaching them the “true faith” and a “right way of prayer.” Brillmacher’s prayer book, on the other hand, is more dependent on the catechism found in the same binding. But also here, catechetical introductions are found in the prayer book itself. With this catechetical approach, both Faber and Brillmacher stood in an established tradition within the genre of Catholic prayer books. Already late medieval prayer books had didactic passages, and in the latter half of the sixteenth century Peter Canisius popularised the genre of combined catechisms and prayer books.⁵³

Although the overall purpose with this approach was to strengthen all readers in the faith and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, it is most certainly no coincidence what subjects are dealt with, and how these are presented and argued for. Both Faber and Brillmacher address subjects that were controversial for Protestant reformers, by arguing for their ancient origin or by emphasising the importance of the Church with its *magisterium* as the true home of all its lost sheep. Considering what has been presented above, these prayer books clearly had a missionary function as tools of re-Catholicisation, striving to lead non-Catholics back to Catholic faith, practices, and ecclesial jurisdiction.

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⁵³ Schrott, “Das Gebetbuch,” 217. Besides Faber, another early example of an author combining his prayer book with a catechism is Georg Witzel, a former Lutheran cleric turned Catholic apologist. Combining complete catechisms with prayer books and the inclusion of didactic passages remained a very common feature in the devotional literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.