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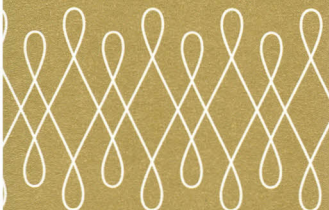
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## Narrative Literature and the Reformation: Focal Points of an Interdisciplinary Discussion of the Scholarship

The roots of the current discussion of the scholarship on narrative literature and the Reformation stretch back into the last third of the twentieth century. This discussion has been ongoing in several disciplines, often working independently of one another and to some extent on different levels of inquiry, and sometimes with only minimal exchange of findings and conclusions. These studies are significant first and foremost because the operative terms themselves denote a field of inquiry in which one can trace processes of the history of science that are not sufficiently understood, processes the further mapping of which can lead to a better understanding of events in literary history and the history of ideas in the early modern era. The goal of my survey here is to examine the conceptual formation of the relevant terms and shed light on their development within the history of science. I also identify some lacunae in the scholarship and formulate several hypotheses. I have concentrated in my inquiry on German speaking areas, with some consideration of the situation in Hungary.

keywords: narrative literature, impact of the Reformation, interdisciplinarity, comparative approaches

### *Clarification of Terminology*

The term “narrative literature” presents both literary studies and the historical study of narrative with a daunting challenge. The origins of the term itself (“Erzählliteratur”) do not lie in German scholarship on literary history as associated with names like Paul Böckmann or Eberhard Lämmert.<sup>1</sup> The term refers first and foremost to narratives within existing printed literature that could be regarded as “popular,” collections of short entertaining or moralizing stories that are widely dispersed or disseminated and longer prose narratives that

1 Paul Böckmann, *Von der Sinnbildsprache zur Ausdruckssprache. Der Wandel der literarischen Formensprache vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit*, Formgeschichte der deutschen Dichtung, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1965); Eberhard Lämmert, *Bauformen des Erzählens* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1955). See Wolfgang Brückner, “Geistliche Erzählliteratur der Gegenreformation im Rheinland,” *Rheinische Vierteljahresblätter* 40 (1976): 150.

recently have come to be grouped under the term “prose novel.”<sup>2</sup> Other kinds of text that often contain narratives are also taken into consideration.

In the historical background of this term there was a debate, now long past but nonetheless rich with implications, between philologists and researchers of popular literature regarding the problem of oral traditions and the epithets “folkish” and “popular.” The difference of opinions concerned first and foremost the question of the actual possibilities of spreading oral tradition among broad layers of the population and the role of literature in the process of mediating narrative. In the wake of the work of the Brothers Grimm, for a long time the direction of inquiry was determined by targeted investigations and selective practices of inclusion.<sup>3</sup> Didactic narratives were neglected, both by literary scholarship and scholars of folklore. The desire to achieve, as a precondition to any study of narrative, a precise knowledge of literarily discernible narrative motifs could only begin to be realized in the 1960s. Indeed to this day there is no real consensus regarding the definition of narrative, neither in literary studies nor in the study of narrative. The historical study of narrative<sup>4</sup> as a multidisciplinary, comparative field of scholarly inquiry<sup>5</sup> has developed primarily out of the study of German literature and the folklore research since the 1950s.<sup>6</sup>

The central tasks of the historical and comparative study of narrative involve first and foremost questions regarding the age, mediation, dissemination, and functions of narrative types and motifs, as well as the question of continuity and the interdependence and penetration of literary and oral transmission and the problems of genres of popular narrative. The hypothesis of unbroken

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2 See Jörg Jochen Berns, ed., *Erzählte Welt. Frühneuzeitliche Erzählliteratur aus den Beständen der Universitätsbibliothek Marburg. Ein Katalog* (Marburg: Universitätsbibliothek Marburg, 1993).

3 Hans-Jörg Uther, “Die ‘Deutschen Sagen’ der Brüder Grimm im Spiegel ihrer Kritiker. Ein Beitrag zur frühen Sagenrezeption,” in *Hören Sagen Lesen Lernen. Bausteine zu einer Geschichte der kommunikativen Kultur. Festschrift für Rudolf Schenda zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ursula Brunold-Bigler and Hermann Bausinger (Bern: Peter Lang Verlag, 1995), 721–39.

4 Elfriede Moser-Rath, “Gedanken zur historischen Erzählforschung,” *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 69 (1973): 61–81.

5 Bengt Holbek, *On the Comparative Method in Folklore Research* (with contributions from Hermann Bausinger, Lauri Honko, and Roger D. Abrahams) (Turku: Nordic Institute of Folklore, 1992); Bengt Holbek, *Tendencies in Modern Folk Narrative Research* (Turku: Nordic Institute of Folklore, 1992).

6 One might think, for instance, of the foundation of the Office of the Encyclopedia of Tales in 1957 in Kiel (since 1980 an undertaking of the Academy of Sciences in Göttingen), the journal *Fabula* (1958), the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (1959), and the publication of the handbook of historical and comparative scholarship on narrative entitled *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, the first volume of which was published in 1977. *Enzyklopädie des Märchens. Handwörterbuch zur historischen und vergleichenden Erzählforschung*, ed. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, vols 13 (Berlin–New York: De Gruyter, 1977–2010).

continuity in oral transmission is actually discarded through the study of sources and exact analyses of literary interconnections, and cross-linkages are exposed. Since the mid-1960s a discussion of comprehensive theory and methodology that would provide a coherent foundation for the discipline has been sought in narratology, in which efforts have been made first and foremost to arrive at theories of narrative that transcend genre.

At roughly the same time there was a dawning realization in the study of literature of how inappropriate it was to separate from the outset so-called popular texts (in other words the texts addressed to all social groups) from rhetorics, which suggests the conclusion that one cannot arrive at an adequate interpretation of the narrative literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries without the study of rhetoric. The scholarly use of apophthegms led to studies that allegedly discerned the point of origin not only of all history writing, but also of the epic genres in this gnomic form. Modern narrative theory, in the meantime, developed from a form of inquiry rooted in the older approaches of the humanities into a field of study based on modern, structuralist, textual-linguistic or communication-theory foundations.<sup>7</sup> The terminology deals first and foremost with the analysis of the narrative instance, the narrative event, and the narrative perspective. In more recent scholarship, affinities between speech and fictional narrative were emphasized. In the attempts to apply textual-linguistic and semiological terms to the restructuring of the rhetorical study of figures one sees a revamping of the relationship between rhetoric and narrative.

Only in the 1990s did the realization gradually emerge that since its beginnings in the Romantic era German literary history has been shaped by the Protestant views of its most prominent figures.<sup>8</sup> One of the consequences of this was that, as Wolfgang Harms has so aptly put it, “[t]he idea of a new commencement, a caesura, a revival of literature with and since the Reformation [...] [could lead to] a forfeiture of Tradition [...] in the sense of [...] a devaluation of anything

7 *Erzählforschung. Theorien, Modelle und Methoden der Narrativik. Mit einer Auswahl-Bibliographie zur Erzählforschung*, ed. Wolfgang Haubrichs, 3 vols, *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik (LiLi) Beihefte*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976–1978); J. G. Pankau, “Erzähltheorie,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 2 (Tübingen: Gert Ueding, 1994), 1425–32.

8 See Klaus Weimar, *Geschichte der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1989); Jürgen Fohrmann, *Das Projekt der deutschen Literaturgeschichte. Entstehung und Scheitern einer nationalen Poesiegeschichtsschreibung zwischen Humanismus und Deutschem Kaiserreich* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989); Jürgen Fohrmann and Wilhelm Voßkamp, *Wissenschaft und Nation. Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1991); Jürgen Fohrmann and Wilhelm Voßkamp, *Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Germanistik im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart–Weimar: Metzler, 1994).

older.”<sup>9</sup> This forfeiture or repudiation of tradition, a consequence of value laden designations of epochs, is characteristic not of the period of transition into the early modern era, but rather of the assessment of this period in the literary history of the nineteenth century. The study of German literary history has only recently begun to free itself from the normative views that were given firm foundation by the hypothesis concerning a historical break in the transition into the modern era. As Klaus Schreiner noted in 1981, the notion of a discrete border alleged in the study of German literature and language between historical epochs at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has increasingly been thrown into question in light of new research on the culture of the late Middle Ages and the Reformation. This has raised new doubts in literary and historical scholarship regarding the dialectical foundations of the historiography of the early modern era.<sup>10</sup> Now we are better able to observe in widely scattered areas the actual proximity or combinations of uses of tradition and shifts in position and function.<sup>11</sup>

Recently there have been efforts not simply to identify lacunae in the history of the literary production in the early modern era of territories in Middle Europe (Mitteleuropa) that had once been Catholic, but also to go beyond the skewed perspective of this denominational approach in general. The notion of “oberdeutsche Literatur” (or “upper German,” referring German spoken essentially in what today is Austria and the southern parts of Germany), which has gained currency largely due to the writings of Dieter Breuer<sup>12</sup> and Hans Pörnbacher,<sup>13</sup> refers neither exclusively to Catholic literature nor simply to the Baroque. Rather one notes today the political-social commonalities and exchanges

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9 Wolfgang Harms, “Der Übergang zur Neuzeit und die Wirkung von Traditionen,” in *Der Übergang zur Neuzeit und die Wirkung von Traditionen*. Veröffentlichungen der Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Hamburg 32 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 7–14, 11; See Wolfgang Harms, “Das Interesse an mittelalterlicher deutscher Literatur zwischen der Reformationszeit und der Frühromantik,” in *Akten des 6. Internationalen Germanistenkongresses Basel 1980*, ed. Hans-Gert Roloff and Heinz Rupp, vol. 1 (Bern: Peter Lang Verlag, 1981), 60–84.

10 Klaus Schreiner, “Grenzen literarischer Kommunikation. Bemerkungen zur religiösen und sozialen Dialektik der Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformation,” in *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit. Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1981*, ed. Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984), 1–20.

11 Wolfgang Harms and Jean-Marie Valentin, *Mittelalterliche Denk- und Schreibmodelle in der deutschen Literatur der frühen Neuzeit*, (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1993).

12 Dieter Breuer, “Raumbildungen in der deutschen Literaturgeschichte der frühen Neuzeit als Folge der Konfessionalisierung,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 117 (1998), 180–91.

13 Hans Pörnbacher, *Die Literatur des Barock*, Bayerische Bibliothek. Texte aus zwölf Jahrhunderten, vol. 2 (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1986).

in the cultural self-conception of the leadership of the various denominations who invoked the "old order of the estates" of Middle Europe. The concept of unity in German national literature also began to seem questionable from non-denominational approaches, and it became increasingly clear that a revision of earlier views of (literary) history was unavoidable.<sup>14</sup> The new thesis, according to which first the artistic and literary doctrines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries pushed upper German literature and culture out of national consciousness and thereby consigned it to oblivion, is widely accepted.

Over the course of the past few decades a concept of literature has emerged in the study of literary history that is open with regards to the whole literary production of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the oral tradition, which was always in a relationship of mutual influence with written culture.<sup>15</sup> This concept places emphasis on the process of literary communication and rejects the distinction between "literary" and "non-literary." Modern inductive-descriptive poetics defines the literary genres as pragmatic groupings of the diversity of actual texts. According to this definition, the genres are variations of mediation or systems of communication that prevail under specific historic, social, and cultural conditions. By now this concept of literature and genre has gained widespread acceptance, even among scholars of the history of narrative.

One of the difficulties (one that has not yet been overcome) of the endeavor to arrive at a common theory, definition, and systematization of narrative literature lies in the fact that both the collective criteria of narrative and the corpus of narrative texts elude precise definition. The traditional generic designations of narrative texts remain in use, however, both in the study of literature and in the study of narrative, in spite of the fact that they have been

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14 Dieter Breuer, *Oberdeutsche Literatur 1565–1650. Deutsche Literaturgeschichte und Territorialgeschichte in frühabsolutistischer Zeit* (Munich: Beck, 1979); Dieter Breuer, "Deutsche Nationalliteratur und katholischer Kulturkreis," in *Nation und Literatur im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit. Akten des 1. Internationalen Osnabrücker Kongresses zur Kulturgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Klaus Garber (Tübingen: De Gruyter, 1989) 701–15, 703; Dieter Breuer, "Das Ärgernis der katholischen Literatur. Zur Geschichte einer Ausgrenzung," in *Europäische Barockrezeption*, ed. Klaus Garber (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1991), 455–63; Dieter Breuer, "Katholische Konfessionalisierung und poetische Freiheit," in *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling (Münster: Aschendorff, 1995), 166–83. On the rivalling system of education of the Protestant and the Catholic traditions see Anton Schindling, *Bildung und Wissenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit 1650–1800* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994), 3; Günter Hess, "Deutsche Nationalliteratur und oberdeutsche Provinz. Zur Geschichte und Grenzen eines Vorurteils," *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 8 (1985), 7–30.

15 Gábor Tüskés, "Schriftliche Folklore im 17. Jahrhundert," *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung* 42 (2001): 2.

and are being subjected to critical interrogation and are increasingly seen as retrospective constructions that are unsuitable for an adequate description of both the innumerable sub-types and transitional forms and various genres and kinds of texts.

In the folk-narrative research a canon of motifs, genres, types, and topics was constructed over the course of the past century that is increasingly recognized as a pure construct.<sup>16</sup> The constructed nature of this canon exhibits numerous assumptions rooted in the history of ideas, society, and scholarship that continue to exert an influence on research.<sup>17</sup> The notion of the denominational origins of the scholars and most prominent figures of German literature, which was widespread in the international folklore research (and in particular the scholarship of the nineteenth century), defined the dominant canon of folk narrative genres in accordance with the German-Protestant national conception of Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian traditions.<sup>18</sup> But the ultramontane bias of Catholic authors, which was a persistent assumption in the scholarship, also led to a kind of reciprocal culture war which in turn distorted perceptions of the historical reality.

The romantic-patriotic heritage and ideological sympathies have also influenced the methodologies in and conclusions of the scholarship on the Reformation for far too long.<sup>19</sup> Protestant biblical exegesis, beginning with the work of Hermann Gunkel and his functional understanding of narrative genres through the question regarding their “real-life setting” (“Sitz im Leben”), led to the articulation in the first third of the twentieth century of a unique philological genre theory, so-called “Formgeschichte” (or what has come to known today in English as form criticism), the most prominent representative of which was Martin Dibelius.<sup>20</sup> The presuppositions of the ethnographical and folklore research discourses were therefore based for a long time on conceptions of folk culture and tradition that today would be characterized as secularized evangelical theologoumena. Seen from the perspective of this insight, the Reformation and

16 Dan Ben-Amos, *Do We Need Ideal Types (in Folklore)? An Address to Lauri Honko* (Turku: Nordic Institute of Folklore, 1992).

17 Wolfgang Brückner, “Reformation,” in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 11 (2004), 455.

18 Wolfgang Brückner, “Konfession, Konfessionen,” in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 8 (1996), 120.

19 See Heiko A. Obermann, *Zwei Reformationen. Luther und Calvin – Alte und Neue Welt* (Durchgesehen und mit einem Nachwort v. Manfred Schulze) (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 2003).

20 Wolfgang Brückner, “Narrativistik”. Versuch einer Kenntnissnahme theologischer Erzählforschung,” *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung* 20, H. 1–3 (Festschrift for Max Lüthi) (1979): 18–33.

its ideological aftermath have a constitutive significance for the scholarship on narrative.

But alongside terms such as “narrative literature,” even the word “Reformation” is used differently and sometimes even in contradictory ways in the various disciplines. In literary history it is a term borrowed in the second half of the nineteenth century from the history of the church for a literary era which in the larger sense spans the whole of the sixteenth century and in the more narrow sense refers to the period between 1517 and the Peace of Augsburg. There are many sound reasons to speak of a “Reformation” era in the history of literature, but one is increasingly unable to ignore the fact that the roots of the notion of the “Reformation” as a designation of an epoch lie primarily in the conservative or liberal-Protestant national science of history of the nineteenth century. The overemphasis on the Wittenberg Reformation (which was most influential in Germany) led until recently to a neglect not only of counter-Reformation alternatives, but also the reform ideas of Huldrych Zwingli, not to mention Calvinist trends, which while they may have been more limited geographically and temporally, nonetheless remained more significant in certain regions.<sup>21</sup> The European foundations of Latin academic culture were underestimated. The European interconnections of the literature of the Reformation became a subject of inquiry only thanks to the study of the Baroque. The notion of a “Lutheran pause,” which was introduced by Wolfgang Stämmler, was also recognized recently as a misconception. Increasingly there is agreement that the written culture of the Reformation should be taken seriously as literature, and aspects in the literature that seem to have been less influenced by Reformation thinking also are given more attentive consideration in more recent works.

For the scholarship on the history of rhetoric, the rhetoric of the “Reformation,” defined by Peter Blickle as “a disputation with almost no social boundaries regarding the correct understanding of the Gospels” and by Peter Matheson as “a paradigmatic shift of religious imagination” and a “rhetorical event through and through,”<sup>22</sup> creates a relatively new field of inquiry.

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21 Heinz Schilling, *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen zur europäischen Reformations- und Konfessionsgeschichte*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte and Olaf Mörke (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002).

22 Peter Blickle, “Reformation und Freiheit,” in *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch. Wissenschaftliches Symposion des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1996*, ed. Bernd Moeller and E. Buchwalter (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998), 37; Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 241.



Scholarship on the Reformation and rhetoric were both called upon to consider the “common man” (in other words the addressee) not simply as an object of a linear process, but rather as a participant in an interactive process.<sup>23</sup> In one of his articles Robert W. Scribner established the “totality of the communication process” of the Reformation as a field of inquiry that included not only texts, but also deeds and oral, visual, and symbolic forms of communication.<sup>24</sup>

From the perspective of the study of narrative it is important, first and foremost, that the representatives of the Reformation put rhetoric in the service of textual and Biblical exegesis while also putting history as a rhetorical store of exempla in the service of rhetoric.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between Protestant sermon-exempla and theological training has been made a topic of inquiry, but the rhetorical praxis of functional literature (“Gebrauchsliteratur”) has hardly been studied. According to recent research, book printing did not mark a new shift in media, but rather merely accelerated a development of handwritten mass production that had been ongoing since the late Middle Ages, only then to be given new impetus and temporarily dominated by the Reformation.<sup>26</sup> The success of the Reformation is not simply a consequence of book printing. Given widespread illiteracy, the early phase of the communication process known as the “Reformation” must be understood as a process that was dominated more than 95 percent by unwritten forms of semi-oral “reading.” The effectiveness in the spread of ideas of fliers and pamphlets, with their diverse forms of texts, was in fact a result of uses of the spoken word. Until roughly 1700 the dominant medium remained the sermon, in which the various themes and forms of narrative were ascribed a fundamental meaning.<sup>27</sup>

For the historical study of narrative, the “Reformation” is no longer merely a term referring to an epoch, but rather is in a larger sense the starting basis for denominational cultural development from the early modern era to the present.<sup>28</sup> The entire complex of the “evangelical” minting of so-called popular literature

23 Immo Meenken, “Reformation,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 7, ed. Gert Ueding (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005), 1078.

24 Robert W. Scribner, “Flugblatt und Analphabetentum,” in *Flugschriften als Massenmedium der Reformationszeit. Beiträge zum Tübinger Symposium 1980*, ed. Hans-Joachim Köhler (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 66.

25 Meenken, “Reformation,” 1080.

26 *Ibid.*, 1087–89.

27 Heike Talkenberger, “Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeit in der Reformationszeit,” *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 6 (Sonderheft: Forschungsreferate 3. Folge, 1994): 1–26.

28 Brückner, “Reformation,” 454.

is at the center of scholarly attention. Included in this is the promotion of narrative traditions through the reform movements and their aftermath, both in the realm of ideas and institutions. Source use that is specific to denomination has only emerged in recent decades, first and foremost through the discovery of the sermon and catechism as social sites of the mediation of stories.<sup>29</sup> Only in the last third of the twentieth century did the study of narrative begin to become open to literary history and textual exegesis and, in accordance with philologists' broader notion of literature, take seriously their study of rhetoric as a means with which to arrive at a more nuanced grasp of means of mediation and narrative strategies. This involved taking into consideration, beyond knowledge of medieval functional literature, the entire production in the early modern era of homiletic handbooks and histories by all of the denominations.

Ever since the publication in 1974 of *Volkserzählung und Reformation* by Wolfgang Brückner, a handbook on the transmission and function of folk narrative material and narrative literature in Protestantism,<sup>30</sup> interest in Luther has been limited not simply to (for instance) his use of proverbs, his collections of fables and folk superstitions,<sup>31</sup> but also to the literary origins of his knowledge, his use of narrative genres, forms, and motifs, his theoretical position in the establishment of "histories" (in the sense given the word by Melanchthon) and the phenomenon of the "narrated" Luther, who himself became a figure of literary tradition. Brückner also proposed a comparable handbook on the narrative literature of the Catholic reform movement, but this still awaits realization.<sup>32</sup> The intellectual preconditions of the emergence of a literature of exempla that was to some extent peculiar to specific denominations, the calendar and reform martyrology have only begun to be studied in recent decades. This is also true of drolleries and so-called devil's literature ("Teufelsliteratur," which refers to didactic, satirical treatises against sin and indulgences), which have only recently been studied in their theological context. Sermons, catecheses, and catechisms have been recognized as important fields of study, and the collections of tales

29 Brückner, "Konfession, Konfessionen," 120–21.

30 Wolfgang Brückner, ed., *Volkserzählung und Reformation. Ein Handbuch zur Tradierung und Funktion von Erzählstoffen und Erzählliteratur im Protestantismus* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1974); See Brückner, "Reformation," 455–56.

31 See for instance Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, "Laienbildung und 'Volksdichtung' bei Martin Luther," in *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 55–77.

32 Wolfgang Brückner, "Volkskunde in Würzburg. Ein Rechenschaftsbericht 1973–78," *Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde* 5 (1978): 157.

of curiosities, wonders, portents,<sup>33</sup> monsters and murder are understood in the context of the Reformation notion of the end of days.

### *New Directions in the Scholarship*

Brückner's handbook proved programmatic for the new scholarship on the history of narrative and can indeed be seen as a culmination of the ascertainments regarding Protestant authors and works specifically. In Frankfurt and Würzburg Brückner's work inspired a series of dissertations that focused on previously overlooked authors and narrative forms of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and examined narrative literature first and foremost as a medium of education, transcending denominational, political, and national boundaries.<sup>34</sup> These works expose mutual relationships of influence between the literary establishment as a cultural construct and its popular reception. Furthermore, they yield narrative catalogues and check both theological and homiletical sources for their credibility and usefulness in the reconstruction of the culture of the late Middle Ages and the early modern era. One finds attempts at a theory of exemplary subject matter in Brückner's own essays, in which he alludes to the complexity of the notion of history in the early modern era and the *modus excerpenti*,<sup>35</sup> as well as in the work of Christoph Daxelmüller, who analyses exempla as a form of scholarly discourse and a factor that contributes to percipience (Daxelmüller also provides an extensive bibliography of the research on exempla).<sup>36</sup>

In 1987 Rudolf Schenda, another prominent figure in the study of the history of narrative, offered an overview of the new tendencies in this discipline

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33 See Barbara Bauer, "Die Krise der Reformation. Johann Jacob Wicks Chronik aussergewöhnlicher Natur- und Himmelserscheinungen," in *Wahrnehmungsgeschichte und Wissensdiskurs im illustrierten Flugblatt der Frühen Neuzeit (1450–1700)*, ed. Wolfgang Harms and Alfred Messerli (Basel: Schwabe, 2002), 193–236.

34 See Rainer Alsheimer, *Das Magnum speculum exemplorum als Ausgangspunkt populärer Erzähltraditionen. Studien zu seiner Wirkungsgeschichte in Polen und Rußland* (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang Verlag, 1971); Alois Schneider, *Narrative Anleitungen zur praxis pietatis im Barock. Dargelegt am Exempelgebrauch in den "Iudicia Divina" des Jesuiten Georg Stengel (1584–1651)* (Würzburg: Bayer. BI. für Volkskunde, 1982); Lothar Hofmann, *Exempelkatalog zu Martin Pruggers Beispielkatechismus von 1724* (Würzburg: BBV, BNM, 1987).

35 Wolfgang Brückner, "Historien und Historie. Erzählliteratur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts als Forschungsaufgabe," in *Volks Erzählung und Reformation*, 13–123.

36 Christoph Daxelmüller, "Zum Beispiel. Eine exemplarische Bibliographie. Teil I–II," *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 13 (1990): 218–44; 14 (1991): 215–40.

in German-speaking areas.<sup>37</sup> He catalogued the systematic work on the narrative sources of the Reformation and the Counter Reformation, whereby thousands of confirmations of the written mediation of narratives from the sixteenth century until the eighteenth century were discovered, but at the same time also evinces a strong inclination towards recent scholarship and the decline in the number of the few university chairs dedicated to the historical study of narrative. This tendency is far more pronounced today as a consequence of the university reforms that have been implemented. With the reestablishment of a commission for the historical study of narrative in 1997 on the occasion of the congress of the German Society for Ethnography in Marburg this area of study got a boost in German speaking countries, though no commission can compensate entirely for the absence of an institutional basis. The primary task of the study of narrative was redefined to extend beyond philology and the study of motifs and include the study of stereotypes and conflict. Narrative types are interpreted as cultural constructs, as a means of coming to terms, through narrative, with difference and estrangement and as a discursive manner of handling otherness.<sup>38</sup> The forfeiture here of the historical perspective is quite apparent. The sources from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth, which are the basis of the majority of the so-called folk narratives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are largely neglected.

The outlook of the more recent historical study of narrative is determined first and foremost by book genres and source texts on the transmission of narrative content, as well as the work of prominent authors of so-called pastor-literature and the polyhistor of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.<sup>39</sup> The methods of the searches for *Loci communes*, which led to the sought-after memorabilia, are fundamentally reconsidered. The extensive literature of compilations, peculiarities, and magical wonders is consulted primarily in order to facilitate the exploration of literary sources of narratives from the oral tradition. The dispute between the evangelical theologian Hieronymus Rauscher and the Catholic Johannes Nas regarding legends, revelations of miracles, and exempla was identified as a highpoint in the denominational polemics on short narrative

37 Rudolf Schenda, "Tendenzen der aktuellen volkskundlichen Erzählforschung im deutschsprachigen Raum," in *Deutsche Volkskunde – Französische Ethnologie. Zwei Standortbestimmungen*, ed. J. Chiva and U. Jeggle (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 1987), 271–91.

38 Sabine Wienker-Piepho and Klaus Roth, ed., *Erzählen zwischen den Kulturen* (Münster: LIT, 2004).

39 See the corresponding entry in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*.

prose.<sup>40</sup> Regarding the newer narrative genres and narrative content of Pietism and the Enlightenment, in addition to the notion of a break with so-called pastor-literature (as collections of stories), a constant catechetical-pedagogical use function of the continuously developing objectives of the reformers was alleged. The various kinds of texts of the so-called moralistic stories written by evangelical pastors and teachers, which as of roughly 1760 began to give rise to the canon of virtue of the Enlightenment and the new code of behavior for the modern civil religion, was made the subject of inquiry only a few years ago.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, scholars have only recently begun to study the evangelical catechisms with exempla of the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup>

Religious autobiographies and biographies have been recognized as the primary genre of pietistic narrative literature, meaning a distinctive version of hagiography with the leitmotifs of conversion or rebirth.<sup>43</sup> Narratives of wondrous rescues of copies of the Bible and of devotional books were used by the Pietists since the middle of the seventeenth century. The extensive pietist literature of edification (or “Erbauungsliteratur,” a term that was used first in the fourteenth century and refers essentially writings that are not strictly speaking theological, as they are not bound by scholarly discourses or dogma, but which are nonetheless motivated by religious aims, for instance providing examples of virtuous life), which enjoyed considerable international influence because of numerous translations, has not so far been studied in detail.<sup>44</sup> The compilation of a systematic catalogue of motifs from written sources with parabolic stories also remains a desideratum, as does a thorough examination of the regional differences in narrative contents and the study of the relationships between written and oral forms of communication among the Pietists.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, literary studies, classical philology, theology, the history of rhetoric and the historical study of narrative have all focused in

40 Rudolf Schenda, “Die protestantisch-katholische Legendenpolemik im 16. Jahrhundert,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 52 (1970): 28–48; See Hannjost Lixfeld, “Eine konfessionelle Satire des Reformationszeitalters. Zur Wechselwirkung von Literatur und Volkserzählung,” *Alemannisches Jahrbuch* (1971/72): 93–104.

41 Wolfgang Brückner, “Moralische Geschichten als Gattung volkstümlicher Aufklärung. Zugleich ein Plädoyer für begriffliche Klarheiten,” *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 10 (1987): 109–34.

42 Wolfgang Brückner, “Die Gattung protestantischer Beispiel-Katechismen im 19. Jahrhundert,” *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 22 (1999): 141–64.

43 See for instance Ulrich Bräker, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 5, ed. Christian Holliger et al. (Munich–Bern: C. H. Beck, 1998–2010); *Schreibsucht. Autobiographische Schriften des Pietisten Ulrich Bräker (1735–1798)*, ed. Alfred Messerli and Adolf Muschg (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2004).

44 Fred van Lieburg, “Pietismus,” in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 10 (2002), 1047–56.

particular on exempla. But only since the work of Rudolf Schenda,<sup>45</sup> Hermann Bausinger,<sup>46</sup> Wolfgang Brückner,<sup>47</sup> Frederic C. Tubach,<sup>48</sup> Peter Assion,<sup>49</sup> Christoph Daxelmüller,<sup>50</sup> Jacques Berlioz,<sup>51</sup> Walter Haug,<sup>52</sup> Peter von Moos<sup>53</sup> and others<sup>54</sup> has there been consensus regarding the fact that the term "exempla" does not designate a genre so much as a function. A text becomes an "exemplum" only through its application. In the earlier scholarship, the term "Predigtmärlein," or "sermon-tale," was used as a synonym for exemplum, although it is not immediately apparent that this is justified, since the former refers to a narrative text. The use of exempla of individual authors can only be fruitfully studied according to a complex methodology and with simultaneous consideration of content, genre-specific and functional aspects, the socio-cultural context, and principles of text generation that are determined in accordance with these aspects (the so-called para-textual constellation of characteristics).

In 1977 Ernst Heinrich Rehermann published an important book on the exempla in Protestant collections of exempla and sermons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (a source which until then had gone largely unnoticed)

45 Rudolf Schenda, "Stand und Aufgaben der Exemplarforschung," *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung* 10 (1969): 69–85.

46 Hermann Bausinger, "Exemplum und Beispiel," *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* (1968): 31–43.

47 Wolfgang Brückner, "Nachmittelalterliche katholische Exempelsammlungen," in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 4 (1984), 609–26.

48 Frederic C. Tubach, *Index exemplorum. A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia, 1981).

49 Peter Assion, "Das Exempel als agitatorische Gattung. Zu Form und Funktion der kurzen Beispielgeschichte," *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung* 19 (1978): 224–40.

50 Christoph Daxelmüller, "Exemplum und Fallbericht. Zur Gewichtung von Erzählstruktur und Kontext religiöser Beispielgeschichten und wissenschaftlicher Diskursmaterien," *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 5 (1982): 149–59; Christoph Daxelmüller, "Narratio, Illustratio, Argumentatio. Exemplum und Bildungstechnik in der frühen Neuzeit," in *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*, ed. Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991), 77–94.

51 Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, eds., *Les Exempla médiévaux. Introduction à la recherche, suivie des tables critiques de l'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach*, (Avant-propos de Claude Bremond, Jacques Le Goff et Jean-Claude Schmitt) (Carcassonne: GARAE/Hésiode, 1992).

52 Walter Haug, "Poetologische Universalien und Literaturgeschichte," in *Erzählforschung*, vol. 2 (1977), 276–96.

53 Peter von Moos, *Geschichte als Topik. Das rhetorische Exemplum von der Antike zur Neuzeit und die historiae im "Policraticus" Johanns von Salisbury* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 1988).

54 See for instance Hartmut Breitzkreuz, "Literarische Zitatanalyse und Exemplarforschung," *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung* 12 (1971): 1–7; Karlheinz Stierle, "Geschichte als Exemplum – Exemplum als Geschichte. Zur Pragmatik und Poetik narrativer Texte," in *Geschichte – Ereignis und Erzählung*, ed. Reinhart Koselleck and Wolf-Dieter Stempel (Munich: Fink, 1973), 347–75.

from the Low German region.<sup>55</sup> The work contains an examination of sources, sermon styles and spiritual intentions of the exempla, as well as selected and annotated texts of exempla and sermon books. The first catalogue of exempla of Protestant authors from Hungary was published by Ákos Dömötör in 1992.<sup>56</sup> As a comparison of the Catholic and Protestant exempla tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reveals, there are significant correlations and differences in the use of exempla in the two confessions.<sup>57</sup> Luther essentially followed the medieval tradition of conveying problems by interspersed exemplary stories, but given his demand for historic factuality, only events that actually had taken place could serve as exempla. Together with Melanchthon he attributed particular importance to the extraordinary occurrences of the present, the so-called wonders, as a source of exempla. In his *Homiletics* (1553),<sup>58</sup> the standard work for the compilation of sermons for the Lutheran orthodoxy, Andreas Hyperius reduced the permitted number of exempla for medieval preachers from three to one (a stipulation that was seldom enforced in practice). According to the recent work of Gábor Kecskeméti, the *Homiletics* of Hyperius also had an effect on the sermon and communication theory of Calvinist preachers in Hungary.<sup>59</sup>

In particular, the aforementioned works focused on individual exempla and their reception history, providing important preparatory work for the topical corpus and the commentary on narratives of the early modern era. The book types, which functioned as vehicles of exempla (including systematically organized collections of exempla), gained widespread recognition only gradually.<sup>60</sup> Concerning the denomination-specific themes, here and there a kind of basic stock of exempla evolved. In the end the use and elaboration of the

55 Ernst Heinrich Rehermann, *Das Predigtexempel bei protestantischen Theologen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, (Göttingen: O. Schwartz, 1977).

56 Ákos Dömötör, *A magyar protestáns exemplumok katalógusa* [The Catalogue of Hungarian Protestant Exempla], (Budapest: MTA, 1992).

57 Gábor Tüskés, *Johannes Nádasi. Europäische Verbindungen der geistlichen Erzählliteratur Ungarns im 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2001), 104–06.

58 Cited in Herbert Wolf, “Erzähltraditionen in homiletischen Quellen,” in *Volkserzählung und Reformation*, 707, Note 17.

59 Gábor Kecskeméti, “A böcsültre kibaladott ékes és mesterséges szóllás, írás”. *A magyarországi retorikai hagyomány a 16–17. század fordulóján* [“The Prestigious, Elegant and Refined Speech and Writing”. Hungarian Rhetorical Tradition at the Turn of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries] (Budapest: Universitas, 2007), 335–39.

60 Wolfgang Brückner, “Protestantische Exempelsammlungen,” in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 4 (1984), 604–9.

texts depended on the handbooks that were consulted, as well as the preferences for exempla and the narrative skills of the individual authors. For Protestant authors, the most important function of exempla was to convey the new value system and ideal of life, as well as the new conception of personality and piety, a task they sought to achieve first and foremost by modifying interpretations, the focal points of the story, and the textually immanent accents. In general biblical examples predominated, in particular examples from the Old Testament and exempla that touched on mythological and historical themes and themes from Antiquity, as well as fables, fairy tales, and devil's tales. In contrast, legends regarding the lives of saints were rarely used. Parallel to the decline and devaluation of hagiographical elements, the Protestant martyrology became a frequent theme of the exempla.<sup>61</sup>

Research also focused on earlier Protestant collections of exempla the structural model of which was provided first and foremost by the sayings of Luther from the *Tischreden* (1566) ordered alphabetically after *Loci communes* and Melanchthon's collection of sayings, which was published by Johannens Manlius in the *Collectanea locorum communium* in 1563 (it consisted of examples of the Ten Commandments, a *Calendarium historicum*, and a *Libellus medicus*). The first collection of Protestant exempla (which was also by far the most influential over the course of the sixteenth century) was Andreas Hondorff's *Promptuarium exemplorum* (1568), which was also divided according to the Ten Commandments. As Heidemarie Schade has demonstrated, Hondorff's sources included, in addition to the Bible, the church fathers and the old church historians, secular authors of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Reformation, chronicles and historical works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Catholic collections of sermons, exempla, and legends, Protestant devotional works, and the devil's literature and tales of wonders.<sup>62</sup> Among Hondorff's exempla, one finds, alongside widespread international narrative themes, numerous narratives that can be regarded as legends without wonders. They give accounts of devotion and persecution, the sufferings and deaths of Protestant witnesses of the faith. The work was republished in supplemented editions roughly forty times over the course of the next century. A Latin translation (1575), which by 1633 had been republished thirteen times, ensured that it would be read well beyond the

61 See for instance Hubert Herkommer, "Die Geschichte vom Leiden und Sterben des Jan Hus als Ereignis und Erzählung," in *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 114–46.

62 Heidemarie Schade, "Andreas Hondorffs Promptuarium Exemplorum," in *Volks Erzählung und Reformation*, 646–703.



German speaking territories, for instance in Hungary.<sup>63</sup> After Hondorff, the exemplum was adopted quite deliberately as an additional device in Protestant sermons and literature.

Following the research of Burghart Wachinger, the collections of exempla not only constitute important sources regarding the transmission of narratives, but also bear witness to the history of moral indoctrination and ethical consciousness.<sup>64</sup> Wachinger was able to demonstrate, by comparing three collections from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that while in the Middle Ages virtue and vice dominated as criteria for the categorization of collections of exempla, for the Protestant collections the Ten Commandments provided one of the most important ordering schemes. He makes a welcome call for further special studies on the typology and history of collections of exempla, whereby the various findings that have been reached would merit a consistent synopsis transcending epochal and denominational boundaries. In order to facilitate further study of the sources, in 2006 Hans Jörg Uther made many collections of curiosities and exempla of the early modern era available on CD-ROM.<sup>65</sup>

Two postils by Johann Jacob Otho offer a revealing example of the wealth of exempla in the evangelical sermons of the seventeenth century. According to a catalogue of regesta by Wolfgang Beck both books contained a total of 1,081 historical narratives and dictums taken from contemporary historical, theological, and humanist literature.<sup>66</sup> In Othos *Kranckentrost* (1665), which was reissued many times up until the middle of the nineteenth century, the “last words” of respected and influential figures (which resemble the Apophthegmata) occupy a place of central importance. Beck draws a distinction between textual levels

63 Ákos Dömötör, “Hondorff-hatások Keresszegi Herman István exemplumaiban” [The Influences of Hondorff in the Exempla of Herman István Keresszegi], *Acta Historiae Litterarum Hungaricarum* 25 (1988): 15–30.

64 Burghart Wachinger, “Der Dekalog als Ordnungsschemata für Exempelsammlungen. Der “Große Seelentrost”, das “Promptuarium exemplorum” des Andreas Hondorf und die “Locorum communium collectanea” des Johannes Manlius,” in *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*, 239–63.

65 Hans-Jörg Uther, *Merkwürdige Literatur* (Digitale Bibliothek 111, CD-ROM) (Berlin: Directmedia, 2006). See Hans-Jörg Uther, “Zur Rezeption der Memorabilia des Valerius Maximus vom Mittelalter bis in die Neuzeit,” in *Bilder – Sachen – Mentalitäten. Arbeitsfelder historischer Kulturwissenschaften. Wolfgang Brückner zum 80. Geburtstag* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2010), 207–16.

66 Wolfgang Beck, “Protestantischer Exempelgebrauch am Beispiel der Erbauungsbücher Johann Jacob Othos,” *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 3 (1980): 75–88; Wolfgang Beck, *Protestantische Beispielerzählungen und Illustrationsmaterien. Ein Katalog aufgrund der Erbauungsbücher von Johann Jacob Otho* (Würzburg: Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde, 1992).

and scopes of function, and he suggests that one keep the following analytical aspects in mind: 1) the context of an exemplum; 2) the quantitative use; 3) the functionality and its relationship to 1); 4) the narrative tendency; and 5) the relationship of mutual influence between intention and content.

In a collection published in 2007 the focus is placed on the epistemology of exempla, in other words on forms, dynamics, and functions of the production of parables.<sup>67</sup> Andreas Pečar, for instance, studies biblical exempla as a medium of polemical exchange in the political discourse of the early Stuart era in Scotland and England.<sup>68</sup> He comes to the conclusion that the exempla were useful not only as rhetorically persuasive devices or references to divine law, but also as bearers of revelatory knowledge and as a guide to God's eternal will. A comparison by Maximilian Bergengruen of the various ways in which the Magdalena exemplum was used by Jean Bodin, François Rosset and Georg Philipp Harsdörffer reveals that Harsdörffer's goal in *Grosser Schau-Platz jämmerlicher Mord-Geschichte* was to stage in the exemplum what is paradoxical and contradictory to the original argumentation until it comes to seem the opposite of this.<sup>69</sup>

Collections of narratives from the sixteenth century have always been part of the canon of German literature, but a discussion of the collections of narrative from the seventeenth century was first held in 1999 in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel.<sup>70</sup> At the moment very few of these source works have been appended with indexes of motifs and exempla. Most of them are self-standing literary works with a broad spectrum of artistic potentials, which must be examined within the frameworks of genre and organizational forms and also with consideration of the individual personality of the author.<sup>71</sup> The significance of these sources is also emphasized by the fact that

67 Jens Ruchatz et al., eds., *Das Beispiel. Epistemologie des Exemplarischen* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007).

68 Andreas Pečar, "Beispiele göttlichen Willens oder "extraordinaire examples? Biblische Exempla als Mittel der Argumentation in politischen Auseinandersetzungen der frühen Stuartzeit in Schottland und England," in *Das Beispiel*, 100–21.

69 Maximilian Bergengruen, "Exempel, Exempel-Sammlung und Exempel-Literatur – am Beispiel von Harsdörffers teuflisches Mord-geschichte "Die bestrafte Hexen," in *Das Beispiel*, 122–42.

70 Dieter Breuer, "Barocke Erzählsammlungen. Zur Einführung," *Simpliciana. Schriften der Grimmelshausen-Gesellschaft* 21 (1999): 11–13.

71 See for instance Dieter Breuer, "Hippolytus Guarinonius als Erzähler," in *Die österreichische Literatur. Ihr Profil von den Anfängen im Mittelalter bis ins 18. Jahrhundert (1050–1750)*, ed. Herbert Zemann (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1986), 1117–33; Dieter Breuer, "Matthias Abele und seine Erzählsammlungen," in *Die österreichische Literatur*, 1135–48; Dieter Breuer, "Frühneuzeitliche Hagiographie am Beispiel des "Leben Christi" von Martin von Cochem," in *Wer schreibt meine Lebensgeschichte? Biographie, Autobiographie, Hagiographie und ihre Entstehungszusammenhänge*, ed. Walter Sparn (Gütersloh: Gütersloher

Grimmelshausen, Harsdörffer, Bidermann and other canonized authors of the seventeenth century made use of diverse collections of histories and narratives as sources. Johann Anselm Steiger studies the exemplum hermeneutics of Luther and the narrative collections of the Lutheran orthodoxy and comes to the conclusion that the collections of exempla are not merely intended for the preacher and the patresfamilias, but also constitute an important component of the Lutheran-Orthodox church historiography.<sup>72</sup>

The tales and exempla used in sermons became a self-standing subject of study in Hungary only in the 1980s.<sup>73</sup> At the center of inquiry one finds first and foremost the exempla in Calvinist sermons and polemical writings, the thematic focal points, the diffusion and contamination of various types of story lines, the narrative characteristics of the exempla, and their relationship to Protestant ideals and oral narrative traditions.<sup>74</sup> Gábor Kecskeméti has studied the interconnections of the exempla over history.<sup>75</sup> János L. Győri has analyzed the typology of exempla based on form, function, and content in the homiletic interpretations of psalms.<sup>76</sup> Ildikó Bárczi has written a monograph on the sources of the Latin homiletic handbooks from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. She notes the need for a comparative study of the analytical indexes of the collections of Protestant exempla and collections of *Loci communes* as significant intertextual systems in the early modern era.<sup>77</sup>

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Verlag–Haus Mohn, 1990), 105–15; Wolfgang Brückner, “Die Legendensammlungen des Martin von Cochem. Narrative Popularisierung der katholischen Reform im Zeitalter des Barock,” *Simpliciana. Schriften der Grimmelshausen-Gesellschaft* 21 (1999): 233–58.

72 Johann Anselm Steiger, “Exempla fidei. Die Exempelhermeneutik Luthers und die Exempelsammlungen der lutherischen Orthodoxie,” *Simpliciana. Schriften der Grimmelshausen-Gesellschaft* 21 (1999): 41–66.

73 Lajos Szabó, ed., *Monda nekik egy példázatot. Száz szépprózái szemelvény 17. századi protestáns prédikációkból* [And He Told Them a Parable. One-hundred Selections of Literary Prose from Seventeenth-Century Protestant Sermons] (Budapest: Európa, 1982).

74 Ákos Dömötör, “A példázatok természetrajza a protestáns szentbeszédekben” [The Natural History of Parables in Protestant Homilies], *Theológiai Szemle* 28 (1985): 15–21; Ákos Dömötör, “A példázatok fejlődéstendenciái a protestáns igehirdetésben” [Developmental Tendencies of Parables in Protestant Sermons], *Theológiai Szemle* 28 (1985): 326–34.

75 Gábor Kecskeméti, “Toposzok és exemplumok a história hasznairól a 17. században” [Topoi and Exempla on the Uses of History in the Seventeenth Century], *Studia Litteraria* 32 (1994): 73–89.

76 L. János Győri, “Az exemplumok szerepe Tofeus Mihály zsolnármagyarázataiban” [The Role of Exempla in the Interpretations of Psalms by Mihály Tofeus], *Studia Litteraria* 28 (1991): 79–90; L. János Győri, “Az exemplumok szerepe 17. századi református prédikációinkban” [The role of Exempla in Hungarian Calvinist Sermons from the Seventeenth Century], *Studia Litteraria* 32 (1994): 157–70.

77 Ildikó Bárczi, *Ars compilandi. A késo középkori prédikációs segédkönyvek forrásbasználata* [Ars Compilandi. Use of Sources in the Sermon Handbooks of the Late Middle Ages], (Budapest: Universitas, 2007).

Luther's demand for historical factuality was directed first and foremost against the "miraculous" details of the lives of saints.<sup>78</sup> He considered such "lies" and *fabulae fictae* unsuitable for educational goals (in the sense of a humanist education).<sup>79</sup> However, he also did not want to forgo the use of edifying histories and therefore urged the adaptation of legends, as Annemarie and Wolfgang Brückner have shown, beginning with the "old fathers" (one thinks for instance of the *Vitae partum* of Georg Major, 1534) and historical calendars and soon collections of evangelical martyrologies, "truthful histories" of apostles, martyrs, confessors, participants in confessional polemics and other evangelical testimonies.<sup>80</sup> In his criticisms of medieval legends Luther regards some of the motifs in the miraculous narratives of saints as valuable fictions, because they are useful in catechistic allegorical interpretation. Luther's critique of legends did not prevent the emergence, soon after his death, of an idealized vision of him that gave rise to a tendentious formation of histories, legends, and myths regarding him as the figure around whom so many ideas crystalized, a tradition that persisted into the twentieth century.<sup>81</sup>

In an illuminating study Rudolf Schenda examined Catholic and Protestant collections of legends in their dialectical interdependency. He concluded that legends have functions in legitimization, stabilization, and indoctrination regardless of denominational affiliation.<sup>82</sup> Only recently has scholarship on narrative recognized the so-called devil's literature of the sixteenth century, which ultimately went back to Luther's demonological histories and tales, as a specifically Protestant literary genre that was structurally related to older and younger allegorical versions of the type of the fool.<sup>83</sup> These moralistic writings, which were prevalent in orthodox Lutheran areas, contained series of legendary

78 See for instance André Schnyder, "Legendenpolemik und Legendenkritik in der Reformation: "Die Lügend von St. Johannes Chrysostomo" bei Luther und Cochläus," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 70 (1979): 122–40.

79 Wolfgang Brückner, "Luther, Martin," in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 8. (1996), 1293–07.

80 Annemarie and Wolfgang Brückner, "Zeugen des Glaubens und ihre Literatur. Altväterbeispiele, Kalenderheilige, protestantische Martyrer und evangelische Lebenszeugnisse," in *Volkserzählung und Reformation*, 520–78.

81 Wolfgang Brückner and Heidemariae Schade, "Luther als Gestalt der Sage," in *Volkserzählung und Reformation*, 261–324; Wolfgang Brückner, *Luther. Bekenntnisgemälde des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2007).

82 Rudolf Schenda, "Die protestantisch-katholische Legendenpolemik im 16. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 52 (1970): 28–48.

83 Wolfgang Brückner and Rainer Alsheimer, "Das Wirken des Teufels. Theologie und Sage im 16. Jahrhundert," in *Volkserzählung und Reformation*, 394–519.

exempla and were one of the vehicles of the spread of Protestant social critiques of the early modern era. Their stylization in the early study of German literary history as texts of a “German” image of the devil was influenced by a national mentality and therefore should be subjected to critical reflection.

One should also note, in connection with this, that problems concerning the stories of witchcraft have attracted the attention of scholars today. The first comprehensive treatise on witchcraft (*Malleus maleficarum*, 1485/87), with its narrative accounts, was seen as valuable by Protestant compilers of the sixteenth century. There were no differences between denominations when it came to the narrative aspersions against witches. The genre of tales of magic, wonders and portents may not go directly back to Luther, but they were first exploited as modern omens of divine justice through his notion of the coming of the end of days. *Wunderzeichen* (1556–1562), a three-volume work by Job(us) Fincel(ius), represented a new kind of compilation in which the portent literature of the humanist revival of augury culminates as an expression of the Lutheran view of the coming of the end of days, while also functioning as historical testament to the first decades of the Reformation.<sup>84</sup> It contains a total of 47 stories of the devil or events that can be interpreted as the work of the devil, and it was read, interpreted, and for a long time passed on as a work of historical-theological revelation.

The influence of the vogue of devil’s literature went far beyond the borders of the German speaking territories. For instance, the fourth volume of *Ördögi kísértetekről*, or “On devilish apparitions” (1578), a Hungarian-language collection of postils of evangelical pastor Péter Bornemisza, led to the condemnation and banishment of the author by the competent Protestant Church court. Sometime around 1556 Bornemisza studied with Melanchthon in Wittenberg. The primary sources for his devil’s takes were Melanchthon’s anecdotes (as reported by Manlius), *Chronicon Carionis*, Cyriakus Spangenberg, and the *Vitae patrum* of Georg Major.<sup>85</sup> The sources have not yet been fully exploited. A new historical-critical edition of the work would be useful. Bornemisza organized the narratives thematically, and in the sixth part the grouping of the histories follows

84 Heinz Schilling, “Job Fincel und die Zeichen der Endzeit,” in *Volkserzählung und Reformation*, 325–92; Wolfgang Brückner, “Fincel(ius), Job(us),” in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 4 (1984), 1132–34.

85 Péter Bornemisza, *Ördögi kísértetek* [Devilish Apparitions], ed. Sándor Eckhardt (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1955); Sándor Scheiber, *Folklor és tárgytörténet* [Folklore and Literary Themes (Stoffgeschichte)], vol. 2 (Budapest: MIOK, 1977), 10–58.

that of Manlius. This collection also contains the first traces of the Faust legend in Hungary.

Luther's aversion to idle tales and fables and his fondness for Aesopian animal fables and proverbs have long been noted.<sup>86</sup> Less familiar, however, is the fact that his interest in Aesop made an impression on his companions at table and moved some of them, such as Johannes Mathesius, to include this narrative matter in homilies. Luther's adaptation of 13 of Aesop's fables was first printed in 1557 and gave further impetus to the collection of fables and the rich fable poetry of the sixteenth century. In contrast with research on the goals and functions of fables, only isolated studies of their morphology and poetological status have been done. Unlike the study of New Testament parables in the nineteenth century, recent attempts gave rise to a systematic approach to narrative forms of non-actual speech whereby there is also an attempt to determine the status of the fable. A few years ago Reinhard Dithmar published a chronologically ordered collection of texts on the theoretical statements regarding fables, parables, and allegories from Antiquity to the twentieth century. He devotes a separate chapter to fable theory from Luther to Mathesius.<sup>87</sup>

Between 1536 and 1592 three different translations and adaptations of Aesop were published in Hungary. From the perspective of the development of Hungarian prose narratives, the most significant of these was *Száz fabula*, or "One-hundred fables" (from before 1566), by Gáspár Heltai.<sup>88</sup> In 1543, Heltai, a late evangelical preacher, author, and printer of books and other written materials, had visited Luther and Melanchthon and studied at the university in Wittenberg. His collection constitutes a free adaptation of the Steinhövel-Brant version (which was in widespread use) with the use of additional sources. According to recent studies, one can situate the work in direct proximity to the fable theory and fable collection of Luther.<sup>89</sup>

86 Reinhard Dithmar, ed., *Martin Luthers Fabeln und Sprichwörter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995).

87 Reinhard Dithmar, ed., *Theorien zu Fabel, Parabel und Gleichnis* (Ludwigsfelde: Ludwigsfelder Verlagshaus, 2000), 144–84. See Burkard Waldis, *Esopus. 400 Fabeln und Erzählungen nach der Erstausgabe von 1548*, vols. 2, ed. Ludger Lieb (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011); Dirk Rose, ed., *Europäische Fabeln des 18. Jahrhunderts. Zwischen Pragmatik und Autonomisierung. Traditionen, Formen, Perspektiven* (Bucha bei Jena: Quartus Verlag, 2010).

88 Gáspár Heltai, "Száz fabula" [One-hundred Fables], in *Heltai Gáspár és Bornemisza Péter művei* [The Works of Gáspár Heltai and Péter Bornemisza], ed. István Nemeskürty (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1980), 77–239.

89 Csilla Utasi, "A Száz fabula európai irodalmi kontextusa" [The European Literary Context of "One-hundred Fables"], *Studia Litteraria* 45 (2007): 56–61.

The fact that Luther's own collection, with almost 500 proverbs, represents only a fragment of his knowledge of proverbs is of particular significance in this context.<sup>90</sup> In the complete German-language works there are some 5,000 documents verifying legends and proverbial oral idioms. To my knowledge the Latin proverbs have not yet been collected systematically. Luther's enthusiasm for Georg Major's collection of Latin proverbs (*Sententiae*, 1534) is clear, but its influence remains almost entirely unexamined. New approaches to the study of proverbs that examine the language, manner of transmission and use, temporally and culturally specific appraisals, and everyday, educational, and literary functions of proverbs have yet to be adopted.<sup>91</sup>

The reciprocal influence between Reformation and so-called "Meistergesang" (a didactic or religious song composed to correspond to traditional monophonic melodies) has long been recognized. But it was not until Horst Brunner and Dieter Merzbacher published the findings of their research that historians began to realize that the narrative moment in the mastersongs of Hans Sachs played a considerably larger role after the Reformation than in the songs before the Reformation.<sup>92</sup> He ceased to limit himself to the Bible. The index of the narrative subjects in his work includes several dozen international types of narrative.<sup>93</sup> One finds innumerable narrative references in Protestant historiography<sup>94</sup> that have hardly been made the subject of study, as well as in the handwritten Calvinist visions<sup>95</sup> and the denominational polemical writings.<sup>96</sup>

90 Wolfgang Brückner, "Luther, Martin," in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 8 (1996), 1299–300.

91 See for instance *Kleinstformen der Literatur*, ed. Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994); Günther Nahberger, "Morgen ist auch ein Tag". *Eine Theorie mythischer Sätze* (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verl. Hohengehren, 2000).

92 Horst Brunner, "Meistergesang und Reformation. Die Meistergesangbücher 1 und 2 des Hans Sachs," in *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 732–42.

93 Dieter Merzbacher, "Hans Sachs," in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 11 (2004), 978–80.

94 See for instance Mihály Balázs, "Bibliotheca Unitariorum. Introduction," in János Kénesi Tőzsér and István Uzoni Fosztó, *Unitario-Ecclesiastica Historia Transylvanica. Liber I–II*, ed. János Káldos (Budapest: Balassi, 2002), XIX–XX.

95 Vilmos Gyenis, "Későbarokk és népies irodalom. A XVIII. századi protestáns víziók" [Late Baroque and Folk Literature. Eighteenth-Century Protestant Visions], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 72 (1968): 1–23; Ambrus Molnár and Jenő Szigeti, *Református népi látomásirodalom a XVIII. században* [Lutheran Folk Revelation Literature in the Eighteenth Century] (Budapest: Magyarországi Református Egyházi Zsinati Iroda, 1984).

96 Mihály Balázs, "Fikció és valóság Palaeologus Disputatio scholastica című művében," in "Tenger az igaz bitürl való egyenetlenségek vitatásának eláradott özöne..." *Tanulmányok XVI–XIX. századi hitvitáinkról*, ed. János Heltai, Réka Tasi (Miskolc: ME BTK Régi Magyar Irodalomtörténeti Tanszék, 2005), 1–11.

Melanchthon's significance for the transmission of narrative subject matter of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Humanism is—in contrast with that of Luther—only beginning to be recognized.<sup>97</sup> In his works one finds the most genres of short narrative genres: exempla, medieval and early evangelical legends, dicta, facetiae, maxims, epigrams, proverbs, fables, dreams, jokes, riddles and myths. The theoretical foundation of the inclusion of such a diversity of historical narrative subject matter lies first and foremost in Melanchthon's concept of the exemplary nature, pedagogical function, and hermeneutic nature of all things historical. As a consequence of his theological concept of history, in the sixteenth centuries the term "history" became "in an unusual way a key term in the area of narrative literature." Collections of the narratives used by Melanchthon were intended for his contemporaries and were often mixed with narratives used by Luther, in whose *Tischreden* Melanchthon played his own role as narrator and narrative object. Part of this collection of exempla and histories has not yet been adequately made accessible. If perhaps not nearly to the same extent as Luther, soon after his death Melanchthon also became the subject of Reformation legends and Catholic anti-legends.

The narrative texts referred to as folk books ("Volksbuch") and prose novels constitute a particularly fruitful subject of inquiry both for literary history and the historical study of narrative. The term prose novel first began to be used to designate long narratives of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the 1970s, replacing the imprecise and misleading term "folk book," which was inherited from Romanticism and was often used as a collective name for texts for which it was inappropriate given their literary-sociological implications.<sup>98</sup> As Hans Joachim Kreutzer has shown, the term folk book should be reserved for a type of book from the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries with particular publication features. According to Jan-Dirk Müller, the prose novel is "no generic term, but a term which, because it groups together a corpus of texts that are heterogeneous from the perspectives of their provenance, subject matter, and structure, can only be described as a 'target form' towards which common developmental tendencies move."<sup>99</sup> This

97 Volker Honemann, "Melanchthon, Philipp," in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 9 (1999), 531–38.

98 Jan-Dirk Müller, "Curiositas und *erfahrung* der Welt im frühen deutschen Prosaroman," in *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 252–71; Jan-Dirk Müller, ed., *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts. Nach den Erstdrucken mit sämtlichen Holzschnitten* (Frankfurt/M.: Roloff, 1990).

99 Jan-Dirk Müller, "Volksbuch/Prosaroman im 16./17. Jahrhundert," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, Sonderheft 1 (1985): 63.



corpus of texts, which includes for instance Melusina, Fortunatus and Faust, constitutes a kind of catch-all of narrative subject matter and motifs from Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early modern era, not to mention narrative models. Its formidable significance for the history of the genre of the novel and its value as testimony to the development of modern individuality has only recently been recognized.

Hans Joachim Kreutzer discerns a clear break in the printing history of the prose novel in the 1620s and 1630s and suggests a connection between this and the Reformation. He does not offer an explanation of this phenomenon, however.<sup>100</sup> The long debate regarding the question of the intention behind the creation of the figure of Faust and the problem of the role of the denominational traditions has not yet been resolved.<sup>101</sup> The numerous adaptations (sometimes back into verse) of German prose novels in other languages should be studied collectively and systematically, on the basis of international comparisons, and with particular consideration of the structural, social and functional differences, as well as differences (and connections) in subject matter, storyline, and reception, tendencies towards rational vs. mythical explanation, and the literary work of the person responsible for the adaptation.<sup>102</sup> Denominational structures have recently been identified in novels from the seventeenth century.<sup>103</sup> It is high time for a history of the prose novel that sees this genre not simply from the perspective of alleged medieval forerunners.

100 Hans Joachim Kreutzer, "Buchmarkt und Roman in der Frühdruckzeit," in *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 197–211.

101 Jan-Dirk Müller, "Ausverkauf menschlichen Wissens. Zu den Faustbüchern des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Literatur, Artes und Philosophie*, ed. Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992), 163–94; Hannes Kästner, "Fortunatus und Faustus. Glücksstreben und Erkenntnisdrang in der Erzählprosa vor und nach der Reformation," *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 23 (1993): 87–120; Marco Frenschkowski, "Katholiken, Juden und Moslems in der 'Historia von D. Johann Fausten'. Beobachtungen zur Rezeption lutherischer Religionskritik in populärer protestantischer Erzählliteratur," *Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde* 63 (1996): 359–85.

102 Jan-Dirk Müller, "Rationalisierung und Mythisierung in Erzähltexten der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Reflexion und Inszenierung von Rationalität in der mittelalterlichen Literatur. Blaubenrer Kolloquium 2006*, ed. Klaus Ridder et al. (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2008), 435–56; Gábor Tüskés, "Mythisierung und Märchenrequisiten in der ungarischen Versbearbeitung des *Fortunatus*," in *Bilder – Sachen – Mentalitäten*, 217–32.

103 Franz M. Eybl, "Katholizismus und Barockroman. Der *Vernunft-Trutz* (1686/88) des Kapuziners Rudolph von Schwyz," in *Religion und Religiosität im Zeitalter des Barock*, ed. Dieter Breuer et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1995), 673–82; Thomas Borgstedt, "Konfessionelle Strukturen in Lohensteins Arminiusroman," in *Religion und Religiosität*, 683–91.

## *Conclusions and Proposals*

1. The terms “narrative literature and Reformation” denote an area of common inquiry for the study of literature, the history of rhetoric, the historical study of narrative, and the history of the Reformation, an area of inquiry that can be precisely defined but has not yet been satisfactorily researched. The problems that arise in these fields of study demand continuous interrogation of the usefulness of certain categories. Most of the modern terms of the science of literature and the study of narrative can only be used with considerable caution when speaking of the period in question. A functional definition of the terms “narrative literature” and “narrative” and greater openness to the findings and questions of various fields of inquiry are both unavoidable. Segmentation in (and as a consequence of) the sciences should be overcome, at least to the extent that this is possible.

2. “Narrative literature” and its subdivision into genres are shifting historical products and observational models of the history of science which in the context of the Reformation constitute fruitful objects of study. In the course of the studies mentioned above it became clear that with an approach that is based on the study of the history of transmission and circumstances of use it is possible to distinguish and specify the connection between narrative literature and the Reformation. The formula “narrative literature and Reformation” seems increasingly dispensable when one observes the texts of the narrative literature of the early modern era in the concrete circumstances of their use, thereby furthering a more discriminating understanding of historical reality.

3. In the history of the transmission of the narrative literature of the late Middle Ages and the production of the literature of the early modern era, the Reformation had considerable significance. The forms and content, but also the mindset and points of view of the literature of the late Middle Ages continued to exert an influence across the alleged threshold of the Reformation.<sup>104</sup> Until now, the narrative traditions of the late Middle Ages and the early modern era have only been discussed separately. Comparisons that stretch beyond the borders of epochs must be ventured in order for the outlines of historical processes to become clear.

4. Less radical hermeneutical innovations as an interdisciplinary test of circumscribed questions addressing a broad array of fundamental sources may

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104 Karl Stackmann, “Schlußbericht,” in *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 770.

lead to progress in our knowledge of “narrative literature and the Reformation.” Narrative texts of the period of the Reformation can only be studied in clear historical context, as parts of a larger whole, with consideration of the intentions and conditions of mediation. Thoroughly researched studies that are temporally, geographically, or socially focused create a solid foundation for more general conclusions regarding the narrative literature of the Reformation.

5. There is a need for an examination (that is sensitive to historical processes) of the relationship of narratives to reality, which suggests not only narratological but also social-historical, cultural-historical, and psychological differentiations. Accepted distinctions between narrative genres, such as their claim to authenticity, are questionable, and one should always keep in mind that the borders between narrative motifs, narrative types and themes are fluid.

6. Little study has been devoted to the processes whereby individual narrative motifs are adapted to different, denomination-specific contexts and sometimes transferred from one form to another. It is often difficult to clarify whether the spread of theme and motif is due to processes of transfer, a trans-denominational or trans-cultural narrative potential, or other circumstances. We know next to nothing about narrative in the substrata in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>105</sup> The influence of Protestant rhetoric on narrative literature should be made the subject of detailed study, but one should also consider the role of Protestant students and exiles who traveled abroad in the transmission of narrative texts.

7. The hypothesis according to which for hundreds of years almost nothing was published in the “upper German” area apart from folkish reading material, while in the Protestant north and east academic writing dominated has become obsolete. Narrative literature played a significant role in the popularization of both Reformation thought and Catholic reform.

8. The disciplines still have failed to provide a clear statement of the precise uses of so-called functional literature, which includes, among other things, the printed collections of narratives, sermons, and exempla of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which often had features that were peculiar to specific denominations. The relationship between literary education and so-called folk traditions between Humanism and Historicism can only be precisely assessed when one compares the actual use value of narrative literature with the entirely

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105 Rudolf Schenda, “Orale und literarische Kommunikationsformen im Bereich von Analphabeten und Gebildeten im 17. Jahrhundert,” in *Literatur und Volk im 17. Jahrhundert. Probleme populärer Kultur in Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang Brückner et al., vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1985), 456.

different aspirations of the national historians and mythologists of the nineteenth century.

9. I urge fundamental comparative research in well definable source areas of the narrative literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the inclusion of the literature of Central Europe in the scholarship on the Reformation to a greater extent. It is increasingly important to consider the cultural and literary imprints of religious denominations.<sup>106</sup> We still lack a comparative study of the attributes of the narrative literature of the early modern era, both those specific to individual denominations and those that transcend denominational boundaries.

10. As Jan-Dirk Müller astutely noted, “[p]rojected research should continue to dismantle denominational, linguistic, and national limitations. It should examine the effects of the factional battles of the Reformation on literature [...], but first and foremost, it should dismiss the concept of a continuous denominational culture and describe the Reformation more as a symptom of the differentiation in the early modern era of social and academic discourses. The catalytic effect of the movement [...] should be profiled more distinctly.” As Müller also observes, one should discuss all tendencies that eluded this movement or reach beyond it.<sup>107</sup> Systematic collaboration among philologists, comparatists, and researchers of the Reformation from different national traditions would be essential.

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106 See for instance István Bitskey, *Konfessionen und literarische Gattungen der frühen Neuzeit in Ungarn. Beiträge zur mitteleuropäischen vergleichenden Kulturgeschichte* (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang Verlag, 1999).

107 Jan-Dirk Müller, *Reformation*. In *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, vol. 3, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller (Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 2003), 246.

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