

The Function and Historical Development of Reformation Confessions

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“With the Reformation begins a new epoch in the history of the confessional document,” according to the newest edition of *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.¹ This is in and of itself a revealing statement. If we ask why that was and precisely what constituted the epoch-making innovation in the history of confessional documents at that time, the many aspects of the question demonstrate that no simple answers are possible. Indeed, the question becomes even more complex (although at the same time more fruitful) when we consider the entire European context of Reformation confessions of the faith. This essay presents two sets of reflections on the relationship between the historical developments of the sixteenth century and the nature of the confession of the faith in that time and subsequent centuries.

First, the sixteenth century presents a striking array of confessions, which cannot easily be placed within a single analytical structure. They originated out of a great variety of political, social, and theological factors; at the same time the construction of these confessions influenced politics, society, theology in many different ways. As a result of the Reformation, the public definition of faith and doctrine were no longer left exclusively to the office of public teaching vested in the hierarchy of the church or to the binding statements of councils. As an alternative to previous practice, it found expression in the formulation of confessional documents. In some instances these documents originated from the deliberations of ecclesiastical assemblies which resembled conciliar or synodical gatherings, but others were instigated by the implementation of political policies, the concerns of a municipal ministerium, or the initiative of individual personalities with Reformation convictions. Therefore it is proper to speak of the entire sixteenth century as an epoch of confessions, of the construction of confessional documents and their introduction as factors which played a significant role in church and society.² Johannes Gutenberg’s

revolution in printing contributed significantly to the situation in which the confessional documents composed by the reformers could become a decisive authority and official definition of the faith. Printing made it possible to have these documents readily available in a standardized written form, and thus they were able to exercise their influence in a broad public forum.

Second, in the sixteenth century a wide range of historical developments served as a foil for what became characteristic alterations in the understanding and function of confessing the faith, and thus of confessional documents. These changes in focus did not take place in the same ways in all the contexts in which Europeans constructed their confessional documents. They did, however, have a similar result: the confession developed into a theological statement of identity, which then—in each unique situation as developments took place over a longer period—brought about the establishment of churches defined by their public confession. The *confessio*, expressed in the Latin verbs *fateri* (acknowledge), *confiteri* (avow), or *profiteri* (declare publicly), no longer referred only or primarily to the confession of praise to God or the confession of sins. Certainly, the original components of the definition, which posited confession of praise as worship of God and confession of sins as an integral element for a valid practice of the sacrament of penance, did not disappear. Nonetheless, in the course of the sixteenth century the focus of the general use of the term shifted ever more to the formal declaration or account of the content of one's faith and teaching, as a legally binding act, coupled with the implicit, unarticulated, but clear appeal to the community of faith to accept the confession with conviction. Without really intending to do so, theologians of the period shifted the usage of the term in accord with the practice and convictions of the time.

According to this definition, Zwingli's *Sixty-Seven Theses* of 1523 are not yet a confession in the narrow sense. The document did form the foundation for the city council's authorization of the Reformation of Zurich after the disputation was held on these theses. In that disputation Zwingli won the council's approval for his plans. These theses set forth the content of Zwingli's preaching in the form suitable for conducting a public disputation. Indeed, Zwingli clearly confessed, "I, Ulrich Zwingli, confess that I have preached [the content

of] these articles of faith and positions in the venerable city of Zurich, on the basis of Scripture, which is called God-breathed (inspired by God), and I am committed to defend these articles and to win [the disputation] . . .”³ In the same way Luther’s appeal to his conscience, bound by the Holy Scripture, before the emperor and empire in Worms in 1521, or the “*Protestatio*” of the princes at Speyer in 1529 are not confessions in the sense just defined.⁴ Nonetheless, the number of Reformation texts to be regarded as confessions of the faith will not be substantially affected by this more limited definition.

The function and impact of these confessions generally fluctuated between two contrasting but complementary poles: the concern for integration through establishing unity and consensus within Christendom, on the one hand, and, on the other, the consolidation and unity of one’s own community of faith, demarcating it by means of its own confession. No firm line separates the two, and in the final analysis each specific situation in which the faith was confessed determined which of the two functions was more strongly accented from the outset. It can be said that this observation is true for all epochs in the history of the church. If we assess the development of confessional documents in the sixteenth century within the German empire, however, a pattern with two phases emerges. At first, the aspect of confession which aims at integration and the creation of consensus dominated. Within only a few decades, however, this function receded into the background and was in the end overtaken by the need to establish the particular church’s identity and to distinguish it from other confessions. To be sure, this did not mean that in the course of this development the Evangelicals gave up their claim of catholicity as they shifted from seeking consensus to a self-confident expression of their disagreements with others. What they did indeed give up, however, was their original hope of still being able to win their opponents to their own faith and to the teaching of the Reformation and thereby to attain unity in confession.

Several examples reveal how this development took place in the actual course of the public confession of the faith in the sixteenth century, all instances of the multiplication of confessional documents and the movement from confessing with the goal of integration and

consensus to confession aimed at setting boundaries and establishing identity.

The Multiplicity of Confessions

Confessing the faith in order to give an account of one's faith and teaching is not only a phenomenon which arose from public efforts to reform church and society and to claim public authority for such reforms. It could also express a private concern that took the form of an individual's own confession of faith. For example, Luther used the term *confessio* in this way in his controversy with Zwingli—in his treatise designed to end this dispute, his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* of 1528. In this case the confession that the Wittenberg professor added as a third section to his repudiation of his opponents and to his interpretation of the biblical texts on the Lord's Supper served to place this controversial position paper, as a final expression of his doctrine, in the context of the true faith, in order to anticipate every possible misuse of his position in advance. His confession had an apologetic goal.

This confession served to legitimize Luther's Christological argumentation for the true presence of Christ's body and blood under the elements of bread and wine as he had unfolded it in the earlier parts of the treatise. This treatise sought to defend his argument on the basis of the Christological formulations of the Council of Chalcedon. Thus, Luther's personal confession of the entire creedal faith in the third part of the treatise functioned apologetically. Luther's reformational criticism of medieval teaching was also derived from his adherence to the articles of faith taught in the creeds of the ancient church. Examples include his critical analysis of doctrines that stressed the ability of the human will to contribute to justification; his critique of the monastic way of life as a system of works-righteousness and withdrawal from the structure for daily life that God wills for people in "secular" walks of life; his departure from the traditional understanding of church and sacraments, as well as his rejection of indulgences, veneration of the saints, and the mass. Luther could conclude his confession with the appeal that this reformational teaching placed him within the fellowship of all Christians and that

his doctrine was grounded in Scripture: "This is my faith, shared by all Christians. This is what the Holy Scripture teaches us."⁵ With this confession he affirmed his participation in an all-embracing consensus of believers. This third part of his long treatise on the Lord's Supper was also published separately and in that form found wide distribution. It influenced the text of the Schwabach Articles of 1529 and the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Thus, this private confession quickly received public relevance and was significant for the construction of the Lutheran confession of the faith.⁶ Nonetheless, his Christological argumentation remained very controversial during the course of the sixteenth century.

The private, individual confession – also called a "particular confession" in view of its limited sphere of influence – could over time continue to command broader interest and yet remain the confession of the individual even if it had originally served a public, official political purpose. That is the case, for example, with Zwingli's *Account of My Faith [Fidei Ratio]*, which he presented at the diet in Augsburg in 1530.⁷ The cities of the *christliche Burgrecht*, an alliance of south German and Swiss municipalities, including Zurich, did not succeed in agreeing on a common document as their confession that they could present to the emperor in reaction to his edict of 1530, which called on Protestants to explain their deviations from the Roman obedience. Therefore, Zwingli decided to speak for himself,⁸ and he did that with impetuous forthrightness. Although Johannes Eck reacted with a counter-treatise, and Zwingli replied in print, both of which were dedicated to German princes,⁹ the *Fidei ratio* did not assume a further public role and so remained a private confession. However, as such it actually became a powerful summary expression of Zwingli's position and a witness to his theology. He also published his clearly detailed position repudiating Luther on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper within the framework of the creeds of the ancient church, the Nicene and Athanasian.

While the *Fidei ratio* had astonishingly little impact, the *Second Helvetic Confession [Confessio Helvetica posterior]*, which originally was composed as the private effort of Zwingli's successor Heinrich Bullinger, became a document of consensus with a considerably broad influence through the initiative of the electoral Palatinate. Its

government had used the Heidelberg Catechism as a confessional statement since 1563.¹⁰ The *Second Helvetic Confession* joined the Catechism as a doctrinal standard in the electoral Palatinate and attained widespread recognition among Reformed believers in Europe and was able to unite Calvinism, divided as it was into countless national confessions, at least to a great extent.

Even more clearly, the *Confessio Fidei* of Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate illustrates the variety of functions and the influence in specific situations which a private confession arising out of a political milieu could exercise. Toward the end of his life (he died on October 26, 1576) the elector had added an account of his faith to his last will and testament, intending thereby to defend his conversion to Calvinism and to fend off the threat of exclusion from the Religious Peace of Augsburg at the diet in Augsburg of 1566. It contained a pledge to the Holy Scripture and to the ancient creeds of the church as well as to the Augsburg Confession and its Apology. But in its paraphrase of the Apostles' Creed this confession introduced typical Calvinistic accents, as they appear most clearly in different emphases in Christology and the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The elector had formulated his claim that his confessional option fit well into the common consensus of doctrine by composing a *Corpus doctrinae* in miniature.

After Frederick's death his oldest son and successor, Elector Ludwig VI, who inclined toward Lutheranism, began slowly to reverse the measures undertaken by his father to introduce Reformed instruction and worship. He did so by dismissing pastors from office and installing new ones in their place as well as other practical measures. Johann Casimir, Ludwig's younger brother, reacted by bringing their father's confession of faith into print. He provided it with his own preface. It appeared in four languages, Latin, German, English, and French. In this way the *Confessio Fidei* of Frederick III became a genuinely programmatic document not only for Johann Casimir's ecclesiastical policy in his own lands but also for his diplomatic activities beyond the borders of his own lands. With the publication of this confession of his father in his own territory, the Palatinate-Lautern, he demonstrated that he had followed his father's footsteps as the preserver of the "Confession" that served as Frederick's

last will and testament, in contrast to Johann Casimir's older brother in the electorate of the Palatinate. At the same time he positioned himself as a potential ally for Calvinistic powers in western Europe. This private confession of faith assumed a role above and beyond its character as an instrument of confessional-political activity.¹¹

These private or "particular" confessions were certainly not limited to the early period of the Reformation, the first half of the sixteenth century.¹² In German lands they continued to be written until the beginning of the Thirty Years War, that is, to the end of the controversies over the definition of the Lutheran confession of the faith. The overwhelming number of such private confessions stands in contrast to the smaller number of those documents which assumed public status beyond a particular sphere and attained widespread public recognition.

The Augsburg Confession is the example par excellence of such confessions. At the same time it is a unique case, but its special status can be explained in the context of the historical and political conditions in which it arose. For the Augsburg Confession is the confession of imperial princes and cities of a *Ständestaat* [a regime composed of estates], organized as a federation and with rival competencies at the levels of emperor and princes. This political structure, as it existed at the beginning of the sixteenth century, had emerged in the course of the imperial reform of 1495 and 1500. Berthold von Henneberg, at the time archbishop of Mainz, had promoted this reform in an effort to establish a functioning center of political power for the Empire.¹³ Its framework for carrying out public policy was formed by a concept of the office of emperor that viewed it as the preserver of the unity of empire and church on the basis of its understanding of the society as a *Corpus Christianum*. In the wake of the *Protestatio* of Speyer the previous year, the presentation of the Augsburg Confession at the diet of Augsburg in 1530 set the stage for the text becoming a political and legal document. At Augsburg Emperor Charles V wanted "to hear the convictions, opinions, and position statements of each [prince] and to set aside the mistakes of both parties." Its formal presentation to the imperial diet in 1530 created the situation in which the Evangelical princes' and cities' public Confession attained this status within the Empire. Alongside that one critical

event came its use in further political maneuvering by both emperor and princes (including its serving as the confessional basis of the Smalcald League, founded in 1531 and as the determining standard for truces of Nuremberg and Frankfurt of 1532 and 1539). Public usage bestowed public respect and quasi-legal force upon the document. That, of course, was not the “original purpose”¹⁴ of the confession, but rather a secondary effect, which indeed combined the interaction of religion and imperial politics with theological intent and purpose.

The Augsburg Confession had actually aimed to justify the faith and public teaching of the Protestant estates. It was originally intended to keep alive the possibility of reaching consensus with the Roman Catholics in the face of the Edict of Worms, which at that point had already been renewed several times. This striving for consensus expressed itself later in the revisions of the Augsburg Confession which its author Philip Melanchthon undertook. Melanchthon did not alter the Confession because he viewed it as his own private work and wanted to accommodate it to progress in his own theological development. He changed its text because this account of the faith in the form of a confession was meant to present Evangelical teaching as effectively as possible in negotiations with Roman Catholics aimed at establishing concord through religious dialogues. Thus, Melanchthon recalled in the preface to the *Corpus doctrinae Philippicum*,¹⁵ which he published at the initiative of the Leipzig book dealer Ernst Vögelin in 1560, that he, as the author of different confessional documents, had “not undertaken the revision in the service of his own arbitrary desires.”¹⁶ He continued the work for the Evangelical governments that he had begun in 1530 to make as effective a presentation of the Wittenberg confession of faith as possible.

At that point the Augsburg Confession had experienced a unique and multi-faceted development as a document with not only theological relevance but also relevance in the sphere of imperial law as the basis for the toleration of the Protestant estates. The result was that Melanchthon was not the only person who wanted to provide an account of the history of the confession of the faith presented in the document’s German and Latin Prefaces. The Augsburg

Confession is the only confession of the Reformation which occasioned the compilation of several historical accounts of its origin and impact, function and development, beginning in the sixteenth century. This set in motion a kind of historiography of the confession: the "*historia confessionis Augustanae*."¹⁷

The unique nature of this development of the genre of confessional document and its dependence on the conditions set by the political circumstances in which it arose becomes especially clear when compared to parallels that may be found in neighboring European lands, in which equally strong reformational movements were able to find fertile soil. Parallel developments, but also decisive contrasts, become most clear when we look at the rival of the Habsburgs, France. There the king had begun to secure his royal power at a national level already in the thirteenth century, and through a centrally organized administration he succeeded in deconstructing territorial structures which dispersed power within French society. In this context he had reduced the influence of the nobility. Because of this, the opposition of the estates to the central exercise of power aligned itself with the Reformation, as in the Holy Roman Empire. Richard Nürnberger indeed speaks of a "politicization of French Protestantism." At its first national synod in Paris in 1559 the French Protestant church issued its confession of faith, the *Confession de Foi*, and at the same time, in close conjunction with that confession, it agreed upon the *Discipline ecclésiastique*. Thus, the synod moved beyond the differences in teaching and practice among the Huguenot congregations which had previously existed and established a uniform ecclesiastical and synodical structure.¹⁸ The confession of French Protestantism under persecution combined the account of the faith which it demonstrated to be true with the inner consolidation of a church that up to that time had existed only as a loose assemblage of single congregations in the underground.

This took place simultaneously with the emergence of a truly Calvinist political party, led by a part of the French high nobility. With its own Huguenot troops it entered into the religious wars, and it provided the pool from which the congregations later elected their "*Protecteur*" so that, similar to relationships in the Empire before 1555, a bi-confessional situation materialized in fact even though not

in legal form. But the early absolutistic structure of the country and the strength of the French monarchy as an institution—even when some individual wearers of the crown were rather weak monarchs—made it impossible to think of actually presenting the confession to the king, even if the French Calvinists did indeed desire to do so. In fact, the *Confession de Foi* contained an address to King Francis II and was supposed to be presented to him as an account of the true faith during the military advance on Amboise in 1560. But the endeavor collapsed. The Huguenot leaders were hanged. When the confession again was up for discussion at the religious colloquy of Poissy in 1561, the Cardinal of Lorraine, Charles de Guise, succeeded in exploiting the theological plurality and the divisiveness between the confessions within Protestantism. He was able to use the Augsburg Confession as a tool for his own purposes since the spokesman of the Huguenots, Theodor Beza, was not willing to accept its doctrine of the Lord's Supper.¹⁹ Thus, the cardinal was able to discredit the Protestant church on the basis of the tacitly presumed claim that the truth that is to be confessed at all times could be only the one truth and that this truth lay in the *unitas ecclesiae*. In terms of French law the *Confession de Foi* never attained legal standing or force.

The medieval theory of "Gallicanism" contributed to this situation as well. In the early fifteenth century this policy had made the king lord of the church in his land and through the possibility of the so-called "Appel comme d'abuse," that is, the transfer of ecclesiastical court cases to secular courts, had begun to poke holes in the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishops even before the Reformation. The Gallican structure gave the French king the highest possible degree of control over ecclesiastical affairs.²⁰ Thus, on the basis of medieval usage, the king had already begun to take over the functional governance of the church. Against this background none of the edicts of peace and toleration which were issued in connection with the Wars of Religion referred to the adherents of the *Confession de Foi* of 1559. Even the Edict of Nantes of 1598 recognized the status of French Protestants only loosely, defining them as "adherents of the so-called reformed Religion" even though it did try to integrate the political organization of the Huguenots without destroying it; the Brevets appended to the Edict, although not an actual part of

the decree itself, even provided the means for maintaining the Huguenot garrisons and for the payment of pastors.²¹ Furthermore, the Huguenots did receive legal representation not only in the Parliament of Paris but also in regional temporal courts.²² But the Edict of Nantes did not identify the Protestants in terms of a confessional document. The confession of French Protestantism is to be counted, therefore, to be sure, as one of the driving forces of the religious politicization of this period, but nowhere was it accorded weight as a legal document. However, in tandem with the ecclesiastical constitution, the *Discipline ecclésiastique*, it not only consolidated the theological position of the French churches but also defined their presbyterial-synodical organization, which was completely independent of political authorities.²³ In this way the confession of French Protestantism never lost or altered its original purpose as an expression of its identity. Even if, as happened within the boundaries of the Empire, no one wished to concede that the division of Christendom in the theological sphere was permanent – unity in the confession of the truth remained a goal for which to strive – that was hardly reflected in the process of establishing a confession.²⁴ Similar situations existed for the majority of Calvinistic confessions in Europe. Assessments of the circumstances out of which they emerged still need to be made.

The Function and Development of the Confessional Document

Even this brief survey reveals that the question of the development and function of the confessional documents of the Reformation defies any general conclusion; no overall schema or a generalized program for interpreting them emerges. That is due, as we have seen, to the specific political constellations of each instance, which the various streams of the Reformation encountered in the national and social contexts in which they took place. Second, it is due to the specific theological influences that shaped the author or authors of each. That means, to cite the Augsburg Confession as an example, that the story of its development would be much shorter if it were explained exclusively or primarily in terms of the political and legal constellations in which it originated. Rather, the concern that

determined the way in which this confession was constructed by Philip Melanchthon was of decisive importance, as was its further development as a confession of faith. He viewed the Augsburg Confession first and foremost as a means to regain or establish a new consensus within the church on the basis of the Holy Scripture. Therefore, the first twenty-one articles of the Augsburg Confession offered what contemporaries called an *analogia fidei*.²⁵ By design it adhered closely to the dogmas of the ancient church and emphasized what was common to both sides, the Evangelicals and the Roman Catholics, within this framework. Concern for demonstrating catholicity also helped shape Melanchthon's method in composing the Augsburg Confession. Its formulation of the Wittenberg faith and teaching in the form of affirmative statements and negative statements was designed to prove the catholicity of its confessors by highlighting their rejection of the classical heresies of the ancient church.²⁶ Points at which Melanchthon believed that the two parties were truly in significant disagreement, such as the Evangelical criticism of the papacy, clearly receded into the background, in order to reduce the dispute to a few specific abuses. The accent fell upon the agreement with the Holy Scripture and the "Roman church" insofar as its teaching could be taken from Holy Scripture. In further stages of the history of the Augsburg Confession this goal of reconciling and integrating the two parties can be seen. For the Augsburg Confession also served as the basis for negotiations to establish concord beyond the borders of the Empire. These negotiations with the kings of France and England, both hostile to the Habsburgs, came into play in 1534 and 1536. Their approach to the Protestant princes of the Smalcald League, to be sure, stemmed from different political motivations, such as the divorce of Henry VIII, which placed him in opposition to the Habsburgs for dynastic reasons.²⁷ The Augsburg Confession had become a politically relevant document because it served as the basis for the confessional position of the Smalcald League. But Melanchthon was much less concerned with the political aims, much more with the theological goal of *concordia*. Against this background he could use the Augsburg Confession as raw material that could be paraphrased as needed, and he adapted that raw material to the different situations which he wished to

address with a confession of the faith, without surrendering the core of the content of Wittenberg theology. His *Consilium ad Gallos* of 1534 and the “Wittenberg Articles,” which resulted from his negotiations with English diplomats in 1536, repeated the most important positions of the Augsburg Confession and placed them into the ecclesiastical contexts of each specific nation. Melanchthon emphasized what the two sides held in common while simultaneously driving home Reformation concerns, in part under the cover of medieval terminology. At the same time Melanchthon tolerated no compromise in regard to the doctrine of justification *sola gratia* and *sola fidei*, which already in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession had assumed the status of a non-negotiable, fundamental criterion for teaching that was faithful to Scripture.²⁸ Such confessional consensus with foreign powers, had it come about, would have created all the necessary conditions for the entry of both kingdoms into the Smalcald League. However, in the final analysis neither France nor England actually joined the League. Even if neither the *Concilium ad Gallus* nor the “Wittenberg Articles” were accepted, the Augsburg Confession nevertheless left behind traces of its influence, at least in England, through the “Wittenberg Articles,” which did help shape King Henry’s “Ten Articles” (1536), and even more so the “Forty-Two Articles” of King Edward VI (1552), and on the basis of that document the “Thirty-Nine Articles” of Elizabeth I (1563/1571).²⁹

However, these negotiations to establish agreement, if they had led to consensus among the parties, could have and would have inevitably influenced the usage of the Augsburg Confession as well. This became clear by the way in which the Wittenberg Concord of 1536 made its impact in Evangelical circles. This document had brought the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper of the south Germans under the leadership of Martin Bucer into alignment with the teaching of the Wittenberg theologians around Martin Luther. This “Concord” preserved the term *manducatio indignorum* on the basis of a somewhat loosely defined *unio sacramentalis* of the body and blood of Christ *with* the elements in the Supper, the bread and wine. Agreement on the formulation of the Wittenberg Concord enabled south German acceptance of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology and the reception of the South Germans into the Smalcald League

as well. Melanchthon's altered version of article X of the Augsburg Confession on the Lord's Supper took this theological consensus into account in his revision by omitting the direct declaration that Christ's body and blood are present under the form of the elements, by dispensing with the rejection of opposing teaching, and by simply speaking of the presentation of Christ's body and blood with the bread and wine.

That this 1540 revision of the Augsburg Confession was intended to build consensus with the Roman Catholics, or to strive for it, is seen even more in other revisions to the *Confessio Augustana Variata* of 1540, particularly in Articles IV, V, and VI, "On Justification," "On the Office of Ministry," and "On New Obedience," as well as in Article XX, "On Good Works." For Melanchthon had modified the Confession expressly for this purpose. He expanded certain articles so that the Confession might serve the Evangelical governments more effectively as the basis for confession and conversation at the religious colloquy of Worms and Regensburg in 1540 and 1541.³⁰ Above all, the articles on justification (IV) and good works (XX) command interest. There is no trace left of the cautious reticence which marked the *Confessio Augustana invariata*. Its Article IV, formerly very brief, was expanded into a detailed exposition of the doctrine of justification of the Reformation. It shows the influence of the second edition of Melanchthon's *Loci communes*, issued in 1535.³¹ Alongside the revisions of Article XX, the new version of the Confession of Article IV presented a detailed discussion of faith and works. It strove to prevent a rupture of the dialogue with the Roman Catholic position, which wanted to maintain the place of the human participation in attaining justification. Therefore, Article XX aims at taking up the reproaches of the opponents, responding by making it clear that the Confession in no way wished to abolish good works, arguing instead that they can only retain their true significance and be properly understood on the basis of justifying faith. "Both teachings must be present in the church," Melanchthon explained, "both the gospel of faith for the building up and comfort of consciences and the teaching of which are truly good works and which are genuine acts of service to God."³² The account of the faith of the Reformation and the definitions of its own position, which

the confession presented more self-confidently than ever, still sought the possibility of reconciling the opposite doctrinal positions.

The Confession as a Line of Demarcation and a Statement of Identity

The further development of the public confession of the faith in Germany took place largely by repeating or echoing the Augsburg Confession and applying it to new situations. The Confession's status as part of imperial law after the Religious Peace of Augsburg, of course, contributed to that. The Peace guaranteed limited toleration to the adherents of the Augsburg Confession, alongside those affiliated with the "old faith," which up to this point still had no specific documents stating its confessional position. Therefore, the Evangelical camp felt compelled to reduce the theological plurality that existed and it continued to move toward this single legal and theological standard of confession within its ranks. This development meant that the confessional documents of the Reformation served above all as a statement of identity which demarcated boundary lines. Present from the beginning, this function of the confession became more and more prominent. The actual turning point in this change of direction for the function and significance of the confession came already before the critical date of the Religious Peace in imperial policy and imperial law.

Melanchthon's participation in the composition of the Leipzig Proposal for the diet of the electorate of Saxony, the so-called Leipzig Interim of 1548, created a profound change in the atmosphere and context in which confessional activity continued in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Proposal did teach the doctrine of justification in evangelical fashion and bore typical Melanchthonian characteristics, but at the same time it contained formulations in regard to the cooperation of the human will in conversion and the value of human works which many of Melanchthon's former students found troubling. These, along with the Proposal's reintroduction of some medieval customs and practices, soon provoked internal disputes within the Wittenberg circle. In the eyes of the so-called "Gnesio-Lutherans" the author of the Augsburg Confession had with this compromise abandoned his own confessional principles.

In defense of these principles the princes of the Smalcald League had entered into conflict with Charles V and suffered defeat; for those principles many pastors had had to go into exile. However, at the time of the drafting of the Leipzig Proposal it was not possible to highlight the Augsburg Confession in the light of existing political conditions after the defeat of the Smalcald League in 1547. Therefore, it is not surprising that when Melancthon's critics, Matthias Flacius and his Gnesio-Lutheran comrades, composed the Magdeburg Confession of 1550, intending this document to justify their resistance to the emperor, they did precisely the opposite. The Magdeburg Confession did what the draft for the Leipzig diet could not do: it "repeated" the Augsburg Confession. Thus, the preface to the Magdeburg Confession, entitled "Brief Summary," stated: "First, that our churches indeed practice the true Christian religion and worship of God. Therefore, in the first part of this book we offer the confession of our faith for ourselves and for the entire Christian communion, and it adheres to the articles of the Augsburg Confession."³³ To be sure, this confession was—in the midst of a situation of persecution—anything but an attempt to create consensus and to work as an integrating factor in its intention. It was concerned with a definite, clear separation of true teaching from false teaching; that meant in this case putting distance between the theological direction of the Philippists in electoral Saxony and a confessional position which placed the *summa doctrinae* in the center, in order to be able to address political-societal needs in the gray area of neutral matters which were neither explicitly commanded nor prohibited in Scripture, the so-called *adiaphora*.³⁴ Those who resisted the Proposal's program, including the authors of the Magdeburg Confession, were not prepared to share responsibility for its concessions to imperial policy and medieval teaching and practice. They felt bound to their stance of confessing the faith, with its doctrinal content and the associated liturgical and ecclesiastical practice, in what they regarded as a situation *in casu confessionis et scandali* [in a situation in which confession is called for, when offense to the faith is present] without compromise.³⁵

This example shows how the function of confessing the faith had shifted to the determination of the identity of one specific group

and therefore laid the cornerstone for the later understanding of confession of the faith and the use of the term “confession” as a designation of firmly defined “confessional” institutionalized entities. At the same time it became clear what kind of theological authority the Augsburg Confession had attained in the two decades since its composition. For the Magdeburg resistance movement saw in the “Leipzig Interim” nothing other than a suppression of “the standing and the authority of the Augsburg Confession.”³⁶ Suppression of this confession, which was so valuable as an *analogia fidei* and was widely identified with the teaching of Martin Luther, the prophet of the end times,³⁷ struck the Magdeburg confessors as a denial of Christ.³⁸ Thus, they presented to the public not only a formulation of their confession and the exposition of their doctrine of political resistance; they also offered a brief history of the Augsburg Confession, in order to show that, from the beginning and through all the disputations and colloquies at which it was used, this document had endured, neither refuted nor altered.³⁹ They saw themselves as “the remnant [of the adherents] of the Augsburg Confession,” who had the duty to testify to the gospel discovered anew through Luther and to the Augsburg Confession. They felt compelled to do this in order to make it clear to all Christians who were suffering under the effects of the Interim that this confession of the truth, the content of which was repeated in sharp distinction to all doctrinal perversions, “was not yet completely extinguished.”⁴⁰

It was not only this Gnesio-Lutheran confession that makes it clear that the repetition of the Augsburg Confession had formulated public teaching in such a way that created boundaries over against those who taught otherwise and consolidated the thinking of those who agreed. Even Melancthon himself contributed to pointing the Confession in this direction. However, his concern always aimed at joining together the statements of identity which created boundaries against those who taught otherwise with his efforts to preserve the internal unity of *all* the adherents of the Augsburg Confession. That is, he was seeking an all-embracing *internal* consensus. This is shown, for example, in the *Confessio Saxonica*, also called the *Repetitio Confessionis Augustanae*, which the Wittenberg professor composed in 1551 at the instigation of Elector Moritz of Saxony as a basis for the Saxon

presentation of public teaching at the Council of Trent. Melanchthon emphasized in his introduction to this document that, above all, when the churches are charged with error and false teaching and they are accused of abandoning consensus for schism, it is necessary to confess true doctrine: *Necesse est interrogatos recitare doctrinam* [it is necessary that those who are asked should declare openly what they are teaching].⁴¹ Above and beyond that, the Confession was to function as a *vera explicatio doctrinae* [true explication of doctrine],⁴² which was meant to be repeated continually, to counteract false condemnation by opponents and at the same time to secure inner harmony in the foundation of the faith and its teaching.⁴³ This harmony, for which the church should strive, and the consensus which it should preserve, was a goal in itself. Melanchthon was no longer trying to win over the Roman Catholic side. Rather, the *Confessio Saxonica* presented itself and its adherents in explicit contrast to Roman Catholicism, as it was being represented by the Council of Trent. The purpose of confessing the faith had become the demonstration that the content of his own confession agreed with the true “consensus of the church catholic of our Lord Jesus Christ and Christian unity,”⁴⁴ a “catholic consensus of the church.”⁴⁵ This consensus proceeded out of the writings of the prophets, apostles, and fathers and was guaranteed by the testimonies of the reformers,⁴⁶ among which the Augsburg Confession was accorded a leading position. A glance back over the history of the Reformation which prefaced the *Confessio Saxonica* served to place this *Repetitio* in the succession of this line of witnesses to the truth.⁴⁷

Not only Melanchthon himself, but also his students, Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans alike, formulated their confessions as repetitions of the Augsburg Confession or defensive statements against allegedly false interpretations of the Confession. Both repetition for the sake of applying the Confession to new situations and the defenses for repudiating false interpretations can be seen in the approach of the Frankfurt Recess of 1558⁴⁸ and the reaction to it in the Weimar *Book of Confutation*, which became the confession that determined public teaching in Ernestine Saxony.⁴⁹ Produced under the direction of Flacius and some of his associates, the *Book of Confutation*, to be sure, did forsake the trajectory that had developed up to that point in that

it minimized the positive formulation of faith and teaching in each article and chose to focus on the *negativa*, the condemnation of false teaching. In nine sections it demarcated its own position from everything that had developed into a reformational “heresy” and rejected the propagators of each of them: Zwingli, the Anabaptists, Michael Servetus with his anti-trinitarian views, Caspar von Schwenckfeld with his Christological doctrine of Jesus’ celestial flesh, the adiaphorists, Georg Major and his doctrine of good works, the antinomians, the synergists, and finally Andreas Osiander and his doctrine of justification. With this approach the circle around Flacius obviously limited the doctrinal consensus that was to be guaranteed by this confession to a very small community of confession. Nonetheless, the fact that so many theologians were claiming that they were following the true trajectory of the Augsburg Confession, which had by this time assumed the status of a secondary authority, next to Holy Scripture, made it necessary to find the way back to an all-embracing reformational consensus in confession.

The final attempt to practice this function of the confession as a document which integrates and establishes consensus at the internal Protestant level lay with the Formula of Concord of 1577. It presented itself as a clarifying *Repetitio* of the content of the Augsburg Confession. Its failure to embrace all in the Wittenberg circle rendered it, nonetheless, into what it in fact was not intended to be, namely, a confession which demarcated boundaries within that circle. From the side of both the Philippists and also the Flacians came some reactions which solidified the confessional divisions, abandoning the ideal and the claim of repeating the Augsburg Confession in application to new issues. The *Repetitio brevis* [*Brief Repetition*] of the Philippist-inclined theologians of Anhalt, which stems from the pen of Wolfgang Amling, and the *Repetitio, das ist Wiederholung der Norma Christlicher Lehre* [*Repetitio, That Is, Repetition of the Norm of Christian Teaching*] of the Flacian-inclined Austrian churches both demonstrate this. To be sure, at the same time in each case that particular point of dispute which separated the respective groups from the Formula of Concord came into clear focus as a new standard or central element in the confession of the faith: in the case of Anhalt the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, and in the case of the Austrian Flacians the doctrine

of original sin.⁵⁰ The ideal of unity in confession and the appeal to a single fundamental confession of the faith of the Reformation that set the norm for public teaching was competing with the theological pluralism that continued to assert itself. The several strands of development in the public confession of the faith were being differentiated from each other, forming new confessional communities that used their specific accounts of the faith to set boundaries and define their own identity. This no longer permitted reconciliation of their points of view.

At the same time these developments set the theological background for the historiography of the Augsburg Confession which emerged at this point. It combined the reprinting of source documents with an explicit historical retrospective in order to answer the question that had gained vital significance through political developments of the time: which version of the Augsburg Confession should serve as the standard-setting, the authentic version of the Confession in light of the process of the revisions of its text which had sought consensus and to an extent realized broad agreement. The first study of the history of the Augsburg Confession, which was composed and printed in the course of the creation of the Formula of Concord (1576), came from the pen of the Rostock professor David Chytraeus. Closely following him came the Brandenburg theologian Georg Coelestin (1577), to whom Chytraeus had handed on his source material.⁵¹ With the decision of the Formula of Concord affirming the *Confessio Augustana invariata* in May 1577 and the dissemination of this new effort at establishing a uniform confession by the princes, the question of how to evaluate the development of the confession in the years between 1530 and 1577 came to the fore with even greater urgency than at the time Chytraeus and Coelestin were preparing their histories just a few months earlier. The preface to the Book of Concord, which Jacob Andreae composed in 1579, also presented a brief historical overview of the confession of the faith within the Wittenberg circle since 1530.⁵² The historiography of the Augsburg Confession then specifically served the apologetic interests of those involved in constructing the several confessional positions. Each of them had to be defended, especially in the context of their claims upon political legitimacy and toleration as adherents of the

Augsburg Confession under imperial law. Therefore, it was only natural that with his *Historia der Augsbürgischen Confession* of 1581 the theologically educated jurist and legal advisor to the Nuremberg municipal council, Christoph Herdesianus, entered the discussion of the development and function of the Confession on the side of the *Variata*.⁵³ The response to Herdesian issued a few years later by the theologian Nikolaus Selnecker did not bring the matter to an end.⁵⁴ Into the eighteenth century the history of the development of the Augsburg Confession remained a topic of historiographical work. It would be profitable to investigate the conditions and impact of this historical research more precisely.

Conclusion

This way of dealing with public confession of the faith, as we have considered it in the example of the Augsburg Confession, could be investigated and analyzed in comparable western and eastern European contexts. Its approach is based upon an attitude toward public confession which arises from three axioms:

1. In comparison to all other private and particular confessional documents, the Augsburg Confession is generally regarded as the paradigmatic expression of the faith and teaching of the Reformation and as an adequate summary of the Holy Scripture, which biblical humanism had brought to the center as the single standard and foundation of the Christian faith. The Augsburg Confession presented the *analogia fidei* that served its adherents as they interpreted and applied Scripture. This claim was advanced in exchanges with those outside the Wittenberg confessional circle, for instance, among Roman Catholics or Calvinists.
2. Against this background, what humanism had taught about language as an instrument to unlock the past and the present, to interpret them both, and to claim them for oneself opened the way for the conviction that the statements of Holy Scripture and with it the statements which confessed the faith in the course of history and under conditions of different, historically-bound situations, must always be formulated anew. This fit together with the conviction of the reformers that God's Word

is not congealed in statements of doctrine and at hand in well-fashioned formulations set for all times and places, but rather its timeless content takes shape as the *viva vox Evangelii* in forms that are appropriate for their own respective times.

3. Against this background, confessional documents could also be constructed as newly formulated repetitions of the positions of statements which had previously attained respect as symbols setting forth a standard summary of the content of Holy Scripture. That led not only to understanding the Augsburg Confession as a repetition of the ancient creeds of the church, but also to the understanding that further development of the confession of the faith in the sixteenth century took place in the repetition and application of the Augsburg Confession to new situations. From this all-encompassing point of view the history of the Reformation can therefore be understood as the history of confessing the faith. As such, it gives impulses for church and society relevant for our contemporary society in their search for orientation in a new millennium.

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NOTES

1. Heinrich Holze, Art. Bekenntnis III. Kirchengeschichtlich. 3. Reformation. In: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*⁴ (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1998-2007), 1 (1998):1252.

2. Gottfried Seebaß, "Die Reformation als Epoche?" Lecture at the "Arbeitstagung der Fachgruppe Kirchengeschichte der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie," April 14-16, 2000, in Brandenburg/Havel.

3. *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*, edited by E. F. Karl Müller (Leipzig 1903, rpr. Zürich: Theologische Buchhandlung, 1987), 2. (Hereafter cited as BSRK.)

4. Holze evaluates such statements in written or oral form that proceed from hearing the gospel, in contrast, as "aktuelles Bekennen" ("confessing appropriate to the situation;" see his Art. Bekenntnis, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*⁴ III.3, 1:1252.

5. Martin Luther, *Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis* (1528). In *Martin Luther Studienausgabe*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Delius, 4 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt 1986), 256:29-30. In *Luther's Works* (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress, 1961) 37:372.

6. See Wilhelm Maurer, *Historischer Kommentar zur Confessio Augustana*, Bd. 1: *Einleitung und Ordnungsfragen* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976), 32–39 and 45. See also the introduction to *Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis* by Ernst Koch, in *Martin Luther, Studienausgabe* 4:16–17.

7. *Ad Carolvm Romanorum Imperatorem Germaniae comitia Augustae celebrantem, Fidei Huldrychi Zwinglij ratio* (Zurich 1530). In *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke* [henceforth Z]= *Corpus Reformatorum* [henceforth CR] (Berlin: Schwetschke / Leipzig: Heinsius Nachfolger 1905–1963) ZVI.2 = CR 93.II, S. 753–817; in a new German translation in *Huldrych Zwingli, Schriften* IV, ed. Thomas Brunnschweiler and Samuel Lutz, (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1995), 93–131.

8. See the preface of Zwingli addressed to the emperor, in Z VI.2 = CR 93.II, 790–792 = *Zwingli, Schriften* IV, 99f.

9. Eck answered with his *Repulsio articulorum Zwinglii Ces. Maiestati oblatorum*, to which Zwingli responded with his *De convitiis Eckii*. In ZVI.3, CR 93.III:231–291.

10. After Emperor Ferdinand I notified the elector of the Palatinate, Frederick III, in a missive dated July 13, 1563, that the adoption of the Heidelberg Catechism amounted to self-exclusion from the Religious Peace of Augsburg, Frederick was intent on legitimizing his confessional option by proving that it agreed with the Augsburg Confession and its Apology as they were to be properly understood as well as with non-German Protestantism. Bullinger's confession served this latter purpose, which the elector adopted for his own purposes in this situation. See details in Endre Zsindely, Art. Confessio Helvetica Posterior, in *Theologische Realenzyklopaedie* 8 (1981):169–173, and Irene Dingel, *Concordia controversa. Die öffentlichen Diskussionen um das lutherische Konkordienwerk am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 63 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), 101–103.

11. The *Confessio Fidei* appeared under the title *Christliche Confession ... des Fu(er)sten vnd Herren ... Friderichen des Dritten ... Auß sonderem befehl des ... Fu(er)sten vnd Herren ... Johans Casimiren/ Pfaltzgrauen bey Rhein verordeneten Statthalters / Den 25. Februarij Anno 1577. In Druck verfertiget. ...* [s.l., s.a.: Heidelberg, Jakob Müller, 1577]. And also in Latin as *CONFESSIO FIDEI ILLVSTRISSIMI PRINCIPIS AC DOMINI, D. FRIDERICI III. ...* [s.l.] M.D.LXXVII. See Dingel, *Concordia controversa* esp. 106–109 and note 26. Here are also details on the English and French versions.

12. See, for example, Tilemann Heshusius, *Confessio de praesentia corporis et sanguinis Iesu Christi in coena Domini* (Königsberg, 1574). In 1599 the so-called “Staffort Book” of Margrave Ernst Friedrich of Baden was published, another official confession directed against the Concordist effort, which must be regarded as a “particular” confession because of its limited influence. See Dingel, *Concordia controversa*, 22. The Staffort Book is found in part in BSRK, 799–816.

13. The most important measures were concluded at the imperial diets at Worms, 1495 and Augsburg, 1500. See Bernd Moeller, “Das Reich und die Kirche in der frühen Reformationszeit,” in *Das »Augsburger Bekenntnis« von 1530 damals und heute*, ed. Bernhard Lohse and Otto Hermann Pesch (Munich: Kaiser, 1980), 17–31.

14. *Ibid.*, 29.

15. See Irene Dingel, “Philip Melancthon and the Establishment of Confessional Norms,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 20 (2006), 146–169.

16. Philipp Melancthon, “Praefatio in Corpus doctrinae germanicum,” in CR *Philippi Melancthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*. C. G. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindweil (eds.) (Halle and Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1834–1860) 9, 930, Nr. 6830. At the instigation of

Leipzig printer Ernst Vögelin, Melancthon had collected a series of his own writings and composed prefaces for both the German and the Latin editions of the collection. See Heinz Scheible, *Melancthon. Eine Biographie* (Munich: Beck, 1997) 243. The prefaces are found in CR 9, 929-931, Nr. 6830, und CR 9, 1050-1055, Nr. 6932.

17. Up to and including Christian August Salig, *Vollständige Historie Der Augspurgischen Confession und derselben Apologie, Aus bewährten Scribenten, und gedruckten zum Theil auch ungedruckten Documenten genommen, Theil I-IV* (Halle: Renger, 1730-1745), und Ernst Salomon Cyprian, *Historia der Augspurgischen Confession, auf gnädigsten Befehl Des Durchlauchtigsten Fürsten und Herrn, Herrn Friedrichs des Andern, Hertzogens zu Sachsen=Gotha, aus denen Original-Acten beschrieben* (Gotha: Reyher, 1730).

18. On the development of the text of the *Confession de Foi*, see Hannelore Jahr, *Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Confession de foi von 1559*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche 16 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964).

19. At the religious colloquy in Worms in 1557 Beza was prepared to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession although with a stated objection to the article on the Lord's Supper. By posing the question of subscription to the Augsburg Confession, the cardinal highlighted the division among the European Protestants since Beza emphasized that he was advancing a doctrine of the Lord's Supper that held to the spiritual presence of Christ in it. See Mario Turchetti, "Une question mal posée: La Confession d'Augsbourg, le cardinal de Lorraine et les Moyenneurs au Colloque de Poissy en 1561," *Zwingliana* 20 (1993):53-101. From the beginning of the Reformation the Roman Catholics practiced the tactic of raising the issue of the divisions among the Evangelicals and made the point also in regard to the several versions of the Augsburg Confession. This is mentioned in another context also by Wilhelm Maurer, "Confessio Augustana Variata," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 53 (1962):144. In regard to the controversies of the late sixteenth century, see Dingel, *Concordia controversa*, 576, 580, and 591.

20. One indication of the extent of this development was the establishment of the so-called "chambre ardent" by Henry II (1547), a policing agency with competence over cases of heresy under the authority of the Parlement of Paris. By establishing this agency the king significantly restricted the jurisdiction of the church. The state punished heretics not only as the "bracchium saeculare" [secular arm] of the church but actually pursued such cases within its own courts. Protestants were prosecuted as heretics and enemies of the state at the same time. In 1549 the church assumed the task of carry out these proceedings. See Richard Nürnberger, *Die Politisierung des französischen Protestantismus* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1948), 29-37.

21. See the Edict of Nantes 1598, Brevet I and II, April 30, 1598, in *Religionsvergleiche des 16. Jahrhunderts, Bd. II*, ed. Ernst Walder, Quellen zur neueren Geschichte 8, 2. ed. (Bern: Lang, 1961), 63-68.

22. The Edict of Nantes established a "Chambre de l'Édit" under the authority of the Parlement of Paris to take care of the legal cases involving the Protestants. This kind of institution was supposed to be established under the authority of the regional Parlements as well. Protestants were supposed to gain representation on the courts through the appointment of their representatives to these courts. For details on the legal regulations of the Edict of Nantes, see "Edikt von Nantes (1598), Art. 30-57," in *Religionsvergleiche des 16. Jahrhunderts II*, 24-33.

23. Finally, at the seventh national synod of La Rochelle in 1571 democratizing tendencies in the organization of the church, including those advanced by Jean Morély,

were finally and decisively put to rest. In addition, the *Confession de foi*, which up to that point had stood on equal footing with the Genevan model for a confession that had been shaped in part by Calvin, was confirmed as the only authoritative Huguenot confession by the subscription of those present. Since that time it has been called the *Confession de La Rochelle* or the *Confessio Gallica*. See Art. Hugenotten, in RGG⁴ 3:1925-1926.

24. The Calvinistic confessions also place their formulations of public teaching within the framework of the creeds of the ancient church and state in that way their intention not to proclaim any heresy; see the *Confessio de Foi* or *Confessio Gallica*, Art.V, in BSRK, 222, in German translation in *Evangelische Bekenntnisse*, (ed.) Rudolf Mau, vol. 2 (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1997), 186.

25. On the origin of the concept of the *analogia fidei*, see Romans 12.6, and on its meaning and application, Bernhard Gertz, *Glaubenswelt als Analogie. Die theologische Analogie-Lehre Erich Przywars und ihr Ort in der Auseinandersetzung um die analogia fidei*, Themen und Thesen der Theologie (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1969), 53-62.

26. See Hans-Werner Gensichen, *Damnamus. Die Verwerfung der Irrlehre bei Luther und im Luthertum des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums 1 (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), 65-84.

27. Henry sought a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, an aunt of Charles V, after he had already secretly married Anne Boleyn on January 25, 1533, but the pope confirmed the first marriage and excommunicated Henry. See Arthur G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2. ed., London: Batsford, 1989), 125-129, and Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England, vol. I: The King's Proceedings* (repr., London: Gregg, 1993), 156-191.

28. See Irene Dingel, "Melancthon's Paraphrases of the Augsburg Confession, 1534 and 1536, in the Service of the Smalcald League," in Irene Dingel, et al., *Philip Melancthon, Theologian, in Classroom, Confession, and Controversy* (Refo 500; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), essay 5.

29. See Georg Mentz (ed.), *Die Wittenberger Artikel von 1536* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1905) (Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus 2) (Rpt., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), 12-16. On the Ten Articles, see Dickens, *English Reformation*, 199-200, and Hughes, *Reformation in England*, 348-360.

30. It was "presented as an official document of the Protestants" on November 11, 1540. See Bernhard Lohse, Art. Augsburger Bekenntnis I, TRE 4 (1979), 626, und Irene Dingel, Art. Religionsgespräche IV, TRE 28 (1997):659.

31. So Lohse, "Augsburger Bekenntnis I," 626.

32. *Das Augsburger Bekenntnis in der revidierten Fassung des Jahres 1540 (Confessio Augustana Variata)* (trans.) Wilhelm H. Neuser (Speyer: Evangelischer Presseverlag, 1990) (Texte, Dokumente 2), 21.

33. *Bekentnis Vnterricht vnd vermanung/ der Pfarrhern vnd Prediger/ der Christlichen Kirchen zu Magdeburgk. Anno 1550. Den 13. Aprilis* (Magdeburg, s.d.), A1b.

34. Magdeburg *Bekentnis*, B2b: "Dargegen wollen wir zuweilen setzen/ wo von diesem reinen einhelligem verstand Christlicher Lere vnd bekentnis abgewichen sind/ Papisten/ Interimisten vnd Adiaphoristen/ des gleichen Widerteuffer/ Sacramentiret/ vnd was mehr irriger Geister sind/ von welchen allen wir vns mit Lere/ bekentnis vnd mit wercken gantzlich absundern."

35. On this concept in Flacius' thought, see Hans Christoph von Hase, *Die Gestalt der Kirche Luthers. Der casus confessionis im Kampf des Matthias Flacius gegen das Interim von 1548* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1940).

36. Magdeburg *Bekennntnis*, B1a.
37. Magdeburg *Bekennntnis*, A4a.
38. Magdeburger *Bekennntnis*, B1a: "Diese stu(e)ck vnd viel andere mehr/ wie sie in der warheit nichts anders sind/ denn ein verleugkung der Augspurgischen Confession, vnd mit derselben auch Christi des HERRN selbs/ also nemens Babst/ Bischoffe/ Fu(e)rsten [B1b:] vnd jhr gantzer hauffe nicht anders an ..."
39. Magdeburg *Bekennntnis*, A3b.
40. Magdeburg *Bekennntnis*, B2a.
41. *Repetitio Confessionis Augustanae*, CR 28:369.
42. *Repetitio Confessionis Augustanae*, CR 28:371.
43. See the preface of the *Repetitio der Augspurgischen Confession* in Georg Major's translation, CR 28:481.
44. *Repetitio der Augspurgischen Confession*, CR 28:488.
45. *Repetitio der Augspurgischen Confession*, CR 28:487.
46. *Repetitio Confessionis Augustanae*, CR 28:376, and *Repetitio der Augspurgischen Confession*, CR 28:488.
47. However, this was not yet, strictly speaking, a "Historia of the Confessio Augustana;" *Repetitio Confessionis Augustanae*, CR 28:371-73, and *Repetitio der Augspurgischen Confession*, CR 28 482-83.
48. See Irene Dingel, "Melanchthon's Efforts for Unity between the Fronts: the Frankfurt Recess," in Dingel et al., *Melanchthon, Theologian*, essay 6.
49. The Weimar *Book of Confutation* appeared under the title *Illustrissimi Principis ac Domini, Dom. Jo. Friderici secundi, suo ac fratrum ... nomine, solida et ex verbo Dei sumpta Confutatio et condemnatio praecipuarum corruptelarum, sectarum et errorum, hoc tempore ... ingruentium et grassantium* (Jena: Rebart, 1559).
50. See the confession from Anhalt, *REPETITIO BREVIS, SIMPLEX ET PERSPICVA ORTHODOXAE CONFSSIONIS, QVAM amplectuntur ecclesiae Principatus Anhaltini aliquot articulis, inter nonnullos hoc tempore controuersis* (Neustadt an der Haardt: Harnsich, 1581), and the Austrian *REPETITIO: Das ist/ Widerholung der Norma Christlicher Lere/ dazu die reinen Euangelischen Kirchen in Nider Österreich durch Gottes gnade sich bißher bekennet haben/vmnd noch bekennen/ ... Den beyden lo(e)blichen Sta(e)nden/ ...vbergeben ... Anno salutis, 1581 [s.l., s.a.]*. See Dingel, *Concordia controversa*, esp. 306-309 and 493-495. The preface of the *Repetitio brevis* expressed adherence to the three ancient creeds, the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg confession of 1531, and to the interpretation of these latter two documents in the *Confessio Augustana Variata* of 1540 and to the *Repetitio* or *Confessio Saxonica* of 1551, and to the Smalcald Articles. In addition, it emphasized its agreement with the teaching of Prince Georg of Anhalt, who was regarded as authoritative for the teaching and confession of the church along with Luther and Melanchthon, *ibid.*, esp. 10-18.
51. Rudolf Keller, *Die Confessio Augustana im theologischen Wirken des Rostocker Professors David Chyträus (1530-1600)*, *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte* 60 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 19-23.
52. Irene Dingel, "The Preface of The Book of Concord as a Reflection of Sixteenth-Century Confessional Development," *Lutheran Quarterly* 15 (2001):373-395.
53. He published his study under a pseudonym, Ambrosius Wolff, *HISTORIA Von der Augspurgischen Confession, Wie/ vnd in welchem verstandt sie vorla(e)ngst von dero genossen vnnnd verwandten im Artickel des Heiligen Abendmals/ nach der Wittenbergischen Concordiformul/ Anno*

36. *ist angenommen/ Auch wie sie seidhero sonst etlich mal in öffentlichen Religionshandlungen ist gemehrt vnd erklä(ert) worden. ...* (Neustadt an der Hardt: Matthaëus Harnisch, 1581). Herdesian clearly stated that he was addressing the fact that secular governments which fought to introduce the Book of Concord threatened those who did not subscribe to it with exclusion from the Religious Peace of Augsburg. His "History of the Augsburg Confession" was intended to counteract this possibility, *Historia*, A2a. See Dingel, *Concordia controversa*, 248-259.

54. Dingel, *Concordia controversa*, 270-278, 619-629.