

May 2013

Anabaptist Masculinity in Reformation Europe

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ANABAPTIST MASCULINITY IN REFORMATION
EUROPE

by

Adam Bonikowske

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in History

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

May 2013

ABSTRACT

ANABAPTIST MASCULINITY IN REFORMATION EUROPE

by

Adam Bonikowske

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013

Under the Supervision of Professor Merry Wiesner-Hanks

This thesis studies the connections between the Anabaptist movement during the Protestant Reformation and the alternative masculinities that developed during sixteenth-century Europe. It argues that Anabaptist men challenged traditional gender norms of European society, and through their unique understanding of the Reformation's message of salvation, these men constructed new ideas about masculinity that were at odds with Protestant and Catholic culture. Anabaptist men placed piety and ethics at the center of reform, and argued for the moral improvement of Christians. In separation from Catholics and mainstream Protestants, Anabaptists created a new culture that exhibited behavior often viewed as dangerous. The resulting culture was marginalized and challenged by persecution during the sixteenth century, but survived into the modern era.

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Acknowledgments

The idea for studying Anabaptist masculinity developed out of an early conversation I had with my advisor, Prof. Merry Wiesner-Hanks. In the spring of 2011, her seminar course on Gender and Sexuality in World History provided the opportunity to write an early paper on “Anabaptist Masculinity”. I cannot thank Merry enough for everything she has done to help me develop this thesis, especially with editing my horrible first drafts. She encouraged and challenged me to produce this thesis, which I hope will be the foundation for my dissertation.

There are a number of people who I would like to thank for helping me during the research of this thesis. I must thank the History Department at UW-Milwaukee for awarding me a Travel Grant, which allowed a visit to the archive at the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College in Indiana. I am grateful to everyone at Goshen College and the MHL that helped me while I was there. Joe Springer, the archivist at the MHL, was very kind and provided me with more material than I could have hoped to get through in the little time I was there. I would also like to thank Prof. John Roth at Goshen College who read a paper of mine on Anabaptist masculinity, and provided valuable information about organizing my thesis. I must also thank the Newberry Library in Chicago and the German Studies Association for giving me the opportunity to share my research professionally at conferences in Chicago and Milwaukee.

I would also like to thank Prof. Jennifer Watson, Associate Dean of Humanities at UW-Milwaukee. During the spring of 2011, my independent study with her focused on reading and translating various sixteenth-century German and Swiss Anabaptist sources,

some of which I used in this study. Other professors in the History Department at UW-Milwaukee helped me develop professionally and gave me advice about my research. I would like to thank Martha Carlin, Marcus Filipello, Winson Chu, Joe Austin, and Steve Meyer. I especially would like to thank the committee members of my thesis, Carolyn Eichner and John Hoevler, for providing valuable advice for revision and ideas for the conclusion.

Many friends and colleagues supported me during my years at Milwaukee. There are too many to name, but I would like to thank my fellow history graduate students and friends for emotional support and being there when I needed them. Most importantly, I want to thank my family. My mom and dad, Mike and Jenny Bonikowske, gave me constant encouragement and support the past three years. Also, my sister, Danielle. Thanks for always being there for me.

Introduction

The Anabaptist movement began in 1525 with the formation of the Swiss Brethren in Zürich, and spread from there voicing different ideologies about doctrine and how faith should be practiced. Anabaptists rejected infant baptism, believing that only adults should be baptized, because they alone possessed the capacity to understand faith. Although opinions and rituals varied among different communities, Anabaptists generally believed social transformation was necessary for the betterment of society. This was a movement that supported the politically marginalized, the poor and destitute, and the socially oppressed.¹

Because the Anabaptist vision sought the betterment of society, its followers found the objectives of the mainstream Reformation to be seriously lacking in belief and direction. According to Anabaptists, magisterial reformers failed to convey the deep moral significance behind the new understanding of salvation, and therefore, the social “improvement of behavior”.² Early attempts to gain support among the magisterial reformers were unsuccessful, as many reformers were against adult baptism. Thus, in order to socially transform and improve people, Anabaptists separated themselves from society. They formed their own communities in isolation, and developed many sectarian characteristics that distinguished their congregation and members from the rest of society. These characteristics centered on strict moral and ethical standards. As Werner Packull

¹ Werner O. Packull, “In Search of the ‘Common Man’ in Early German Anabaptist Ideology,” *The Sixteenth-Century Journal* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 67.

² Hans-Jürgen Goertz, “Radical Religiosity in the German Reformation,” in *A Companion To The Reformation World*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2004), 77.

has argued, “In this moral elitist form Anabaptism came to constitute a peripheral social manifestation but no longer a populist movement.”³

The Anabaptist impulse for improvement of behavior was both spiritualist and scriptural in its formation. At the crux of this social movement was the Anabaptist understanding of salvation: people were to consciously turn away from their lives as sinners, and were challenged to be reborn as “new men,” and live more in accordance with God. Hans-Jürgen Goertz has correctly identified this process, arguing, “It is in all cases, a matter of the ethicization of faith. Practice becomes the visible preservation of salvation.” [...] “Human participation in the process of salvation is unmistakable here.”⁴

Above all things for Anabaptists was the serious intention to change everything about one’s life. Mentality, behavior, and lifestyle took new expressions as faith permeated every aspect of life. Religion was expressed and took shape in daily, mundane tasks. Thus, daily acts perpetuated faith and made spiritual change physically evident. Nowhere else among the movements of Reformation was this transformation more apparent than among Anabaptists. The formal rituals of traditional religious services such as the mass were abolished and replaced by faithful acts in day-to-day affairs. Goertz argues, “even if not always systematically developed” the intention to change in the Anabaptist movement was “its essential concept or program.”⁵

Thesis and Main Themes

This thesis argues that Anabaptist men in sixteenth-century Europe understood manliness and exhibited masculine behavior in significantly different ways than Catholic

³ Packull, “In Search of the ‘Common Man’”, 63.

⁴ Goertz, 77. Goertz claims that many Anabaptists were inspired by late medieval pious repentance.

⁵ Goertz, 80.

and other Protestant men. I argue that the Reformation was a historical period that not only provided opportunities for men to explore new ways to understand their faith, but it also provided the opportunity for Anabaptist men to break away from masculine conventions and re-construct ideas about masculine identity. Therefore, masculinity in the Reformation era was not static, but fluid and changeable; not homogenous, but capable of adopting ideals that were consistent with new religious cultures that emerged during this century. In this framework, the Anabaptist movement allowed men who followed and led it to place morality and ethics at the heart of masculine identity.

Anabaptist men in the sixteenth century believed adult baptism was a rite of passage that allowed one to shed one's immoral and sinful past, and be spiritually born anew. The experience of adult baptism improved men internally, and this improvement was demonstrated externally in devotion to a spiritual life instead of one that was worldly and temporal. This transformation was an "ethicization of faith"; a fundamental *change* of every aspect of a man's life. Ideas about manhood and manliness were constituted through a discourse concerned with morality, simplicity, responsibility, and dedication to God and faith. This was a direct identification with the masculine virtues and the humanity of Jesus Christ.

This study approaches Anabaptist masculinity with three central themes. First, it considers how Anabaptist men perceived a new understanding of masculine ideals, which they had constructed from Scripture, where the example of Christ's experiences as a man could be seen.⁶ Christ was an exemplary male figure for Anabaptist men to imitate as

⁶ For example, see "Questions and Answers of Ambrosius Spitelmaier (1527)" in *Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism*, ed. C. Arnold Snyder, trans. by Walter Klaassen, Frank Friesen, and Werner O. Packull. (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 2001), 60. (*Sources of South German and Austrian*

closely as possible. His virtues, found in Scripture, allowed these men to redefine their masculine identities. Michael Sattler, a leader of the Swiss Brethren who wrote the “Schleitheim Articles”, stated, “Christ teaches us to learn from him that we should be mild and of humble heart.” [...] “Christ has suffered, not ruled, and he gave us a model, so that you shall follow in his footsteps” [1 Peter 2:21].⁷ Anabaptist men chose to imitate the experiences of Christ in many ways, including experiencing adult baptism at the age of thirty, missionary activity, evangelicalism, and finally suffering and martyrdom. Anabaptist men also chose to appear in simple clothing like that that Christ wore, and grow a beard in the same way Christ was represented in sixteenth-century images. Therefore, the imitation of Christ’s masculinity—of morality, humility, and piety—was a strong factor that influenced Anabaptist men.

The second theme of this study draws upon the association between inner and external spirituality in the Anabaptist faith. During the ritual of adult baptism, the Holy Spirit was to empower men and women internally, thereby changing their consciousness and attitude about the physical world. Temporal possessions no longer mattered. The goal of salvation and a life dedicated to God were prioritized above all. However, this internal spirituality was also to be perceptible externally through a man’s demeanor, his public appearance, and his reputation. Hans-Jürgen Goertz argues, “The observation of individual religiosity is the foundation for strict morality, the following of Christ, or Christianity of action, in short, for the ethicization of faith.” [...] “Only the person who is

Anabaptism for now on abbreviated as SSGAA.) Spitelmaier claimed, “Whenever the name Christ is used in Scripture it identifies a genuine person of flesh and blood, prone to suffering and mortal as we. Thus he is not God, but a man, (that is) a tool through which God’s Word has been expressed.”

⁷ Michael Sattler, “The Schleithem Articles,” in *The Radical Reformation* ed. and trans. Michael G. Baylor (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 177-178. Also see, John Denck, “Whether God is the Cause of Evil, 1526” in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers: Documents Illustrative of the Radical Reformation* ed. George H. Williams and Angel M. Mergal (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), 99.

inwardly purified and transformed is called to participate in the divine renewal of the world, indeed, to make himself available as an instrument of this process of renewal.”⁸

The strong connection between inner spirituality and its external demonstration allowed Anabaptist men to connect faith and masculinity. This study thus explores the ways in which Anabaptist men gave meaning to their world through visual practices, challenged and reformed conventions, and thereby created an alternative masculinity in many ways. As Ulinka Rublack has recently noted, public appearance and behavior both deeply established and maintained masculine identity.⁹ Men’s acts were seen as an expression of the divine in the natural world, and gave meaning to a wider sense of religious identity, expressing specific ideals of the religious “self physically as well as intellectually.”¹⁰

The third theme of this narrative is the relation between Anabaptists and other Protestants. Anabaptist men who formed communities in separation from the world were critical of both Catholic and Protestant movements of religious reform. In this sense, Anabaptist men not only constructed their identities in opposition to Catholic men, but also in opposition to Lutherans and Calvinists. This study compares and contrasts Anabaptists, Catholics, and other Protestants to clarify how Anabaptists understood their faith in terms of education, labor, community organization, dress, ideas about honor, and ritual practices. It approaches these from both the insiders’, or *emic*, perspective, and outsiders’, or *etic*, perspective.

⁸ Goertz, 76.

⁹ Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2010), xx; 6.

¹⁰ Rublack, 121.

Review of Literature

In the past three decades Reformation historiography expanded with a new body of research that has focused on gender analysis. Historians in this field revealed how ideas about gender in sixteenth-century society shaped prescribed roles for men and women, and how both sexes conformed to public regulations concerning behavior. A more recent development from the gender school has focused on masculinity, and, analyzed how Reformation Europe offered new definitions or identities of manhood; examining the roles of husbands and fathers, the process of how boys become men, and how men conformed themselves to civic settings and collective needs. Scholars in this field agree that class, age, marital status, and expectations of women were essential factors in shaping a man's identity in the sixteenth century.¹¹ In addition, the concept of honor, lineage and patrimony, management of a family, violence, competition, and service to the state were all integral to understanding of what was fundamentally a "man."

Historians have developed the notion of "hegemonic masculinities," which were rooted in social tradition and imposed from the top-down. These were understood to be universally applicable, standards that all groups of men in a society *should* model.¹² However imposing "hegemonic masculinities" may have been, however scholars have agreed masculinities change over time, and also take on a wide range of meanings within a given society. For the Middle Ages, Ruth Karras has argued, "The medieval cases

¹¹ Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn. eds., *Masculinity in the Reformation Era* (Kirksville, Mis.: Truman State University Press, 2008), ix-x.

¹² Ruth Karras, *From Boys To Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 8.

demonstrate the wide range of meanings masculinity could take within a given society and caution against a tendency to generalize about a given era.”¹³

In the sixteenth century, masculine expectations were also not homogeneous, but were plural and varied.¹⁴ Although men of all classes in sixteenth-century Europe shared certain essential characteristics of a standardized masculinity, the Reformation also brought change to ideas about the male lifestyle. Reformation scholars such as Lyndal Roper and Helmut Puff have described a “spectrum of masculinity,” suggesting contrasting or different masculine codes.¹⁵

Anabaptist historiography has traditionally focused on radical theology, politics, and economics, but has made progress in the past two decades with gender analysis, especially that of women.¹⁶ Jans-Jürgen Goertz notes that early in the Anabaptist movement some women spoke out, but “patriarchal structures were stronger and swiftly shook early moves toward the emancipation of women.”¹⁷ Sigrun Haude’s recent article, “Gender Roles and Perspectives among Anabaptist and Spiritualist Groups,” gives a well organized summary of the historiographical debate where George Hunston Williams, Jennifer Reed, and Sherrin Marshall Wyntjes propose that the Radical Reformation’s notions on freedom of conscience and a sense of heightened individualism brought about an equality of the sexes, and argued that baptism for all believers became part of a more gender egalitarian covenant. On the other side, Claus-Peter Clasen, Joyce Irwin, and Leona Stucky Abbot have suggested a much more subordinate position of women in a

¹³ Karras, 3.

¹⁴ Karras, 3.

¹⁵ Hendrix and Karant-Nunn, xii-xiii.

¹⁶ See Hermina Joldersma and Louis Grijp, eds. and trans. *Elisabeth’s Manly Courage: Testimonials and Songs of Martyred Anabaptist Women in the Low Countries* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001); Linda Huebert Hecht and C. Arnold Snyder, eds. *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996).

¹⁷ Goertz, 76.

strict patriarchal community setting. Many scholars are “positioned somewhere between the two poles of absolute equality and traditional subordination,” which include Marlies Mattern, Marion Kobelt-Groch, and Hans-Jürgen Goertz.¹⁸ Adam Darlage’s recent article on “Double Honor” in Hutterite communities provides insight about special rights given to community elders, including women, in Hutterite communes. He argues that the notion of “double honor” allowed some Hutterite women, “by virtue of their marriage to a leader or even a “specialist” such as a barber or surgeon,” better privileges or treatment than women and men not among the group of leaders.¹⁹

Sigrun Haude’s article in 2007 called for new insight in studies of masculinity for Anabaptists, about which previous research has been lacking. She suggests, “The study of masculinity and manhood is particularly fruitful here because the radical movements broke with some essential practices, rituals, and behaviors that closely delineated masculine identity.”²⁰

Anabaptism provides a strong case for how alternative masculinities could form during the Reformation, as Roper and Puff have suggested. These men revolutionized their masculine identity through innovations in moral behavior.

Discussion of Sources

The majority of sources I have consulted are prescriptive in that they encourage people to live and behave in a certain way or consciously believe in something. Rather

¹⁸ Sigrun Haude, “Gender Roles And Perspectives Among Anabaptist And Spiritualist Groups,” in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700* ed. John. D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 427-430.

¹⁹ Adam Darlage, “Double Honor: Elite Hutterite Women in the Sixteenth Century,” *Church History* 79, no. 4 (December 2010): 770.

²⁰ Haude, 461.

than describe or provide evidence of actual historical events, prescriptive sources advocate what one *should* do rather than tell what one *did* do.

My research uses prescriptive sources comparatively in order to write Anabaptist history across a broad spectrum. The fact that a Swiss Brethren, a Hutterite in Moravia, and a Mennonite in the Dutch Netherlands, separated by hundreds of miles, all wrote similar documents telling men how they should behave or how they should not dress suggests that the daily lives and experiences of Anabaptist men were comparable in these groups. Similar prescriptive sources analyzed together can tell us not only about peoples' mentalities and attitudes in terms of religion and daily life, but also about how people were supposed to physically participate in that religion and culture.

The majority of primary sources consulted in this research have been translated from the original German and Dutch into English in the series "Classics of the Radical Reformation". I have translated very few sources myself, and have taken the English translations to be both scholarly and accurate.

Questions about the sources and translations should be asked when using gender analysis, however. For example, some German adjectives and adverbs have masculine overtones. The German word *Reddlich*, appearing often in the *Hutterite Chronicle*, had a number of different meanings in the sixteenth-century. Among these was the notion of manliness, but one must question whether "manly" is always the best English word for "*reddlich*."

Sigrun Haude wisely raises other questions when researching her gendered study of Anabaptism. Haude writes, "Some male Anabaptist leaders, like Michael Sattler,

included women when they addressed the congregation, frequently speaking of brothers and sisters. The majority, however, talked only in the language of brotherhood.”²¹ I, too, have come across many examples of Anabaptist authors speaking exclusively to men, but also some sources that address both men and women. In my study, I have tried to pay attention to both gendered language and the gender of the audience.

Breakdown of Thesis by Chapters

This study follows the life stages of Anabaptist men from childhood to death. In Chapter 1, I examine the process of how boys and adolescent males in Anabaptist communities were raised by looking at education and labor, and then focus on how young men reached adulthood and maturity through the ritual of adult baptism. Chapter 2 focuses on patriarchal roles in Anabaptism along with other elements of family life, which reveal expectations of Anabaptist men as fathers, husbands, and leaders. In this chapter, I also analyze the community life of different Anabaptist groups, and address how communities were structured to ensure a more spiritualized way of life for men and women. I turn to individuals in Chapter 3 and analyze how ideas about honor differentiated Anabaptists from other men of Catholic and Protestant faiths. This chapter also examines Anabaptist missionary activity, issues regarding pacifism and violence, dress, and facial hair. Chapter 4 is an analysis of suffering and martyrdom and how this influenced masculine ideals for Anabaptists. The martyrs’ mentality is given special attention, but the chapter also focuses on martyrs’ hymns, martyrologies, the link between baptism and martyrdom, as well as Nicodemism and apostates.

²¹ Haude, 428.

Ch. 1: From Boys to Men

Anabaptist men of the sixteenth century denied the Catholic doctrine of good works in favor of a faith that changed people internally. This transformation was expressed, however, in moral and ethical behavior that could be externally demonstrated, and was, as Hans-Jürgen Goertz argues, an “improvement of behavior.” “They were inspired by late medieval pious repentance and were challenged to be reborn as “new men.”²² Internal change reflected a spiritualist desire that fundamentally structured how Anabaptist men understood and received salvation.

The Swiss and Hutterian Brethren, Dutch Mennonites, and circles of Anabaptists in South Germany and Austria advocated a lifestyle characteristic of Erasmian “perfect piety”, which taught “a spiritual redaction of the traditional Catholic ideal of striving for virtue,” raising the ethical demands found in the New Testament.²³ This radical approach to how a true Christian should live shaped the religious practices, rituals, and organization of Anabaptist communities. Daily behavior of men and women in these communities accommodated to these changes, giving new spiritual meaning to everyday routines.

For Anabaptist men, the intention to change everything was serious and not accidental. Change was an essential concept of the Anabaptist faith; a distinguishing part of membership that separated the *emic* from *etic*—Anabaptists from Catholics and other Protestants during the Reformation. This became tangibly evident from the behavior of

²² Goertz, “Radical Religiosity in the German Reformation,” 75-77.

²³ Thomas A. Brady Jr., *German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 61-62. Brady writes this was, “The attempt to progress always from visible things, which are usually imperfect or indifferent, to invisible ones.”

Anabaptist men, was revealed through their writing and teaching, and also manifested physically.²⁴

This chapter and thesis argues that Anabaptist men perceived their faith in moral and ethical terms that fundamentally structured their daily behavior, mentality, and masculinity. Their letters, pamphlets, and doctrines of faith describe how male Anabaptists, from youth to adulthood, *should* act in order to receive God's gift of eternal salvation. The type of moral behavior Anabaptist men idealized was uncharacteristic of the common expectations of men during the Reformation era in Europe. Protestants and Catholics alike commented on the peculiarities and eccentricities of Anabaptist men, perceiving that their definition of masculinity was at odds with hegemonic norms.

This chapter follows the early life of male Anabaptists from childhood to their emergence into adulthood. A short historical background is first provided to contextualize the early Anabaptist movement in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. This background is followed by a brief analysis of Anabaptist behavior that highlights social and cultural habits exhibited by men and women within their own congregations and amongst outsiders. The chapter then turns to how Anabaptist male adolescents were raised in spiritual and moral environments. Sections here focus on early education and work, but also indicate how routinized daily behavior at a young age influenced Anabaptist men's mentality as adults. Finally, the chapter analyzes the male experience of adult baptism to reveal the complex nature of this ritual. Above all things, male adult baptism was a transition experience and rite of passage that confirmed a man's adulthood and prioritized first his faith in God.

²⁴ Goertz, 80.

General Information on Anabaptists

Anabaptism is a very broad term used to define groups of religious nonconformists during the Reformation who chose to practice adult baptism, because they believed infants and adolescents were not able to rationalize their faith and therefore not ready to receive the sacrament. Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz led the early formation of the Swiss Brethren in January of 1525 after a break in doctrinal theology with Ulrich Zwingli and the Zürich circle.

The split between Zwingli and Grebel in 1523-25 was in part a matter of Biblical interpretation. Zwingli viewed the Old Testament as a necessity for interpretation and exegesis of New Testament Scripture. This, he argued, belonged to the learned, an assertion institutionalized among the Reformation's magisterial churches. Grebel believed the New Testament was an authoritative source that represented a model of the pre-Constantinian church, and therefore the apostolic nature and true behavior of Christ's followers.²⁵ The theology developed by Grebel included a rejection of infant baptism nurtured by a vernacular Biblicism and hermeneutic community. Interpretations of the New Testament would be done through congregational conversation, rather than by an elite clergy. These conversations and readings of the Scriptures would affirm proper "rules of life, the reform of abuses in Church and society, and the proper reorganization of congregational life."²⁶

²⁵ Werner O. Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings: Communitarian Experiments during the Reformation* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 2; Joyce L. Irwin, *Womanhood in Radical Protestantism, 1525-1675* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979), xxix. Irwin draws upon the work of George H. Williams, who claimed the Anabaptists "looked steadily into the past, finding their own image and ecclesiastical blueprints in the Bible and the martyr church of antiquity."

²⁶ Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 32.

In the following two decades Anabaptism developed rapidly across the Holy Roman Empire. During this time, congregations practicing adult baptism originated independently of each other, a polygenetic movement in which communities exhibited behaviors different from the Swiss Brethren.²⁷ Many Anabaptist communities like the Swiss Brethren believed that a literal interpretation of the New Testament was the sole authoritative source for their faith. These groups included circles of southern German Anabaptists, congregations in Austria, the Hutterites in Moravia, and later communities in the Dutch Netherlands such as the Mennonites.

A number of flourishing Anabaptist groups in the late 1520s and 1530s had a more spiritualist impulse that practiced mysticism and continuous revelation of God. They believed that the soul could have a more immediate connection with God, and that this personal and internal experience had superiority over Scripture. These groups followed in the path of the spiritualist Thomas Müntzer, and many prophesized the second coming of Christ. They were most common in the southern and western German lands along the Rhine, but did establish circles as far as the Netherlands and the Swiss Cantons.²⁸

The variations and different practices among these groups makes distinguishing and writing a history of Anabaptism rather difficult. Even their contemporaries had difficulty in identifying which Anabaptist congregations shared the same doctrine as the Swiss Brethren or if they were more like Thomas Müntzer in their religious ideas.

²⁷ James M. Stayer, Werner O. Packull, and Klaus Deppermann, "From monogenesis to Polygenesis: the historical discussion of Anabaptist origins," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 49, no. 2 (April, 1975): 83-121.

²⁸ Melchior Hoffman, Jan Mattjias, Jan van Leiden, Jan Battenberg, David Joris, Hans Hut, and Hans Denck were the most influential leaders among these groups. My research tends to omit spiritualist Anabaptists in favor of the more Biblicist groups which were more common in Southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, However, I do use sources from spiritualist Anabaptist leaders like Hans Hut and Hans Denck, as they were important in Southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, and communicated regularly with other Anabaptist groups in these territories.

Sebastian Franck, a sympathizer of Anabaptists, commented on this problem. He wrote, “There are many more sects and opinions among them which I do not know and cannot describe. Almost no one agrees with anyone else in all matters, by which God shows them that he is just as weary of and as opposed to their sect as to all others.”²⁹ Franck’s statement catches this inconsistency between Anabaptist groups, indicating that many had different opinions on faith and often disagreed.

The Anabaptist movement expanded in the 1530s as South German and Austrian Anabaptists followed their leader Jakob Hutter and established large communities in southern Moravia called *Bruderhöfe* or *Haushaben*. These Hutterites, named after their leader, were allowed a degree of religious freedom from the local aristocracy of Moravian Estates in exchange for economic benefits. During much of the sixteenth century Hutterite communities worshiped and practiced their faith in a manner that closely resembled the Swiss model.³⁰ Hutterite communities were large and often exceeded 500 members. From 1536-47 these *Bruderhöfe* multiplied to approximately 30 settlements, and more than doubled that figure from 1568-92. By the close of the century this unforeseen growth transformed the Hutterites into an extensive, state-like cluster of prosperous communes with a capital at Neumühl led by Klaus Braidl.³¹

By the end of the 1530s another congregation was also growing in the Dutch Netherlands under the leadership of Menno Simmons. Under the constant threat of persecution, Menno tirelessly wrote pamphlets over the next thirty years that defended the Mennonites as a peaceful and harmless faith. Over time, his devotion to this task was

²⁹ Sebastian Franck, “On the Anabaptists (1536),” in SSGAA, 248.

³⁰ Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 66-70.

³¹ Adam Darlage, “Double Honor,” 766; James Stayer, *The German Peasants’ War and Anabaptist Community of Goods* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 147. James Stayer argues that “the Hutterites had become very much like those principalities in the “world” they had left behind.”

successful, which allowed Dutch Mennonite communities to practice their faith freely in some areas.

Anabaptists established their own communities in separation from Catholic and Protestant society. Separation and religious freedom were at the heart of Anabaptist doctrine; a faith that identified moral improvement and change as possible only in isolation from the corruptions of the world. This separation was critical to the reconstruction of Anabaptist identities given the political context of the Reformation. After the Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555, each sovereign political territory in the Holy Roman Empire chose whether to be Catholic or Protestant, and enforced this choice.³² Many Anabaptists were identified as heretics and persecuted for their faith throughout the Reformation. Persecution of Anabaptists continued for centuries, but so did those legacies of Anabaptism that have become so widely valued in the modern era: religious tolerance, separation of church and state, and religious freedom. These legacies are vital to understanding the identities of Anabaptist men and their commonly held values.³³

Behavior

Like medieval monks, Anabaptists sought to morally improve themselves internally and externally by changing everything about their behavior. They believed that they were internally strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and this gave them the power to reject worldly possessions considered excessive to a humble and Christian lifestyle. This

³² For a more detailed overview of how confessionalism politically and legally bound the different Christian faiths into an Imperial framework, see Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1650*, 406-410.

³³ For scholarly work that analyzes the legacy of the Anabaptist movement, see Guy F. Herschberger, *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1957); Howard J. Kauffman and Leland Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975); Steven M. Nolt, *A History of the Amish* (Intercourse: Good Books, 1992).

meant that regular human emotions like want, greed, lust, envy, and ego were cast aside for a more pious lifestyle that valued responsibility, honesty, and modesty. Dietrich Philips wrote in his “The Church of God, c. 1560”, “He [Jesus] teaches true humility, meekness, patience, kindness, and brings the peace of God to the conscience.”³⁴

Entertainment, sexual gratification, and other common pleasures were also to be avoided. Anabaptists believed idleness and laziness were unchristian in character. Hans Denck admonished his followers, “Whoever seeks amusement in idle words proves that God bores him.”³⁵ Every action should be done in consideration of God’s teaching and with the upmost righteous demeanor. This way members of the community were to become virtuous role models for one other and avoid distractions that led to sinfulness.

Mennonites were especially strict about living a more ethical lifestyle. In writing “The Faith of the Woman who was a Sinner,” Menno Simmons condemned most social relations between men and women that could potentially lead to fornication. He instructed, “[...]many are not guiltless in that they allow such intimacy with other men and companions, with bold face singing, dancing, drinking, kissing, flirting, primping and fixing up.”³⁶ In Menno’s view, common venues for social entertainment such as parties, ceremonies, and taverns were immoral and unchristian. For Mennonites, joyful occasions were those that partook in worshipping Christ and reading from the Bible.

The Hutterites had a similar view towards entertainment and sexual behavior. Hutterite missionary Paul Glock wrote in a letter to his wife, Else, “Do not be deceived;

³⁴ Dietrich Philips, “The Church of God, c. 1560,” in Williams and Mergal, 244.

³⁵ Hans Denck, “On the Law of God,” in Baylor, 139.

³⁶ Menno Simmons, “The True Christain Faith, C. 1541,” in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons c. 1496-1561* ed. John Christian Wenger, trans. Leonard Verduin (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1956), 376-383; Irwin, *Womanhood in Radical Protestantism*, 60-61.

neither the fornicators nor the idolaters nor the adulterers nor the effeminate nor the homosexuals nor the thieves nor the avaricious, nor drunkards nor the blasphemers nor the robbers shall inherit the kingdom of God.”³⁷ Glock made clear that any sexual and immoral behavior outside of marriage was a sin and would, in his view, prevent Hutterites from receiving God’s salvation. This included those who were greedy, who drank socially, and used foul language.

Not surprisingly, this strict ethical lifestyle was confusing to outsiders. Although monks and nuns lived ascetic lives, they were confined to monasteries and did not engage with the outside world as Anabaptist missionaries or those Anabaptist men whose craft led them beyond their communities did. Therefore, some observers looked at this behavior with criticism and others with admiration, and some combined these. Sebastian Franck captures this in his 1536 work “On the Anabaptists”:

“Some have regular periods of silence and are much concerned with rules, by which they vex and bind the conscience, and so to speak, put a rope around their necks, by means of preoccupation with clothing, hair, eating, speaking, etc. These are called the silent brethren.” [...] “I would say that they were as free of and dead to the world and sin within them as they think they are to the outer world. By this I mean love of self, spiritual pride, absolute certainty, thoughtless judgement, their pretense to piety, desire to be admired, and the whole spiritual concern with self and hypocrisy, which, I fear, is not a little present.”³⁸

Franck’s writing considered Anabaptist religious life riddled with so many rules that common emotions of happiness and desire were shunned due to their concern with externals, but he also saw that they wanted a life dedicated to faith and morality. As Ulinka Rublack notes, for some religious groups of the Reformation, “commodities

³⁷ Paul Glock, “Letter to his Wife Else (1563),” in SSGAA, 312.

³⁸ Sebastian Frank, “On the Anabaptists (1536),” in SSGAA, 236; 239-40.

became loaded with an emotional language of what was socially right or wrong.”³⁹

“Foolishness was associated with sinfulness[...] but also with relief from rigorous social conventions and straight morals. Without foolishness, seriousness and melancholy threatened to overtake; life became lifeless.”⁴⁰ Although this behavior was confusing to outsiders, for Anabaptists, the “ethicization of faith” became a goal that everybody was supposed to strive for along their path to salvation.

Coming of Age and Education for Men

Anabaptist masculinity was shaped by the forms of behavior expected of all Anabaptists, but also by general societal expectations for men. In late medieval and Reformation Europe, boyhood and adolescence were critical early stages of life that shaped masculinity. A boy’s upbringing and his education taught young men masculine ideals and expectations for adult life. The transition from childish behavior to maturity functioned as the primary process of turning boys into men; therefore, in this culture, childhood was perceived as the opposite of manhood.⁴¹ During the teenage years a young man learned the importance of intelligent and rational control, male strength, and skills that embodied physical expression, like horse-riding.⁴² Ulinka Rublack argues, “The progression from youth to adulthood was constructed as a surprisingly drawn-out process for early sixteenth century upper-class men, which could continue into their thirties. Male youth, in fact, only ended properly with marriage, with being head of a household. Before

³⁹ Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 31.

⁴⁰ Rublack, 76.

⁴¹ Karras, *From Boys To Men*, 89; 153.

⁴² Rublack, 42.

this, men's sexual identity was not yet bound to clear-cut ideals of honorable virtue, as it was for women."⁴³

Like young men from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, the adolescent years for Anabaptists were critical in shaping masculinity. However, unlike boys from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, Anabaptists were raised with somewhat different notions of manliness. Morality, honesty, responsibility, and devotion to God were the qualities expected of boys and young men in all religious traditions, but in Anabaptist communities these were especially powerful.

One aspect of manliness that was different for Anabaptist boys than for Catholics and Lutherans was education. Most Anabaptists were against advanced book-learning and university education. This anti-intellectual tone likely stemmed from the fact that the overwhelming majority of Anabaptist men were peasants and farmers, or burghers and artisans/craftsmen. Many communities and missionaries had found converts among the lower, less educated classes of society. This was intentional. Anabaptists were proud of their simple lifestyle. Higher education and time spent reading books other than the New Testament undermined devotion to God. Gabriel Ascherham argued, "We have had universities for fifteen hundred years, but they had only prevented people from finding their salvation."⁴⁴ In a similar view Hans Hut claimed:

"For this reason St. Paul writes his epistles and circular letters to each congregation according to their particular need. To the worldly and creaturely he wrote differently than to the mature and instructed brothers, and differently to the sensual wiseacres than to the weak, etc... the Scripture-clever preachers preach[...] but omit to mention what is

⁴³ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁴ Irwin, xix-xx.

necessary to receive it. Thus they create an indolent and impudent people in whom there is no improvement.”⁴⁵

In Hut’s opinion, theologians who were well-versed in Scripture failed to understand that Paul’s epistles were meant to guide and instruct people towards morally improved lives. Learned men, too busy preaching and reading books, were distracted from the real message of the New Testament, which taught that true Christians were internally improved through faith and not through higher education. Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen believed books had a tendency to lead the reader outward rather than inward, thus not producing true Christians.⁴⁶

This opposition to higher education did not extend to basic literacy. Sigrun Haude argues, in fact, that bible-centered Anabaptists groups “took the educational impetus the furthest” because they taught lower-class children to read.⁴⁷ Children of Anabaptists were educated to receive a basic knowledge in catechetical and Bible reading. South German and Austrian Anabaptists used the Apostles’ Creed and Lord’s Prayer for Catechetical instruction.⁴⁸ Although persecution of Anabaptists in southern Germany and Switzerland prevented many communities from establishing formal schools, in Holland the Mennonites

⁴⁵ Hans Hut, “Comparing and Interpreting Divine Scripture: A Christian Instruction given in the power of the Holy Spirit together with the three parts of Christian Faith and how they are to be understood (1527),” in SSGAA, 34.

⁴⁶ Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen, “A Christian Order of a True Christian: Giving an Account of the Origin of his Faith (1524),” in SSGAA, 18

⁴⁷ Haude, “Gender Roles and Perspectives,” 440-443.

⁴⁸ See Eitelhans Langenmantel’s, “An Anonymous Anabaptist Sermon & An Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer (ca. 1527),” in SSGAA, 111.

organized secular schools in hopes of preventing “a Calvinist indoctrination of their children.”⁴⁹

Reading played an important role in the education of Anabaptist children, because it was essential for participation in Anabaptist religious services. Rather than listening to a sermon, Anabaptists read and interpreted the Scriptures hermeneutically. Most boys and girls learned to read from the Bible. All communities used memorization of passages from Scripture and the Lord’s Prayer as a form of education, studying them and circulating them within everyday conversation.⁵⁰ Anybody had the right to read from the New Testament and spark discussion about Scripture. In Hutterite communities the members responsible for addressing Scripture were called “readers” or “servants of the Word.”⁵¹

Among the Anabaptist groups, the Hutterites in Moravia had one of the most organized educational systems for younger boys and girls. Hutterite children of five years and younger were first weaned and then entered a junior school headed by a school mother. Children ages six through twelve went to a senior school supervised by a master. Boys older than twelve spent their time learning a specific trade.⁵²

Hutterite communities, as a rule, separated children from their families to be educated in separate schools organized by the community. This suggests that their leaders preferred a “communal rather than familial upbringing.”⁵³ Fracturing traditional kinship

⁴⁹ Irwin, 127.

⁵⁰ See Andrew Karlstadt, “Whether One Should Proceed Slowly,” in Baylor, 59; Hans Nadler, “Declaration of the Needle Merchant Hans at Erlangen and the Refutation of the Articles of the Needle Merchant Hans (1529),” in SSGAA, 138.

⁵¹ Goertz, 80.

⁵² Darlage, “Double Honor,” 769.

⁵³ Haude, 445.

networks and child rearing by parents in Hutterite communities methodically weakened the nuclear family, thereby strengthening communal ties and loyalty.⁵⁴ The manner in which Hutterite children were educated was intended as a means of producing humble and spiritual followers in support of the congregation. This also meant that Hutterite boys were raised to place priority on the community over the family or individual.

Men more often than women received a higher education in Anabaptist communities. The common belief that one should utilize his “talent” in order to provide for the community was a highly gendered doctrine that intertwined education and work together. Girls were often taught specifically to read but not to write, which was usually reserved for boys who were to learn a craft by becoming an apprentice of an adult male in the community.⁵⁵ While visiting his sister Sarah at a Hutterite community, Stephan Gerlach commented, “For all Anabaptist settlements have a school in which they place children above two years (up to this point they remain with their mothers) in order to learn to pray and read; other than this they do not study. The daughters commonly learn only prayer, not much writing; the boys, however, learn to read and write until they are a little older when they are allowed to learn a handicraft or some other work.”⁵⁶

The writing skills required for a boy to learn a trade solidified a bond within him to the male community and formed a part of his identity on his way to becoming a man. An apprentice learned to dedicate his time to the community and let go of personal

⁵⁴ D. Jonathan Grieser, “The Household Divided against Itself: Anabaptists and their Families in Tyrol, 1536-60,” in *Piety and Family in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Steven Ozment*, ed. Marc R. Foster and Benjamin J. Kaplan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 141. In agreement with Sigrun Haude and Adam Darlage, Grieser acknowledges that “Children were taken away from their parents as soon as they were weaned and placed in the 24-hour care of ‘professionals’. As the Hutterites were creating in their communal life an economic alternative to the single-family household, so, too, were they developing a social alternative to the family.”

⁵⁵ For examples, see Ambrosius Spitelmaier, “Questions and Answers of Ambrosius Spitelmaier (1527),” in *SSGAA*, 55; Hans Hergot, “On the New Transformation of the Christian Life,” in *Baylor*, 213.

⁵⁶ “Report of Stephan Gerlach on his Visit to the Hutterites, September 22-23, 1578,” in *Irwin*, 131.

desires. More men than women were able to write as the wide range of Anabaptist pamphlets, treatises, and letters by male authors indicates. Learning to write for adolescent boys was part of the process of becoming a man; whereas, for women, it could offer the opportunity to express opinions, which males likely saw as threatening or regarded as of little concern.⁵⁷ In addition, many Anabaptist men became wandering preachers, spreading the divine word through letters and pamphlets, while others frequently wrote to fellow brethren who had been incarcerated. The strong connection between writing and occupation in Anabaptist groups represents essential male-specific behaviors.

Memorization of Scriptures was perhaps the most vital learning pursuit of male adolescents in Anabaptist communities. Boys were taught that persecution and suffering were intrinsic to the Anabaptist faith, since many Anabaptist men had to defend their faith against Catholic and Protestant councils in an effort to save their lives against accusations of heresy. Although he had not been formally educated and could not read, the Anabaptist Hans Nadler's testimony against the authorities at Erlangen "reveals an elaborate 'oral text' that he had committed to memory and that he had utilized when he engaged potential converts."⁵⁸ Acquiring the basic knowledge needed to defend adult baptism against clerical authorities and acknowledge suffering as a part of the faith should be seen as an education process for male youths, part of their process of becoming a mature adult.

⁵⁷ Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History, Global Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 181. Wiesner-Hanks argues, "Reading and writing were taught separately, with girls who were taught to read often not to write because they attended school for a shorter time than their brothers. Writing was also more expensive to learn. Teaching women to read but not to write was the result not only of an economic decision on the part of parents, but also of contemporary notions about the ideal woman."

⁵⁸ Hans Nadler, "Declaration of the Needle Merchant Hans at Erlangen and the Refutation of the Articles of the Needle Merchant Hans (1529)," in *SSGAA*, 136-138.

Labor

During the Reformation, organized male labor was often corporatively affirmed and could take on deep religious notions. Guilds were often affiliated with confraternities that performed charitable works and religious services for the civic community. Merry Wiesner-Hanks argues, “male piety, both Catholic and Protestant, was ‘old-fashioned’—corporate, external, public and tied to good workmanship, if not necessarily good works.”⁵⁹ In this way, work was a medium through which men thought about and practiced their religion.

The relationship between work and religion was understood differently by Catholic, Protestant, and Anabaptist men. Profit gained through business transactions was a point of contention. The charging of interest was forbidden by canon law, which remained an official rule among Catholics during the sixteenth century, although it was often ignored. Protestants, however, officially allowed Christians to charge interest, although they limited the rate. C. Arnold Synder argues, “In this sense, Protestantism was leaning towards the coming “modern” (secular) economic world, based as it would be on the accumulation of capital.”⁶⁰ Anabaptists, on the other hand, rejected the idea of accumulating capital through collecting interest. They related economic matters directly with spiritual life, part of their more ethical approach to social relations among Christians. This view stemmed in part from the Bible, and in part from medieval monastic ideals about a social and ascetic life that followed true faith. For Anabaptists,

⁵⁹ Merry Wiesner-Hanks, “The Religious Dimensions of Guild Notions of Honor in Reformation Germany,” in *Ehrkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit: Identitäten und Abgrenzungen*, eds. Sibylle Backmann, Hans-Jörg Künast, Sabine Ullmann, and B. Ann Tlusty (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 233.

⁶⁰ C. Arnold Synder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press; rpt. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995), 226.

then, sufficiency was favored over surplus; if a surplus was gained through work, it was to be given charitably to other Christians in need.⁶¹

The Anabaptist rejection of economic profit was a matter of Biblical doctrine calling for honest and ethical behavior in dealing with other Christians. Fraud was not acceptable. Christians were to care and provide for others in need. The moral improvement of Christians by the Holy Spirit was to have real, tangible economic implications. For Menno Simmons, this meant that Christians were ruled by the Spirit of Christ that would compel them to love God and their neighbors. This was a new way of understanding social and economic relationships. “Joyful self-sacrifice, service and love” were duties and expectations for men who devoted their lives to following Christ.⁶²

Working as a missionary around Linz, Ambrosius Spitelmaier described this attitude towards faith and work:

“When I or someone else meets someone who is not of our faith, I just ask him whether he is a Christian[...] whether any among them lack food and clothing, whether they have brotherly discipline among themselves[...] and if one desires to know, then we show him the will of God clearly through all created things, to each one through his trade according to the trade he has (John 12; 15; Matt. 4; Luke 9; Matt. 21). Christ also taught that he should learn his will through his trade as though it were a book that God had given to him. A woman learns this through the flax which she spins or through some other work in the house which she does daily. In sum, our teaching is[...] to help people understand spiritual things through visible things.”⁶³

Anabaptist men comprehended their daily work in spiritual ways that implied service to God and the community. They believed God was present in all things and all human relations, therefore one should always labor diligently to reflect how the power of

⁶¹ Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 227.

⁶² Snyder, 246-248.

⁶³ Ambrosius Spitelmaier, “Questions and Answers of Ambrosius Spitelmaier (1527),” in SSGAA, 55.

the Holy Spirit compels a man to understand work as an expression of faith. Hans Hut addressed this belief, stating:

“One must reflect how Christ always showed the Kingdom of heaven and the power of the father to the common man: in creatures, through parables, through craftwork, and through all the manner of work that people do. He did not direct the poor man to books, as our uncomprehending scribes do now. Rather he taught them the gospel, and illustrated it, through their work—to the peasants by their fields, seed, thistles, thorns and rocks.”⁶⁴

For Hut, work was an expression of religious devotion. A man’s labor was deeply connected to notions of piety. Balthasar Hubmaier voiced a similar argument, writing, “we do not all have one office. Instead, one should take the lead in teaching, another in protecting, a third in cultivating the earth, a fourth in making shoes and clothing. But all these works should flow from faith and be made useful to our neighbors.”⁶⁵ Each man, according to his own talent, should work to honor God, help those in need, and provide sustenance for the community.

Anabaptist men were to take pride in their work. They were to be honest, efficient, and produce quality commodities if their profession called for it. Laziness was especially scorned. Andrew Karlstadt wrote, “God also complained about lazy people and threatened to punish such negligent people.” “There is a time when we should awaken and be busy. There is a time for sleeping. If there are poor people, we should help [them.] We must always come to the assistance of the poor, destitute, the imprisoned, the naked, and the like.”⁶⁶ Karlstadt’s admonition to his followers indicated that idleness was not

⁶⁴ Hans Hut, “On the Mystery of Baptism,” in Baylor, 157.

⁶⁵ Balthasar Hubmaier, “On the Sword,” in Baylor, 205.

⁶⁶ Andreas Karlstadt, “Whether One Should Proceed Slowly,” in Baylor, 56-61.

proper Christian behavior and therefore not tolerated. Each man was to do his part in providing for his community.

Many male converts during the early years of the Anabaptist movement were farmers, artisans, and craftsmen. Outside of the leadership group of priests and missionaries, very few men worked skilled occupations that required a university education. (One exception was the civil engineer Pilgram Marpeck.) Most were needle-makers, servants, masons, carpenters, printers, glass painters, bakers, millers, etc. These occupations were viewed as practical and necessary for the support of the community; therefore, most boys around the age of twelve in Anabaptist communities began apprenticeships in one of these trades under an elder.

Among the Hutterites in Moravia, men who were not assigned positions in the church worked in a craft or farmed for maximum productivity. A number of these men were converts who had immigrated to Moravia; they were assigned jobs regardless of their former professional background or skills. In Hutterite communities, Adam Darlage comments, “the lower floors of its larger buildings were primarily used for craft production regulated by specific guild-type regulations called *Ordnungen*. These regulations were established to regularize work practices and ensure quality control amongst the various trades.”⁶⁷

The considerable freedom and land given to the Hutterites was based on economic arrangements with Moravian lords, who demanded each *Bruderhöfe* pay taxes. Because of their hard work, the Hutterite communities in Moravia became extremely wealthy, and this wealth was likely one reason that religious tolerance continued. New converts

⁶⁷ Darlage, “Double Honor,” 767-768.

continuously added labor power and revenue to the communities, and Hutterites also provided cheap labor to other Christians. Taxes on products that they bought as a result of their labor were issues at times for Hutterites, however, who thought they were being taken advantage of. Paul Glock wrote to Hutterite leader Peter Walpot in 1571:

“Further it is my humble opinion that if the rulers were to seek and exact the tenth penny or whatever they want whenever you buy anything, since you must buy much grain for the whole community, it seems to me that wherever possible when the brethren work for the lords or the burghers they take only grain as payment[...] This should be for any kind of worker, carpenters, masons, and hewers, wherever one works for the heathens. Thus I believe that you won’t need to give a tenth or, as they call it, Turk money.”⁶⁸

Rather than being subject to taxes that aided violence against the Ottoman Turks, Glock suggested a loophole that allowed Hutterite laborers to be paid in grain rather than a taxed wage. This compromise not only allowed Hutterite men to continue to provide grain to their communities, it also meant that their labor would not directly contribute to warfare—a venture not permissible in Anabaptist doctrine.

Adult Baptism and the Male Experience

Adult baptism was the foundation of the Anabaptist faith. It was a ritual that expressed rejection of infant baptism and allowed new converts to be admitted into the congregation, and it had profound ramifications for how a person was to live his or her life thereafter. Above all, adult baptism, sometimes referred to as “believer’s baptism” or re-baptism, was the rebirth of new life; a “regeneration by the spirit”. It was a ritual that allowed people to become new persons as a result of an internal connection with the Holy Spirit. C. Arnold Synder argues, “the outer baptism was a sign that an individual had in

⁶⁸ Paul Glock, “Letter to Peter Walpot (1571),” in SSGAA, 350-351.

fact consciously “yielded” inwardly to the working of God—something no infant could possibly do.”⁶⁹ This was more than a religious ritual; it was a sign of the covenant with God, which was at the core of the Anabaptist process of salvation.⁷⁰

Surviving letters and pamphlets from Anabaptist men report their personal experiences and discuss adult baptism’s symbolic nature as a ritual spiritually changing their masculine identity. This spiritual change in men affected how they thought and behaved, and what they held most sacred. It was described as a rite of passage: a process ending one stage of life and beginning another. The ritual thereby created strong bonds between men, allowing their initiation into the congregation. Adult baptism symbolized a covenant with God, who guided these men to form drastically new lifestyles. For Anabaptist men, adult baptism was the sign of innovative thinking and behavior, which led to their construction of moral masculinities.

Many Anabaptist men wrote about “the threefold baptism”, a process that connected the experience of baptism with the beginning and end of a true Christian life. The inner baptism of the Spirit, water baptism, and the baptism of blood made up the threefold process.⁷¹ The first two stages, inner and water baptism, reflected the experience of adult baptism taken upon entering the community. The baptism of blood, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4, concerned the widely accepted notion that true followers of Christ experienced tribulation and suffering in the same manner Jesus

⁶⁹ Snyder, 45-46.

⁷⁰ Goertz, 78.

⁷¹ Balthasar Hubmaier, “A Short Justification, (1526),” in *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources* ed. Walter Klaassen (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981), 166.

had.⁷² Balthasar Hubmaier's "The Sum of a Christian Life," described threefold baptism in detail. Discussing the first two stages, Hubmaier wrote:

"After man has inwardly and in faith surrendered himself to the new life he confesses it openly and externally before the Christian church into which he allows himself to be inscribed according to the order and establishment of Christ. In doing so, he indicates to the Christian church [...] that he has already surrendered himself according to the Word, will, and rule of Christ to live henceforth for him, to regulate all his actions according to him[...]" "He has also decided and already inwardly given his intention that from this time on he will change and improve his life, and that he confess this openly in the reception of the water."⁷³

"Baptism of the Spirit" for Hubmaier was an inward enlightenment of a man's heart and soul, which was caused by the Holy Spirit, and achieved through his knowledge of Scripture, "the living Word of God."⁷⁴ The second part, water baptism, was only a symbolic action that made internal baptism externally perceptible to the congregation by washing of the flesh with water.

Sources by Anabaptist men during the Reformation indicate that they chose the age at which they underwent adult baptism in imitation and tribute to Christ. They interpreted Jesus as a man in the flesh who received the holy covenant by John the Baptist at the age of thirty. In retelling memories of baptism, numerous Anabaptist men plainly confirmed that they were the same age at their baptism as Christ had been. Ambrosius Spitelmaier wrote, "When I was baptized, I was 30 years old, like Jesus when he was baptized in the Jordan."⁷⁵ Felix Manz's "Protest and Defense" argued against infant baptism and claimed, "It is also contrary to the example of Christ, who was

⁷² Klaassen, *Anabaptism in Outline*, 162.

⁷³ Balthasar Hubmaier, "The Sum of a Christian Life," in Klaassen, 166.

⁷⁴ Balthasar Hubmaier, "A Christian Instruction, 1526-1526," in Klaassen, 167.

⁷⁵ Ambrosius Spitelmaier, "Questions and Answers of Ambrosius Spitelmaier, 1527," in SGAA, 57.

baptized when he was thirty years old. Now Christ has presented us with an example, and as he has done, so we should do as well.”⁷⁶

Ulinka Rublack notes in the sixteenth-century, “It was commonly believed that people would arise from death with the body they had had around the age of thirty.”⁷⁷ Thirty was also the age regarded as the peak of masculine maturity, whereas old age for men was reached in the late forties. For men, youth only ended properly with marriage and managing a household, and therefore in larger society and especially for upper-class men, the progression from youth to adulthood was constructed as a drawn out process continuing into their thirties. For Anabaptist men, the sacrament of “adult” baptism indicated initiation into adult life and maturity.⁷⁸

Melchoir Hoffman’s “Ordinance of God” (1530) described adult baptism also as a rite of passage for young men. Hoffman wrote, “It is the sign of the covenant of God, instituted solely for the old, the mature, and the rational, who can receive, assimilate, and understand the teaching and preaching of the Lord, and not for the immature, uncomprehending, and unreasonable, who cannot receive, learn, or understand the teaching of the apostolic emissaries: such are immature children.”⁷⁹ Therefore, male teens and young men in their twenties acknowledged that they would become fully masculine when they reached the mature age required to receive adult baptism.

⁷⁶ Felix Manz, “Protest and Defense” in Baylor, 99. For additional Anabaptist authors concerned with the age of thirty, see Hans Hergot, “On the New Transformation of the Christian Life,” in Baylor, 214; “Refutation of the Articles of the Needle Merchant Hans. February 1, 1529,” in SSGAA, 151; Goertz, “Radical Religiosity in the Reformaton,” 78. Goertz finds that Andrew Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer, both spiritualist men that had large influences on the Anabaptist movement, argued that baptism should be delayed until the age of six or seven. They were of the opinion that baptism must stand in relation to the internally observable salvation in a fundamental way.

⁷⁷ Rublack, 38.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 35; 74.

⁷⁹ Melchior Hoffman, “Ordinance of God (1530),” in Klaassen, 174.

Men also related baptism to a ‘transition’ experience, a ‘dying’ of the old man—the false Christian—and rebirth of a new, true believer.⁸⁰ Felix Manz wrote that Anabaptists “take on a new life, lay aside sins, are buried with Christ, and rise with him from the baptism of new life, [since] baptism is nothing else than a dying of the old man and a putting on of a new.”⁸¹ On a similar note Hans Hut claimed,

“He even thinks frequently that he has been abandoned by the Creator and will perish utterly. Then, for the first time, a person becomes aware of faith. He is dead, dispirited, in hell with Christ, condemned to the whale’s belly[...] This kind of thing happens not only once but many times in life. It is the judgment by which his natural life is changed, he is cut to shape and planed, removing all pleasure and love for the world and the creatures, and prepared for the house of God [and] the goodness and mercy of the Holy Spirit to whom no one can come except through the water of tribulation and the bath of rebirth, by which he is reborn a child of God and brother of Christ.”⁸²

This transition was the passing of one stage of life to a “born again” existence: from darkness to light, from adolescent to adult, immature to mature, sinner to pure soul, beast to human, and weakness to strength. Hans Denck argued, “Those who want to be new men and do not want to give up their old life are like sows that have been washed and then wallow in the mud again (2 Peter 2[:22]).”⁸³ The male experience of adult baptism was a process by which men reached manhood, and washed away the sins of their past life. Mennonite leader Dietrich Philips claimed, “This rebirth does not take

⁸⁰ Goertz, 77.

⁸¹ Felix Manz, “Petition of Defense, Zürich, 1524,” in *The European Reformation Sourcebook* ed. Carter Lindburg (Malden, Mas.: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000), 129. For a similar translation, see Felix Manz, “Protest and Defense,” in Baylor, 98.

⁸² Hans Hut, “Comparing and Interpreting Divine Scripture: A Christian Instruction given in the power of the Holy Spirit together with the three parts of Christian Faith and how they are to be understood, 1527,” in SSGAA, 32-33; Hans Hut, “On the Mystery of Baptism,” in Baylor, 167.

⁸³ Hans Denck, “On the Law of God,” in Baylor, 140.

place outwardly, but in the understanding, mind, and heart of man.”⁸⁴ Philips’ comment is essential to understanding this change among Anabaptists. Men believed they were reborn internally with a new conscious attitude towards living a more spiritual life.

The water of the sacrament was also symbolic of improvement and purification. One of the key criticisms of Anabaptists towards the Magisterial Reformation was its failure to bring about a moral improvement in society. Anabaptists saw adult baptism as the end of a long process of inner struggle with one’s faith. Only after first leading themselves to thoughts of dismay, abandonment, and even doubt were the chosen ready to receive the covenant.⁸⁵ Although water is not gendered, some Anabaptists saw it as a parallel to circumcision, a gendered ritual. While held in prison in Rotherberg in 1536, Edres Keller wrote “From the outward sign I look towards the inner; in baptism, which is now our sign of covenant, as in circumcision which was the Jewish sign of the covenant.”⁸⁶

Anabaptists viewed the water in baptism simply as an outward display, but symbolically baptism represented the final step towards inner enlightenment and a purification of “creaturely” or worldly desires. This was a spiritual and ethical improvement that rationalized a life of humility and piety, in which all objects of desire and lust were renounced in favor of a yieldedness (*gelassenheit*) of the self for both

⁸⁴ Dietrich Philips, “The Church of God, c. 1560,” in Williams and Mergal, 234.

⁸⁵ For example, see Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen’s “A Christian Order of a True Christian: Giving an Account of the Origin of his Faith (1524),” in SSGAA, 20; Leonard Schiemer’s “Letter to the Church of God at Rattenberg (1527),” in SSGAA, 64-66.

⁸⁶ Edres Keller, “Confession of the Prisoner, Anabaptist Endres Keller (Kentlein) in Rotherberg, 1536,” in SSGAA, 199.

women and men.⁸⁷ Hans Hut's vivid description of the process of *gelassenheit* highlighted this spiritual improvement:

“So, to those who live for a renewal of their lives, baptism is not only a submersion and drowning, but a joyous departure from the wavering wishes and impulses of our own desires. Through the dying-out of the old man[...] Then, in patient waiting (*Langen weil*) of his time.” [...] “God pushes us into many kinds of tribulations, so that they sweep lusts out of us and lead us to indifference (*gelassenheit*) to all worldly activities.”⁸⁸

According to Michael Baylor, *Langen weil* was a term Hut derived from the late medieval German mystical tradition, and perhaps from Thomas Müntzer. In this sense, it implied a detachment from the physical world and boredom towards personal possessions. *Gelassenheit* was also a mystical term that described a state of calm toward pleasures of the world.⁸⁹

The Anabaptist belief of improvement and purification through *gelassenheit* was, as Jans-Jürgen Goertz claims, an “ethicization” of faith for the Brethren.⁹⁰ *Gelassenheit* was a religious experience that was supposed to change men's consciousness and attitude about life by prioritizing the spiritual over the material, and was demonstrated through moral behavior. This belief was represented in the writing of the Hutterite priest Hans Schlaffer. Viewed as “a highly gifted” man by his community, Schlaffer wrote:

“water baptism should be given after the knowledge of and faith in Christ because Christ himself received baptism from John the Baptist for the first time in the thirtieth year of his life (Matt. 3:13-15; Mark 1:9) [it is] a sign

⁸⁷ Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen's “A Christian Order of a True Christian: Giving an Account of the Origin of his Faith (1524),” in SSGAA, 13. Haugk von Jüchsen described this as “the spirit of God, who strengthens the person according to that person's yielded strength (*gelassene kraft*). At this point one becomes courageous and upright (*rechtschaffen*).”

⁸⁸ Hans Hut, “On the Mystery of Baptism,” in Baylor, 167-170.

⁸⁹ Baylor, 167-170.

⁹⁰ Goertz, 76.

by which Christians make themselves known to each other by public confession. By this each of them will be prepared to give Christian, brotherly love to each other following the command of Christ. This involves teaching, admonishing, disciplining, excluding, binding, loosing and the like. This is the most necessary... if the church, congregation or gathering of Christ is to remain the virgin and bride of her bridegroom without spot or wrinkle (Matt. 25:1-13)⁹¹

Moral improvement occurred spiritually within the man, but was to be expressed externally throughout the community by means of communal love, teaching, admonishment, and discipline.

Adult baptism as a public ritual was also essential for membership in the Hutterite Church and community. Hutterite leader, Peter Rideman, claimed “since in baptism the man’s sins are left behind and forgiven, and the Church hath the key, this should take place before the Church.”⁹²

Anabaptists practiced baptism in peculiar settings that also held a special significance for the power of the ritual. Unlike infants who received the sacrament at the baptismal font, Anabaptists often baptized men and women in large milk tubs like the one in Waldshut. Even more frequent were baptisms that took place in lakes and rivers, which linked Anabaptist rituals with Christ’s baptism in the Jordan.⁹³ This was also done to demonstrate a rejection of Catholic and magisterial Protestant ceremonies, which they believed did little to signify the true meaning of baptism. For men, being baptized in a river or lake could heighten the male experience of following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Adult baptism was also a public ritual in which the congregation witnessed a member

⁹¹ Hans Schlaffer, “A Brief Instruction for the Beginning of a Truly Christian Life and Confession and Defense, 1528,” in SSGAA, 93. It is this last section that Schlaffer also writes about the three-fold baptism of believers; the baptism of Spirit, water, and fire. It is a public confession, to be made in adulthood, or after one’s thirtieth birthday (n. 82).

⁹² Peter Rideman, *Account of our Religion, Doctrine and Faith: Given By Peter Rideman Of The Brothers Whom Men Call Hutterians* (New York: Plough Publishing House, 1970), 80.

⁹³ Goertz, 80.

officially join the Church as an adult. Rivers and lakes were venues where the “social magic” of the religious ritual appeared more authentic to participants as well as to the collective audience of witnesses.⁹⁴

From the outsiders’ view, adult baptism was heterodox and had dangerous effects on society. Luther identified Anabaptists as *Schwärmer* (unruly subjects), mistakenly linking them to the fanaticism of Thomas Müntzer and his threatening prophecy.⁹⁵ Zwingli was more informed about Anabaptists, but remained unsympathetic. He wrote that because of adult baptism, “they are committed absolutely to the view that they can and do live without sin. How far that claim is borne out by their envy, lying, clamor, evil-speaking and blasphemy I leave on one side.”⁹⁶ In his view, the Anabaptist belief concerning improvement was exaggerated to the idea of human perfection, as some men claimed they could not err in matters of faith. As a result, this led to quarrels, fighting, lies, and other problems.

Zwingli’s comment about disputes among Anabaptist men had some truth to it. Many Anabaptist leaders disagreed at times about correct doctrine or proper methods for baptizing converts, and this often led to dissention among congregations. Hans Schlaffer wrote about such a case that happened in Austria: “When they baptized at Nicholsburg they began by first preaching to the assembly, after which they baptized whoever came and desired it. No personal witness or confirmation of faith was required. For this reason

⁹⁴ R.W. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: The Hambleton Press, 1987), 120-121. Scribner argues that rituals are forms of learned behavior, which are acted and learned in and through popular practices and popular belief. They work through symbolizing processes by which whatever is indicated symbolically is made metaphysically worthwhile. The time, place, and persons involved and experiencing ritual processes and popular rites could all affect their metaphysical and symbolic significance.

⁹⁵ For a detailed study of the Lutheran view of Anabaptism, see John S. Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists: Luther, Melancthon, and Menius and the Anabaptists of Central Germany* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).

⁹⁶ Ulrich Zwingli, “On Baptism (May 27, 1525),” in Lindburg, 131.

our dear brother Hans Hut protested to doctor Balthasar, the result of which was a deep split between him and the brothers there.”⁹⁷ The example at Nicholsburg suggests that during the early years of the movement, an unknown percentage of Anabaptist converts had very little knowledge of the faith before they received adult baptism. Most did understand why they were being baptized as adults, however, and understood this as a transition experience and rite of passage. For men, baptism confirmed adulthood and brought with it new ideas about masculinity that prioritized first his faith in God.

⁹⁷ “Confession and Defense of Hans Schlaffer Given Twice to the Government and Authority in Innsbruck. How he began to believe and the reason for his baptism. Part 2,” in SSGAA, 107.

Chapter 2: Household and Community

In early modern Europe, patriarchal order was supported by learned philosophical notions about differences in gender qualities as well as contemporary popular culture. The ancient philosophies of Aristotle and Galen, common among intellectuals, both viewed man as superior by associating him with heat, the most powerful force in the body. Aristotle had asserted the “one-sex model,” claiming that women produced no semen and therefore provided no form, intellect, or spirit to a fetus. Galen suggested a “two-sex model” in which women did produce semen for the fetus, yet their contribution was still not as essential as men’s. Women were perceived as less than perfect beings, while men naturally endeavor for perfection and therefore are able to maintain better self-control. According to this logic, males were the essential parent and more qualified for authority.⁹⁸ Augustinian theology also supported gender differences, identifying “man as the mind, but the woman as the sense of the body,” thus suggesting women were lustful and men rational.⁹⁹ Around the time of the Reformation, popular culture identified women as weak and more vulnerable to demonic possession. They were labeled temptresses, unruly, and naturally inclined to provoke evil.¹⁰⁰ Collectively, these ideas endowed manhood with power and responsibility.

The new secular religious groups and accusations of heresy that came about during the Reformation provoked restrictions on interpretative freedom that affected both genders, but especially married women. Men understood women as corruptible and therefore in need of guidance. Many women agreed, in the context of Anabaptism, Joyce

⁹⁸ Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender In History*, 88-89.

⁹⁹ Irwin, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Wiesner-Hanks, 124; Rublack, 58.

Irwin has argued, “We may be assured that the vast majority of women among radical Protestant groups were dutiful wives who fully accepted female subordination.”¹⁰¹

Because men were traditionally believed to be endowed with greater reason and valued for their moral leadership and adeptness at learning, patriarchy was firmly established in early modern Europe.¹⁰² Communal, religious, and civic life traditionally overlapped, and men were expected to exert their patriarchal power in all of these. By custom, adult men secured authority and were expected to provide pastoral and fatherly guidance to their towns, congregations, and families.

In the sixteenth century, Protestant preachers in the German lands promoted the model of patriarchy in pamphlets called *Hausväter* literature. Also during this century, humanists chided men to fulfill their masculine roles as fathers and civic gentlemen, arguing that a man unable to rule his family was unable to wield authority in the commonwealth.¹⁰³ In Central Europe, male religious experience tended to be more corporatively affirmed and organized than female. As in guilds, men in communities structured ordinances that included a large number of moral prescriptions linked to notions of piety and honor (*Redlichkeit* or *Ehrlichkeit*).¹⁰⁴ In this context, patriarchy was viewed as a system for order essential to the functioning of Germanic society, especially in terms of religion.

¹⁰¹ Irwin, 201; Haude, 443.

¹⁰² Ulinka Rublack, 20.

¹⁰³ Scott Hendrix, “Masculinity and Patriarchy in Reformation Germany,” in Hendrix and Karant-Nunn, 71. Also see Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Harvard University Press, 1983); Robert J. Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400-1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

¹⁰⁴ Wiesner-Hanks, “The Religious Dimensions of Guild Notions of Honor in Reformation Germany” in Backmann, Künast, Ullmann, and Tlusty, 228; 233; Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History*, 88-89, 97. “They (fathers, leaders) employed ideologies of kinship to mask their control over others, and hoped such language would encourage respect and obedience.”

Patriarchy also encompassed Anabaptism. This chapter will analyze the nature of patriarchal roles in Anabaptism during the sixteenth century, and focus on the expectations of Anabaptist men within their communities. I argue that male Anabaptists identified themselves as honest, responsible, and ethical patriarchs of their communities and families. This ethicization of faith constituted a “moral masculinity” that distinguished them from other Protestant or Catholic men. Expectations regarding daily behavior for Anabaptist men were modeled on the writings of biblical patriarchs. This link to the Bible follows the argument of George Hunston Williams who claimed Anabaptists “looked steadily into the past, finding their own image and ecclesiastical blueprints in the Bible and the martyr church of antiquity.”¹⁰⁵ In this chapter, I focus separately on the topics of community, patriarchy, fatherhood, servants, marriage, and heterosocial relationships, which can simplify the complexities of community and family life in Anabaptism. This approach offers a window into the social history and gender structure of Anabaptist communities.

Anabaptist men as church, community, and family patriarchs publicly advocated their ideology of moral improvement, responsibility, and piety in three ways. First, through their writings and their laws they regulated and prescribed proper behavior for men, women, and children. Secondly, their own comportment sometimes offered men and women in the Church an exemplary role-model for behavior. And third, church services and other day-to-day acts of spirituality communalized morality and communicated a sense of solidarity and belonging.¹⁰⁶ Steven Ozment and Scott Hendrix

¹⁰⁵ Irwin, xxix.

¹⁰⁶ Rublack, 95; 117-118. Rublack addresses this as a campaign to ‘communalize’ spirituality but does so through the analysis of clothing in bourgeois Lutheran communities and a general impetus during the Reformation as a whole.

have argued that patriarchal roles strengthened during the Protestant Reformation, and I also argue that male roles strengthened in Anabaptist communities where male leaders reaffirmed pastoral and fatherly roles in ways that were more demanding than those of their non-Anabaptist Protestant counterparts.

Community and Leadership

The Radical Reformation encompassed dozens of religious sects that varied in theology, behavior, and organization. At the heart of radical theology was the belief in religious freedom and the separation from princely or Magisterial rule. This included a rejection of the material world for the spiritual: a more ethical outlook on how communities *should* be formed and day-to-day affairs should operate. Because of this, and because they often practiced adult baptism, radicals were often persecuted, and therefore had to form congregations clandestinely.

Over-simplified labels have been applied to those religious groups characterized as radical, including the terms *Anabaptist* or *Spiritualist*.¹⁰⁷ All Anabaptists formed religious communities and practiced adult baptism, but to generalize further would fail to grasp the varied nature of the movement. Many Anabaptists, such as the Melchiorites who formed in Strasbourg and other sects in Augsburg and Nuremberg, openly preached and prophesized the End of Days.

Anabaptist sects that formed immediately after the German *Bauernkrieg* in Northwest and Central Germany, along the Rhine, and in various imperial free cities, also tended to be millenarian and prophetic. The most notorious of this camp, the Dutch

¹⁰⁷ See George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962) for labels and definitions of Anabaptist groups. Williams divides the movement into several “types” of Radicals including: Literal Biblicist, Spiritualists, Millenarians, Unitarians, Pacifists, and others.

Melchiorites, caused a sixteen-month legalized rebellion and military siege of the Westphalian city of Münster.¹⁰⁸

Other communities, including the Hutterite Brethren in Moravia and smaller circles in the Tyrol region of Austria were not as millenarian, but instead isolated themselves, and, at times, were able to formalize their own communes with minimal interference from local lords. Beginning in 1525 Anabaptists communities were formed throughout Switzerland, then in South Germany, Austria, and by 1532 as far as Moravia and the Low Countries. Anabaptist communities often were identified by either the region they settled or by their founding patriarch (*i.e.* Dutch Waterlanders or Davidites, after their leader David Joris). This chapter focuses on the Swiss Brethren, Hutterites, Mennonites, and smaller circles of Anabaptists from South Germany and Austria who chose to form their congregations in isolation from the world to spiritually and morally improve one-another through communal support.

Anabaptists such as the Swiss Brethren, Hutterites, and Mennonites held different communal structures, customs, and doctrinal beliefs, which meant that expectations for Anabaptist men and women could also vary between groups. Sigrun Haude claims “It should come as no surprise, then, that issues of gender, including an understanding of male and female roles, are similarly multifaceted and often defined differently depending on the specific Anabaptist and Spiritualist groups or movements, their location, and point

¹⁰⁸ For select works on Anabaptist Münster, see: R. Po-Chia Hsia, “Münster and Anabaptism,” in *The German People and the Reformation* ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1988); Sigrun Haude, *In the Shadow of “Savage Wolves”: Anabaptist Münster and the German Reformation During the 1530s* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Belfort Bax, *Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists* (New York: American Scholar Publications Inc., 1966); Anthony Arthur, *The Tailor King: The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

in time.”¹⁰⁹ Ideas about proper leadership roles varied among Anabaptist circles, as did the degree in which women were able to assert authority in communities.

Anabaptist men structured their communities to prescribe obedience to the Body of Christ on earth (the church) through social discipline and moral propriety, guided by brotherly admonitions and oversight. Patriarchal positions in Anabaptist communities were supposed to ensure moral standards of behavior and discipline disorderly members. The virtues of honesty and justice were standard concerns of Anabaptist patriarchs, who viewed themselves as masculine protectors and shepherds of God’s chosen flock. A Christian community, they thought, was supposed to keep tranquility and trust through laws. The influential Anabaptist leader in South Germany and Basel, Hans Denck, wrote:

“There are three forms of law, which Scripture call commandments, customs, and laws. Customs are external ordering, directed to the natural daily uses of people, so that they may be reminded of those things which are divine and eternal. True laws are those decisions which one makes between brother and brother, to protect the innocent and punish the unjust.”¹¹⁰

In Denck’s view, customary law had a religious function and purpose that was primarily concerned with matters of proper and ethical public behavior. Customary law was similar to community ordinances, like those established among Mennonite congregations in the Low Countries. The Mennonites assigned ministers (*Dieners*) to discover and punish improper and scandalous behavior.¹¹¹ In cases where an unruly member did not follow the directions of the ministers, the Mennonites sometimes imposed a public Ban, separating the person from the church and the community. In

¹⁰⁹ Haude, 426.

¹¹⁰ Hans Denck, “On the Law of God,” in Baylor, 147.

¹¹¹ Dietrich Phillips, “The Church of God, c. 1560,” in Williams and Mergal, 240.

comparison, Hutterites devised a more formal hierarchical system with two deacons in each community, one of Welfare, the other of the Word. These men were to “institute faithful house managers and stewards, who will faithfully move among the children and conduct themselves in a mild and fatherly manner.”¹¹²

Anabaptist ordinances also ensured economic security by means of a strong communal work ethic and, in some cases, a community of goods as this was understood to have existed in biblical times. Anabaptist leaders like Balthasar Hubmaier, Hans Hergot, and Ulrich Stadler viewed the “community of goods” in Acts 2, 4, and 5 as orthodox doctrine for communal living.¹¹³ As an early German advocate of Anabaptism, Hergot wrote, “Everything is bestowed for common use, so that people will eat from one pot, drink from one vessel, and obey one man insofar as it is necessary for the honor of God and the common good. And they will call this man whome they will obey a “sustainer of the community.”¹¹⁴ Thus some Anabaptist communities abolished private property in favor of egalitarianism and common use.

In Hutterite communities private property was considered selfish, greedy, and associated with the temporal world. Hutterite leader Ulrich Stadler argued: “Thus in this community everything must proceed equally, all things be one and communal, alike in the bodily gifts of their Father[...] Each member takes care for the other. In brief, a brother should serve, live, and work for the other, none for himself; indeed, one house for another, one community for another.” Stadler also instructed the Deacons of Welfare in

¹¹² Ulrich Stadler, “Cherished Instructions on Sin, Excommunication, and the Community of Goods, 1537,” in Williams and Mergal, 276-279. There were at least two kinds of Diaconates of the Word: the apostle who preached and gathered the saints and the minister of the Word who remained in the community.

¹¹³ Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 225.

¹¹⁴ Hans Hergot, “On the New Transformation of the Christian Life,” in Baylor, 212.

Hutterite communities, “as true men should be ordained who take care that everything proceeds equally in the whole house of the Lord, everywhere in all the households, lest one have and another want. They also should be fatherly with all the little children of God; and also do all the buying and selling for the community.”¹¹⁵

Hergot and Stadler both described a true Christian life as communal and selfless. Anabaptists were supposed to provide for one another, each contributing according to his or her own talents. Anabaptist theologian Balthasar Hubmaier supported this doctrine when he educated his church at Nikolsburg in Moravia: “we do not all have one office. Instead, one should take the lead in teaching, another in protecting, a third in cultivating the earth, a fourth in making shoes and clothing. But all these works should flow from faith and be made useful to our neighbors.”¹¹⁶

Patriarchal Leadership

Male leadership was standard in Anabaptism, formed by a patriarchal mentality in which men were viewed as protectors or “shepherds” of their flock. This mentality was compatible with Anabaptist family life, in which men retained spousal and paternal authority. Demographics researched by Claus-Peter Clasen reveal that men outnumbered women in most Anabaptist communities, contributing approximately 65 percent of the rank and file.¹¹⁷ Rules and codes of conduct within congregations were sometimes agreed

¹¹⁵ Ulrich Stadler, “Cherished Instructions on Sin, Excommunication, and the Community of Goods, 1537,” in Williams and Mergal, 277-278; 280-284.

¹¹⁶ Balthasar Hubmaier, “On the Sword,” in Baylor, 205.

¹¹⁷ Haude, 443.

or voted upon democratically, but this did not extend to women. As Joyce Irwin states “women remained entirely subordinate, both at home and in the church.”¹¹⁸

As shepherds and patriarchs of their communities, Anabaptist men wrote frequently about doctrine, the true nature of Godly life, and the proper organization of their communities. In the 1520s, influential leaders among the Swiss, South German, Austrian and Hutterite Brethren published manuscripts concerning community organization and ethics in order to more methodically shape members of their communities into God-fearing, pious Christians. The main documents admonishing Anabaptists in favor of a spiritual and disciplined life were the *Swiss Congregational Order* of 1527, Leonhard Schiemer’s *The Church Discipline* of 1527, Michael Sattler’s *Schleitheim Articles*, *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*, and Peter Rideman’s *Account of our Religion, Doctrine and Faith*. Through meticulous research, Werner Packull has proved that the congregational organization of the Swiss Anabaptists laid the foundational model later adapted by other groups as far as the Hutterite community in Austerlitz, Moravia.¹¹⁹ Here, I suggest that later groups also followed the Swiss model when they established community discipline practices and models of masculine behavior.

The *Schleitheim Articles* prescribed how leadership was to be organized among groups of Swiss Anabaptists. Michael Sattler quoted from Scripture: the “shepherd” of the church must be a morally upright person (1 Timothy 3:7); the shepherd will preside in the congregation in reading, exhortation, teaching, warning, admonishing, and in prayer

¹¹⁸ Irwin, xxi.

¹¹⁹ Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 33-46. The *Swiss Order* and *Schleitheim Articles* were known in Moravia because they entered Hutterite codices.

and administering the Lord's Supper.¹²⁰ Community patriarchs of Anabaptists were to model themselves in accordance with biblical doctrines, with an emphasis on morality, honesty, and a good reputation. They were to be pious and educated, and tend to their flock in all matters spiritual.

In many ways Anabaptist patriarchal leadership was similar to that in magisterial Protestant groups. Both were modeled on the biblical patriarchs. Calvin's consistory in Geneva and Bucer's *Christliche Gemeinschaft* in Strasbourg also mandated morality as essential to Christian life, enforced by patriarchal discipline and ordinances. But within magisterial Protestant groups, this was done through parish tribunals that enforced discipline publicly over a large religious community, with an emphasis on individual public authority. By contrast, Anabaptist leaders were to be the shepherds, sustainers, and *Dieners* (servants or ministers) of the community. This characterized a patriarchal responsibility deeply encribed with humility and morality. Patriarchs and "church elders" were honored members, but that honor derived from the community respect given to chosen men who possessed the ethical virtue and capability for leadership. Masculine identity as an Anabaptist patriarch was, then, conceived more in terms of community rather than individuality. Leadership emphasized the embodied virtues of morality, honesty, and wisdom rather than the ability to publicly wield authority as in the Lutheran or Reformed faiths.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 256.

¹²¹ See Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating The Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 82-84; 89-91.

Family Patriarchy

Scott Hendrix and Susan Karant-Nunn assert “By common consent—established long before the Reformation—only those men who married and suitably provided for their children were regarded by the public as fully masculine.”¹²² Ulinka Rublack agrees, arguing: “in this society, only a ‘householder’ who supported his family, and built up his own legitimate lineage, was considered a properly civil adult man. The Reformation debates that gripped Augsburg accentuated this view. To be an honorable man now more than ever before meant to be sexually active and deal with the responsibility of a household as its head, affirming one’s authority through both practices in the small commonweal, and thereby forming the basis of ordered society at large.”¹²³

Anabaptists also accepted that becoming husbands and fathers were essential stages of a man’s life. Educated leaders such as Balthasar Hubmaier and Menno Simmons defended patriarchal ideology with Aristotelian or Augustinian philosophy about fatherhood. In his reply to Gellius Faber in 1554, Menno followed Aristotelian logic, and claimed “the father is the real origin of his child and the mother the prepared field,” thereby claiming that fatherhood is of greater significance.¹²⁴ Menno also wrote, “woman is merely a passive field in the generative process; she contributes no seed to the child. Just as a seed is nourished by the soil in which it grows yet remains distinct in substance, so a child is nourished in its mothers womb, but can only be said to be in her, not of her.”¹²⁵

¹²² Hendrix and Karant-Nunn, eds., *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, xiv.

¹²³ Rublack, 57.

¹²⁴ Menno Simmons, “Reply to Gellius Faber (1554),” in Irwin, 4.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

Instead of philosophical rationales, however, most Anabaptist men supported patriarchal authority by citing Scripture, where answers to questions about life, rules, and morals were found. Even Hubmaier articulated a more theological argument centered on biblical passages: “God said to Eve, ‘You shall be under man’s authority, and he will rule over you.’”¹²⁶ Swiss, South German, Austrian, and Hutterite Brethren all cited Pauline doctrine for matters concerning familial patriarchy.¹²⁷ Hutterite leader Ulrich Stadler admonished his fellow brethren to “be true, faithful house managers and dispensers, and all things would be nicely arranged, as Paul shows.”¹²⁸

Being head of a household formed an essential part of Anabaptist masculinity, where spousal and fatherly guidance were duties carried out with “manly feeling.” Anabaptist men were responsible for the maintenance of their houses and moral guidance of their wives and children.¹²⁹ Wolfgang Brandhuber, a priest in the Tyrol region of Austria who influenced many early Hutterarian Anabaptists, instructed his congregation:

“every head of the house and all who are with him and share his faith should work together and have one purse, master, servant, wife, maid or other fellow-believers [...] Faithful oversight should be exercised over all members with admonition and reproof according to godly scripture until the confession and accounting of faith of each member is well known. Then the Lord’s command is to be carried out and men of the Word shall be presented to the congregation, so that the order of the spiritual body of Christ is advanced and the work completed.”¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Balthasar Hubmaier, “On the Sword,” in Baylor, 192; Irwin, 7; 63.

¹²⁷ Williams and Mergal, 207. The idea is taken from Obbe Phillip’s, “A Confession, ca. 1560.”

¹²⁸ Ulrich Stadler, “Cherished Instructions on Sin, Excommunication, and the Community of Goods, 1537,” in Williams and Mergal, 283.

¹²⁹ Haude, 430; 454.

¹³⁰ Wolfgang Brandhuber, “A Letter from our Dear Brother and Servant of Jesus Christ, Wolfgang Brandhuber to the Church of God at Rattenberg on the Inn, 1529,” in SSGAA, 158.

Brandhuber's lesson to his Brethren outlined the duties expected of all Anabaptist men. As family patriarchs they had a moral responsibility for maintaining order by discipline, faithful oversight, and education.

Marriage, heading a household, and fatherhood were standard masculine virtues in Anabaptism. Family patriarchs were responsible for their wives' and daughters' behavior in that they were to oversee the maintenance of their moral virtues and chaste minds. Fathers were to raise their children "in the fear of God," giving instruction and assuring discipline. German Anabaptist Andreas Karlstadt argued, "the father of each household should enjoin, repeat, and explain God's word to his children."¹³¹

Obedience was also demanded of women who were to follow the instruction of their husbands and leaders of their congregations. Sigrun Haude argues the South German, Austrian, and Swiss records indicate female Anabaptists were restricted to supporting rather than leading roles.¹³² Anabaptist men such as Paul Glock reflected upon this by writing to his wife from prison:

"Similarly Peter also says that we are to observe a modest deportment, 1 Pet. 3:12, especially the women, who are to be subject to their husbands, so that they also who do not believe the Word are won without words by the behaviour of the women when they see their chaste life as well as their fear."¹³³

Glock also requested that his wife Else remain silent and not "backbite" other members, and that she should "Think of the wonderful admonition of the apostle Peter, that the

¹³¹ Andreas Karlstadt, "Whether One Should Proceed Slowly," in Baylor, 57.

¹³² Haude, 430.

¹³³ Paul Glock, "Letter to his Wife Else, 1563," in SSGAA, 321.

adornment of women [...] in the hidden man of the heart is the incorruptibility of a gentle and quiet spirit which is excellent and great before God.”¹³⁴

Prescriptive sources from both Hutterite and Mennonite Brethren instructed men how to properly admonish women and effectively express “manly courage” when facing their sisters in the faith. Women in these communities were told to remain obedient, chaste, and modest. Men were encouraged to display manly virtues of strength, bravery, and steadfastness under duress.¹³⁵ Menno Simmons stressed female subordination perhaps more than any of his contemporaries, scolding women to remain indoors and to dress modestly whenever outside. Yet, Menno also educated Mennonites towards a more egalitarian relationship between the sexes based on mutual respect. Husbands were not allowed to physically harm their wives as a means of displaying patriarchal authority. In 1541 Menno penned “The Faith of the Woman who was a Sinner” as a reminder to his Church that both men and women were to be respectful when considering physical companionship; that lust and greed were the sin of men as much as women; men were to marry women that they “deflowered”; and both sexes should display modesty and purity in their comportment.¹³⁶

The expectation of marriage for leaders also meant that Anabaptist men understood sexual relationships with women as necessary for advancing the spiritual Body of Christ on earth. Men were considered vulnerable to sexual provocation, yet in

¹³⁴ SSGAA, 306. In addition to Paul Glock, Michael Sattler, Wolfgang Brandhuber, Peter Riedemann, and Bernard Rothmann offer similar positions for male leadership and women’s subordinate status in the household. For passages from Michael Sattler, see Baylor, 106-108; 176. For passages from Wolfgang Brandhuber. see SSGAA, 158. For passage on Peter Riedemann, see Haude, 433.

¹³⁵ Haude, 449. Hutterites and Mennonites did not allow women to preach or baptize; nor did they send out women as missionaries.

¹³⁶ Menno Simmons, “The True Christain Faith, c. 1541,” in Irwin, 55.

marriage they were required to sexually express themselves.¹³⁷ In their writings, some Anabaptist leaders encouraged restraint in sexual intercourse. Fornication, sexual promiscuity, and adultery were vehemently admonished by leaders such as Peter Riedemann and Menno Simmons. Sex was primarily supposed to be for the support of the sanctity of marriage and procreation, and not for pleasure or self-gratification. For Anabaptist men, sexual relations were supposed to be a spiritual rather than physical act that strengthened marital fidelity and respect for wives.

Anabaptist men's positions as community and family patriarchs reinforced masculine honor by holding men liable for the actions of family members. Unchecked behavior of a wife or child affected the reputation and honor accorded to a man in the community. In 1530, Hutterite leader Jörg Zaunring's wife was publicly implicated for committing adultery. After the situation had been privately judged, Zaunring's leadership was tarnished and the couple was excommunicated from the church. Zaunring was replaced as leader and "was rehabilitated after he repented of his behavior."¹³⁸ As a husband and leader, Zaunring's lack of ability to control his wife's sexual behavior affected not only his moral integrity as a patriarch of the Hutterite community, but also compromised his masculine honor as a married man. A husband's fidelity in marriage would not indemnify masculine honor if his wife committed the sin of adultery. Zaunring's "rehabilitation" exemplified the Hutterian Brethren's need for communal discipline and demonstrated how the actions of Anabaptist women affected the reputations of their spouses.

¹³⁷ Scott Hendrix, "Masculinity and Patriarchy in Reformation Germany," in Hendrix and Karant-Nunn, 74.

¹³⁸ Jörg Zaunring, "A Short Interpretation of the Last Supper of Christ Presented as a Conversation between the World and a Christian to the Honour and Glory of God, c. 1530," in SSGAA, 163-164. Details on the affair are found in the *Hutterite Chronicle*.

Patriarchy in Anabaptist communities encompassed the duties and expectations required of community leaders, neighbors, husbands and fathers. Men in these communities understood their masculinity in relation to their position in the congregation and in their families. Marriage, fatherhood, heading a household, and social reputation constituted manliness. Patriarchy was understood particularly in terms of morality, respectability, and wisdom as adult men were community role models for proper Christian piety. This meant that Anabaptist men were expected to provide ethical and responsible leadership in ways that placed priority on the community over the family or individual. Anabaptist men were also expected to govern their houses, educate members of their family, and discipline unruly members. This placed women almost always in a subordinate status in which only patriarchs designated missionary activities, voted to elect church members, and preached to the Church. Male privileges meant greater responsibilities and expectations, however. Anabaptist men were expected to be strong, steadfast, and brave as they wielded authority. Masculinity could also be identified as the ability to restrain oneself from sexual provocation or physical harm towards women. Sexual activities of women could also affect masculine virtue, especially in cases where Anabaptist men were unable to control their wives.

Fatherhood

Fatherhood in late medieval and early modern Europe did not imply thorough participation in the upbringing of a child. Childrearing was mainly assigned to mothers or servants, but this does not mean emotions of love and pride between fathers and sons were nonexistent. Fathers then as today grieved when their children passed. Yet, Ruth

Karras argues literary sources tend to omit father/son companionship or bonding as a prominent theme. Patrilineal reproduction was an important aspect of manhood in late-medieval Europe, rather than relationships between fathers and their sons.¹³⁹ Merry Wiesner-Hanks notes, “Fatherhood played a particularly strong role in areas where society was conceptualized as an amalgam of families or households rather than as individuals, for the adult male head of household was both in charge of the smallest political unit and the representative of that unit to the wider world.”¹⁴⁰ Stronger familial relationships likely existed in smaller religious communities where Anabaptist theology asserted fatherhood as an essential figure in shaping morality.

Responsibilities placed on family patriarchs in Anabaptist communities indicate an intensified relationship between fathers and children. This relationship is less concerned with emotional closeness and geared more towards masculine duty, which made fathers responsible for the moral upbringing and education of their children.¹⁴¹ Balthasar Hubmaier argued in favor of a father’s authority in the household: “God said to Eve, “You shall be under man’s authority, and he will rule over you.” Now, if God set Adam in authority over Eve, he also received power over all flesh and blood that has been borne by Eve in pain.”¹⁴²

Anabaptist sources prescribing fatherhood suggest expectations of obedience and discipline as the most essential duties of fathers. John Denck wrote “punishment is not a sin but a good. For what father who loves his child does not also punish it until it is

¹³⁹ Karras, *From Boys To Men*, 166.

¹⁴⁰ Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender In History*, 97.

¹⁴¹ Andreas Karlstadt, “Whether One Should Proceed Slowly,” in Baylor, 57. Karlstadt wrote “the father of each household should enjoin, repeat, and explain God’s word to his children” as a means to spiritually educated them.

¹⁴² Balthasar Hubmaier, “On the Sword,” in Baylor, 192; Irwin, 7; 63.

prepared to do what it should have done before the sin?”¹⁴³ Denck described punishment as a tool for educating children, stimulating them to ascertain right from wrong. He writes:

“If there were a child with a propensity to steal and the father put a penny before him in order to find out whether he would steal it and thereupon to punish him and to get rid of the naughtiness, [the father] would have reason to punish the child with success. [...] Truly, if the boy will not leave off his complaint, the father will lead him to the judges at the gate to deal with him according to the law of Moses [Deut. 21:18-21].”¹⁴⁴

Denck based discipline on scriptural interpretation where the rationale of improvement, both moral and social, was for the betterment of the child and the community. Specifically, a child’s admission of guilt was critical to the importance of spiritual forgiveness. In this case, Denck’s conception of fatherhood was bound to conditioning children to standards of behavior set in the Old Testament. By contrast, Hutterite fathers took the lead in disciplining children not to punish, but because they feared women would lose control of their emotions and be overly-aggressive. The lyrics of one Hutterite song ran: “...women were too likely to loose their temper and start beating on the children like herdsmen on a group of unruly cattle.”¹⁴⁵

The idea of protection as a responsibility assigned to Anabaptist fathers is somewhat unclear. The intense persecution of Anabaptists meant that little physical protection could have been provided by fathers to their spouses and

¹⁴³ John Denck, “Whether God is the Cause of Evil, 1526,” in Williams and Mergal, 91; Haude, 441. Sigrun Haude provide additional examples that addressed a father’s duty to discipline their children.

¹⁴⁴ John Denck, “Whether God is the Cause of Evil, 1526,” in Williams and Mergal, 103-104; 109.

¹⁴⁵ Haude, 440.

children. What then did it mean to be a father if a man was unable to keep safe those closest to him? Little is mentioned about the matter of protection in Anabaptist sources, although Balthasar Hubmeier did say that one should avoid authority whenever possible, but in times of persecution, wield a sword in defense of oneself as the Romans had.¹⁴⁶ Many men willingly accepted martyrdom as a test of their faithfulness to God rather than protecting their family. Temporal and worldly possessions, including children, came secondhand to moral consciousness in a martyr's mentality.

Some Anabaptists relocated when persecuted while others believed in physically protecting dependents in times of danger. Andreas Karlstadt commented "You must always say that if you take from a child that which would harm him, then you perform a fatherly or brotherly Christian act."¹⁴⁷ In this sense, a father may take caution towards provoking danger towards his children by means of persecution, or taking things from children that would be spiritually dangerous, as in books that taught incorrect doctrine.

Spiritual love rather than emotional love likely played a greater role in the masculine qualities desired in fathers. Menno Simmons wrote to his congregation, "to seek the Reformation of my body and also of our nearest kinfolk as parent of child; spiritual love must be preferred to anything else. Aside from this I would care for them and provide the temporal necessities of life, so far as it would be in my power."¹⁴⁸ Menno acknowledged that a father should provide basic necessities for his children, but discouraged emotional attachments between father and child, which might deter a father's

¹⁴⁶ Balthasar Hubmeier, "On the Sword," in Baylor, 181-195.

¹⁴⁷ Andreas Karlstadt, "Whether One Should Proceed Slowly," in Baylor, 69.

¹⁴⁸ Menno Simmons, "On the Ban: Questions and Answers, 1550," in Williams and Mergal, 265.

own commitment to God. In other words, familial love was a shunned emotion, because emotional attachment to another human was temporal. Spiritual love, instead, encouraged family members to be more pious, admonished them for their transgressions, and directed attention towards spirituality and the community.

The educational system within Hutterite communes in Moravia provides historians with an alternative example of fatherhood. As described in the previous chapter, Hutterite communities, as a rule, separated children from families to be educated in separate schools organized by the community. Children were removed from their parents at an early age and placed in the 24-hour care of ‘professionals’ designated by the community.¹⁴⁹ This suggests Hutterite leaders preferred a communal upbringing rather than a familial one. Fracturing traditional kinship networks like parent-child rearing in Hutterite communities methodically weakened the nuclear family, thereby strengthening communal ties and loyalty.¹⁵⁰ Prioritizing the community over the family in this manner attributed minimal value to fatherhood in ideals of masculinity.

Servants

Anabaptism sometimes offered incentives that went beyond religion for members. The German lands in the 1520s experienced revolt and famine that forced hardships on many common folk. Werner Packull has argued that many destitute veterans of the German Peasants War struggled to find employment after 1525. These men traveled far away from home and took jobs wherever they could. In their disillusionment, some

¹⁴⁹ Grieser, “The Household Divided against Itself” in Foster and Kaplan, 141. Grieser views the Hutterite educational system as a development that provided a social alternative to the family, which complemented their communal life as an economic alternative to the single-family household.

¹⁵⁰ Haude, 441.

accepted Anabaptism because of the communal and economic support it offered, along with the Gospel of salvation for the common man it promised.¹⁵¹ When famine was widespread as in Southern Germany between 1527-1529, the prospect of economic survival attracted both men and women to communities such as the Hutterites, which promised care for orphans and widows.¹⁵² In this social climate, destitute men and women looked for work as servants and maids, some ended up finding jobs and living among Anabaptists.¹⁵³

A handful of Anabaptists commented about their servants in their writing, and acknowledged the fact that they themselves, or other leaders in the local community, had converted and baptized them. Eitelhans Langenmantel's record indicates that he was seized by an officer of the Swabian League in 1528 along with his maid, who was also put to death.¹⁵⁴ Jacob Hutter's wife, Katharina, before being converted, worked as a maid in the Anabaptist home of Paul and Justina Gall where she began participating in nocturnal religious gatherings. The Gall household was not only a meeting place but doubled as a safe-haven for Anabaptists seeking lodging or refuge from authorities. In this atmosphere Katharina was persuaded to join, and a year later in 1532, she was baptized by her future husband Jacob Hutter.¹⁵⁵ Afterwards Katharina and Jacob traveled to Horschwang with two male servants, both named Martin, and a handful of other followers of Hutter. In her testimony before her martyrdom, she wrote, "Niclas

¹⁵¹ Packull, "In Search of the 'Common Man'," 51-67.

¹⁵² Haude, 448.

¹⁵³ It was common in the sixteenth-century for a families of reasonable income to hire servants or maids to work and live in their master's household. Historians of early modern Europe classify servants as a part of the "complex household," meaning more people than the nuclear family inhabited the household.

¹⁵⁴ SSGAA, 112. Langenmantel suffered from gout and could not walk, which suggests that injury, illness, or disability may have been an exemption.

¹⁵⁵ SSGAA, 191-193.

Niderhofer from the district of Schonegg and a young woman by the name of Ulian, who worked as a maid at Khyens were baptized on St. Jacob's Day."¹⁵⁶ Both records indicate maids and servants of Anabaptists were persuaded to accept Believer's Baptism.

The relatively egalitarian nature of Anabaptist communities and the theological doctrine of equality both attracted the common man or woman to accept adult baptism. The dismissal of natural hierarchy in Anabaptism was supported by Scripture, which viewed the master/servant relationship in more spiritual terms.¹⁵⁷ Paul Glock wrote to his wife "The Lord himself speaks through the prophet when he says: As is the priest, so are the people and as the master, so is the servant and the woman as her maid, Isa. 24:2; Hos. 4:9."¹⁵⁸ Since a priest and his people were not divided by wealth or family blood, but treated with mutual respect, Glock's analogy described a more spiritual relationship between master and servant. Glock's reference also noted the evangelical mission of Anabaptist men to preach the Gospel to the common man.

The ritual of foot-washing practiced by some Anabaptist congregations provided public and symbolic representation of egalitarian theology. Mennonites in particular viewed ablutions such as foot-washing as a spiritualized ritual that publicly displayed humility and mutual respect. In *The Church of God*, Dietrich Phillips wrote, "The third ordinance is the foot washing of the saints [in order to] humble ourselves toward one another and that we should hold our fellow believers in the highest respect. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Katharina Hutter, "Testimony of Katharina Hutter, Given before December 3, 1535," in SSGAA, 195.

¹⁵⁷ Natural hierarchy is meant in the sense of wealth and privileges that benefited those in the more esteemed estates of nobleman and wealthy burgher. Communal hierarchies still existed in Anabaptist communities but privileges were rarely given to individuals on basis of position or age.

¹⁵⁸ Paul Glock, "Paul Glock, Letter to His Wife," in SSGAA, 316.

¹⁵⁹ Dietrich Phillips, "The Church of God, c. 1560," in Williams and Mergal, 245.

The master symbolically becomes the servant in the ritual of foot-washing by humbling himself before another publicly, in front of the Church. In turn, the ritual follows until all have humbled themselves before another in equal manner. The reverential act of foot-washing reflected the heart of Anabaptist masculinity where services or help provided to one's neighbor in kindness identified a man's humility and morality, because he expressed God's love through his actions.

Marriage

Marriage formed an essential component of a man's identity, allowing him to have authority in relation to others when he oversaw the family patrimony. In the German lands, a man was by public opinion not an adult until he married, nor a householder until he provided for a family.¹⁶⁰

Marriage for Anabaptist men was a spiritual union that proved and tested his manliness. Sources indicate that many men left their wives and children after they received adult baptism because many Anabaptists preached of false-marriages or the corruption of lying in bed with a non-Anabaptist women. Several men, especially those from Hutterite communities in Moravia, openly supported the desertion of non-Anabaptist spouses.¹⁶¹ Men justified abandoning their wives and children by referencing Scripture. Leanord Schiemer's message to his congregation in Rattenberg was a popular response: "Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or fields for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life (Matt.

¹⁶⁰ Karras, 13-17; 145.

¹⁶¹ Irwin, xxiv; 46.

19:29).”¹⁶² Ambrosius Spitelmaier reasoned, “If anyone leaves wife or child, house or property, he does it because of God and his Word, as also Christ wants us to do.”¹⁶³ The needle merchant and Anabaptist, Hans Nadler, abandoned his wife in Erlangen to follow Hans Hut to Nicholsburg, “despite her pleading with him to stay.” There was a strong public backlash, however, on the part of the larger community toward Anabaptist men who abandoned their families and took new wives. Nadler was later tried for desertion and adult baptism in 1529.¹⁶⁴

Anabaptist men left marriages, formed new ones, and encouraged other men to do likewise because they adhered to strict endogamy. Only women who had accepted believer’s baptism made suitable wives. Apostolic evangelicalism also played a role. Wandering male preachers sent out to spread the Gospel were away from their families for long periods of time, which was considered abandonment by many.

Rules against marriage with outsiders caused problems for the Anabaptist movement. A number of men left their families without legally divorcing their wives, allowing mass criticism of the movement as practicing bigamy, which was illegal. Ulrich Zwingli lamented, “They have their wives common in such a manner as to desert their own marriage partners and take others; so with the children, as to desert them and leave them for others to support. These fine fellows, when lust persuades, make common a brother’s wife, even his virgin daughter.”¹⁶⁵ Zwingli’s defamation of Anabaptist men accused them of bigamy, and sexual licentiousness, along with polygamy and incest.

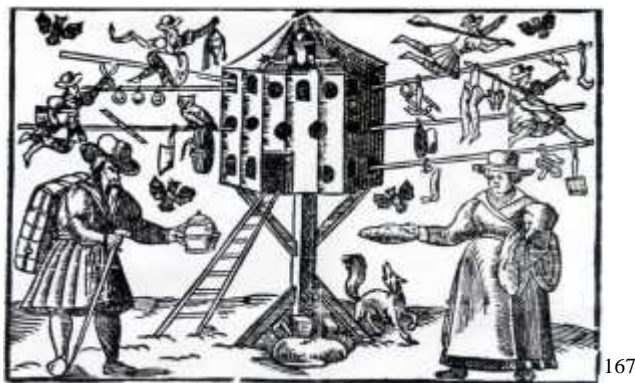
¹⁶² Leonard Schiemer, “Letter to the Church of God at Rattenberg, 1527,” in SSGAA, 75.

¹⁶³ Ambrosius Spitelmaier, “Questions and Answers of Ambrosius Spitelmaier,” in SSGAA, 61.

¹⁶⁴ SSGAA, 136-138.

¹⁶⁵ Ulrich Zwingli, “Refutation of the Tricks of the Baptists, July 31, 1527,” in Lindburg, 126.

Anyone characterized in this manner was perceived as a threat to the social fabric and functioning of European culture and society.¹⁶⁶



The woodcut above titled “The Hutterite Anabaptist Pigeon Coop” by the Jesuit Christoph Andreas Fischer illustrates the allegations made against Anabaptists as adulterers and bigamists. Represented as pigeons, Hutterites allow husbands to flock to another spouse, abandoning their wives.¹⁶⁸ Religious groups thought to have heterodox theology were often accused of sexual perversion and corrupt marriage, as the earlier example of the Albigensians indicates.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Also see, Sebastian Frank, “On Anabaptists,” in SSGAA, 229-248. Franck also was concerned with the Anabaptist view of marriage, and his work more accurately described Anabaptist beliefs, theology, and social behavior.

¹⁶⁷ Christoph Andreas Fischer, woodcut, “The Hutterite Anabaptist Pigeon Coop,” in Adam W. Darlage, *Priests Under Pressure in Southern Moravia: History and Identity in Roman Catholic Polemics (1575-1615)* (Proquest, 2009), 341.

¹⁶⁸ Darlage, *Priests Under Pressure*, 336-348. Fischer’s woodcut was the cover image to a theological refutation of the Hutterites, published in 1607, but dedicated to Moravian lord Maximilian von Dietrichstein two years earlier in a pamphlet titled: *The Hutterite Anabaptist Pigeon Coop, in Which All their Shit, Dung, and Filth is to be Found, What they Think About God, Christ, the Holy Sacraments, and Other Articles of Christian Faith, Explained Briefly and Truly from Their Own Books Printed as Well as Written... and Also that of the Greatest Pigeon, Jakob Hutter*. Darlage details Fischer’s attack in this source thoroughly.

¹⁶⁹ “B. Refutation of the Articles of the Needle Merchant Hans. February 1, 1529,” in SSGAA, 149-150. The “Refutation of Hans” shows how Protestant and Catholic theologians refuted and countered Anabaptist claims by citing passages of Pauline doctrine as orthodox interpretations on marriage, mainly 1 Cor. 7 and 1 Tim. 5.

Despite the occasional desertion of wives after their conversion, Anabaptist men conceived of marriage as a serious element of their masculine identities, just as their contemporaries did. Most men observed strict moral obligations as husbands with authority over their wives, and a few wrote about them. Peter Riedemann's *Confession of Faith* (1545) provides one of the most detailed prescriptive sources for a Hutterite man's duties as a husband, discussing virtues a man should possess through marriage. Riedemann addressed a husband's concern for his wife's salvation and his responsibility to provide spousal guidance, which in-turn made the husband a more virtuous Christian and more masculine in character:

“The man, on the other hand, as one in whom something of God's glory is seen, should have compassion on the woman as the weaker instrument. He should go before her in love and kindness and care for her not only in temporal but still more in spiritual things. He should faithfully share with her all he hath been given by God. He should go before her in honesty, courage, and all the Christian virtues, so that in him she may have a mirror of righteousness, and invitation to piety, and a guide who will lead her to god.”¹⁷⁰

Riedemann understood marital relationships as strengthened by spiritual rather than emotional love. In this case, an Anabaptist man's identity centered on keeping his wife in check with “manly feeling,” but out of mutual respect, the spouses were to improve one another in terms of righteousness, piety, and spiritual guidance.

The majority of marriages in Europe in the sixteenth-century did not end in divorce, and Anabaptists could not officially divorce one another. Menno Simmon's pamphlet “On the Ban: Questions and Answers, 1550” summarized the

¹⁷⁰ Haude, 433; 545.

Mennonite ordinance on ending a marriage: “Separation must be made in the congregation; and therefore the husband must consent and vote with the church in the separation of his wife; and the wife in the separation of her husband[...] therefore we do not speak of divorce, but of shunning.”¹⁷¹ Marriage was supposed to be performed in front of the community, and only the community could dissolve a marriage by voting democratically to impose a mutual ban on each spouse.

Heterosocial Relationships

Men in sixteenth-century Europe were homosocial, meaning their day-to-day public activities were conducted with other men, and not with women. Homosociality was demonstrated by non-sexual bonds men formed with one another. Artisans, theologians, and members of the nobility conducted their daily affairs, communicated, and competed for reputation with others of the same sex. Guild membership, military service, and university life were all career choices in which men were homosocial, and adolescent boys also behaved in this manner.¹⁷²

Anabaptist men were more heterosocial in their daily affairs than were their contemporaries. Separated from society in small communities, Anabaptist men ignored a number of male-exclusive obligations imposed by society, such as military service or swearing oaths. Men re-structured their lifestyles in communities that featured more social and religious activities involving women’s participation. Anabaptist leaders promoted an “ethicization” of faith among both men and women. In this atmosphere,

¹⁷¹ Menno Simmons, “On the Ban: Question and Answers, 1550,” in Williams and Mergal, 264-265.

¹⁷² Karras, 1; 10-11.

communal participation of everyone was critical to the process of salvation.¹⁷³ Both men and women read from the Bible during church services and wore the same humble clothing. Men also had a tendency to address both brothers and sisters in the faith in their writing.

Hutterite men such as Paul Glock gave gifts to other men's wives in the community as a "greeting" to show brotherly compassion. After a year of making wool cloth Glock wrote, "Ursula Wurm of Kaufbeuren, if she is still alive, is also to share the cloth, even if she gets only one ell. It is a greeting. And the other bolt you are to give to your wife Maria and to all the wives of servants of the Word and temporal care, also as a greeting."¹⁷⁴ Showing brotherly affection or kindness towards women by offering simple provisions formed and strengthened bonds with women in the community. Gift-giving expressed a degree of fraternal love and solidarity amongst men and women in Anabaptist communities, which Balthasar Hubmeier referred to as the "public expression of Christian love."¹⁷⁵

Heterosocial participation in gift-giving strengthened relations in Anabaptist communities that were critical to survival in times of persecution. Sigrun Haude argues, "This powerful spiritual component of the relationship between men and women also allowed for another constellation among the sexes that was a rarity at the time, namely male-female friendship outside of marriage."¹⁷⁶ Heterosocial friendship implied a sense of reassurance that all members of the community would support one another in times of

¹⁷³ Goertz, 77.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Glock, "Letter to Peter Walpot, 1571," in SSGAA, 352; Leonard Schiemer, "Letter to the Church of God at Rattenberg, 1527" in SSGAA, 68. Schiemer's letter provided a similar emphasis on gift-giving to all in the Church (68).

¹⁷⁵ Goertz, 78; Karras, 95. Ruth Karras also reminds us of Stephen Jaeger's idea of "ennobling love" as an important model of love based on admiration of the beloved's virtuous attributes, rather than on "chemistry".

¹⁷⁶ Haude, 452.

hardship. While imprisoned in Württemberg away from his family, Hutterite Hans Schmidt remained steadfast against authorities, writing: “In vain they reminded me of my wife and asked whether I had children. I said that my brothers would take care of my wife and children.”¹⁷⁷ Schmidt’s assurance that his family would be provided for in his absence is an indication of the heterosocial bonds that Anabaptist communities like the Hutterites relied upon.

How did Anabaptist men’s heterosociality affect their attitudes about masculinity? It allowed them sometimes to comprehend manliness in relation to women in their communities. The close-knit communal and spiritual structure of Anabaptist communities meant that Anabaptist men regularly interacted and communicated with women who were not family members in their daily affairs. Heterosocial behavior of this nature was uncommon in sixteenth-century society, in which it was routine for men to socially and publicly interact only with other men. In contrast, male-female friendships based on communal bonds allowed some men in Anabaptist circles to develop a sense of manliness through voluntary kindness.

¹⁷⁷ Hans Schmidt, “Experience of a Hutterite in Württemberg,” in SSGAA, 373.

Ch. 3: Individuals

Recently, scholars of Reformation Europe have focused on masculinity and new definitions of manhood during the sixteenth century. Specialists in this field agree that class, age, marital status, and the expectations women placed on men altogether were essential facets in establishing a man's identity.¹⁷⁸ In addition, honor, lineage and patrimony, violence, competition, and service to the state were all integral to the understanding of what made a "man."

In this chapter I argue that Anabaptists revolutionized the understanding of masculinity through their innovations in moral behavior. Separated from the distractions of the world, Anabaptist men rejected common civic duties required of men and other worldly desires in favor of a spiritual and Biblically-centered godly life. This rejection radically altered what they believed defined manliness.

This chapter focuses on the individual religiosity of Anabaptist men during the sixteenth century, and analyzes how their devotion to a spiritual life was prescribed by a strong rhetoric for strict morality. It will also focus on how Anabaptist men's ideas about a proper Christian lifestyle and behavior contrasted with both Lutheran and Catholic perceptions. I argue that identities and ideas about manhood were not homogenous among Protestants; instead, sharp distinctions existed between Anabaptist and Lutheran masculinity.

Individually, Anabaptist men profoundly changed their lives during the Protestant Reformation. Hans-Jürgen Goertz has argued, "The observation of individual religiosity

¹⁷⁸ Hendrix and Karant-Nunn. eds., *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, ix-x.

is the foundation for strict morality, the following of Christ, or Christianity of action, in short, for the ethicization of faith. It is also the foundation for Anabaptist separatism: the separation from the world, that is, from evil, and from the opinions of all of those people who still live in sin.”¹⁷⁹ This separation was accomplished through gestures of refusal. Rejection of civic oaths and conscription were symbolic acts of protest that required participation in the process of change. If separation for Anabaptists implied hope for a better future with new human beings, repentance, and the Kingdom of God, then in fact, “*everything* had changed.”¹⁸⁰

This chapter addresses topics that were central to Anabaptist men as they reconstructed notions of manhood in terms of inner moral spirituality, including honor, missionary activity, and violence, and in terms of outward appearance, including dress and facial hair. Anabaptist men wrote about each of these topics prescriptively, providing advice about how a man should conduct, improve, or present himself. In some cases Anabaptist authors disagreed on these topics, as in the case of whether one should use violence. On the other hand, Anabaptist authors who concerned themselves with writing about male honor, missionary activity, and outward appearance were rather complementary in their logic.

Honor

In early modern Europe the notion of honor shaped every adult man’s identity. Honor was given commonly through some form of action such as providing for a household unit, serving bravely for one’s country in battle, religious piety, or displaying

¹⁷⁹ Goertz, “Radical Religiosity in the Reformation”, 76.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

authority.¹⁸¹ Men often held honor on behalf of themselves, their family lineage, and nation. In many ways honor could circulate amongst groups of men, which formed strong bonds between them.¹⁸² Honor was both socially constructed from the reputation and esteem given by others, and subjectively formed from one's own inward sense of pride, self-esteem, and integrity. The interior aspects formed the core of an Anabaptist man's sense of honor.

Many sources written by Anabaptist men rejected the normal actions that allowed men to receive honor. Some men went as far as discarding the concept of honor in its entirety or at least in the way contemporary Protestants and Catholics viewed it. Anabaptist men acknowledged civic or noble honor to be synonymous with avarice, egotism, pride, and ignorance. By doing so, these men renounced what they considered to be "creaturely" or physical possessions that credited one man with an appearance or reputation above another.¹⁸³

The rejection of status reflected a doctrine of equality supported in Anabaptism, positioning no man above another. Anabaptist men publicly embraced this radical doctrine through refusals of participation in civic duties and denial of inheritance rights. They rejected the concept of a family blood line or noble blood, acknowledging everyone as descendants of Christ, and ruled out the practice of primogeniture. Anabaptists also addressed other men only by their first name, thus omitting titles of respect. They refused

¹⁸¹ Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History*, 94

¹⁸² Wiesner-Hanks, "The Religious Dimensions of Guild Notions of Honor in Reformation Germany" in Backmann, Künast, Ullmann, and Tlusty, 223-225.

¹⁸³ There are many Anabaptist sources that reflect this ideology. Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen, "A Christian Order of a True Christian: Giving an Account of the Origin of his Faith (1524)" (2-20) and Leonard Schiemer, "Letter to the Church of God at Rattenberg (1527)," (67-80) in SSGAA; Hans Denck, "On the Law of God" (130-151), Hans Hut, "On the Mystery of Baptism" (152-171), and Michael Sattler, "The Schleithem Articles," (172-180) in Baylor; Melchoir Hoffman, "The Ordinance of God, 1530," in Williams and Mergal, 198.

to swear public oaths of any sort, did not accept positions of public office, and declined all military service.¹⁸⁴

Anabaptist men perceived honor demonstrable only through a meek Christian lifestyle; in other words, honor was a reflection of a man's inner strength that was free of earthly temptations. Salvation in Christ was the ultimate reward and an eternal blessing in exchange for committing one's life to a higher cause. Therefore, Anabaptist men believed that a man should refrain from the vices of self-honor and titles. For them, honor was more affiliated with the respect given to a man for his pious, moral, and humble attributes. This was an inward sense of being honorable, rather than honor externally displayed by wealth or office. Therefore, this was a mentality that perceived masculine virtue as relinquishing the honor a man could gain through worldly affairs in favor of an inner and individualistic religiosity that focused on what he held most sacred.

The refusal to participate in normal obligations assigned to men was rationalized through a new inner strength Anabaptist men were supposed to possess. According to Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen's widely read pamphlet, *Christian Order*, inner strength derived from "the spirit of God, who strengthens the person according to that person's yielded strength [*gelassene kraft*]. At this point one becomes courageous and upright [*rechtschaffen*]."¹⁸⁵ Haugk von Jüchsen's work described a transformative experience

¹⁸⁴ Goertz, 79-80. Refusals of civic duties and personal wealth in Anabaptism have been compared to traditional monastic piety and apostolic poverty expressed in mendicant orders. The chief differences were that Anabaptists were not officially recognized by the Catholic Church as Franciscan or Benedictine friars were for their missionary pursuits, and they did not experience monastic isolation.

¹⁸⁵ Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen, "Jörg Haugk von Jüchsen, A Christian Order of a True Christian: Giving an Account of the Origin of his Faith (1524)," in SSGAA, 13. Haugk's "Christian Order" circulated freely among Anabaptists and their descendants into the 17th century. C. Arnold Snyder argues this work "was read as a critical alternative to Martin Luther's understanding of justification by faith alone[...] It is the Spirit's illumination that "lifts" a person out of unbelief and sends the believer on a seven-stage journey

during which Anabaptists were internally strengthened through the Holy Spirit, giving men courage and the unique power of self-restraint. Self-restraint was key. Anabaptist men's ability to possess *gelassenheit*, or a "yieldedness" towards temporal possessions changed the nature of their identity and what constituted masculine honor. Hans Hut expressed this fundamental change in men in his pamphlet *On the Mystery of Baptism*. Hut argued, "Often in Scripture a man is called a tree. If he is to be turned into a house, he must be cut off from the world in all his lusts [and] the desires of a person: one branch sticks out to property, another to great wealth, and others to pomp and temporal honors."¹⁸⁶

Anabaptists believed honor awarded through wealth, reputation, and merit tarnished the purity of Christian life. The South German Anabaptist Hans Denck scolded, "Whoever seeks glory by virtue of his merits, as though these merits came from him, certainly destroys the grace that comes through Christ."¹⁸⁷ In his *Protest and Defense*, Felix Manz proclaimed, "For, truthfully, I am not concerned about honor, name, and reputation[...] Therefore, I appeal to you, my gracious, dear lords and brothers, as a citizen."¹⁸⁸ In comparison, Balthasar Hubmaier's treatise, *On the Sword*, stated true followers of Christ must deprive themselves of "even their honor, which people regard as the most precious jewel on earth, must also be wounded and violated by the godless." "It is not appropriate for any Christian to gain favor with the authorities out of a desire for

that transforms the inner being and thus leads to conformity with Christ. True saving faith is therefore above all transformational." (n., 2).

¹⁸⁶ Hans Hut, "On the Mystery of Baptism," in Baylor, 160. Also see, Hans Denck, "On the Law of God," in Baylor, 136. Denck writes, "You say, "Oh, it is not possible for any man to fulfill the law." I reply that, indeed, it is not possible for any man as a man [to fulfill it]. But for the faithful, all things are possible (Mark 9[:23])—not as men, but as those who are one with God and who are independent of everything creaturely, and in part independent of themselves."

¹⁸⁷ Hans Denck, "On the Law of God," in Baylor, 141.

¹⁸⁸ Felix Manz, "Protest and Defense (1527)," in Baylor, 100.

power. Rather, he should avoid authority as much as he can. Brothers, you see that Christ himself shows here how the greatest should recognize and regard himself as the least, and the most preeminent as the servant.”¹⁸⁹

The excerpts from Denck, Manz, and Hubmaier reveal how Anabaptist men encouraged self-restraint among their brethren and spoke in favor of putting God’s honor first. Their written documents frequently described righteous conduct, defense of Anabaptist doctrine, and martyrdom as actions performed specifically for God’s honor. For example, Michael Sattler’s *Schleitheim Articles* stated “we have the steadfastness to proceed along the path we have undertaken, following the honor of God.”¹⁹⁰ In Sattler’s view, God was the only source for obtaining masculine honor and courage. On a similar note, an anonymous pamphlet *To the Assembly of the Common Peasantry*, followed the reasoning of Michael Sattler, and cited St. Peter’s writing as a model: “In sum, the basis of St. Peter’s whole epistle is directed only to God’s honor, brotherly fidelity, and unity.”¹⁹¹ These examples point towards a symbolic transfer of a man’s honor, developed through stronger personal and spiritual relationships with God. Attributing one’s honor to God was a refusal of contemporary expectations of honor originating in the self, which were advocated in other strands of Protestantism and in Catholicism.

Anabaptist men criticized other Protestant reformers as false, greedy men for holding temporal offices. This criticism stemmed from a larger concern with the failure of Protestant reformers to address the overall need for moral improvement in society. In such cases, they characterized Magisterial reformers as unworthy leaders. Hans Hut

¹⁸⁹ Balthasar Hubmaier, “On the Sword,” in Baylor, 182; 203.

¹⁹⁰ Michael Sattler, “The Schleitheim Articles,” in Baylor, 174.

¹⁹¹ Anonymous, “To the Assembly of the Common Peasantry,” in Baylor, 111. Michael Baylor believes this source was possibly an early work of Andreas Karlstadt, yet there is no evidence to support this claim.

lamented, “They [Magisterial Reformers] are now whoring anew with the Babylonian whore [the papacy], in every pleasure, pomp, honor, greed, envy, and hate.”¹⁹² In a similar manner, Dietrich Phillips claimed Lutheran reformers and Catholic clergy “greatly prefer to have the honor of men—they love to be called Doctors, Masters, and Sirs—rather than the honor that comes from God, which is obtained by upright faith and a holy conduct.”¹⁹³ The admonitions by Hut and Phillips and their condemnation of Lutheran magistrates and Catholic priests as men stricken with a greedy desire for honor and wealth provide examples of the new morally-constituted, masculine honor in Anabaptism.

Outsiders tended to view Anabaptist men’s rejection of civic duty as unruly and dangerous to society. Sebastian Franck’s published work, *On the Anabaptists*, provided a detailed summary of how the peculiar behavior of Anabaptist men distinguished them from other Protestants and Catholics. Franck stated:

“He has renounced all that is creaturely, and knows nothing according to the flesh. Dying is counted as gain and riches as dung. He counts the joys of the world, voluptuousness, honor, life, etc. to be sorrow, unhappiness, shame and death. He never swears in anything, does not bring a suit before the law, does not go to war, bears no weapons, and needs no worldly government, interest [for money lent], or servants. He goes about as a person no longer alive, without finery. He has nothing of his own, and nothing in common with the world such as parties, banquets, business contracts, craft guilds, companies, estates, weddings, dances, etc. To him all things are equal, in him not one sin, nor passion, nor quarreling, nor concupiscence finds place. Any stirring of the flesh is to be killed and drowned by the spirit, and sin is not permitted to surface. To support all this they cite the saying of Paul about the new man.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Hans Hut, “On the Mystery of Baptism,” in Baylor, 154.

¹⁹³ Dietrich Phillips, “The Church of God, c. 1560,” in Williams and Mergal, 246.

¹⁹⁴ Sebastian Franck, “On the Anabaptists,” in SSGAA, 238-39. This work was an essential part of Franck’s *Chronica, Zeytbuch vnd geschichtbibel von anbegyn bisz inn disz gegenwertig M.D. xxxj. jar.*, which was a large folio volume of over 1,000 pages printed in Strasbourg in 1531. It is most significant for its history of

Franck's summary described Anabaptist men as social outcasts, uncivil, and dead to the world in all matters temporal. In this sense, he perceived Anabaptist men as people without emotions and values. Frank understood them as men without *Mut* (spiritedness) and, thus, without masculine energy, enjoyment, or playfulness.¹⁹⁵ Franck compared masculine honor among Anabaptists with shame. As an outsider, he failed to grasp how honor was conceptualized by Anabaptist men. Rather than connecting honor with spiritual *gelassenheit* toward the worldly for moral improvement and for God's honor, Franck viewed acts of refusal by Anabaptist men as shameful to society.

The criticisms exchanged between Anabaptist men and other Protestants such as Sebastian Franck provide insight into how Protestant identities in the sixteenth-century were not homogenous. Anabaptist men often identified themselves in relation to other Protestant groups, rather than simply in relation to Catholicism. This was especially true in how men from these religious groups conceived masculine honor. For Lutheran men, honor was associated with civic duty, the family patrimony, work, and reputation. In contrast, Anabaptist men rejected mainstream masculine honor in their separation from society. These men "put God's honor first" for internal spiritual and moral improvement. They would also express this externally through dress, which this chapter will address later on.

ideas on early Anabaptism. Frank refused to become an Anabaptist because he believed they placed too much stress on the visible church.

¹⁹⁵ Rublack, 109. *Mut* was a central idiom in sixteenth-century Germany to describe what other cultures understood to be "spiritedness." This was contrasted with "Über-mut".

Missionaries

Missionary activity in Anabaptism was identified with the apostolic Church of antiquity. Initial attempts for reconciliation in Zürich between Ulrich Zwingli and Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz failed, which forced the Swiss Brethren to look elsewhere for support. Itinerant missionaries became the main figures in sustaining the movement through firsthand communication with converts.¹⁹⁶

Only male members of Anabaptist churches were sent out from their congregations and communities as missionaries.¹⁹⁷ The stress on the laity and the common man in the Anabaptist movement encouraged a more active role for men to promote and spread the faith. Sigrun Haude argues “Between the leaders and itinerant missionaries and the general membership existed a layer of “half-missionaries” that provided an opportunity for men to participate actively in the dissemination of their faith.”¹⁹⁸ These “wandering preachers,” as they were sometimes referred to, experienced a core feature of the Anabaptist movement, that is, traditional apostolic poverty. The life of a poor missionary allowed Anabaptist men to conceptualize their masculinity in new and complex ways. These men faced everyday challenges of hunger, persecution, and imprisonment. Missionary pursuits of this nature tested a man’s courage, strength, and steadfastness.

¹⁹⁶ Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 211.

¹⁹⁷ Haude, 341. Wolfgang Schäufele has argued that the lay impulse in Anabaptism led to a much more widespread missionary pursuit, in which the formal male role played only a small part. Swiss Brethren, South German, Austrian, and Hutterite Brethren only assigned men missionary work; however, spiritualist and millenarian Anabaptist groups were more gender egalitarian. These groups allowed women more active roles in prophesizing and missionary work.

¹⁹⁸ Haude, 432.

The imitation of Christ's evangelical mission was central to the missionary identity for Anabaptist men. Hans Hut wrote, "For whoever thinks that he is a Christian must travel the path which Christ traveled (John 8[:51] and 10[:27f])."¹⁹⁹ Anabaptist missionaries understood their mission in practical terms—as a spiritual duty of spreading the Gospel of Christ and gathering converts—and also as following in Christ's footsteps. Missionary men identified themselves with the same masculine characteristics of Jesus Christ. Humility, honesty, courage, perseverance, and suffering were essential attributes of this moralized masculine identity.

For some Anabaptist men, as in the case of Jakub Hutter, missionary work provided a position of leadership during the early 1530s. The early Hutterite settlements in Moravia were the strongest advocates of missionary work throughout the Holy Roman Empire.²⁰⁰ Hundreds of Hutterite missionaries in the sixteenth-century communicated with other Anabaptist circles, preached the Hutterite *Confession of Faith*, and encouraged men and women to join the communes in Moravia.

Craig Koslofsky has recently addressed the dangerous nature of the missionary activity Anabaptist men undertook, and notes that these men were forced to adapt to and anticipate a more nocturnal lifestyle. Moving by night to elude capture, missionaries, in the words of the *Hutterite Chronicle*, were "hunted and driven from place to place and from land to land. They had to be like owls and night ravens, not daring to appear by day, hiding... in the wild woods."²⁰¹ Within a culture of persecution that existed during the Protestant Reformation, the night became more sacred for Anabaptist men, and

¹⁹⁹ Hans Hut, "On the Law of God," in Baylor, 133.

²⁰⁰ Darlage, "Double Honor," 764.

²⁰¹ Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 56; 90.

missionary men often had to show a type of manly courage unknown to their Lutheran and Catholic equivalents.

Pacifism and Violence

Fighting in battle and the martial skills required in warfare were expectations of men in sixteenth-century Europe. Since the early Middle Ages, feudal society required noble men to be trained from the age of puberty in horseback and to wield a sword. Burghers and free-peasants could be conscripted for battle. Only serfs were free of military obligations. Violence, military service, and protection were masculine values in Europe. Ulinka Rublack argues, “To constantly display weapons was a specifically German custom[...] meant for aesthetic display as much as to mark wealth and a civic, virile adult masculinity that prided itself on the ability to defend its honor, freedom, and a ‘fatherland’ here understood in local terms.”²⁰²

Many Anabaptist men rejected military service and conscription, and showed a pacifist mentality towards violence. Andreas Karlstadt stressed this mentality in his letter to the people of Allstedt in 1524, stating, “If you are to be armed against your enemies, dress yourself in the strong, steel-like and unconquerable armor of faith.”²⁰³ The refusal to fight in battle or physically participate in military conquest was an extremely subversive act in sixteenth-century Europe, and this refusal raises questions about the nature of Anabaptist masculinity. Sigrun Haude has inquired, “In a society where manliness was intricately linked to strength and the willingness to defend home and

²⁰² Rublack, 53.

²⁰³ Andreas Karlstadt, “Letter from the Community of Orlamünde to the People of Allstedt,” in Baylor, 34.

community, how did pacifist Anabaptist men—unwilling to carry a sword or serve in the army—redefine their manhood?”²⁰⁴

Anabaptist men’s rejection of the sword in favor of nonresistance was considered in two ways: physical battles against fellow Christians and the application of church discipline. The majority of Anabaptists advocated nonresistance, but to consider this as nonviolent pacifism in the modern sense would be anachronistic. Rather, Anabaptist men opposed the sword in favor of the ban, which was seen as a rehabilitating process for disciplining those who opposed official church decisions. People were not to be judged by the sword, but were to be improved through non-physical punishment. Although the ban shunned people away from the community and severed communication with them, this was understood as a less severe punishment than accusing heresy and taking life. Those that were banned were given the opportunity for rehabilitation, a chance to correct one’s mistakes and be welcomed back to the congregation. Nonviolence, then, was more than simply refusing to bear arms or participate in battle. Instead, as Walter Klaassen argued, it was “a totally new life orientation in which all human relationships are governed by patience, understanding, love, forgiveness, and a desire for the redemption even of the enemy. It is part of the new way of ordering human relationships under the new covenant.”²⁰⁵

The Swiss Brethren were the first Anabaptist group to advocate nonviolence.²⁰⁶ In his correspondence with Thomas Müntzer, Conrad Grebel rebuked the spiritualist for his incitement of peasant rebellion. Grebel wrote, “Moreover, the gospel and its adherents

²⁰⁴ Haude, 461.

²⁰⁵ Klassen, *Anabaptism in Outline*, 265-266.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 265. James Stayer has argued that the Swiss Brethren’s conviction for a complete refusal of the sword only came gradually.

are not to be protected by the sword, nor are they thus to protect themselves, which, as we learn from our brother, is thy opinion and practice. True Christian believers are sheep among wolves, sheep for the slaughter.”²⁰⁷ Grebel’s view would be accepted by many and would come to fundamentally structure the nonviolent doctrine found in Michael Sattler’s *Schleitheim Articles*. Article VI stated: “But within the perfection of Christ only the ban is used for the admonition and exclusion of the one who has sinned, without the death of the flesh, simply the warning and the command to sin no more.”²⁰⁸

As in other refusals undertaken by Anabaptists, nonresistance in separating from the world was understood in literal Biblical terms and argued in the *Schleitheim Articles* by citing Matthew 5:39, Romans 13:1ff, and John 8:11. Articles IV and VI specifically reject sword-bearing in favor of Christ’s command of “nonresistance,” followed by a reference to Paul’s orders that the world and the Church function according to different standards, where true Christians should remain separate from the world. For example, Matthew 5:39 states, “Thereby shall also fall away from us the diabolical weapons of violence—such as sword, armor, and the like, and all their use to protect friends or against enemies—by virtue of the word of Christ: ‘you shall not resist evil.’”²⁰⁹ The strict position against violence and sword outlined in the *Schleitheim Articles* was upheld by the Swiss and South German/Austrian Anabaptists, Hutterites, and Mennonites. Perfect Christians were not to resist enemies but yield before them and the world, while trusting in God. This separation from society, taken from the New Testament and read literally,

²⁰⁷ Conrad Grebel, “Letter to Müntzer, 1524,” in Williams and Mergal, 80.

²⁰⁸ Michael Sattler, “Schleitheim Confession, 1527,” in Klaassen, 268-270.

²⁰⁹ Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 186; Also see, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*, trans. and ed. John H. Yoder (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1973), 44-45; 86-91. Sattler’s *Congregational Order* and *The Capito Letters: Letter to Bürgermeister and Council at Horb, 31 May 1527*, both reference his position against violence and the use of the sword.

underlined an objective “rule of life” and political ethic for Anabaptist men.²¹⁰ Although Anabaptist leaders including Grebel, Sattler, Hans Denck, Pilgram Marpeck, Jakob Hutter, and Philip Riedemann had somewhat different views on the issue of nonviolence, they all looked to Jesus as a foundational model for political ethics.

On the other hand, the Anabaptist view against the sword was not uniformly accepted by all the Brethren. Hans Hut and Balthasar Hubmaier did not advocate a theology of nonresistance or pacifism.²¹¹ Hut supported an apocalyptic vision similar to that of Thomas Müntzer. Even after the failed Peasant’s War of 1525, Hut criticized Swiss Brethren ordinances that forbade all Christian participation in war. He explained, “A Christian may well have a sword but[...]it must remain in the scabbard until God tells him to take it out. Before then they would all be scattered and tried. Finally the Lord would gather them all together again and himself return. Then the saints would punish the others, namely, the sinners who had not repented.”²¹²

Balthasar Hubmaier was unique among Anabaptist leaders in that he had a doctorate in theology and was not a pacifist, but instead viewed protection through violence as essential to ensure the Christian order. He believed in civil service, swearing oaths, and a typical form of male honor compatible with that of society at large.

Hubmaier and his followers, the *Schwertler* (sword bearers), believed that Christian men may use violence as a means to defend those under persecution and to maintain order.²¹³ Hubmaier’s tract “Concerning the Sword” indicated that every man’s

²¹⁰ Snyder, 187.

²¹¹ Ibid., 185-200.

²¹² “Interrogation of Hans Hut, 1527,” in Klaassen, 273.

²¹³ Gregory, 206.

duty was to judge all matter of conflicts before participating in them. The man's decision may then appropriately acknowledge whether governments are just or unjust.²¹⁴ This work was unique in that Hubmaier addressed the importance of Anabaptist men in protecting true Christians and their neighbors in defense against the wicked. Hubmaier understood Anabaptist men as potential wielders of the sword if called to duty by God. He writes, "God has hung the sword at their side and ordered them to be his handmaidens (*dienerin*) [...] Paul calls the authorities handmaidens of God. For what God can do himself he often prefers to do through his creatures as tools."²¹⁵ Here men are to uphold civic authority in defense and protection of the weak following the advice of Paul, who wrote "to the Romans of a material sword, worn at the side, which terrifies evildoers[...]. If there are two different swords, one which concerns the soul and the other the body, dear brothers, you must allow both to remain in force." "Thus, God wants to do many things through creatures as his tools."²¹⁶

Hubmaier's *On the Sword* was a rebuttal of the *Schleitheim Article's* strict literal interpretation of following the model of Jesus. He utilized passages from scripture to contradict Sattler's view, referencing Isaiah 2:4 and Joel 3:10: "Melting Swords into plowshares and the lances into sickles and yet breaking the plow for swords and the hoes for lances."²¹⁷ In this manner, Hubmaier attempted to make the command not to kill (Matthew 5) and the divine "ordering" of the sword of government (Romans 13) into a more compatible theology. He argued that individual Christians and government "does

²¹⁴ Balthasar Hubmaier, "Concerning the Sword, (1527)," in Klaassen, 271. Hubmaier stated, "However, the subjects should first carefully test the spirit of their rulers whether they are motivated by arrogance, pride, greed, envy, hate, or self-seeking rather than by love of the common good and the peace of land."

²¹⁵ Balthasar Hubmaier, "On the Sword," in Baylor, 185-187; 192.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 195; 198; Also see, Snyder, 192-193.

²¹⁷ Snyder, 192-193.

not kill out of anger[...] but by the order of God,” which legitimized both nonresistance and the use of force as separate, each in its proper sphere.²¹⁸ From these writings, Hubmaier like Martin Luther, supported Christian participation in defensive war.

The argument over the duty to wield the sword advocated by Hubmaier split many Austrian and Moravian Anabaptist groups. Tension was high over the issue, especially in the summer of 1527 in Nikolsburg after Hubmaier was arrested for baptizing adults. This tension characterized the formation of the first two Moravian communities. The *Schwertler* defended Hubmaier’s theology that Christian magistrates should use force to maintain order. These men followed the leadership of Hans Spittelmanier. Others advocated pacifist separation from society, in accordance with Grebel, Manz, and Sattler. The latter group, known as the *Stäbler* (staff bearers), were led by Jacob Wiedemann. After a dispute, Wiedemann and his flock traveled east of the Morava River and founded the Anabaptist community at Austerlitz in 1528.²¹⁹

How did Anabaptist men, unwilling to provide military service or use a sword, view the relationship between violence and manhood? These men understood the use of violence and killing as unchristian acts. Killing was too final. It denied other men their opportunity to improve spiritually and morally, or to repent. Killing was considered wrong because it robbed men of the liberty to decide for Christ. Anabaptist men believed using the sword was, therefore, counterproductive.²²⁰ Violence produced more hostility,

²¹⁸ Ibid., 193. For additional sources concerning Hubmaier’s understanding of violence, see Balthasar Hubmaier, “Concerning the Sword, 1527,” in Klaassen, 248; 271-272.

²¹⁹ Gregory, 206. Other sects of Anabaptism, especially the Dutch Melchiorites associated with the Münster Rebellion of 1534-35 and the Batenburgers, were also defenders of physical violence. I am not considering them in this study because many historians have indicated their violent, radical behavior and prophetic millenarianism separated them from the Swiss Brethren, Hutterites, and Mennonites that are my focus.

²²⁰ Klaassen, 266.

whereas the ban was more ethical in dealing with unruly Christian subjects. Proper masculinity was modeled on the forgiving and ethical nature of Christ, and valued patience, understanding, love, and forgiveness, even of one's enemy. Human life and relationships were meant to be valued rather than discarded carelessly.

Hubmaier's unique stance towards violence was likely due to his advanced training as a theologian. Like Luther, he supported justified violence in protection of Christian lives, friends, and neighbors. Hubmaier did not condone violence for the sake of honor, glory, or wealth that accompanied spoils of war, however. He justified using the sword only when necessary, to be done through the order and service of God, and never out of anger. Thus his acceptance of violence fit with contemporary Protestant and Catholic views of masculinity, but his justification for this did not.

Dress

Ulinka Rublack's recent book, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*, provides a terrific analysis of German material culture, clothing, and masculinity during the Reformation. She argues, "There was nothing homogenous about Protestant culture. Clothing practices and their symbolization can reveal specific "taste communities". A bourgeois urban mainstream even founded a Protestant material culture. Rather than preaching austere simplicity, it endorsed a notion of civil decorousness and hence adapted Renaissance ideals."²²¹ Her study aptly identifies a mainstream Protestant type of dress, but describes marginalized religious groups in vague terms. She writes,

²²¹ Rublack, 82.

“Some Protestants saw fancy dress as too tainted with immorality and too playful to be decorous. Principle restricted and kept everything in well-defined limits; consequently, emotional transformation spread danger[...] True hope and joy in this strand of Protestantism was increasingly confined to the spiritual.”²²² This section will build on Rublack’s arguments and examine Anabaptist dress, which was one of those strands of Protestantism in which play and joy were “increasingly confined to the spiritual.”

Among the reasons for anticlericalism during the Reformation was the criticism of priestly vestments worn during mass. Protestants viewed this as excessive display, unrelated to Christ’s message and the true apostolic church. Luther believed neither humble habits nor fine clerical clothing designated anyone as holy.²²³ In a sense, this logic was a part of a spiritual redaction characteristic of Erasmian “perfect piety”: “the attempt to progress always away from visible things, which are usually imperfect or indifferent, to invisible ones.”²²⁴ The Swiss Brethren were especially strict on this line of reasoning. Conrad Grebel argued in his “Letter to Thomas Müntzer”, “If the Lord’s Supper is to be administered, we want it to take place without priestly vestments, without singing, and without additions... preach and establish what the apostles practiced.”²²⁵ He also articulated this in the Second Zürich Disputation with Zwingli: “Likewise concerning the vestments which the priest wears when he administers the mass:[...] neither chanting nor vestments is of any use except to detract from right, true prayer.”²²⁶

²²² Rublack, 109.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 85.

²²⁴ Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformations*, 61-62.

²²⁵ Conrad Grebel, “Letter to Thomas Müntzer,” in Baylor, 40.

²²⁶ “The Second Zurich Disputation (October 26-28, 1523),” in Lindburg, 128.

The Swiss Brethrens' attack on priestly vestments was a small aspect of a much larger Anabaptist campaign against luxurious and elegant clothing during the Reformation. Along with their separation from the world and rejection of temporal or "honored" possessions, Anabaptists rejected material items that designated wealth or sumptuousness. The refusal to wear lavish clothing or appear in public dressed in anything inappropriate to one's standing reflected the spiritual and moral ideal that Anabaptists identified with. Wearing simple or humble clothes constructed a "psychic landscape" for Anabaptists that was supposed to express their inner spirituality outward. Clothes were worn to symbolize morality and meekness. Rublack argues, "Simple dress of this kind projected an image of a pious laity uninterested in fashion."²²⁷

Anabaptist men wrote letters, pamphlets, and community ordinances that all prescribed how men and women were to dress and appear in public. This was often done to admonish fellow Anabaptists to physically exhibit a more Christian lifestyle or to conform to community standards and expectations. These writings, however, also expressed the more personalized relationships Anabaptists had with God, and described how the clothing they wore could express their inner spirituality to the world. Hans-Jürgen Goertz has argued, "Liberation from the clergy meant freedom of expression, in addition to taking personal responsibility for religious practice: reading the Scriptures oneself, actively offering oneself to the Holy Spirit and living one's life according to

²²⁷ Rublack, 10; 86. Rublack finds that clothing of this nature was sometimes illustrated in Reformation and apocalyptic woodcuts. Propaganda like this portrayed people who were spiritually prepared for repentance, and in some cases, for the end of the world as dressed in humble clothing.

God's will[...] For Karlstadt, it meant throwing off one's robes and starting a new life on the land, in the garb of a farmer."²²⁸

For other Anabaptist men, dressing in simple garb manifested the humble appearance of Christ. Like Jesus, they did not wear swords at their waste, codpieces, or shiny belt buckles. Even Anabaptists who could afford to did not dress pompously, with fine silks, or appear in gold or purple, which represented wealth. This was deliberate. These men chose to imitate Christ, who was always portrayed wearing a simple cloak. This idealized poverty as sacred. Imitating Christ was a further impetus taken by Anabaptist men to differentiate and distance themselves from other Protestants and Catholics. It was a way to physically symbolize a faith that truly followed Christ.²²⁹ A sentence from Zwingli's "Refutation of the Tricks of the Baptists" helps to visualize the apostolic poverty embraced by some Swiss Brethren in 1527, where "in great swarms they [Anabaptists] came into the city, unbelted and girded with rope or osiers, and prophesied, as they call it, in the market place and squares."²³⁰

Only neutral-colored clothing may have been favored by Anabaptist men. Hans Hergot's early writings offer one indication of this, as he states, "For God's sake the people will disregard selfish interests and do what serves the common good. They will wear a garment which they can produce in the village—white, gray, black, blue."²³¹ In this society, neutral colors like black and white had symbolic meaning. Black represented constancy and somberness while white signified faith and humility. Multi-colored clothes

²²⁸ Goertz, "Radical Religiosity in the Reformation," 74.

²²⁹ Rublack, 26; 82-86. Rublack also comments, "Others maintained that materiality could mediate between the human and the divine. Shrouds worn by a holy person, for instance, could be seen as imbued with the sacred through having touched a holy body and possessing healing power."

²³⁰ Ulrich Zwingli, "Refutation of the Tricks of the Baptists (July 31, 1527)," in Lindburg, 125.

²³¹ Hans Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," in SSGAA, 213.

could be associated with an “unsound” mind.²³² This is not surprising, for multi-colored clothing and decorations were commonly displayed in venues for entertainment. The Mennonite Obbe Phillips recalled that some charismatic mystics in Strasbourg “wore a tunic or a cloak with a lappet of fur. Some wore an unusually strange garment and so forth with these shapes and appearances dressed eloquently and pompously in multi-colored clothes to attract attention while others groomed their beards to “beautify their intentions.”²³³ Anabaptist men warned others to be wary of those who deceived men of their true nature and evil intentions by false disguise. These were “wolves in sheep’s clothing”; men who purposely don a pleasant appearance.²³⁴

Many of the sources from Anabaptist men regarding clothing are consistent in their message, stating often that sumptuous dress did not denote holiness and was actually unchristian. While working as an apostle around Linz, Ambrosius Spitelmaier wrote in 1527,

“before I received this baptism, I attended school, since I am a student as my clothes indicate although they are somewhat used and without ornament. Clothes do not make anyone devout nor wicked, but the heart.”²³⁵ Likewise, Hans Schlaffer wrote in 1528,

“Being a true Christian has nothing to do with fur coats, long gowns and hats, good eating and drinking and idleness, honoured sir, highly learned father, beautiful salons, tall houses, warm rooms, gentle brother on your pillow or feather mattress.”²³⁶ Another more detailed excerpt comes from the Austrian Anabaptist preacher Wolfgang Brandhuber,

²³² Rublack, 70.

²³³ Obbe Phillips, “A Confession, c. 1560,” in Williams and Mergal, 211-213.

²³⁴ Jörg von Jüchsen, “A Christian Order of a True Christian (1524),” in SSGAA, 10

²³⁵ Ambrosius Spitelmaier, “Questions and Answers of Ambrosius Spitelmaier (1527),” in SSGAA, 54.

²³⁶ Hans Schlaffer, “A Brief Instruction for the Beginning of a Truly Christian Life and Confession and Defense (1528),” in SSGAA, 89.

who became an important elder and leader to the Hutterite Brethren. Brandhuber asserted that fancy clothes will disappear on judgment day and be replaced by sackcloth for everyone.

“On that day (judgment day) he will put away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, the golden crescents, the bodices, the bracelets, the scarfs, the beautiful long tight-fitting dresses, the musk vials, the amulets, the signet rings and head bands, the festal garments, the hats, the cloaks, the veils, the pins, the mirrors, the blouses, the neckcloths, the linen garments, etc. And then instead of perfume there will be stench, instead of a sash a rope, baldness instead of well-set hair, instead of a breast cloth, sackcloth, instead of beauty, blackness.”²³⁷

Brandhuber’s description identified a true Christian as one who lacked luxury goods, poor in appearance, and humbled by his sackcloth held up by a rope. He was to be somber but patient as he received the salvation of God.

Some of the most detailed sources regarding Anabaptist dress come from the writings of Menno Simmons. His pamphlet, *The True Christian Faith, c. 1541*, intentionally warned members of his Church about the life of excess that false Christians lead. Menno wrote,

“They say that they believe, and yet, alas, there are no limits nor bounds to their accursed haughtiness, foolish pride and pomp; they parade in silks, velvet, costly clothes, gold rings, chains, silver belts, pins and buttons, curiously adorned shirts, shawls, collars, veils, aprons, velvet shoes, slippers, and such like foolish finery. They never regard that the exalted apostles Peter and Paul have in plain and express words forbidden this all

²³⁷ Wolfgang Brandhuber, “A Letter from our Dear Brother and Servant of Jesus Christ, Wolfgang Brandhuber to the Church of God at Rattenberg on the Inn (1529),” in SSGAA, 159. This list of female finery, somewhat contemporized by Brandhuber, comes from Isa. 3:18-24. It should, however, not be understood as applying only to women, but simply as a scriptural list of worldly indulgence applicable to male and female alike.

to Christian women. And if forbidden to women, how much more to men who are the leaders and heads of their wives!”²³⁸

Menno mainly addressed the women in his congregation, yet men, too, were to adhere to the same restrictions on clothing. Wives were to remain pious, both internally and externally. This meant a Mennonite woman’s demeanor was judged by her appearance, where modest dress was the desired fashion. Women were to avoid clothing that made them appear sinful. Menno later added, “Do not adorn yourselves with gold, silver, costly pearls and embroidered hair, and expensive, unusual dress. Use such clothing as becomes women professing godliness and which is suitable in your occupation.”²³⁹ This last admonishment indicates that even jewelry and cosmetic accessories available for women’s hair were deemed impermissible by the Mennonites. Menno believed only the simplest of dress was tolerable for Christian women.

Differences in clothing between Anabaptists and other Protestants were noticeable to contemporaries. Sebastian Franck compared the strict nature of Anabaptist dress to monasticism. Frank wrote, “They also establish rules about how simple clothes have to be, how each is to be made, and how many folds the skirt should have. Like the monks, they have rules governing eating, drinking, silence, speaking and clothes.”²⁴⁰ Frank’s comment compared Anabaptist sumptuary laws to the *Benedictine Rule*, which stated rules about the fabric and style of a monk’s tunic and undergarments.

Anabaptist men were not afraid to criticize other clergymen for their impious choice of dress. One Hutterite missionary was even brave enough to scold an abbot

²³⁸ Menno Simmons, “The True Christian Faith, C. 1541,” in Irwin, 57.

²³⁹ Menno Simmons, “The True Christian Faith, c. 1541,” in Irwin, 63.

²⁴⁰ Sebastian Frank, “On the Anabaptists, (1536),” in SSGAA, 235.

during his stay in Württemberg. Hans Schmidt recalled in writing that he told an abbot, “You have placed your houses near to the churches, so that you will not have to walk far. The apostles did not have things that easy, nor did they sit around in fox-trimmed coats like you.” Such an accusation must have been embarrassing for a prelate of the Catholic Church. Schmidt was quick to add rather amusingly, “Thereupon the abbot again became very excited and the spirit of evil was on his forehead.”²⁴¹

There is difficulty in providing illustrative evidence for Anabaptist clothing. Unlike their magisterial Protestant and Catholic counterparts, very few Anabaptist men had self-portraits commissioned in the sixteenth-century. The majority of profile images of prominent Anabaptist men were commissioned posthumously. Christoffel van Sichem (1581-1658), for example, was the artist of a series of engravings of Anabaptist leaders, such as that of Balthasar Hubmaier provided drawn c. 1606. Since Hubmaier was martyred in 1528, there is no way to authenticate that he owned the fur coat and hat that van Sichem placed him in, however.²⁴²

David Joris, one of the most influential Anabaptist leaders in the Netherlands, was one of the few men who did commission a self-portrait. Having been a skilled glass painter by profession, Joris was a wealthy gentleman in his time. His biographer, Gary Waite, has appropriately labeled him both an Anabaptist and a Spiritualist because of his prophetic attitude toward the second coming of Christ. David Joris was a peculiar Anabaptist leader because he was a Nicodemite. In other words, he was a devout

²⁴¹ Hans Schmidt, “Experiences of a Hutterite in Württemberg,” in SSGAA, 370.

²⁴² For a view of this image, see the back cover of *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, trans. and ed. H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989).

Anabaptist in his private life but pretended to be appear as an ordinary gentleman in public. Joris used the alias and pseudonym Johan von Brugge to avoid persecution.

The two faces of David Joris help explain his irregular, if not unique self-portrait, in which he is dressed sumptuously in a red silk gown and tailored yellow hose, with a fashionable black velvet cap, thin white gloves, a codpiece, and sword at his waist. This was hardly the look of a prophet of God.



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David Joris relocated several times during his life, and spent the last twelve years in Basel. In his account, Joris's neighbor Dr. Felix Platter tells of Joris being buried in a velvet pointed cap lined with scarlet and a sumptuous gown. Three years after his death (1559), his body was exhumed because of the local magistrate's suspicion of heresy. After he recognized the body, the hangman desecrated it by tearing off his funerary

²⁴³ Netherlandish Master, Portrait of the Anabaptist David Joris, c. 1550/1555, oil on panel, 78.9x68.5 cm (Inv. 561). © Kunstmuseum Basel, Photo: Martin P. Bühler, rpt. in Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 25; 37. Rublack writes, "The new prominence of portrait paintings thus heightened the symbolic presence of an individual person, as looking from that central viewpoint, or as centrally depicted." It is therefore helpful to think of portrait paintings as a visualization of the subjects' identities in particular ways.

clothes and publicly burning Joris's remains alongside his books and a portrait he owned.²⁴⁴

The self-portrait and the elegant dress Joris wore do not reveal him to be an Anabaptist, but were characteristic of his professional status. Thus David Joris was a Nicodemite in terms of religion, but also in terms of masculinity, because his private life exhibited masculine virtues at odds with those of his public alter ego, Johan von Brugge. Joris altered his public religious identity to conform to the norms of the Swiss Reformation. He also altered his public identity as a gentleman who dressed sumptuously to conform to hegemonic gender norms of sixteenth-century German society.

Joris's ideas about the spiritual and moral improvement of man were at odds with his outward appearance. His own illustration of "The New Man" provided below comes from his most important work, the *Wonder Book*.



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²⁴⁴ Rublack, 24-25.

²⁴⁵ David Joris, "The New Man," *The Wonder Book*, 2nd ed. 1555. Courtesy of the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College. Goshen, IN.

Joris's "New Man" symbolized a true Christian man spiritually improved after receiving believer's baptism. The illustration symbolized what Joris believed was the state of human perfection. Appearing naked, the new man was born anew, having physically shed away worldly possessions. This man was completely free from temptations of the flesh, very different from the man in the self-portrait.²⁴⁶

In summary, the sources that describe Anabaptist clothing indicate that Protestant dress was not homogenous in style. As members of a separatist faith, Anabaptists adopted clothing that not only differentiated their members from Catholics, but it also distinguished them from mainstream bourgeois Protestant dress. Instead of the civil decorousness advocated by Luther and other Protestants, Anabaptist men encouraged their followers to adopt an extremely simple and somber style of clothing, which might have helped members to identify with one another. Such dress allowed Anabaptist men to comprehend their masculinity in relation to apostolic poverty and the humility of Jesus Christ. Wearing simple clothing was a participatory expression that could mediate the divine by displaying a man's inner spirituality externally. Therefore, an analysis of dress can show how Anabaptism was expressed outwardly, through simpler clothing than what mainstream Protestants wore.

Facial Hair

The male body and hair have been new categories of interest among scholars of early modern Europe, and beards have become a useful topic to explore as a constituent of masculinity. Facial hair was not simply a barrier between a man's face and his

²⁴⁶ David Joris, "To the Praise of Our Lord and the Instruction of His People, 1537," in *The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris 1535-1543*, trans. and ed. Gary K. Waite (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press), 172-173. Also see Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 283-284.

environment; it was also a physical symbol of health, attractiveness, and honor. Will Fisher's study of early modern English culture provides evidence that beards were significant, both characteristically and symbolically in idealizing how hair constructed masculinity.²⁴⁷ Through the life stages of a man, growing a beard was a major symbol of maturity that divided adolescence from adulthood. Furthermore, Anu Korhonen argues that, "Following a medieval tradition, male physiology, maturity, and virility all had their bodily manifestation in abundant hair, be it beards, body hair, or head hair."²⁴⁸

Beards were a significant expression of protest during the Reformation. Traditionally, many laymen grew long beards, but Catholic clergy had rules against growing facial hair and therefore beards became a symbol and marker of Protestant defiance. Deliberate baldness, such as the monk's tonsure and bare chin connected manhood with a sense of spiritual humility for Catholic clergy. In the Protestant context, this was considered false modesty, and Protestant preachers grew long beards to counter Catholic religious baldness.²⁴⁹

Ulinka Rublack notes that long beards "could associate clergymen with the patriarchs and provide gravity, especially for many of the young, newly trained clergy[...]. But the fashion was far from being uniformly adopted, because if they were not grey and long, and unless they were groomed, flourishing beards could also be associated with disruptive masculine virility, or with Jewish practices."²⁵⁰ There was little actual consistency among Protestant reformers concerning beards. John Calvin, Wolfgang

²⁴⁷ Anu Korhonen, "Strange Things Out of Hair: Baldness and Masculinity in Early Modern England," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* XLI, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 371-391; Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁴⁸ Korhonen, "Baldness and Masculinity in Early Modern England," 388.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 389.

²⁵⁰ Rublack, 102.

Capito, Urbanus Rhegius, Johan Brenz, John Oecolampadius, and Heinrich Bullinger were a handful of reformers that had chosen to grow facial hair. In contrast, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer, Caspar Hedio, Johannes Bugenhagen, Erasmus Alber, Justus Menius, and Veit Dietrich were beardless in public for long periods during their time as reformers.²⁵¹

In contrast to magisterial Protestant reformers, there seems to be a stronger tendency among Anabaptist men towards the growth and maintenance of a beard. David Joris was known for his long red beard as shown previously in his self-portrait, and even his illustration of “The New Man” featured a beard. Almost every engraving or drawing, although made posthumously, pictured an Anabaptist man with a beard.²⁵² The images below show six prominent Anabaptist leaders, all with beards.²⁵³

²⁵¹ Caspar Hedio was a reformer in Strasbourg along with Martin Bucer, Wolfgang Capito and Mathew Zell. Johannes Bugenhagen was a pastor in Wittenberg and from 1528-1540, a reformer in North Germany and Denmark. Justus Menius was a town preacher at Wittenberg, Mühlberg, and Erfurt. Erasmus Alber was a teacher and pastor in many towns in central and northern Germany, namely in Spredlingen near Frankfort. Veit Dietrich was Luther’s secretary and a preacher at St. Sebald in Nuremberg.

²⁵² Thielmann J. van Braght’s, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians: Who Baptized Only Upon Confession of Faith, and Who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus, Their Saviour, From the Time of Christ to the Year A. D. 1660* trans. Joseph F. Sohm (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1938). The *Martyrs Mirror* is another source that provides several illustrations of Anabaptists posthumously. Personal images of Anabaptist martyrs from the sixteenth-century as well as those of large groups of unidentified Anabaptists men were pictured with beards. Conrad Grebel was apparently the only Anabaptist portrayed posthumously without a beard.

²⁵³ Starting from the top row, left to right: Melchior Hoffman; Menno Simmons; Balthasar Humbaier; Melchoir Rink. Second row: Felix Manz; Pilgram Marpeck.



Hardly anything is mentioned about facial hair by Anabaptist men in written sources, perhaps because beards were seen as a trivial matter.²⁵⁴ Although Anabaptist sources lack reference to beards, one document called attention to an Anabaptist who could *not* grow facial hair. Jörg Zaunring, an important Anabaptist leader in South Tyrol, was described as a man without a beard and with a high-pitched voice.²⁵⁵ The fact that Zaunring's beardless face was noted by another Anabaptist indicates that his condition may have been perceived as an irregularity by his brethren, and that he lacked common physical traits other Anabaptist men had.

²⁵⁴ Hans Schmidt, "Experiences of a Hutterite in Württemberg," in SSGAA, 375. Schmidt briefly remarked that while imprisoned in Württemberg, a Catholic clergyman threatened "that my beard would grow white before I got back to Moravia."

²⁵⁵ Jörg Zaunring, "A Short Interpretation of the Last Supper of Christ Presented as a Conversation between the World and a Christian to the Honour and Glory of God (ca. 1530)," in SSGAA, 162-163.

Their desire to imitate Christ may have been one reason that a majority of Anabaptist men appear to have had beards and were regularly portrayed with them in illustrations. Sixteenth-century images of Christ presented the savior as a man with a beard. Anabaptist men grew facial hair because it was a highly masculinized ideal that also held an appealing religious significance. Like the tonsure of medieval monks, beards were symbolic of an Anabaptist man's humility and spiritual honor for God. Beyond the association with Christ, a beard was a way Anabaptist leaders distinguished themselves from Catholic clergy, and in some cases, other Protestant preachers.

Ch. 4: Martyrdom

As followers of a nonconformist religion, the Swiss Brethren of 1525 were immediately labeled heretics, forcing them to form clandestine gatherings and meet in secret. In May of 1525, the first two Anabaptists were martyred, having, as it was reported, “both approached the fire stakes with joyful bearing and died willingly and joyfully.”²⁵⁶ The first years of the movement were also the bloodiest: 488 of the 845 (57.6 percent) verified or “credible” Anabaptist executions fell in the three-year period from 1527-30.²⁵⁷ By 1529, Charles V’s imperial mandate at the Diet of Speyer made adult baptism a heresy punishable as a public offense. From the view of the authorities, Anabaptism was an attack on the social order, a subversive lifestyle that “struck the very heart of a culture in which religion was supposed to bind man to wife, parents to children, neighbor to neighbor, burghers to magistrates, and subjects to lords.”²⁵⁸

From the view of Anabaptists, suffering and martyrdom were essential components of the faith, and this chapter argues that martyrdom was also a central component of Anabaptist masculinity. A martyr’s death, fundamentally connected with the process of receiving salvation, required bravery, steadfastness, and “manly courage.” This was considered a heroic act and identified those who willingly suffered for the Lord as heroes of the faith. Since medieval times it was not uncommon for acts of self-sacrifice to be attributed with masculine virtue, especially in regard to the service feudal knights provided their lords. Self-sacrifice was an honorable action for Anabaptist men who

²⁵⁶ Heinold Fast, “The First Two Swiss Anabaptist Martyrs: Bolt Eberli and an Unnamed Priest Lachen, May 29, 1525,” in *Sources of Swiss Anabaptism* ed. Leland Harder (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1985), 377.

²⁵⁷ Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 201. The 845 known executions come from Switzerland, south and central Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia.

²⁵⁸ Thomas A. Brady, Jr., *The Politics of Reformation Germany: Jacob Sturm (1489-1553) of Strasbourg* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International Inc., 1997), 144.

followed in the footsteps of Christ. Anabaptist men who suffered in death for their faith were honored through the reverence of martyr's songs and martyrologies. The men who died in this way were given the same masculine attributes that saintly martyrs of antiquity were thought to have. In some ways, martyrdom could also solidify bonds between Anabaptist men who were ready to surrender their bodies for salvation. These men were, as one Anabaptist man described it, a "nobility of virtue."²⁵⁹

This chapter will begin by analyzing the dangers of practicing adult baptism in the context of the Reformation. The legal procedures taken by both Catholics and Protestants in their attempts to stamp out Anabaptism labeled the faith as a heresy. Persecution, imprisonment, trial, torture, and death threatened Anabaptist men in their quest to establish a more Christian lifestyle free of authorities. An analysis of the martyrs' mentality follows, which will help unveil the feelings, emotions, and consciousness of the men who freely accepted this fate. Next, a comparative analysis of adult baptism and martyrdom will provide better comprehension of how the two actions were connected in the Anabaptist mentality of salvation. The chapter will follow with a brief look at Nicodemism and apostates to reveal how attitudes towards martyrdom were not uniformly accepted by all Anabaptist men. Finally, the chapter will close with a section examining how Anabaptist songs and martyrologies honored fallen brethren. Attention is especially given to the concept of memory and how it was utilized among Anabaptist groups to praise and preserve heroic actions.

²⁵⁹ Hans Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," in Baylor, 218. Hergot's use of "*der adel der turgent*" signified a group of men that possessed noble qualities through their virtuous behavior rather than by their blood.

Persecution, Imprisonment, and Death

The failure of the Swiss Brethren to persuade Ulrich Zwingli and the Zürich City Council during the Zürich Disputations meant that civic reform was not a possibility. Instead, the Zürich Council condemned the practice of adult baptism, making it punishable by death. The Brethren had to separate themselves from the Zürich Church if they were to practice adult baptism and abolish the mass for a more purified Christian faith. That separation itself, however, was also illegal. One Lutheran pastor stated in 1528, “Holy Scripture customarily uses the word *heresim*, Titus 3:10: A heretic, whom in German we call a *Ketzer*[...] For the word *heresis* in the Greek language means to choose, select, separate.”²⁶⁰ The pastor’s definition indicated that even before the imperial edict of 1529, Anabaptist separation from public Churches was considered heresy and was thus illegal.

The *Reichstag* of Speyer in 1529 was the venue at which Charles V ordered an imperial mandate against all Anabaptists throughout the Empire. On April 23, 1529 the mandate threatened: “no man, having once been baptized according to Christian order, shall let himself be baptized again or for the second time[...] it is forbidden in the *imperial law* to do such on pain of death.”²⁶¹ This order listed a number of legal procedures as to how Catholic and evangelical nobility were to handle the accused, but essentially it allowed the condemnation of those who practiced and refused to recant their

²⁶⁰ Anonymous (Simon Schneeweiss?), “Theological Refutation of Anabaptist Teaching (1528),” in SSGAA, 122. Schneeweiss was a Lutheran, listed as being pastor of the Church at Crailsheim, a town near Nuremberg.

²⁶¹ Emperor Charles V, “Mandate of 23 April 1529” in Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 238-239. Text translated from that in Bossert, *Württemberg: Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer* (QGT, 1), 3 f. In the earlier mandate of 1528 that Charles identified common law with spiritual or canon law against the Anabaptists. This was presented at the Diet of Speyer, warning “...by Our public mandate, to exhort, to restrain, and to warn your subjects, relatives, and those who belong to you against the recently arisen, new error sect of Anabaptism... remind them faithfully and earnestly of the penalty of the law in such a case...”

adult baptism. The law was adapted from the sixth-century *Codex Iustitianeus* and was firmly adhered to in Catholic regions of the empire.²⁶² As a result, hundreds of Anabaptist men and women were persecuted in the Holy Roman Empire as well as Catholic areas of Switzerland, and the Low Countries.²⁶³

In reformed regions of the Empire Charles V's mandate was not consistently applied. Hans-Jürgen Goertz finds that the mandate was followed "milder in Hessen, more strongly in Electoral Saxony and in parts of the Palatinate. The grounds for punishment were also revised in the Protestant regions—not heresy, but blasphemy and treason were cited. In this context, the practice of believer's baptism was forbidden by being declared a public offense."²⁶⁴

Some Protestant cities like Strasbourg handled the "Anabaptist problem" in their own way. Already in July of 1527 the Strasbourg patrician and future mayor, Jacob Sturm, issued the first city ordinance against Anabaptists.²⁶⁵ Strasbourg, once viewed as a safe-haven to all beliefs, closed its gates and turned away Anabaptist refugees. The Senate and City Council of XXI vigorously tried to dissolve Anabaptist conventicles by ordering raids, arrests, and exile. They arrested Melchoir Hoffman, who spent the final twelve years of his life in prison, only to be freed by death. Pilgram Marpeck, the Anabaptist leader and once respected engineer in Strasbourg, was expelled after a debate with the council in the winter of 1531. The Spanish anti-trinitarian and Anabaptist

²⁶² Goertz, 82.

²⁶³ Arthur, *The Tailor-King*, 10.

²⁶⁴ Goertz, 82.

²⁶⁵ Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 252.

sympathizer Michael Servetus was also forced out of the city before being martyred in Geneva by Calvin's consistory.²⁶⁶

Sturm and the XXI held a synod in order to collectively decide how to deal with Strasbourg's Anabaptists. In the final session of the First Synod on 23 October 1533, Sturm declared, "the Senate does not intend to force anyone in matters of faith, but only to suppress conspiracies that might lead to division of the commonweal." A unanimous vote at a later synod on 4 March 1534 declared that Anabaptism would not be tolerated in Strasbourg, and that it was considered a punishable offense.²⁶⁷ The official decision indicates that some reformed cities did not simply follow the Catholic mandate of 1529 against Anabaptists, but instead deliberated how to address Anabaptism through civic councils.

Anabaptist men, especially those traveling as missionaries, were subject to persecution and imprisonment, and many were tried and sentenced to death. Most men were burned at the stake, but some were drowned. The Zürich council made adult baptism punishable by drowning in an edict passed in March of 1526. Felix Manz suffered this fate in Lake Zürich that year. Michael Sattler was later burned at the stake in Rottenburg in 1527. Balthasar Hubmeier was sentenced to death by fire in Vienna in

²⁶⁶ Brady, *The Politics of the Reformation In Germany*, 143-146.

²⁶⁷ Brady, *Politics of the Reformation*, 88; 148. In the vote in March 1534, the Strasbourg Council had decided to remain with the oft-mentioned Tetrapolitan Confession, which was a doctrinal statement prepared by Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito under Sturm's supervision for the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. It held a shared view of the Strasbourg preachers that sided with the Zwinglian position on the sacrament of the Eucharist. The vote also remained in accordance with the Sixteen Articles, which was a declaration of faith drawn up during Strasbourg's First Synod in 1533 by Bucer to achieve unity among the churchwardens, pastors, preachers, and curates in religious matters.

1528, while other important leaders in the Tirol, such as Leonard Schiemer and Hans Schlaffer, received a similar fate.²⁶⁸ John Hut was also burned at Augsburg in 1529.

Torture was a common method utilized by secular authorities to get Anabaptist men to deny their faith. *The Hutterite Chronicle* describes many of the gruesome practices used in the attempt to get Jakob Hutter to recant after he was betrayed and brought to Innsbruck in Austria. After interrogation by priests of the King Ferdinand's government:

“They tortured him and caused him great agony by all they did to him, yet they were not able to change his heart or make him deny the truth[...] They put him ice-cold water and then took him into a warm room and had him beaten with rods. They lacerated his body, poured brandy into the wounds, and set it on fire. They tied his hands and again gagged him to prevent him from denouncing their wickedness. Putting a hat with a tuft of feathers on his head, they led him into the house of their idols and in every way made a laughing stock of him. After he had suffered all their cruelty and yet remained firm and upright, a Christian hero steadfast in faith, these wicked sons of Caiaphas and Pilate condemned him and burned him alive at the stake.”²⁶⁹

It was common for large groups of Anabaptist men to be sentenced and burned together publicly. *The Martyrs Mirror* provides many cases where this happened. For example, Thomas Hermann was seized at Kitzbuehl in 1527 where “He was immediately apprehended, tortured, sentenced to fire, and burned. [...] After him sixty-seven of his fellow believers were executed in the same place.”²⁷⁰ These men were tried and sentenced to death because the judge at Kitzbuehl had found them to be “heretics.”

²⁶⁸ Goertz, 82.

²⁶⁹ *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren: Volume I*, trans. and ed. by the Hutterian Brethren, (Rifton, NY: Plough Publishing House Hutterian Brethren, 1987), 145.

²⁷⁰ van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror*, 422.

Wolfgang Brandhuber and seventy of his followers were also executed at Linz by “fire, water and the sword.”²⁷¹

King Ferdinand was particularly motivated to weed out all Anabaptists in Austria. He ordered a “great persecution” of the Anabaptist Church of Steinborn in 1539. Approximately 150 men and women were taken to the castle of Falkenstein. Some recanted but roughly 90 people were kept imprisoned for five and a half weeks. Those who refused recantation were “taken to the sea” while the King’s marshal “gave some of the young lads as slaves to Austrian nobles.”²⁷² The *Martyrs Mirror* portrays a scene of emotion and feeling: “Thus man and wife had to separate from each other, and leave their little children[...] This leave-taking was so pitiful, that the king’s marshal, and others like him, could not keep back their tears.”²⁷³ At “great persecutions,” such as that at Steinborn, Anabaptist husbands and fathers lost the ability to protect and provide for their families. Sigrun Haude notes that the prospect of forced abandonment of wives and children added to the suffering Anabaptist men had to endure under persecution and imprisonment.²⁷⁴

The examples presented above describe only a small number of the Anabaptists that experienced punishments and suffering for remaining steadfast in their faith. The few mentioned, however, do indicate the range of punishments that Anabaptist men underwent during the sixteenth century. Death by fire was not the only sentence given to Anabaptists found guilty of heresy. Life imprisonment, starvation, various methods of torture, enslavement, and emotional trauma comprise the variety of punishments

²⁷¹ van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror*, 433.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 450.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 450-451.

²⁷⁴ Haude, 454.

Anabaptist men were subject to. Menno Simmons commented on the uncertainty of punishment for his fellow Brethren, stating:

“Some they have executed by hanging, some they have tortured with inhuman tyranny, and afterwards choked with cords at the stake. Some they roasted and burned alive. Some they have killed with the sword and given them to the fowls of the air to devour. Some they have cast to the fishes[...] Others wander about here and there, in want, homelessness and affliction, in mountains and deserts, in holes and caves of the earth. They must flee with their wives and little children from one country to another, from one city to another. They are hated, abused, slandered and lied about by all men.”²⁷⁵

Menno’s list of cruel and usual punishments reveal that Anabaptism was perceived as a real threat to the public by both Catholic and Reformed authorities. Already by 1527 martyrdom had become a well-known fate for those who willingly accepted adult baptism. Therefore, suffering and martyrdom were realistic consequences for Anabaptist men.

The Martyrs’ Mentality

The martyr’s mentality shared by Anabaptists was a fundamental awareness accepted along the moral path to salvation. Adult baptism was an illegal action punishable by death, so suffering was intrinsic to the faith. This was a mentality that associated physical bravery with torture and a painful death. Anabaptists identified suffering as courageous and honorable, and viewed self-sacrifice as a moral quality to be praised by fellow Brethren.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Katherine Leach, *Documents and Debates: The German Reformation* (London: Macmillan Education LTD, 1991), 74.

²⁷⁶ For a full analysis of the Anabaptist martyr mentality, see Brad Gregory’s chapter “*Nachfolge Christi: Anabaptists and Martyrdom*” in *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, 197-249.

A handful of historians have studied the martyrs' mentality in Anabaptism. George Hunston Williams argued that Anabaptists commonly found their answers in the "ecclesiastical blueprints" of Scripture where the martyred church of antiquity provided a past model to replicate.²⁷⁷ Hans-Jürgen Goertz has pointed towards the new individual religiosity intensified by the Reformation's theology of personal salvation possible without clerical ordination. Goertz claimed, "This is the foundation for the intensely new notion of the individual's personal religiousness: a person who is told that the divine spirit transforms him internally, and of whom it is expected that he will contribute to it through acts of mortification[...] becomes more intensively conscious of his own singularity than if he is told that his sinful self will henceforth be overlooked."²⁷⁸ Anabaptists claimed that mainstream Protestants lacked serious belief in the moral significance of salvation, or as Goertz called it, the "improvement of behavior." Like Thomas Müntzer, Anabaptists compared Luther with traditional papists because of his focus on the "honey-sweet" instead of the "bitter" Christ, who demanded suffering. The process of salvation required real human participation in order to understand "what God is in experience." This had its roots in medieval pious repentance.²⁷⁹

Brad Gregory has argued, "Even to ponder becoming an Anabaptist was ipso facto to think about martyrdom."²⁸⁰ The act embodied the notions of separation at the heart of Anabaptist identity; the idea that true disciples of the faith consciously maintained a readiness to suffer and die as Christ had.²⁸¹ The willingness to endure suffering through martyrdom instead of recantation strengthened solidarity and attracted

²⁷⁷ Irwin, xxix.

²⁷⁸ Goertz, 75.

²⁷⁹ Goertz, 77.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 198.

²⁸¹ Gregory, 207; 212.

rather than weakened membership. True Disciples of Christ, Anabaptists believed, happily followed their savior in agony and death. Hans Denck wrote, “The person who willingly suffers for the truth is blessed because he has escaped the lie. To such a person even this suffering becomes easy, precious and good. But to the world it is difficult, painful and evil.”²⁸² Although Anabaptist leaders quarreled over other aspects of their faith, this mentality was fixed among them: “Hubmaier and Hut, Grebel and Müntzer, for all their disagreements, voiced variations on this theme from Strasbourg to Moravia.”²⁸³

The martyrs’ mentality may have been more common among Anabaptist men than women. As previously mentioned in chapter 2, sixty-five percent of the Anabaptist membership was male according to Claus-Peter Clasen’s research. This implies that there was likely a larger demographic of men martyred than women. Sigrun Haude has also indicated differences in capital punishments between men (burning) and women (drowning), and some sources suggest that martyrdom was a more common experience for men in specific regions.²⁸⁴ The 1584 Württemberg record “How to proceed against Anabaptist Women” indicated a reluctance of the civic authorities to use capital punishment or even banishment of women heretics. Magistrates feared that children of Anabaptist mothers would be left abandoned.²⁸⁵ While the Württemberg example suggests martyrdom was more common for men, further research is needed to show whether this was also true in other Protestant territories.²⁸⁶

²⁸² Hans Denck, “On the Law of God,” in Baylor, 146.

²⁸³ Gregory, 207.

²⁸⁴ Haude, 458. Women martyrs typically suffered death by drowning, which appeared less painful and dramatic to authorities and the public, while the honorable kind of execution for men was to be burned.

²⁸⁵ Irwin, 63-66.

²⁸⁶ Anabaptist women were often martyred in Catholic territories owned by the Habsburgs such as the Dutch Netherlands and Austria.

Anabaptist men perceived a sense of spiritual honor in Brethren who had the ability to remain steadfast and suffer for God. Loyalty and devotion tested through pain and loss were sacrifices made by men who possessed an inner spiritual strength. Salvation in Christ was the ultimate reward and an eternal blessing in exchange for committing one's life for a higher cause. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Anabaptist men often "put God's honor first." Their writings expressed the idea that righteous conduct and death "under the cross" were heroic actions performed for *God's honor*.²⁸⁷ Wilhelm Reublin, a leader among Michael Sattler's circle of Swiss Brethren, wrote to his followers about Anabaptist men who were martyred in nearby towns. His letters claimed that four Anabaptist men were offered pardons if they would recant their faith, but each one rejected this, having claimed, "God's grace was to them more precious than man's grace."²⁸⁸ Therefore, part of Anabaptist masculinity meant surrendering the honor men could gain in life by honoring God through self-sacrifice and death. Spiritual honor was symbolic of the martyrs' mentality and the internal, personal relationship Anabaptist men had with God.

Anabaptist martyrologies have described mass executions where several Anabaptist men were simultaneously burned alive. The image provided below, taken from the *Martyrs Mirror*, helps to visualize such emotion-packed experiences. In such circumstances, spiritual honor could be collectively apparent among those men who suffered together painfully for their salvation. As reported in the martyrology, these men were perceived as heroic and honorable by their brethren. Martyrdom had the ability to

²⁸⁷ Michael Sattler, "The Schleithem Articles," in Baylor, 174.

²⁸⁸ Gregory, 208.

create a strong sense of unity amongst Anabaptist men; a bonding mechanism of brotherly fidelity and a “nobility of virtue” that deeply shaped their consciousness.²⁸⁹



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The bonds between Anabaptist men strengthened their ability to remain steadfast in the face of death. Those men that went willingly to the fire provided honorable examples of “manly courage” to others. Menno Simons encouraged this spiritual bonding between men, writing, “See, my worthy brothers, if you prove yourselves in your

²⁸⁹ Hans Hergot, “On the New Transformation of the Christian Life,” in Baylor, 218.

²⁹⁰ Jan Luiken, “18 Anabaptists Burned at the Stake” in van Braghts,” in *Martyrs Mirror*, 17.

oppression [then will] your poor, weak brethren and companions in the Lord [be]strengthened and instructed through your courage.”²⁹¹

These masculine bonds also meant a willingness to suffer in order to protect fellow members of the faith. The missionary Hans Schmidt refused to provide information concerning fellow Hutterites when questioned by Württemberg authorities. Schmidt wrote, “The overseer would have been satisfied with an answer about the stopping places of our people, but I would rather have died than to betray anyone.”²⁹²

The martyrdom of Christ was the example that Anabaptist men followed. Following Christ in all paths of life provided a basic guide to salvation, from baptism at the age of 30 to martyrdom at death. Brad Gregory writes, “Discipleship was no halfway house. *Nachfolge Christi* (following Christ) implied an openness to rejection, oppression, and violent death for maintaining the truth for which Christ himself had been killed. [This] marked them more deeply with a martyrological mentality.”²⁹³ Michael Sattler wrote in the *Schleitheim Articles*, “Christ has suffered, not ruled, and he gave us a model, so that you shall follow in his footsteps” [1 Peter 2:21].²⁹⁴ In a similar manner, the Mennonite Dietrich Philips wrote, “deny self, and faithfully follow in his footsteps, voluntarily take up the cross[...] have godly sorrow, meekness, purity of heart, mercy, peacemaking, patience in persecution for righteousness’ sake.” “The seventh ordinance is that all Christians must suffer and be persecuted.” “The righteous must suffer and possess

²⁹¹ Gregory, 223.

²⁹² Hans Schmidt, “Experiences of a Hutterite in Württemberg,” in SSGAA, 377.

²⁹³ Gregory, 198. Gregory builds on the argument of Cornelius Dyck, who wrote, “the possibility of martyrdom had a radical impact on all who joined the group—on their priorities, status and self-consciousness.”

²⁹⁴ Michael Sattler, “The Schleitheim Articles,” in Baylor, 178.

his soul through suffering.”²⁹⁵ Sattler and Philip’s comments made a direct pastoral identification with Christ’s suffering, revealing how Anabaptist men anticipated their own martyrdoms.²⁹⁶

Baptism and Martyrdom

Anabaptist theology linked adult baptism to the prospect of martyrdom. This was commonly referred to as the threefold baptism discussed in chapter 1. The third stage, after inner baptism of the spirit and water baptism, was the baptism of blood. Anabaptists believed this was physical experience of suffering and persecution. The baptism of blood was the final step in the Anabaptist journey towards salvation through God.²⁹⁷

Both baptism and martyrdom were symbolic actions that reflected the ethical and moral consciousness among Anabaptist men to suffer and ascend towards a higher state of perfection. Hans Hut described salvation received through martyrdom as the attainment of perfection by man. Hut wrote, “He [man] can recognize how God acts through man and prepares him for [the goal of] perfection, since perfection can only occur beneath the cross of suffering according to God’s will.”²⁹⁸ Hut was reflecting on the imperfection of one’s human nature and the vulnerability of man. Only through the purifying act of martyrdom can man obtain perfection in God’s everlasting salvation.

Adult baptism and martyrdom were actions that introduced men into a more Christian community. The former into the Anabaptist congregation, the latter into the

²⁹⁵ Philip Dietrich, “The Church of God, c. 1560,” in Williams and Mergal, 150-152.

²⁹⁶ Gregory, 202.

²⁹⁷ Klaassen, *Anabaptism in Outline*, 162-163. Balthasar Hubmaier’s “A Short Justification (1526)” and Hans Hut’s “Schornbaum (1527)” are two sources that Klaassen provides that describe the threefold baptism in detail (pp. 166-167; 169-170).

²⁹⁸ Hans Hut, “On the Mystery of Baptism,” in Baylor, 161.

eternal Kingdom of God.²⁹⁹ Both acts were external displays of faith, but together they represented the fundamental steps towards inner enlightenment and salvation. Hans-Jürgen Goertz writes, “For all Swiss Anabaptists the baptism of faith was not only the entry into the community, a rite of initiation, but at the same time a public act in which the baptized bound himself to remain a follower of Christ and declared himself willing to become a martyr.”³⁰⁰ This “martyr’s mentality” conceived death in the form of sacrifice as a second transition, surrendering human life for eternal salvation. Conrad Grebel wrote, “Truly believing Christians[...]must be baptized in fear, need, grief, persecution, suffering, and dying. They must be tested in the fire, and they must not find the haven of eternal rest by killing their bodily enemies,” therefore, in the face of martyrdom one must “stand by the others like a hero and warrior of God.”³⁰¹ In Grebel’s view, Christ’s own martyrdom supported his willingness to suffer, identifying the sacrifice as a heroic and manly act.

The same pastoral identification with Christ would be repeated in Thielman van Braght’s *Martyrs Mirror*: “For this is the signification of baptism, that the Christian’s life is nothing more but pure dying and suffering; because we are like unto the image of Christ, and baptized with Him, must die and suffer, if we would reign and live with Him. Rom. 6:4.”³⁰² Both men and women could be martyrs, but for men, the willingness to suffer and to sacrifice one’s life was understood as following in Christ’s footsteps; to be baptized and die in the same way Jesus had.

²⁹⁹ Gregory, 211.

³⁰⁰ Goertz, 78.

³⁰¹ Conrad Grebel, “Letter to Thomas Müntzer,” in Baylor, 42; 46.

³⁰² van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror*, 367.

Nicodemites and Apostates

Although martyrdom was intrinsic to Anabaptist faith, there were many Anabaptist men who avoided this fate. Some Anabaptist men, such as David Joris, chose to hide their faith in public for fear of persecution, a practice termed Nicodemism.³⁰³ Some men were not so quick to surrender their bodies and lives to secular authorities. Attitudes towards martyrdom were not uniform, and many Anabaptist men recanted and turned apostate when their possessions, families, and own lives were literally “at stake”.

Sources reveal that many Anabaptist men did not consider martyrdom as the essential key to enter the Kingdom of God. In fact, hundreds of Anabaptists denied their faith before councils, magistrates, and inquisitors.³⁰⁴ The Anabaptist leader at Rattenberg, Leonard Schiemer, wrote disparagingly about these individuals in an attempt to deter recantation among his followers.

“The second sort of people are indolent towards the light[...] they are very self-confident, but fear the opinion of others. Knowledge, understanding, good advice, strength and skill are highly prized by them. They are very inquisitive, ask many questions, and want to experience everything. Indeed, they are very fine Christians until the cross arrives.”³⁰⁵

According to Schiemer, martyrdom was the ultimate test of true Christians. In his view, the sacrificial cross had divided Anabaptists into separate camps of real Christians and pretenders.

Johnathan Grieser has argued that economic concerns and private property were strong motives for new Anabaptist converts to recant when interrogated. His research of

³⁰³ Goertz, 76.

³⁰⁴ Gregory, 208.

³⁰⁵ Leonard Schiemer, “Letter to the Church of God at Rattenberg (1527),” in SSGAA, 73.

the Tyrolean archives suggest that many Anabaptists in this region were persecuted for their economic assets, namely, property. Those who uprooted themselves with intentions to migrate to the Hutterite communes in Moravia were commonly arrested and tried by secular courts interested in gaining land. Early mandates of the 1530s threatened confiscation of all Anabaptist property. Those found guilty of practicing Anabaptism were forced to swear the *Urfehde* (oath) and publicly recant their beliefs, a rather embarrassing but common penalty for first time offenders.³⁰⁶

The case of Heug family from Vintschgau provides a noteworthy example of how the Tyrol authorities dealt with Anabaptists during the sixteenth century. In March of 1555 both brothers, Remigius and Christoff, were suspected of being Anabaptists after selling a portion of their property. Before they could immigrate to Moravia both brothers were arrested along with their wives who were both pregnant at the time. The Heug family had considerable wealth, and not surprisingly, the courts imposed harsh penalties. Grieser writes, “Letting them go with the usual *Urfehde* and payment of court and prison costs, they also levied a fine of 1000 fl. and instructed local officials to make sure the brothers and their wives underwent full penance[...] By July it was clear to the authorities that the Heug recantation was less than sincere. (In early August) the menfolk vanished (to Moravia).”³⁰⁷ Both Remigius and Christoff renounced their adult baptism in fear of martyrdom, but their apostasy was more practiced than genuine. The Heug family chose to save their lives and much of their property rather than become Anabaptist martyrs, but did eventually leave for Moravia in spite of the oaths they swore.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Grieser, “The Household Divided against Itself,” in Forster and Kaplan, 138.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 144. The archives show that execution was the alternative in Tyrol. On 10 June 1561 Jörg Ragg, a Hutterite missionary, was arrested and martyred after some time in prison. Ragg had supposedly been

Cases like the Heug family's were not uncommon. Lucas Plechpuchler was also seized while sojourning to Moravia in 1562. The court records claim that "He recognized that he had badly erred in taking up the Anabaptist faith; he repented his sin and asked for mercy."³⁰⁹ The Bishop Madruzzo, lord of Brixen, pardoned both of Plechpuchler's sons who followed their father's recantation. These men were forced to pay fines from the court and prison and publicly take an oath of loyalty for the Catholic faith.

Forced recantation by Anabaptists show the mixed attitudes that members had towards martyrdom. Grieser argues, "While these tactics are often evidence of Nicodemism, they may also be interpreted as evidence of the continuing power and persistence of traditional family ties and structures."³¹⁰ This is certainly true, especially among new converts. Neophytes like the Heug brothers and the Plechpuchlers indicate that some Anabaptist men were reluctant to take up the cross because they had not yet identified self-sacrifice as a masculine and Christian virtue. If new converts in Tyrol still valued private property over a communal life, there is little reason to believe that they were ready and willing to become martyrs like the many Hutterite men before them.

Martyr's Songs, Hymns, and Martyrologies

Recent research has examined Anabaptist *Märtyrerlied* (martyrs' songs). Historians have analyzed the themes, structure, and the tonality of these hymns.³¹¹ These songs were a means of saving and evoking the hundreds of martyrs' experiences for future generations.

seized in Tyrol while attempting to claim his patrimony. He was interrogated for some time but refused to deny his faith.

³⁰⁹ Grieser, 144.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 151.

³¹¹ Gregory, 199.

Martyrs' songs regularly allowed illiterate Anabaptists to understand the significance of suffering that was central to the faith. Singing was a religious ritual that was fundamental to communicating the martyrs' mentality.³¹² Anabaptist members who participated in song became not only aware of the intensity of persecution, but also the positive and pious nature of the martyred. The songs strengthened the bonds of solidarity between Anabaptist men, heroically honoring the death of their fallen brethren. They also condemned those who persecuted Christ's disciples. Magistrates, executioners, and, most commonly, the pope were attacked for their evil work against God's chosen flock.³¹³

The *Märtyrerlied* linked the popular doctrines of Anabaptism with death in a very precise manner. Anabaptist leaders and martyrologists, especially those from the Dutch Netherlands, collected final testimonies and copies of court records and styled the dialogue of these documents into songs to commemorate the martyr experience. Martyrs' songs and hymnals preserved the martyrs' experience, and were sung in church and during other daily activities to give praise to fallen brethren and sisters and revere them as heroes.

A close comparison between final testimonies of some Anabaptists and their corresponding martyrs' hymns suggest that many of these songs were typically written shortly after the executions, and often by fellow Brethren who were present during trials and sentences.³¹⁴ The striking similarities between Felix Manz's final testimony, *Felix Manz an seine Mitbrüder, Vor 1527 Januar 5*, and his martyrs' hymn, *Felix Manz, Bey Christo wil ich bleiben. Im Ton: Ich stund an einem morgen, Vor 1527 Januar 5*, provide

³¹² Gregory, 227.

³¹³ Goertz, 83.

³¹⁴ Gregory, 214. In some cases, martyrs' songs were composed from letters or pamphlets that the martyred and their fellow members had previously written.

evidence as to how these songs were composed.³¹⁵ There is some suspicion about the correct year of the Manz's testimony and whether he had previously written the hymn himself, which was revised after his death. Yet, the similarities in prose between the two documents show that the hymn was in fact crafted from the final testimony shortly after Manz's death.

Towards the final decades of the sixteenth-century, Anabaptists began to compile other sources that contributed to the writing of *Märtyrerlied*. Brad Gregory writes, "A new series of songs accompanied the martyrology beginning in 1570 [which were] based directly on the prison writings of the martyrs themselves." These were crafted from the documents "thought to be the most important (*principaelste*) or the most instructive (*leerachtichtste*)."³¹⁶

The Swiss Brethren and Hutterites memorized martyrs' hymns regularly. Memorization rather than mass printing had a certain appeal to Anabaptists. Martyrs' songs were spread by missionaries traveling from one congregation to the next, which prevented outside audiences from having access to these songs through the wider market of the printing press. The exclusivity of martyrs' hymns among Anabaptist circles not

³¹⁵ *Felix Manz an seine Mitbrüder, Vor 1527 Januar 5*; and *Felix Manz, Bey Christo wil ich bleiben. Im Ton: Ich stund an einem morgen, Vor 1527 Januar 5?*, in *Quellen Zur Geschichte Der Täufer In Der Schweiz*, eds. Dr. Leonhard Von Muralt and Dr. Walter Schmid (Zürich: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1952), 218-221. Manz's final testimony begins: Mein Hertz erfreuet sich in Gott, der mir viel Erkenntnuß hat gegeben und beygelegt, auf daß ich dem ewigen, unendlichen Tod entgehen möge. Darum preiße ich dich, o Herr Christus vom Himmel! Daß du meinen Kummer und Betrübnuß abwendest: welchen Heiland mir Gott gesandt hat zu einem Vorbild und zu einem Licht, der mich noch vor meinem Ende zu seinem himmlischen Königreich beruffen hat, auf daß ich mit Ihm solte der ewigen Freude genießen und Ihn samt seiner Gerechtigkeit lieben, welche hier und dort in der Ewigkeit bestehen wird, ohne welche kein Ding hilft oder bestehet[...]. The similarities are striking in comparison to the beginning of Manz's martyrs' hymn: Mit lust so wil ich singen, / mein hertz frewt sich in Gott, / Der mir vil kunst thut bringen, / daß ich entrinn dem Todt / Der ewiglich nimmet kein endt. / Jch preiß dich, Christ von Himmel, / der mir mein Kummer wendt, [begin second stanza] Den mir Gott thut zusenden / zu eim vorbild und liecht, / Der mich vor meinem ende / zu seinem Reich berufft, / Daß ich mit jm hab ewig freudt, / und liebe jhn von hertzen, / auch all sein grechtigkeyt, / [begin third stanza] Die hie und dort wirt gelten.

³¹⁶ Gregory, 226.

only explains the lack of their early publications, but it also explains the strong symbolic role that the martyrs' experience played within the faith. The reluctance to share these songs outside of Anabaptist communities reflected an internalized martyrs' mentality that was unknown to other Protestants and Catholics.³¹⁷

The use of memory in spreading martyrs' hymns also reveals another important difference between Anabaptists and other Protestants. While Lutherans also used the hymn as a critical symbol of communal participation in their religious services, they relied more on the publication of hymns to reach a broader audience. In 1524, Luther had the first evangelical hymnbook published.³¹⁸ Rather than printing hymns, Anabaptists celebrated their heroes distinctively, through memory and memorized song.³¹⁹ The ritual of song-singing in Anabaptist practice was strictly consistent with their ecclesiological views, because Anabaptists believed only spiritual songs should be sung, rather than those for entertainment and celebration.

Anabaptist martyrs' hymns had a tendency to perceive all martyrs as having masculine qualities. The *Song about Weynken Claes Daughter* commemorated a martyred Dutch Anabaptist woman burned at the stake in The Hague in 1527, who exhibited the virtues bestowed upon both brethren and sisters of the faith. Stanzas four and ten of her martyrs' hymn read:

“That which I before have spoken,”
 she declared, “I stay steadfast in that.”
 They could stoke the fire all they wanted,

³¹⁷ Ibid., 212-214.

³¹⁸ H.G. Koenigsberger and G.L. Mosse, *Europe in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), 118.

³¹⁹ Gregory, 197.

Getting it to burn and smoke:
 She had no fear for any of it.

She herself did help him put
 The powder in her bosom.
 Listen to what happened there:
 Of her own accord she went
 Up to the stake, a Heroine.³²⁰

Songs and hymns of this nature attributed courage, bravery, and heroism to both sexes in Anabaptism. Women who suffered persecution were characterized as also having “manly courage,” which indicated that Anabaptist masculinity was not linked to the male gender in the act of martyrdom. Through acts of physical bravery, courage, and enduring torture and painful death, Anabaptist women could transcend their traditional feminine roles.

Nikki Shepardson’s “Gender and Rhetoric of Martyrdom in Jean Crespin’s *Histoire des vrays tesmoins*,” finds the act of martyrdom to be non-gendered in its experience, but gendered in its perception.³²¹ The martyr’s songs that commemorated fallen Anabaptists reveal that the gendered traits which typically characterized male actions were also attributed to women who equally received corporal punishment.³²² In other words, although more Anabaptist men than women were punished and martyred for their faith, the Anabaptist perception of courage in martyrdom was not limited to men.

³²⁰ *Een Liedeken van Weynken Claes dochter, Na de Wijse: Het was een Joden dochter, 1527* in Joldersma and Grijp, 50-55.

³²¹ Nikki Shepardson, “Gender and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom in Jean Crispin’s *Histoire des vrays tesmoins*.” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring, 2004): 155-174.

³²² Gregory, 205.

During the early decades of persecution, a handful of Anabaptist groups began to compile final testimonies, pamphlets, and prison letters into martyrologies as well as turning them into hymns. Due to the continuous persecution of Anabaptists these compilations were regularly updated and republished into massive accounts of Anabaptist martyrs. Like martyrs' songs, martyrologies were a means to preserve and commemorate the actions and writings of virtuous Anabaptist men and women. These works told members about the suffering and sorrow of martyrdom, but they also celebrated those heroic Anabaptists who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the goal of salvation. In doing so, martyrologies built a foundation for future Anabaptists by keeping alive a past heritage of saintly members.³²³

Brad Gregory claims that Anabaptists groups developed different methods of memorialization of martyrs early on. Among the most adept groups were the Swiss Brethren and the Hutterites, who both spoke and wrote in German.³²⁴ The Hutterite Brethren compiled martyr accounts of Anabaptists into a large type of hagiography, *The Hutterite Chronicle*.³²⁵ They also compiled the *History of the pious Anabaptist Martyrs*.³²⁶

Among the most well-known Anabaptist martyrologies, aside from the *Hutterite Chronicle*, is Thieleman J. van Braght's *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*. Published in 1660, van Braght's massive collection was an outgrowth from several different earlier works by various authors, who published and

³²³ Gregory, 239-240.

³²⁴ Ibid., 199-200.

³²⁵ For an English version see *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren: Volume I*, trans. and ed. by the Hutterian Brethren, (Rifton, NY: Plough Publishing House Hutterian Brethren, 1987). For the German version see *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder: Ein Sprachdenkmal aus frühneuhochdeutscher Zeit*, Herausgegeben von A.J.F. Zieglschmid, (Northwestern Universität).

³²⁶ van Braght, 372.

updated new editions beginning in the mid-sixteenth century. Each new publication added new documents, improving and expanding the martyrology. The original book from 1562 was published in Holland under the title, *Het Offer des Herren*. Eight more editions were published from 1567-1599. In 1617 Hans de Reis and Jacques Outerman wrote a massive edition of 863 pages that was published at Hoorn under the title, *Historie der Warachtighe getuygen Jesu Christi*. The following installment in 1631 was printed in Haarlem with 1056 pages and titled, *Martelærs Spiegel der Werelese Christenen (The Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians)*. Van Braght's 1660 edition expanded on this compilation, and was divided into two parts with the latter portion or "Old Book" having added minimal corrections to the 1631 edition.³²⁷

Van Braght's *Martyrs Mirror* is basically a hagiography of saintly Anabaptist martyrs. Just as in Catholicism where many men were canonized for suffering a martyrs' fate, Anabaptists martyrs, too, were considered saintly and virtuous for their steadfastness in the face of death.

Memorialization of martyrs was fundamental to the Anabaptist movement. The high number of martyred men not only inspired solidarity among other Anabaptist men, it also contributed to the proselytization of new members. Martyrdom inspired other Christians to join the Anabaptists because their willingness to suffer as Christ had was an honorable sign of faithfulness, which provided hope for salvation in difficult times. Anabaptist men were aware of this fact, and they believed memorialization of martyrs was an important way to strengthen membership, provide models of bravery, and pass down an oral history of the movement. For Anabaptist men, self-sacrifice was manly. A martyrs' death was terrifying and painful, but those men who "willingly and joyously"

³²⁷ van Braght, 414.

approached the stakes knew their actions were courageous and honorable. These men were aware that such bravery would live on in memory, could move others to remain steadfast, and provide a legacy of faithful followers of Christ.

Conclusion

This study has analyzed gender in the Reformation era to identify how alternative religious cultures and masculinities developed in sixteenth-century Europe. The Anabaptist movement is useful for research in masculinity studies, because in their separation from society Anabaptist men established religious communities that were different from both Catholic and Protestant cultures. An analysis of Anabaptist masculinity provides insight into how some men acknowledged the Reformation's new message of salvation and individuality in ways that transcended religion. For Anabaptists, that message meant complete *change*—the moral improvement of oneself—internally and externally. The desire for change had strong implications for how Anabaptists perceived masculine ideals, and provided the opportunity for some men to redefine masculine identity.

This thesis argues that masculinity in the Reformation era was not homogenous; rather, it was adaptable and nuanced as new movements came about in response to religious reform. Anabaptist masculine ideals were significantly different from those valued by Catholics and by other Protestants. Anabaptist men challenged traditional masculine norms of sixteenth-century Europe. The men leading this movement wrote prescriptively to their followers, and advocated a new mentality about ethics, moral behavior, and piety.

The Anabaptist mission for change and improvement was based on the experience of adult baptism. Adult baptism improved men internally, and this change was demonstrated externally in devotion to a spiritual life instead of one that focused on the

worldly and temporal. This transformation was an “ethicization of faith.” For Anabaptists, Christian life emphasized qualities of humility, morality, responsibility, and piety.

Anabaptist men’s continuous focus on Christ was a central factor in this process of improvement. This was a direct identification with the masculine virtues and the humanity of Jesus. Christ was an exemplary male figure for Anabaptist men to imitate as closely as possible. His virtues, found in Scripture, allowed these men to redefine their masculine identities. The moral, humble, and pious nature of Jesus became the essential attributes that Anabaptist men placed at the center of masculine identity.

Sections of this study have associated Anabaptist masculinity with the masculinity of Christ. Chapter one reflected how Anabaptist men identified adult baptism at the age of thirty as a direct imitation of Christ’s baptism. The ritual of adult baptism signified a rite of passage for these men, and was the pivotal step towards maturity and manhood. Chapter three argues that Anabaptist missionaries focused on the evangelical nature of Christ, and understood missionary work in relation to masculine duties and the apostolic poverty of Christ. In the same chapter, I argue that Anabaptist men wrote frequently in support of modest dress, similar to what Christ had worn. Anabaptist men rejected the civil decorousness of mainstream bourgeois Protestant dress. Facial hair, too, was another way for Anabaptists to imitate Christ. Sixteenth-century images of Christ portrayed him as a man with a beard, and Anabaptist men chose to grow facial hair as a symbol of piety and masculinity. The martyrs’ mentality of Anabaptists, discussed in chapter four, was also a direct identification with the suffering and death of Christ. Anabaptist men understood Christ’s sacrifice as virtuous, honorable, and a manly act of courage.

The theological link between inner and external spirituality in the Anabaptist faith was another factor that supported an ethicization of faith. Anabaptist writers described the “Baptism of the Spirit,” an experience that took place within the individual participating in the act of adult baptism. According to Anabaptist sources, the Holy Spirit internally empowered men to possess the capacity for self-restraint. Self-restraint meant the ability to let go of temporal possessions in favor of a simple life that was more in accordance with how true Christians should live. This was a conscious change, which expressed a negative attitude towards wealth and private property. The goal of salvation and a life dedicated to God was prioritized above all, while material goods were considered distractions.

Improvement through the Baptism of the Spirit was an individualized experience, which was supposed to be externally demonstrated and perceived by the community. Anabaptist men externally expressed this change in their day-to-day, mundane tasks, as well as their behavior. Therefore, improvement was supposed to be tangibly evident as the quotidian was to constantly reflect Christian devotion.

The strong connection between inner spirituality and its external demonstration allowed Anabaptist men to connect faith and masculinity. Sections of this study have analyzed how Anabaptist men gave meaning to their world through visual practices, rejected conventional expectations of men, and thereby created an alternative masculinity in various ways. Chapter one examined how the everyday work and professions of Anabaptist men were expressions of piety. Each man according to his own talent was to labor in service to the community and provide charitable aide to others. Chapter two focused on the structure of Anabaptist communities, and revealed how patriarchal

leadership and ordinances demanded strict moral behavior and responsibility for men and women. Hutterite communities, for example, were structured in such a way that men prioritized community over family life. Members were admonished to focus on spiritual rather than emotional love for their family and neighbors. Whereas emotional love formed powerful human attachments, spiritual love emphasized human relationships improved by guidance, discipline, and a more sincere comprehension of affection.

Chapter three also analyzed how Anabaptist men externally demonstrated their improvement. Several acts of refusal established an alternative lifestyle that cared little for temporal possessions. Anabaptist men's refusal to swear oaths, hold offices, provide military service, hold honorary titles, claim inheritance, attend mass on Sunday—along with other rejections—physically and symbolically confirmed that these men denied worldly possessions in favor of a life dedicated to God. An analysis of how Anabaptist men comprehended notions of honor suggests that these men associated wealth, reputation, and glory with ego, pride, and vanity. Instead, Anabaptists “put God's honor first,” and rejected personal honor. This chapter also identified Anabaptist missionary activity and dress as external expressions of faith, morality, and modesty.

The structure of this thesis follows the life stages of Anabaptist men from childhood to death. The narrative thus stresses how this new religious culture emphasized certain stages of a man's life that had special meaning only for Anabaptist men, and not for other Catholic and Protestant men. Chapter one's analysis of education for boys and the male experience of adult baptism as a rite of passage provide evidence for this. The focus of Anabaptist martyrdom in chapter four also indicated how men in these

communities could willingly accept an early death. Many Anabaptist men considered martyrdom as an essential component of their faith.

The cultural differences between Anabaptists and other Protestants is the final theme in this study that highlights the Anabaptist ethicization of faith and alternative masculinity. This approaches Anabaptist communities from both the insiders', or *emic*, perspective, and outsiders', or *etic*, perspective. Anabaptist men were critical of both Catholic and Protestant movements of religious reform. Their writings claimed that Lutheran reformers failed to grasp the real meaning behind the new understanding of salvation, which Anabaptists understood to be the moral improvement of people. On the other hand, from the perspective of both Protestants and Catholics, Anabaptist men were eccentric, dangerous, and heretical.

A number of areas in this thesis have focused on differences between Anabaptists and Protestants. Chapter one addressed education and labor, and argued that Anabaptist men rejected higher education because they believed books other than the Bible distracted one from time dedicated to God. In regards to work, variations existed among each faith when considering profit and interest. Anabaptist men argued that men should only keep enough money to sustain the community; therefore, any profit or surplus was given away charitably.

The analysis of marriage and heterosociality in chapter two also delineated areas where Anabaptist men were at odds with Protestants. Leaders of the Anabaptist movement advocated strict endogamy, allowing some men to abandon their wives and only marry women who had accepted adult baptism. Catholics and Protestants viewed this as unlawful, licentious behavior and some reformers, like Ulrich Zwingli, labeled

Anabaptists as bigamists. From the perspective of Anabaptist men, women who refused to convert were not true Christians and therefore unacceptable wives. A closer analysis of the relationships between Anabaptist men and women outside of marriage also suggests Anabaptist men were more heterosocial in their communities than Protestant and Catholic men. These men formed strong bonds of friendship with women as an expression of spiritual and Christian love. Friendship between men and women outside of marriage was a rarity of the time, as Lutheran and Catholic men were more homosocial. The participation of women in Bible readings and conversations about Scripture was another essential part of Anabaptist heterosocial life.

Sections dedicated to honor, dress, and facial hair in chapter three stress the very different mentalities between Anabaptists and Protestants about masculine ideals, comportment, and appearance. In contrast to other Protestant men, Anabaptists rejected personal honor. In the case of dress and beards, they chose simplicity over fashionable clothing and argued that Christ had provided a model for them to follow. Chapter three also takes up the issue of violence and underlines Anabaptist men's doctrine of pacifism. The refusal to provide military service firmly separated Anabaptists from other Christian men. While Catholics and Protestants believed protecting one's family and fighting for one's country was honorable and manly, most Anabaptist men argued that violence conflicted with official doctrine established in Scripture. The refusal to serve in the military and protect one's family signified how Anabaptists perceived masculine ideals in alternative ways.

The main historical legacies of the Anabaptist movement are religious freedom, religious tolerance, and separation of church and state. Today, these legacies are highly

valued liberties in many parts of the world. Anabaptist men wanted to improve society, and as chapter four discusses, hundreds of men were willing to suffer and die for their faith and vision of a more ethical and Christian society. The descendants of sixteenth-century Anabaptists continued to express this vision. The modern diaspora of Hutterites, Mennonites, and Amish, for example, have continued Anabaptist religious culture into the twenty-first century.

The Anabaptist separation from mainstream society and their acts of refusal remain intrinsic to the culture of their modern descendants. In North America, these groups continue to avoid participation in politics, reject technological innovations, and continue to wear simple clothing that distinguishes them from mainstream society. Pacifism has also persisted as an essential component of this religious heritage and identity. Men from Mennonite groups in South Dakota refused the draft during the First World War and were persecuted for their faith, forcing them to migrate to Canada.³²⁸ These modern examples indicate that Anabaptist men and their descendants historically have placed a strong emphasis on tradition. The masculine ideals of Anabaptists that were developed during the Reformation in many ways have survived to the present. Today, as in the sixteenth century, these ideals remain at odds with those of most Protestants and Catholics.

³²⁸ Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 176.

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