

# 'God really hated the hypocrites': Hypocrisy and Anti-clerical Rhetoric in the Early Lutheran Reformation

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*In 1524, two anonymous pamphlets were published, both professing to be letters written by a married woman to her sister, a nun. Both draw on a range of New Testament texts to express criticism of 'the hypocrites', a term the anonymous author uses to refer particularly to clergy and religious. This article examines how the author of these pamphlets constructed and characterized the category of the hypocrite. Drawing on the work of Hans-Christoph Rublack, the article shows that her critique is coherent with anti-clerical rhetoric found in a wide range of early Reformation pamphlets. It then compares her strictures on hypocrisy with references to hypocrisy and hypocrites in the early German writings of Martin Luther and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt to explore the extent to which accusations of hypocrisy were entwined with anti-clerical and anti-monastic rhetoric in the early Lutheran Reformation. It concludes that while accusations against clergy and religious were often couched in terms of their hypocrisy, Luther's use of the term hypocrite was much broader, extending to all those whom he viewed as presenting themselves as 'holier than thou', while Karlstadt made less use of the term.*

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In 1524, two anonymous pamphlets were published, both claiming to be written by a married woman in response to her sister, a nun. The shorter (at seventeen printed pages), and apparently earlier of the two, *Ayn bezwungene antwort vber eynen Sendbrieff eyner Closter nunnan, an jr schwester im Eelichē standt zugeschickt / darin sy vil vergebner vnnützer sorg fürhelt vñ jre gaistliche weißhait vñ gemalte hayligkait zū menschlichem gesicht auffmutzet* ['A necessary answer to an

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open letter sent by a cloistered woman to her married sister in which she presents many unnecessary and useless concerns and presents to the world an embellished image of her spiritual wisdom and apparent holiness’], was probably published in Nuremberg. The longer (twenty-five printed pages), and probably later work, *Ain Sendtbrieff von Ainer erbern frauen im Eelichen stand / an ain Klosterfrauen / gethon über berümmung ettlicher haylicher geschriff in Sermon begriffen / so die Klosterfrauw verbrent / und darauf ein lange ungesaltzne geschriff zu ursach erzelt hat &c.* [‘An open letter from a respectable married woman to a nun, written in praise of all the parts of Holy Scripture included in a sermon that the nun burnt, afterwards presenting her reasons in a long tasteless letter &c.’] was printed in Augsburg.<sup>1</sup> The title of the first of these letters indicates one of the key themes of both: the anonymous author’s concern that her sister’s outward trappings of faith did not match the inner reality of her relationship to God. This is developed by the unknown author – here referred to as Anonyma – into an impassioned, scripturally founded critique of the hypocrisy of the clergy, and more generally of those who had taken religious vows. It is Anonyma’s intertwining of hypocrisy and anticlericalism – including anti-monasticism – which forms the subject of this article. After a brief consideration of the relationship between hypocrisy and anticlericalism in

<sup>1</sup> All English translations from these letters and from other texts are by the author, Charlotte Methuen, unless an English translation is specified in the footnotes. Dorothee Kommer is of the opinion that the two letters were written by the same author and that they represent published versions of actual letters: Dorothee Kommer, *Reformatorsche Flugschriften von Frauen. Flugschriftenautorinnen der frühen Reformationszeit und ihre Sicht von Geistlichkeit* (Leipzig, 2013), 117–29. Miriam Usher Chrisman treats the pamphlets as having been written by different authors, a ‘converted sister’ (based on a mistranslation of the title as ‘A Convert Answers a Letter sent by a Convent Nun to her Married Sister’) and an ‘honorable woman’: Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519–1530*, Studies in German Histories 7 (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1996), 140, 145. Kommer’s assertion is based largely on the coherence in the use of the Bible in the two pamphlets, a position which is supported and strengthened by the argument in Charlotte Methuen, “‘dañ got vnd die haylig geschriff leerent dich söllich nit’: Autorinnenschaft und Bibelverwendung in zwei anonymen reformatorsche Flugschriften”, in eadem, Gury Schneider-Ludorff and Lothar Vogel, eds, *Reformatorsche Bewegung im 16. und 17. Jh., Die Bibel und die Frauen 7.1* (Stuttgart, 2024), 173–94. ET: eadem, “‘God and Holy Scripture do not teach you such things’: Female Authorship and the Use of The Bible in two Anonymous Reformation Pamphlets,” in eadem, Gury Schneider-Ludorff and Lothar Vogel, eds, *Reformation Movements in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Bible and Women 7.1* (Atlanta, GA, forthcoming 2024).

the scholarly literature relating to the early German Reformation, this article explores how Anonyma's construction of hypocrisy and her characterization of hypocrites inform her anti-clerical and anti-monastic rhetoric. Anonyma's use of Scripture to buttress her argument reveals an excellent knowledge of relevant biblical texts, not all of which were commonly used by other authors of this period. Drawing on a useful taxonomy of anticlericalism in German pamphlets proposed by Hans-Christoph Rublack, the article shows that the arguments presented in Anonyma's letters are coherent with – and indeed typical of – popular rhetoric in this period of the Lutheran Reformation. Reading Rublack's taxonomy through the lens of Anonyma's writings, however, also indicates that the accusation of hypocrisy underlies most of the categories of anticlericalism which he identifies. In a final step, Anonyma's criticisms of the clergy and religious are brought into conversation with accusations of hypocrisy in the early German works of the reformers Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt and Martin Luther, both of whom have been identified as influences on Anonyma,<sup>2</sup> to explore the extent to which hypocrisy for Karlstadt and Luther was associated with anticlericalism. It concludes that while both often couched criticisms of clergy and religious in terms of their hypocrisy, Luther's use of the term hypocrite was broader, extending to all those whom he viewed as succumbing to the temptation of presenting themselves as 'holier than thou'. Anonyma's use of hypocrisy to focus her anti-clerical discourse thus emerges as a distinctive characteristic of her writings, but one which is coherent with early Reformation polemic.

Anticlericalism has long been identified as a motivating factor in the German Reformation.<sup>3</sup> As Andrew Weeks observes, 'hostility to

<sup>2</sup> See Kommer, *Reformatrische Flugschriften von Frauen*, 129, 141; compare also Stefania Salvadori, 'Frauen und Bibel bei Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt: zwischen dem Ruf nach der Freiheit des Evangeliums und der Mahnung zur sozialen Bindung', in Methuen, Schneider-Ludorff and Vogel, eds, *Reformatrische Bewegung*, 153–72, at 170–2; ET: eadem, 'Women and the Bible in the Writings of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt: Freedom to read Scripture whilst conforming to Social Norms', in eadem, Gury Schneider-Ludorff and Lothar Vogel, eds, *Reformation Movements in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, R. W. Scribner, 'Anticlericalism and the Reformation in Germany', in idem, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London, 1987), 243–56; idem, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Oxford, 1994); Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman, eds, *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 1994); Hans-Jürgen Goertz,

priests, monks, nuns, bishops, popes, ceremonies, ecclesiastical fees and corruption' is recognized by historians 'as a driving force of the Reformation as a popular movement.'<sup>4</sup> Such critique predates the Reformation. Although, as Kaspar Elm and Hans-Jürgen Goertz point out, the term 'anticlericalism' first emerged in the nineteenth century,<sup>5</sup> clerical behaviour was criticized throughout the medieval period. Across Europe, clergy and religious faced 'serious accusations, expressed in derisive verse and lampoons, in satirical images and sketches, relating to their morals, the (non-)observance of their vows, their privileges and unjustified wealth, their ignorance and negligence of their duties.'<sup>6</sup> Rublack similarly notes that 'accusations of avarice, negligence and depravity directed against individual clerics, the clergy as a whole, and the church as an institution, in addition to the exploitation of laymen by ecclesiastical recourse to secular power, are recurrent themes in the medieval apocalyptic tradition.'<sup>7</sup> These were also common themes in medieval German literature, as Albrecht Classen illustrates.<sup>8</sup> Elm argues that while accusations that clergy and religious failed to live according to their vows had long been widespread, by the fifteenth century, these criticisms were

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*Antiklerikalismus und Reformation. Sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Göttingen, 1995); Geoffrey Dipple, *Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Günzburg and the Campaign Against the Friars* (Aldershot, 1996); Albrecht Classen, 'Anticlericalism and Criticism of Clerics in Medieval and Early-Modern German Literature', *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 72 (2014), 283–306; Andrew Weeks, 'Die antiklerikale Reformation und ihr Feindbild, der "Dr. Theologiae" Faustus', *Neophilologus* 102 (2018), 217–40.

<sup>4</sup> Weeks, 'Die antiklerikale Reformation', 220.

<sup>5</sup> Kaspar Elm, 'Antiklerikalismus im Deutschen Mittelalter', in Dykema and Oberman, eds, *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 3–18, at 3–4; Goertz, *Antiklerikalismus und Reformation*, 11–12. The first use of the English noun 'anticlericalism' is given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 1867, although the adjective 'anticlerical' was already in use by 1651: see the OED lemmas 'anticlericalism' and 'anticlerical', *OED*, online at: <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/103709986>> and <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/8568>> respectively, accessed 21 December 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Elm, 'Antiklerikalismus im Deutschen Mittelalter', 5.

<sup>7</sup> Hans-Christoph Rublack, 'Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets', in Dykema and Oberman, eds, *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 461–89, at 462.

<sup>8</sup> Classen points out that 'Medieval literature knows countless examples where clerics become the butt of the joke, or where severe criticism is voiced against the representatives of the Church because of their hypocrisy': Classen, 'Anticlericalism and Criticism of Clerics', 286. The specific examples from medieval literature Classen discusses are drawn from Walther von der Vogelweide, the Stricker, Mæren, and Schwänke.

being ‘directed not only at the episcopate and the local clergy, at monks, canons and mendicants, but also, increasingly turned against the Pope and the Roman Curia.’<sup>9</sup> Scribner sees such anticlericalism in Germany as primarily a response to abuses of clerical power, whether ‘political, economic, legal, social, sexual [or] sacred.’<sup>10</sup> Such anticlerical language helped to shape the swingeing critiques of the papal church which characterized the early Reformation.

In contrast, there seems to have been no study on the role of hypocrisy in the German Reformation or its relationship to anticlericalism. This is odd, not least because a standard early modern High German dictionary defines the term *Gleisnerei* as ‘falsehood as a characteristic of individuals or as the customary behaviour attributed to certain groups, above all the clergy ...; associated with the self-promotion of their own piety, honesty, knowledge and skills.’<sup>11</sup> Goertz points out that late medieval and early modern anticlericalism was not seeking to eradicate clerical influence from public life; rather ‘the clergy were ridiculed and insulted, threatened and even attacked, because they had neglected their official duties and committed one moral offence after another.’<sup>12</sup> Late medieval anticlericalism clearly included aspects which amount to accusations of hypocrisy, but Elm (for instance) does not use the term hypocrisy in his article at all (which is to say that he does not refer to the terms *Heuchelei*, *Gleisnerei* or *Scheinheiligkeit*, the three German nouns most usually translated into English as hypocrisy, or to *Gleisner*, hypocrite).<sup>13</sup> In

<sup>9</sup> Elm, ‘Antiklerikalismus im Deutschen Mittelalter’, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Scribner, ‘Anticlericalism and the Reformation’, 244. See also idem, ‘Anticlericalism and the Cities’, in Dykema and Oberman, eds, *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 147–66, at 151 [repr. in idem, *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400–1800)*, ed. Lyndal Roper (Leiden, 2001), 149–71].

<sup>11</sup> Lemma ‘gleichsnerei’, *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, online at: <<https://fwb-online.de/lemma/gleichsnerei.s.1f?q=Glei%C3%9Fnerei&page=1>>, accessed 21 December 2023. Common variant spellings include *gleichsnerei*, *gleißnerei*, *Gleiszerei* and *Gleisnerei*.

<sup>12</sup> Goertz, *Antiklerikalismus und Reformation*, 11–12.

<sup>13</sup> *Heuchelei* and *Gleisnerei* (the older form) are synonyms, both used to translate *simulatio* and *hypocrisis*. *Scheinheiligkeit* literally means pretended or seeming holiness. All three terms refer to ‘the act or state of pretending to be better than one is or to have feelings or beliefs which one does not actually have’: see *Cambridge Dictionary*, online at: <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/heuchelei>>, accessed 21 December 2023. Compare also the lemmas ‘Heuchelei’, ‘Heucheln’, ‘Gleiszerei’ and ‘Scheinheiligkeit’, *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, online at: <<http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/>>, accessed 21 December 2023.

his survey of critiques of the clergy in over four hundred German Reformation pamphlets, Rublack identifies the condemnation of clergy as hypocrites as one of nine categories of accusations levelled against them.<sup>14</sup> Scribner and Classen both mention hypocrisy in their discussions of anticlericalism, but neither of them explore the way in which hypocrisy informs anticlericalism.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, the relationship between hypocrisy and false religion, and the appeal to biblical texts in the definition of hypocrisy, have been recognized as central to medieval and early modern hypocrisy in the English context. Introducing the essay collection, *Forms of Hypocrisy in Early Modern England*, Lucia Nigri and Naya Tsentourou remark that the association of hypocrisy and false religion frequently draws on ‘the biblical precedent of the archetypal hypocrites: the Pharisees.’<sup>16</sup> They identify several key scriptural texts relating hypocrisy and false religion: the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18: 9–14); the condemnation of the Pharisees as hypocrites (Matthew 23: 13–36); and Jesus’s introduction to the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6: 5–6), in which he commands: ‘whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others’ [NRSV].<sup>17</sup> In her consideration of hypocrisy in drama, Nigri further remarks that early modern portrayals of hypocrites drew on a medieval tradition ‘associating hypocrisy with the Roman Catholic religion’<sup>18</sup> and, more particularly, on a tradition of anti-clerical polemic.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Michael D. Bailey points out that ‘Augustine and other Church Fathers ... thought about falsity in terms of *hypocrisis* or *ironia* ... or *simulatio*,’ and that hypocrisy ‘became increasingly associated with false religion or godlessness,’ with the Pharisees seen as ‘the archetypal hypocrites in the

<sup>14</sup> Rublack, ‘Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets’, 468–78.

<sup>15</sup> Scribner, ‘Anticlericalism and the Reformation’, 246, 253. See also idem, ‘Anticlericalism and the Cities’, 153, 156–7; Classen, ‘Anticlericalism and Criticism of Clerics’, 286, 289–90, 296–8, 300.

<sup>16</sup> Lucia Nigri and Naya Tsentourou, ‘Introduction’, in eadem, eds, *Forms of Hypocrisy in Early Modern England* (Abingdon, 2018), 1–14, at 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 4–5.

<sup>18</sup> Lucia Nigri, ‘Religious Hypocrisy in Performance: Roman Catholicism and the London Stage’, in eadem and Tsentourou, eds, *Forms of Hypocrisy in Early Modern England*, 57–71, at 57.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 57–9.

Gospels.<sup>20</sup> Nigri offers Chaucer's Pardoner as an example of the association between hypocrisy and anticlericalism. In all these studies, hypocrisy is recognized as fundamental to critiques of religion such as those articulated in early modern German anticlericalism. It therefore seems fruitful, in a volume considering the church and hypocrisy, to probe the relationship between hypocrisy and anticlericalism in the German Reformation.

Exploring the nature of hypocrisy as presented in Anonyma's texts provides what seems likely to have been a lay perspective emerging from – and speaking into – the heated debates about evangelical theology and practice that were taking place in both Augsburg and Nuremberg in the early 1520s, with their consequences for the reassessment of religious identity and priorities.<sup>21</sup> Anonyma's position in these debates was clearly supportive of evangelical challenges to traditional church life. Indeed, her letters testify to a wider conflict between members of religious orders and their evangelically-influenced relatives, of which other examples can be found in both Augsburg and Nuremberg.<sup>22</sup> Applying Rublack's taxonomy of anticlericalism to these texts shows that Anonyma's critique of clergy and members of religious orders is typical of the anti-clerical and anti-monastic polemic of the time: as will be seen, her letters include examples of all but one of the categories which Rublack identifies.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Michael D. Bailey, 'Superstition and Dissimulation: Discerning False Religion in the Fifteenth Century', in Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzog, eds, *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2015), 9–26, at 10.

<sup>21</sup> For Augsburg at this period, see, for instance, Michele Zelinsky Hanson, *Religious Identity in an Early Reformation Community: Augsburg, 1517–1555*, Studies in Central European Histories 45 (Leiden, 2009); for Nuremberg, see Gottfried Seebass, 'The Importance of the Imperial City of Nuremberg in the Reformation', in James Kirk, ed., *Humanism and Reform: The Church in Europe, England, and Scotland, 1400–1643*, SCH Sub 8 (Oxford, 1991), 113–27.

<sup>22</sup> See Kommer, *Reformatorsche Flugschriften von Frauen*, 126–7. Compare also Ulrike Strasser, 'Brides of Christ, Daughters of Men: Nuremberg Poor Clares in Defense of Their Identity (1524–1529)', *Magistra: A Journal of Women's Spirituality in History* 1 (1995), 193–248; Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, *Stripping the Veil: Convent Reform, Protestant Nuns, and Female Devotional Life in Sixteenth Century Germany* (Oxford, 2022), esp. 19–29.

<sup>23</sup> Anonyma does not offer any critique which fits closely with Rublack's first category, that of the impoverished priest at the bottom of the ecclesiastical hierarchy who, as a 'poor ass', distorts religious truth, and whose attention is focused on securing his own comfort through exploitation of the congregation. This is perhaps because her primary critique of the clergy focuses on bishops. For this category, see Rublack, 'Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets', 468–9.

Moreover, although Rublack only explicitly associates the second of his nine categories of anti-clerical discourse with hypocrisy, reading his taxonomy through the lens of Anonyma's letters reveals that all nine of the categories he identifies represent a mismatch between the expectations of clergy and the reality of their lives, and thus equate to accusations of hypocrisy. For Anonyma, at least, concerns about clerical hypocrisy were a fundamental driver of her anti-clerical polemic.

Dorothee Kommer is one of the few scholars to have explored Anonyma's letters in any depth, as part of her study of German Reformation pamphlets authored by women.<sup>24</sup> She remarks that Anonyma's criticism of her sister, to whom the letters are ostensibly addressed, is 'inseparably connected to her critique of convent life and of the religious in general, extending to general anticlericalism.'<sup>25</sup> Anonyma expresses this critique through explicit and implied charges of hypocrisy. As already noted, one of the key points of criticism raised by Anonyma in both her letters is the disconnect between the outward trappings of faith and inner spiritual reality. However, although this theme is named in the title of the earlier letter, it is much more developed in the longer second letter, which therefore forms the basis of the discussion that follows. In it, Anonyma argues for the importance of true faith held with integrity. Christ's miracles, she says, were done 'to increase [his disciples'] faith in him, and that was necessary because God really hated the hypocrites [*dañ got hat die gleyßner gantz seer gehasszt*].'<sup>26</sup> She cites the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector as a key example of the problematic incongruence between outward faith and inner reality:

Look what we find in Luke 18 about the hypocrite [*gleyßner*] who said in the temple: 'Lord I thank you that I am not like other people; I give a tenth of my income; I fast two days every week; I do not commit adultery. In particular I am not like this man, who sins publicly &c.' This hypocrite was still unclean when he went home. The poor public sinner, who sat slumped over in his regret, and said, 'God have mercy on

<sup>24</sup> Kommer, *Reformatorsche Flugschriften von Frauen*, 115–44. The pamphlets are considered more briefly by Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform*, 140, 144, 145–8.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 136.

<sup>26</sup> Anonyma, *Ain Sendbrieff von Ainer erbern frawen im Eelichen stand / an ain Klosterfrawen / gethon über berümung ettlicher haylicher geschriffi in Sermon begriffen / so die Klosterfrawu verbrent / und darauf ein lange vngesaltzne geschriffi zu ursach erzelt hat &c.* (Augsburg, 1524) [hereafter: *Ain Sendbrieff*], fol. C<sup>r</sup>.



me, a poor sinner', went home whole: the one who had confessed himself to be sick and was healed. The other called himself healthy but was left without any medicine.<sup>27</sup>

This sets the tone for Anonyma's critique. In an approach which Martin Jung has described as typical of the writing style of pamphlet authors who did not have a university education, Anonyma cites a plethora of biblical texts to stress the importance of ensuring coherence between the internal and the external, using them to highlight her criticisms of hypocritical behaviour.<sup>28</sup>

Anonyma accuses clergy (particularly bishops) and religious not only of being hypocrites, but of ministering 'for the sake of financial gain'.<sup>29</sup> This combined criticism fits with Rublack's second category of anti-clerical discourse, which characterizes the priest as a trader in masses (*Messkrämer*) and 'from a scriptural viewpoint, a hypocrite[e] (*Gleisner*), whose pretence at piety cannot conceal his concern to secure and expand his living.'<sup>30</sup> Anonyma is particularly concerned about those whose learning does not lead them to the truth:

What does Paul say to Timothy, in the second epistle, chapter 3? They look as though they have a spiritual life and do nothing but learn, but they never come to the truth; rather, they oppose the truth &c.<sup>31</sup>

This echoes Rublack's third category: clergy who are ignorant of Scripture, so that their sermons and teaching represent, at best, the blind leading the blind and, at worse, make them preachers of lies (*Lügenprediger*).<sup>32</sup> Anonyma also finds that most priests have either

<sup>27</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. C<sup>r</sup>, referring to Luke 18: 10–14.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Jung identifies the 'Häufung von Bibelzitenen' ('the amassing of biblical quotations') as characteristic of such pamphlets: Martin Jung, 'Katharina Zell geb. Schütz (1497/98–1562). Eine "Laientheologin" der Reformationszeit?', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 107 (1996), 145–78 [repr. in idem, *Nonnen, Prophetinnen, Kirchenmütter. Kirchen- und frömmigkeitsgeschichtliche Studien zu Frauen der Reformationszeit* (Leipzig, 2002), 121–68].

<sup>29</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Aiii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Rublack, 'Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets', 469–71.

<sup>31</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. [Biv]<sup>v</sup>, referring to 2 Tim. 3: 1–8. See also Anonyma, *Ayn bezwungene antwort vber eynen Sendbrieff eyner Closter nunnen, an jr schwester im Eelichē standt zugeschickt / darin sy vil vergebner vnnützer sorg fürhelt vn̄ jre gaistliche weißhait vn̄ gemalte hayligkait zū menschlichem gesicht auffnutzet* (Nuremberg, 1524) [hereafter: *Ayn bezwungene antwort*], fol. Cii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Rublack, 'Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets', 471–2.

‘fat bellies or fat purses’,<sup>33</sup> a concern that coheres with both Rublack’s fourth category, the critique of clergy as greedy and gluttonous folk (*Fressvolk*), for whom ‘their belly is their God’ (*Bauchprediger*);<sup>34</sup> and with his fifth, with clergy as ‘avaricious bucks’ or ‘fishers of pennies’ (*Pfennigfischer*), rather than fishers of souls.<sup>35</sup> Rublack sees this critique of clerical greed and gluttony as associated with a view of the cleric as sexually incontinent, a “mating horse” (*brünstiges Pferd*) or “lewd bull” (*geiler Stier*),<sup>36</sup> but this association is not present in Anonyma’s text.

Anonyma warns of the deceptiveness of clergy, in language which is consistent with Rublack’s sixth category, which castigates priests as robbers or thieves, characterized by the biblical image of ‘the wolf in sheep’s clothing’ or even as the ‘murderer of souls’ (*Seelmörder*).<sup>37</sup> Again, Anonyma articulates the less extreme criticism:

What does it say in Matthew 7? Be cautious: beware of those who come to you in sheep’s clothing, when inwardly they are ravening wolves. From their fruits you should recognise them &c.<sup>38</sup>

She is also concerned about clergy whose primary interest is in emphasizing and buttressing their own position, comparing them to the Levites:

What does Matthew 23 say? They do all their works before the Levites so that they will be seen by others; they make the fringes on their clothes especially long and want people to call them Rabbi. That is, those who are carved from prelatial wood want to be called honourable sir, or honourable lady.<sup>39</sup>

This should be a concern not only for prelates and clergy, but for all Christians, as Anonyma makes clear through an appeal to Luke 22 and the teaching of Christ that, ‘Whoever amongst you will be the

<sup>33</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Diii<sup>v</sup>: ‘ich sieh wol das sy der meertayl fayßt seyndt / Es sey am bauch oder am beüttel’.

<sup>34</sup> Rublack, ‘Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets’, 472–3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 473–4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 472.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 474–5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. [Biv]<sup>v</sup>, referring to Matt. 7: 15–16a. See also *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. Cii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. [Biv]<sup>v</sup>, referring to Matt. 23: 5–7.

greatest, he should be a servant to all the others.<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, there are parallels here to Rublack's seventh category, the ecclesiastical lord or *Kirchenjunker* as a tyrant or 'a devilish lord (*teufflicher Herr*)', implying 'a perverted usurpation of God's lordship, and a life style directly contrary to Christ's commandment'.<sup>41</sup> Here too, Anonyma's language is not as extreme as that found in some of the pamphlets discussed by Rublack, but the content of the critique is very similar.

Rublack's eighth category, which he sees as 'the most severe comparison', is the association of the clergy with the Pharisees.<sup>42</sup> This is a central theme for Anonyma. In her view, the Gospel of Matthew gives clear instructions as to how those who are truly holy should conduct their lives, as she draws out in both letters. Referring to Matthew 23, she cites Christ's criticisms of the Pharisees:

What did Christ the Lord say in Matthew chapter 23: They will lay heavy burdens on people's shoulders and will not lift a little finger to help them? ... Read the eight woes [*die acht wee*] where he reproaches them and explains the meaning of Moses' seat in which they are supposed to be sitting.<sup>43</sup>

The 'eight woes' – seven in modern translations – refer to the repeated words of Jesus, 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ...' (Matthew 23: 13–36) in his condemnation of the outward holiness but internal depravity of the Pharisees. It is apparent that, for Anonyma, the comparison between the clergy and the Pharisees is integrally bound up with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and by extension, that of the clergy.

For Anonyma, the need for the outward practices of faith to be congruent with inner spiritual reality relates also to the necessity of distinguishing between true and false prophets. She refers indirectly to the danger of false prophets, exhorting her sister, or her readers, to

<sup>40</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. [Biv]<sup>v</sup>, referring to Luke 22: 24–6. See also *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. Cii<sup>v</sup>. Biblical texts in Anonyma's letters are translated from her own words, since she is not using an identifiable biblical translation. For a detailed discussion of the German Bible translations available to Anonyma and their relation to her biblical quotations, see also Methuen, 'dañ got vnd die haylig geschriff'.

<sup>41</sup> Rublack, 'Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets', 476–7.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 477.

<sup>43</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Aiii<sup>v</sup>, referring to Matt. 23: 4 and 13–36. See also *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. Cii<sup>f</sup>.

‘Read John’s first canonical epistle, chapter 4, where he says, first test the spirit to see whether it is from God, etc.’<sup>44</sup> She is probably thinking here of 1 John 4: 1, ‘Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world’ [NRSV]. This resonates with Rublack’s ninth and final category of anti-clerical discourse, which sees the clergy as false prophets, sometimes extended to present them as “Baal’s prophets,” the apostles and disciples of the Antichrist’.<sup>45</sup> Again, Anonyma articulates the milder form. Elsewhere she insists that she herself is able to test the spirits, arguing:

If a prophet stands up and speaks inspired by his own dreams or good ideas, and does not speak my word, then put him to death or stone him. Do you think that we are bound to Luther or others like him? No! We are bound to the word, and not to human laws and teachings.<sup>46</sup>

Human ideas, affirms Anonyma, ‘are not certain, but God’s Scripture is certain.’<sup>47</sup> It is following Scripture that leads to true faith, and to love of neighbour: ‘offering help in [Christ’s] name to our neighbours, the most needy and the least amongst us’ is ‘what to do if with God’s help you want to do good, and please God’.<sup>48</sup> It is this that makes it possible to avoid hypocrisy.

It is apparent from this that Anonyma’s critique of the clergy is entirely coherent with anti-clerical discourse expressed in the other German pamphlets of this period studied by Rublack. However, it is also apparent that Anonyma’s critique of the clergy is expressed in terms of concerns about their hypocrisy. This emerges also in her discussion of Christ’s instructions about prayer. In the shorter exhortation in *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, she focuses on the way that hypocrites pray:

When you pray you should not behave like the hypocrites [*die heüchler*] who stand there and pray in the schools of the congregations and on the corners of the streets so that they will be seen and heard by the people.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Aii<sup>v</sup>; compare also *ibid.* fols Biii<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Rublack, ‘Anticlericalism in German Reformation Pamphlets’, 478.

<sup>46</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. B<sup>v</sup>. See also *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. Aiii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. B<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. C<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. Bii<sup>v</sup>, referring to Matt. 6: 5.

This passage leads into a summary of the Lord's Prayer.<sup>50</sup> In *Ain Sendbrieff*, she cites Matthew 6 more extensively, emphasizing even more strongly the instruction to pray privately and not hypocritically:

He says, do not give alms before other people, and never do so because you want to be seen; otherwise you will have no reward from your father. Do not make a big show of yourselves, or blow your own trumpets, like the hypocrites [*die heüchler*] in the streets. When you want to pray, do not do so publicly in the synagogues, that is, in the congregations, or on the street corners or in the streets, which might be seen by other people as hypocritical [*gleyßnerisch*]. Rather go secretly into your chamber and shut the door and pray to your father in private.<sup>51</sup>

Anonyma reiterates (with a sideswipe at members of religious orders) that these instructions do not pertain only to the liturgy, but are also about ensuring that a Christian's whole life is lived without hypocrisy:

This is not only about Maundy Thursday ... when the stinking feet of the monks and nuns are washed. You should do these things to honour God and help your neighbours throughout the year, at all times, not for appearances or profit, and with no outward hypocrisy [*on allen scheyn vnnd gbreng thun / mit kainem eusserlichen anzaygend gleyßnerey*].<sup>52</sup>

Anonyma's critique of the clergy is, therefore, fundamentally a critique of their hypocritical behaviour.

Anonyma's critique of hypocrisy is aimed not only at various groups within the church, but at the traditions of the church per se. She compares the teaching of the gospel with the teachings of the church as defined in the decretals:

The gospel reveals only poverty, patience, humility and physical work, along with a strong faith and trust in Christ. In contrast, the decretals show great pomp and much arrogance, greed and laziness, income from many benefices and a luxurious life. This is a new law on top of the other law, a burden for Christ's flock. It has many human laws and teachings, none of which are founded in God's Scripture.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fols Bii<sup>v</sup>–C<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. C<sup>r</sup>, referring to Matt. 6: 1–8.

<sup>52</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. [Biv]<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fols [Aiv]<sup>v</sup>–B<sup>r</sup>, referring to Matt. 15: 8–9, 13. Decretals are papal decrees concerning points of doctrine or (more often) canon law.

Similarly, the church fathers have also ‘darkened and defiled the Holy Scripture with their human fabrications and turns of phrase.’<sup>54</sup> Indeed, down the centuries, the teachers of the church, she argues, ‘have written so much that disagreed with the evangelists and the twelve apostles.’<sup>55</sup> For Anonyma, Scripture must be the only measure of true faith: ‘If one of today’s teachers wants to teach us something different, whether it is Luther or Cunz or B[r]enz, or if they have learned something different than the pure unadulterated word of God, why would we want to follow him?’<sup>56</sup> She relates this point to the necessity of distinguishing between true and false prophets and the importance of following divine, rather than human, teaching.<sup>57</sup> The very tradition of the church itself, therefore, is in Anonyma’s view vulnerable to the criticism of hypocrisy due to the failure of the tradition and its teachers to respect the teachings of Scripture.

Within the church and its structures, Anonyma views certain groups of people as more vulnerable to the charge of hypocrisy. Priests are often hypocrites: her sister has argued that ‘they have always been God’s anointed,’ a claim about which Anonyma is deeply sceptical:

I do not enquire whether they have been anointed, or just smeared with oil. I can see that most of them have fat bellies or fat purses. But that blessedness can be attained through them is has long been very doubtful, if it is possible at all, on account of what I have heard about their sermons. For the Holy Scripture calls no-one a priest unless they reveal the word of God according to the pure text.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, Anonyma finds that the bishops have failed in their responsibility to teach and preach the gospel: ‘amongst all those posturing mitred bishops robed in purple, I know none who teaches me well. I have never heard one preach.’<sup>59</sup> The hypocritical behaviour of the bishops, however, goes far beyond this failure to preach and teach

<sup>54</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. B<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. B<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. B<sup>v</sup>, referring to Deut. 13: 1–5a. See also *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. Aiii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> See the passage cited above, at pp. 158–9.

<sup>58</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Dii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. [Aiv]<sup>v</sup>.

the gospel to encompass their luxurious lifestyles and their encouragement of hypocritical behaviour amongst the clergy:

Did [Christ] say to the apostles, stay at home, keep lavish courts, play cards, live a good life, make sure that all your treasure chests and coffers are full, burden your poor people with many tolls and taxes, teach sinfulness by your example, ride through the town with great pomp, rape the virgins, bully the wives? Did he say, cheat the world with your pretentious power, tear people's consciences apart and make them afraid? Did he say, tell them about the strict law of Moses and say nothing about Christ's mercy or how he delivers them from sin through his death? Did he say, invent many things about purgatory and offer high praise for indulgences, which are of this world, and for a church that behaves as if it were a royal court? Did he say, be sure to forbid the parsons to have wives, but allow them to live in sin with women, and charge them a hefty fine when they do?<sup>60</sup>

Although she also criticizes the clergy more widely, it appears that Anonyma is particularly concerned about the behaviour of bishops.

The final group she regards as hypocritical is made up of convent women and female religious, including her own sister. Anonyma provides a swingeing and strikingly well-informed critique of the role of worldly values and status within convents:

Now I know that you convent women would like to pretend that this is not your problem, as if you believed yourselves not to be in the world any more. But this will not help you. You believe that as long as you are enclosed within the convent walls you lack no aspect of holiness, but your bliss will deceive you. Amongst you there are still many ugly aspects of the world. For instance, one sister asserts that she was born of nobler parents than the others, and she is given an office and more freedom.<sup>61</sup>

Anonyma's critique of female religious offers a strong reminder that late medieval and early modern anticlericalism was directed against all members of the religious hierarchy, including members of religious orders. Reflecting on the nativity, she comments that Christ was not visited in the crib by 'Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, bishops or cardinals, monks or parsons [*Bischoff / oder Cardinal / Münchē / oder*

<sup>60</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Aiii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Cii<sup>v</sup>.

*Nolhart*],’ but by the shepherds: here she clearly associates both clergy and religious with Caiaphas and Annas, the high priests, and the shepherds with the laypeople of her own day.<sup>62</sup> Geoffrey Dipple has chosen for this reason to refer to ‘antifraternalism’ as well as ‘anti-clericalism’.<sup>63</sup> However, Anonyma’s letters demonstrate that such criticisms were not only directed against friars, but also against monks and nuns.<sup>64</sup>

In sum, Anonyma believes that those whose hypocritical behaviour she criticizes have abandoned the truth in ways that are similar to those against which the apostle Paul warned:

Show me also Paul’s first letter to Timothy, chapter 4. There he says that many people abandon the faith and follow the spirit of error and the teachings of the devil. Their consciences are wounded; they refuse to marry and forbid the food that God created to be enjoyed by believers at all times, giving thanks for his grace &c.<sup>65</sup>

However, Paul also offers guidance as to the behaviour expected of Christians:

Look at what Paul says to the Romans in chapter 12: dear brothers, be diligent, patient, mild, gentle, and lead a good life setting a good

<sup>62</sup> *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. Aiii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> As in the title of his PhD thesis: Geoffrey L. Dipple, “Woe unto you, Stomachpreachers, Cheesbeggars and Hypocrites”: Antifraternalism and Reformation Anticlericalism’ (PhD thesis, Queens University, Kingston, 1991), published as idem, *Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Günzburg and the Campaign against the Friars* (Aldershot, 1996).

<sup>64</sup> Hans-Jürgen Goertz, by contrast, remarks that anti-clerical criticism might be directed towards ‘the pope, the bishops, canons and prelates (the higher clergy) or secular priests, nuns and monks (the “ordinary priesthood”),’ thus counting members of religious orders as clergy: see Hans-Jürgen Goertz, “What a tangled and tenuous mess the clergy is!”: Clerical Anticlericalism in the Reformation Period’, in Dykema and Oberman, eds, *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 499–519, at 503. I have preferred, in this article, to distinguish between clergy and religious by referring to anti-monasticism. In his critique of monastic vows, Martin Luther sometimes refers in German to ‘Klosterleute’ or ‘Klostervolk’ (which in *LW* is generally rendered ‘monks’); thus ‘Bapst, Bischoff, Priester, Kloster volck’ becomes ‘pope, bishop, priests, and monks’: *WA* 6: 407; *LW* 44: 127. Luther’s works are cited according to the *Weimarer Ausgabe (WA)*; English translations from *Luther’s Works (LW)* are given where they exist.

<sup>65</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Aiii<sup>v</sup>, referring to 1 Tim. 4: 1–3 (the text here actually specifies 2 Tim., but the passage is clearly from 1 Tim.). See also *Ayn bezwungene antwort*, fol. B<sup>v</sup> (here the reference is to ‘Paul. zū Timo. iiiii,’ not specifying which letter to Timothy is meant, but the text again clearly alludes to 1 Tim.).



example, not only before God but also especially before other people. You should not compare yourself with this world, &c.<sup>66</sup>

For Anonyma, Scripture provides the measure by which all believers, including clergy, religious and laypeople, should seek to live.

Anonyma's critiques of the hypocrisy of the clergy and members of religious orders are explicitly rooted in Scripture, and both letters are replete with scriptural references and allusions.<sup>67</sup> As observed above, Jung sees the proliferation of scriptural citations as characteristic of lay pamphlets in this period. However, Anonyma's choice of Scripture is distinctive. Comparing Reformation pamphlets authored by women, Kommer finds that although some of the texts cited by Anonyma are also referred to in other pamphlets, a good number are used only by Anonyma in her letters.<sup>68</sup> These include Anonyma's use of Deuteronomy 13,<sup>69</sup> Matthew 6: 1–8<sup>70</sup> and Matthew 23: 5–7, 8–9, as well as her description of Matthew 23: 13–36 as the 'eight woes',<sup>71</sup> all of which are texts which Anonyma uses to highlight the hypocritical behaviour of clergy and religious. Moreover, Kommer's comparative table shows that Anonyma's reference to the parable of the Pharisee (or, to use her language, hypocrite) and the publican (Luke 18: 10–14) is also unique in this sample of texts.<sup>72</sup> It is striking that Luke 18, Matthew 6 and Matthew 23 are the three key texts which Nigri and Tsentourou found to underlie biblically-founded accusations of hypocrisy.<sup>73</sup> The extent of Anonyma's references to Luke 22: 24–6, Romans 12 and 2 Timothy 3: 2–8 is also unusual, with other authors discussed by Kommer referring only to Luke 22: 24, to single verses in Romans 12, and to 2 Timothy 3: 1–5 or 3: 5.<sup>74</sup> In comparison, texts such as Matthew 7: 15–16a, Matthew 15:

<sup>66</sup> *Ain Sendbrieff*, fol. Aiii<sup>v</sup>, referring to Rom. 12: 11–12, 2.

<sup>67</sup> See also Methuen, 'dañ got vnd die haylig geschriff'.

<sup>68</sup> Kommer, *Reformatorsche Flugschriften von Frauen*, 122–3, and compare also her comparative index of scriptural texts used or referred to in the pamphlets she considers: *ibid.* 378–420.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 123 and compare 379.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* 123 and compare 392.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 123. Kommer notes that specific verses in this passage are referred to by other authors, including Katharina Schütz Zell and Ursula Weyda, and in other anonymous texts: see *ibid.* 397.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 401.

<sup>73</sup> Nigri and Tsentourou, 'Introduction', 4–5, and see above, p. 153.

<sup>74</sup> Kommer, *Reformatorsche Flugschriften von Frauen*, 401 (Luke 22), 410–11 (Rom. 12), 417 (2 Tim. 3).

8–9, 13, Matthew 23: 4, 1 Timothy 4: 1–3 and 1 John 4: 1 are also referred to by other female authors, such as Argula von Grumbach, Ursula von Münsterberg, Katharina Schütz Zell and Ursula Weyda, and in other anonymous pamphlets with apparently female authors.<sup>75</sup> Anonyma's strong emphasis on the hypocrisy of members of the clergy and religious orders thus emerges as potentially distinctive, even though, as the comparison with Rublack's categories has shown, her anti-clerical and anti-monastic critique can be seen as typifying that found in other lay writings of the period.

From this exploration of Anonyma's argument, a question arises: was her appeal to hypocrisy as an (anti-clerical) lens through which to assess the church, its clergy and its religious more typical of her time than the literature on anticlericalism might suggest? The final part of this article will consider references to hypocrisy by Luther and Karlstadt in their early (mostly German) works and (in Luther's case) German sermons. This exploration suggests that, while Karlstadt rarely made explicit accusations of hypocrisy, his use of the term in his polemical works was often anti-clerical or anti-papal in tone, but he also applied the concept of hypocrisy more widely, criticizing hypocritical behaviour as in opposition to what he regarded as the 'supreme virtue' of *Gelassenheit*, not always using the term hypocrite.<sup>76</sup> Luther uses the term hypocrite rather more frequently: while he too accused clergy and religious of hypocrisy, his main focus is also more general, using the accusation of hypocrisy to call out all aspects of false religion. Thus neither Karlstadt nor Luther use the term exclusively to buttress their criticism of the clergy, although that use is more prominent in polemical works, especially those by Karlstadt.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 393 (Matt. 7), 395 (Matt. 15), 397 (Matt. 23), 417 (1 Tim. 4), 419 (1 John 4).

<sup>76</sup> The term *Gelassenheit* derives from the German mystical tradition, where it means a surrender of the self and union with God; it is notoriously difficult to translate into English. On the English translation of *Gelassenheit*, see Ulrich Bubenheimer, 'Gelassenheit und Ablösung', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 92 (1981), 250–68; ET: idem, 'Gelassenheit and Detachment: A psycho-historical Study of Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt – and his Conflict with Martin Luther', online at: <<https://karlstadt-edition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Gelassenheit-and-Detachment.pdf>>, note 1, accessed 21 December 2023. On Karlstadt's understanding of *Gelassenheit*, see Vincent Evener, 'Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt', in Ronald K. Rittgers and Vincent Evener, eds, *Protestants and Mysticism in Reformation Europe* (Leiden, 2019), 78–99, esp. 79, 82–6, 87–8, 91.

<sup>77</sup> I would like to express my deep thanks to Stefania Salvadori for her invaluable comments on the Karlstadt section of this article.

Karlstadt seldom uses the term ‘hypocrite’ (*gleyßner/gleszner, heuchler*), and although many of his early uses of it are associated with polemic against the papacy or the clergy, he also sees hypocritical behaviour as a more general issue.<sup>78</sup> Writing in 1520 on ‘the supreme virtue of *Gelassenheit*’, he asserts that Christ is found in the temple of the believer who is ‘serene’ or ‘detached’ (*gelassen mensch*) and not with ‘the pharisees and hypocrites, the pope and his coxcombs’ (*die Phariseyer und gleyßner / der Babst und seyn Gecken*).<sup>79</sup> Hypocrisy here emerges as the counterpoint to *Gelassenheit* which is not specific to clergy and religious. At the same time, Karlstadt describes the high priests Annas and Caiaphas as ‘hypocrites, who do not pay much attention to what gives [God’s] law and word its content and makes it useful,’ associating them also with ‘the pope and all the cardinals and bishops’ (*der Bapst etzliche Cardinälen und etzliche Bischoffen*).<sup>80</sup> Later that year, in *Welche Bücher biblisch sind* (*Which Books are Biblical*; 1520), he accuses the pope of ‘letting his hellish decretals be called canons’, although (in Karlstadt’s view) these are ‘not the rules of the Christian faithful but of the hypocrites.’<sup>81</sup> Karlstadt expounds on the hypocrisy of the pope at some length in *Von Päpstlicher Heiligkeit* (*On Papal Holiness*; 1520): the words of ‘the pope and his hypocrites’ (*des Bapsts und seiner heuchler*) have failed to recognize that ‘scripture is more holy than any unliving

<sup>78</sup> This has been ascertained by a search on ‘gle\*’ in the online edition of the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Schriften und Briefe Andreas Bodensteins von Karlstadt* [hereafter: KGK], which currently extends to December 1521: see KGK, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_edition](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_edition)>, accessed 21 December 2023. I am grateful to Stefania Salvadori for giving me early access to the recently published KGK 6. References to the edition are given in the form: KGK (no. [letter number]) [volume number]: [page number].[line number(s)]. A link to the online text is given where one exists.

<sup>79</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Missive von der allerhöchsten Tugend Gelassenheit*, fol. B2<sup>f</sup>, KGK (no. 166) 3: 404.8–13, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_166\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_166_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. A2<sup>f</sup>, KGK (no. 166) 3: 392.17–19.

<sup>81</sup> Karlstadt says of the pope that ‘er sein hellische Decretalen lasset Canones nennen / dan sie seint nicht regel der christglaubigen / sunder der gleyßner’: Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Welche Bücher biblisch sind*, fol. C4<sup>f</sup>, KGK (no. 171), 3: 546.17–19, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_171\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_171_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023. There is a striking parallel here to Anonyma’s strictures on the decretals (see text at note 52 above). However, Luther also comments that ‘papal decretals occasionally are erroneous and militate against Holy Scriptures and Christian love’: Martin Luther, ‘Acta Augustana’ [‘Proceedings at Augsburg’], *WA* 2: 10; *LW* 31: 265.

temple, chalice, altar, monstrance and so on,' have equated papal law with divine law, and have denied imperial dignity.<sup>82</sup> In *Verba Dei* (1520), Johannes Eck, Karlstadt's opponent at the 1519 Leipzig Disputation, is the *hypocrita*, 'feigning theological discourse to the disciples in God's temple' (*simulans theologicum ad discipulos in dei templo sermonem*).<sup>83</sup> More expansively, in the full title of *Von Gelübden Unterrichtung* (*Teachings on Monastic Vows*; 1521), a treatise of which, Kommer argues, Anonyma was aware,<sup>84</sup> he explains that he will show the 'hypocritical life' (*gleyßnerisch leebenn*) of 'priests, monks and nuns' (*Pfaffen / Monchē / vñ Nonnen*).<sup>85</sup> Here he expresses many criticisms of the religious life similar to those offered by Anonyma, although he does not explicitly mention hypocrisy until the end of the treatise, where he draws on Matthew 6 to emphasize the importance of praying privately rather than 'openly like the hypocrites', and criticizes the 'long prayers of the hypocrites', identifying those hypocrites with 'vicars, monks and nuns'.<sup>86</sup> Their behaviour is to be contrasted with God's desire for 'mercy not sacrifice', which Karlstadt, referring to Hosea 6: 6 and Matthew 9: 13, interprets to mean 'mercy not vows'.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, in *Das Reich Gottes leidet Gewalt* (*The Kingdom of God suffers Violence*; 1521), Karlstadt accuses the 'Pharisees, hypocrites and scribes' (or, elsewhere, the 'hypocrites, scribes and pharisees') of blocking the way to God's word and of being 'born to crush and to rob the kingdom of God'; here too he identifies them with 'priests and monks' (*Pfaffen / und*

<sup>82</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Von Bepstlicher heylickeit*, quotations at fols C3<sup>r</sup>, E4<sup>v</sup>; KGK (no. 167) 3: esp. 430–1, 442–5, 455, 465; quotations at 443.23 and 463.3–7, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_167\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_167_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023.

<sup>83</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Verba Dei*, fols C3<sup>r</sup>, G1<sup>r</sup>; KGK (no. 146) 3: 50.14–15; 93.25–8, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_146\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_146_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023.

<sup>84</sup> Kommer, *Reformatatorische Flugschriften von Frauen*, 129.

<sup>85</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Von Gelübden Unterrichtung*, title page; KGK (no. 203) 4: 509–10, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_203\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_203_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, fols F1<sup>r</sup>, F3<sup>v</sup>; KGK (no. 203) 4: 566.18–19; 572.10–13.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, fols G3<sup>v</sup>–G4<sup>r</sup>; KGK (no. 203) 4: 581.5–12. He argues similarly in his Latin treatise *Super coelibatu, monachatu et viduitate axiomata*, KGK (no. 190) 4: 191–255, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_190\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_190_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023. Compare also Salvadori, 'Frauen und Bibel bei Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt', 163 nn. 31 and 32.

*Monnichen*).<sup>88</sup> He also, at times, associates hypocrisy with criticism of the clergy by implication, for instance when he criticizes ‘the apparently spiritual people’ (*die vermeyndte geistliche leüte*) who have made of the Lord’s Supper ‘a sacrifice or mass’ and sold it for money, a criticism which, by its nature, must refer primarily to clergy.<sup>89</sup>

However, Karlstadt also refers to hypocrites in a more general way. It has already been observed that he understands hypocrisy as the counterpoint to *Gelassenheit*, and this emerges as a fundamental understanding of hypocrisy in Karlstadt’s theology. In her introduction to *Von Mannigfaltigkeit des einfältigen, einigen Willens Gottes. Was Sünde sei* (*Of the Multiplicity of the Simple, unified Will of God. And what Sin is*; 1523), Stefania Salvadori observes that Karlstadt contrasts tax collectors and prostitutes, who have been able to recognize and confess their sin, with ‘hypocrites and monks’, who – convinced of their piety and good works – are much slower to recognize their sin.<sup>90</sup> However, Karlstadt is also aware that it is not only monks and clergy who are hypocrites. Vincent Evener observes that ‘Karlstadt equates “hypocrisy” with *Annehmlichkeit* (finding something pleasing; here, the self), which claims good for the self in work or suffering and flows from the assertion of human ego.’<sup>91</sup> Referring in 1519 to Job (presumably 13: 16), he emphasizes that ‘no hypocrite persists before God’ (*kein gleiszner bestet vor got*), because the hypocrite is unable to confess their sins: a true believer can say ‘I confess my impurity; that is my purity’ (*Ich erken mein unreinigkeit / das ist mein reinigkeit*).<sup>92</sup> In 1521, he uses the same verse from Job to define as hypocrites all those who seek to use the

<sup>88</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Das Reich Gottes leidet Gewalt*, fols B4<sup>v</sup>–C1<sup>r</sup>, C2<sup>r</sup>; KGK (no. 191) 4: 284.11–18; 287.14–18, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_191\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_191_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023.

<sup>89</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Ob man mit heyliger schriffte erweisen müge / das Christus mit leyb / blüt vnd sele / im Sacrament sey* (Basel, 1524), fol. B<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> Stefania Salvadori, ‘Einleitung’, KGK (no. 239) 6: 13–26, at 24, referring to Karlstadt’s argument in *Von Mannigfaltigkeit des einfältigen, einigen Willens Gottes. Was Sünde sei*, fols G1<sup>r-v</sup>; KGK (no. 239) 6: 69.11–70.11.

<sup>91</sup> Evener, ‘Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt’, 88.

<sup>92</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Auszlegung unnd Leuterung etzlicher heyligenn geschrifften ... kurtzlich berurth und angetzeicht in den figur und schriffen der wagen*, fol. C4<sup>r</sup>; KGK (no. 124) 2: 238.11–18, quotations at lines 14 and 17–18, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_124\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_124_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2023. Job 13: 16 reads in the Vulgate: ‘Et ipse erit salvator meus: non enim veniet in conspectu ejus omnis hypocrita’ (AV: ‘He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him’).

sacraments, other forms of piety and good works to show themselves worthy: 'All those who come with works and piety are hypocrites' (*Gleyszner seyndt alle und jede / so mit wercken und frumekeit kumen*).<sup>93</sup> Similarly, when condemning indulgences, Karlstadt applies Christ's criticism of the hypocrites for 'giving a tenth of your spices ... but neglecting the most important matters of the law' (Matthew 23: 23) to all penitents (*bußwircker*).<sup>94</sup> Indeed, as he makes clear in *De legis litera sive carne et spiritu enarratio* (*An account of the letter of the law, or flesh and spirit*; 1521), anyone who believes only according to the letter of the law 'resembles the Jews, Pharisees and hypocrites' (*Iudaeos, Pharisaeos, et Hypocritas*), who do not believe in God, but in human laws and regulations.<sup>95</sup>

Although for Karlstaadt, hypocritical behaviour is the counterpart to *Gelassenheit*, he does not always use the term hypocrisy when condemning the behaviour. In a discussion of the difference between *Gelassenheit* and *Ungelassenheit*, he associates the latter with those who 'surely recognise or even love the letter but do not know God' (*den büchstaben erkent ainer wol / oder hat lust in ime / aber gott erkennet er nit*), precisely those whom elsewhere he has labelled hypocrites.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, in a consideration of the origins of 'unfaith' (*unglauben*), which, he says, 'comes from lies and from a liar', namely Satan, he presents faith as being 'of the light', and unfaith as 'of the darkness'.<sup>97</sup> Again, the behaviour he describes equates to that of those he has elsewhere termed hypocrites. Although he makes sparing use of the term hypocrisy outside his polemical writings, hypocrites and

<sup>93</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Von den Empfängern, Zeichen und Zusagen des heiligen Sakraments des Fleischs und Bluts Christi*, fol. B3<sup>r</sup>; KGK (no. 183) 4: 110.10–14, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_183\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_183_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2021.

<sup>94</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Von Vermögen des Ablass*, fol. B3<sup>r</sup>; KGK (no 161) 3: 229.14–18, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_161\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_161_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2021.

<sup>95</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *De Legis litera sive carne, et spiritu*, fol. A3<sup>r</sup>; KGK (no. 197) 4: 412.14–26, online at: <[http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk\\_197\\_transcript](http://dev2.hab.de/apps/edoc/view.html?id=kgk_197_transcript)>, accessed 21 December 2021.

<sup>96</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Was gesagt ist: Sich gelassen. Was das Wort Gelassenheit bedeutet und wo es in Heiliger Schrift erscheint*, fols B1<sup>v</sup>–B2<sup>v</sup>; KGK (no. 241), 6: 113–15, esp. 113.23–114.3.

<sup>97</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Wje sich der gelaub vnd vnglaub gegen dem liecht vnd finsternus, gegen warheit vn[d] lügen, gegen got vnd dem teufel halten* (Basel, 1524), fols [Civ]<sup>r</sup>, [Div]<sup>v</sup>.

their hypocritical behaviour provide an important counterpoint in Karlstadt's theology of *Gelassenheit*.

Like Karlstadt, Luther was deeply concerned with apparent holiness. His concern for the dangerous paradox posed by those who like to appear holy, although in reality they are not, was already articulated in his lectures on the Psalms (1513–15). He regards 'good counsel for an evil purpose' to be 'truly hypocrisy, sham, and deceit [*prope hypocrisis, simulatio et dolus*] – as when a person uses good means, for example, praying, fasting, and all that is good, to do something to the glow of the world or for gain or some other vanity.'<sup>98</sup> The 'nature of hypocrisy [*natura Hypocrisis*] ... is a righteous performance in the eyes of men on earth, but is evil in the heart.'<sup>99</sup> In these early lectures, Luther associates hypocrisy with heresy, asserting: 'Such are all heretics, all pretenders who create an appearance in public to which their heart does not correspond.'<sup>100</sup> In his defence of the Ninety-Five Theses (1518), Luther draws on Matthew 6: 6 to identify 'the most arrogant hypocrites [*superbissimi hypocritae*]' as those who pervert true repentance 'by distorting their faces in fasts and by praying in streets and heralding their giving of alms.'<sup>101</sup> When penance is not sincere, it is to be understood 'as hypocritical [*hypocritarum est*] and not that which Christ teaches.'<sup>102</sup> Similarly, commenting on the Lord's Prayer for 'simple folk' in 1519, Luther sees the world as full of 'sinful ungodly spirits' (*frevelen ungottfürtigenn geyster*), whom he compares with 'the hypocrite in the gospel' (*dem gylsner ym Evangelio*).<sup>103</sup> When Luther preached on the parable of the Pharisee (or hypocrite) and the tax collector in 1522, he criticized the Pharisee, who 'misleads the whole world with his glittering hypocritical life' (*verfurd die gantzen welt mit seinem scheinenden gleissenden leben*), to argue for the need to judge people 'with spiritual eyes' (*mit geistlichen augen*).<sup>104</sup> Here Luther's focus when condemning

<sup>98</sup> Martin Luther, *Dictata super Psalterium* [*First Lectures on the Psalms*], WA 3: 27; LW 10: 28.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, WA 3: 323; LW 10: 268.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Martin Luther, *Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute* [*Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses*], WA 1: 531; LW 31: 84.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, WA 1: 531; LW 31: 85.

<sup>103</sup> Martin Luther, *Auslegung deutsch des Vater unnsrer fuer dye einfeltigen leyen* [*A German Interpretation of the Our Father for Simple Lay People*], WA 2: 80–130, at 90.

<sup>104</sup> Martin Luther, *Ein Sermon von dem Gleißner und offenbaren Sünder* [*A Sermon on the Hypocrite and Public Sinner*], WA 10/3: 293–303, esp. 302–3.

hypocrisy is not exclusively on the clergy and religious, but on all who offer a deceitful appearance of piety.

However, Luther does at times associate hypocrisy specifically with the spiritual estate. Thus, in *An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung* (*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*; 1520), he condemns the distinction between the spiritual and temporal estates as ‘pure invention’ (*man hats erfunden*), and ‘indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy’ (*wilchs gar ein feyn Comment und gleyssen ist*).<sup>105</sup> In the Latin version of *Tractatus de libertate christiana* (*The Freedom of a Christian*; 1520), Luther argues:

It does not help the soul if the body is adorned with the sacred robes of priests or dwells in sacred places or is occupied with sacred duties or prays, fasts, abstains from certain kinds of food, or does any work that can be done by the body and in the body. The righteousness and the freedom of the soul require something far different since the things which have been mentioned could be done by any wicked person. Such works produce nothing but hypocrites [*nec his studiis alii quam hypocritae evadant*]. On the other hand, it will not harm the soul if the body is clothed in secular dress, dwells in unconsecrated places, eats and drinks as others do, does not pray aloud, and neglects to do all the above-mentioned things which hypocrites can do.<sup>106</sup>

Moreover, Luther condemns many of the differences between Christian groups as intrinsically hypocritical: ‘The world has been filled with fakes and hypocrites [*gleyssner und heuchler*] and with so many sects, orders, and divisions of the one people of Christ that almost every city is divided into ten parties or even more.’ Such sects and individuals ‘wrangle about their self-contrived ways and methods like fools and madmen’; the result is ‘the destruction of Christian love and unity’.<sup>107</sup>

Again, in *Von den guten Werken* (*On Good Works*; also written in 1520), Luther identifies the ‘holy hypocrites [*heilige gleyssener*]’ as those who ‘consider themselves pious, and ... let others regard

<sup>105</sup> Martin Luther, *An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung* [*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*], WA 6: 407; LW 44: 127.

<sup>106</sup> Martin Luther, *Tractatus de libertate christiana* [*The Freedom of a Christian*], WA 7: 50 [Latin]; LW 31: 345. This passage is much shorter in the German edition, and although its import is the same, the German text does not mention hypocrites (WA 7: 21).

<sup>107</sup> Martin Luther, *Eyn sermon von dem newen Testament, das ist von der heyligen Messe* [*A Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass*], WA 6: 356; LW 35: 80.



them as such,<sup>108</sup> expanding on this in the 1523 edition to explain that the honouring of God's name through worship with 'the lips, bending of the knees, kissing, and other postures,' if it is 'not done in the heart by faith, in confident trust in God's grace,' is in reality 'nothing more than a hypocritical semblance and pretense [*nichts dan ein schein und farb der gleissenerey*].'<sup>109</sup> In his *Judgment on Monastic Vows* (1521), Luther reflects that 'the holier a thing is the more it is assailed by the perverted copying of blasphemous hypocrites [*imo quo sanctior res est, hoc magis peititur impiorum et hypocritarum perversa aemulatione*].'<sup>110</sup> Vows, and particularly vows of chastity – which the gospel teaches should be 'a matter of free choice'<sup>111</sup> – have been perverted by the papacy. Luther concludes that 'the pope is resisting the Holy Spirit and that his teaching is devilish, erroneous, and pure hypocrisy [*doctrinam suam esse daemoniorum et erroneam et meram hypocrisin*],'<sup>112</sup> and that monastic vows are 'declared illusory, satanic, and hypocritical teaching by the divine judgment of the Spirit [*pronuncientur esse doctrinae erroneae er daemontiacae et hypocriticae*].'<sup>113</sup> In *The Misuse of the Mass* (1521), Luther even goes so far as to suggest 'that those who pray the seven hours without sincere desire and joy in God sin much more in his sight than those who neglect to pray them at all'; they are, he says, 'vain hypocrites [*eyttel gleyßner*], who pretend to pray and speak to God.'<sup>114</sup> In his *Sermon ... for the Instruction of Consciences* (1521), he accuses clergy of setting a bad example for lay people, misleading them into believing 'that all they have to do is to keep their fasts and feasts.'<sup>115</sup> Here Luther draws on the 'woes' in Matthew 23 to express his disapproval of this position and those who teach it:

<sup>108</sup> Martin Luther, *Von den guten Werken* [*Treatise on Good Works*], WA 6: 210; LW 44: 31.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, WA 6: 218; LW 44: 40.

<sup>110</sup> Martin Luther, *De votis monasticis Martini Lutheri iudicium* [*The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows*], WA 8: 577; LW 44: 252.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, WA 8: 579; LW 44: 255.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, WA 8: 597–8; LW 44: 284.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, WA 8: 598; LW 44: 285.

<sup>114</sup> Martin Luther, *Vom Mißbrauch der Messe* [*The Misuse of the Mass*], WA 8: 534; LW 36: 194.

<sup>115</sup> Martin Luther, *Ein Sermon von dreierlei gutem Leben, das Gewißen zu unterrichten* [*A Sermon on the three Kinds of Good Life for the Instruction of Consciences*], WA 7: 797; LW 44: 237.

As if our God were bothered in the slightest whether you drink beer or water, whether you eat fish or meat, whether you keep the feasts or fasts! It was of people like this that Christ spoke in Matthew 23[: 23–24], ‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites [*We euch schriftgelhrten, geistlichen und allen gleisnern*]! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith.’<sup>116</sup>

Preaching in 1522 in a series of sermons which Robert J. Bast has identified as key to understanding his developing anticlericalism, Luther complains that those who claim to make up the spiritual estate ‘know nothing about either the smallest or the greatest of Christ’s commandments. The more spiritual and more hypocritical they are, the blinder they are. And yet they still pride themselves on being the most spiritual and the most pious.’<sup>117</sup> In this line of argument, Luther is clearly associating hypocrisy with a swingeing critique of the clergy.

He is clear, however, that there is a true church which is not hypocritical. By 1521, in his defence of his teachings against the papal bull, Luther had begun to distinguish between ‘the counterfeit and hypocritical church or church leadership [*der geferbeten unnd gleyssender kirchen oder geystlichkeytt*], and the true, basically sound church.’<sup>118</sup> The true church, he protested, has long been ‘hidden ... beneath sacred vestments, ritual, works, and similar outward pretensions and man-made laws’, which had taught people ‘that [they] can be saved through the contribution of money rather than through faith.’<sup>119</sup> Hypocrisy, he argued in his 1523 lectures on

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Martin Luther, *Predigt in der Schloßkirche zu Weimar* [*Sermon in the Castle Church in Weimar*], 19 October 1522, WA 10/3: 344: ‘die selben menschen wissen wider vom kleinsten noch grösten gebott Cristi. Also ie geistlicher und gleisnern, ie blinder. Aber dennoch rümen sie sich die geistlichen die frümsten zu sein.’ Compare Robert J. Bast, ‘Je Geistlicher ... Je Blinder: Anticlericalism, the Law, and Social Ethics in Luther’s Sermons on Matthew 22: 34–41’, in Dykema and Oberman, eds, *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 367–78, at 372. Curiously, Bast makes no reference to Luther’s use of *gleisner*.

<sup>118</sup> Martin Luther, *Grund und Ursach aller Artikel D. Martin Luthers, so durch römische Bulle unrechtlich verdammt sind* [*Defense and Explanation of All the Articles of Dr. Martin Luther which were Unjustly Condemned by the Roman Bull*], WA 7: 308 (and cf. 309); LW 32: 7.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. The distinction between the ‘hypocritical and bloodthirsty church’ and the true church ‘which is without influence, forsaken, and exposed to suffering and the cross, and

Deuteronomy, was associated with living under the law whilst members of the true church lived under the gospel.<sup>120</sup> Luther's anticlericalism needs to be understood in the context of his efforts, in this period, to define the shape of the true church and the behaviour of its members. His criticism of the clergy, while often as emotionally charged as that offered by Anonyma, is offered in the context of an attempt to provide a model for true Christian living. His pastoral awareness of the spiritual deficiencies, not only of clergy but also of laypeople, surely underlies his accusations of (or concerns about) the existence of hypocrisy amongst believers more generally.

It is scarcely surprising that Anonyma does not argue with the same theological sophistication as Luther or Karlstadt. Karlstadt's mentions of hypocrites in his polemical works are closer in tone to Anonyma's strictures against the clergy, although Anonyma's anticlerical polemic is much more explicitly rooted in accusations of hypocrisy and her choice of biblical texts does much to substantiate this association. It is also striking that although Luther's concern with hypocrisy is much wider, often focusing on *Scheinheiligkeit* (pretended holiness or false piety), hypocrisy nonetheless offers a useful

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which before the world and in the sight of that hypocritical church is ... vanity and nothing,' would emerge as an important theme in Luther's 1535 lectures on Genesis, and particularly his exegesis of the stories of Cain and Abel and of Jacob and Esau. Cain and Esau become for Luther the types of the hypocrite. The Genesis lectures also show Luther's deepening understanding that hypocrisy may express itself as excessive asceticism as well as gluttony: 'the gloomy hypocrites ... consider it piety and saintliness to abstain from gold, silver, food, clothing, or the like. [They]... imagine that they are showing deference to God if they abstain. Thus neither hypocrites nor gluttons have a correct understanding of Scripture. There is a time for feasting, fasting, mourning, and rejoicing.' See Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, LW 1–8; quotations at WA 42: 187; LW 1: 252 and WA 43: 333, 334; LW 4: 276, 277. Luther's discussion of hypocrisy in the Genesis lectures and other later writings bear some striking similarities to the themes identified by Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe in her article in this volume, and would bear further investigation; however, such an investigation is beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>120</sup> Martin Luther, *Deuteronomion Mosi cum annotationibus* [*Lectures on Deuteronomy*], WA 14: 654; LW 9: 141: 'For the Law first forces to works and when taken in the fleshly sense produces brilliant hypocrites [*speciosos hypocritas*], who imagine themselves to be the first of all, and to whom everything is due.' See also *ibid.*, WA 14: 723–4; LW 9: 260: 'if you look at the external show of works, there are many who fulfil the Law at least in many respects; and so they do not seem to be under the curse, as the hypocrites are. If, however, you look at the spirit which loves the Law, there are none who fulfil one jot or tittle. And so all are under the curse, and especially those who do outward works without the inward spirit'.

lens through which to understand his anticlericalism and his critiques of monasticism. Both Luther and Karlstadt were exponents of ‘clerical anticlericalism’, the critique of clergy and religious articulated by those who were themselves priests (and, in Luther’s case, also a member of a religious order),<sup>121</sup> although they did not restrict their critiques of hypocrisy to the clergy and religious. Anonyma, by contrast, presents her anti-clerical and anti-monastic rhetoric as one who was not (and, as a woman, could not be) ordained; nor had she taken religious vows. She may offer a more specifically lay perspective, since she was not in a position to preach amendment of life from the pulpit, as both Luther and Karlstadt could and did.

Starting from the close relationship between hypocrisy and anticlericalism found in Anonyma’s letters, this article has argued that the nexus of these critical tropes formed a leitmotif in the early Reformation, albeit expressed more explicitly by this lay author than by either Karlstadt or Luther, whose theological interests were undoubtedly wider. Hypocrisy, particularly in the form of false claims to piety and godliness, emerges as an important – and understudied – theme which underlies much Reformation rhetoric. As the ecclesiastical landscape became more confessional, concern about false piety seems to have given way to a focus on the distinction between hypocrisy and dissimulation, particularly in relation to the range of behaviours that constituted religious conformity.<sup>122</sup> In this early period of the Reformation, however, as in much of the medieval period, the evidence of Anonyma’s letters and Karlstadt’s and Luther’s writings suggests that hypocrisy and anticlericalism, hypocrisy and anti-monasticism, were closely – indeed intrinsically – intertwined.

<sup>121</sup> For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, ‘Clerical Anticlericalism in the Early German Reformation: An Oxymoron?’, in Dykema and Oberman, eds, *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 521–34. Elm argues that in the later medieval period, it was primarily the laity who identified the negative consequences of clerical misbehaviour, and they often sought to restore the condition of the church through fraternities and other forms of semi-religious community. By contrast, clergy who internalized similar critiques were seeking to renew the order to which they belonged: Elm, ‘Antiklerikalismus im Deutschen Mittelalter’, 11–12.

<sup>122</sup> See, for instance, Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1990); Jon Balsarak, ‘Geneva’s Use of Lies, Deceit, and Simulation in their Efforts to Reform France, 1536–1563’, *Harvard Theological Review* 112 (2019), 76–100.