

Christian Networks in the Early Modern Period

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Modern network analysis is extremely useful when investigating not only the relationships between individuals and within groups and institutions, but also virtual connections. It allows one to systematically identify, examine and depict communicative relationships within their historical context. This enables the researcher to recognise efficiently which individuals interacted with one another, in what spaces and in the framework of what regulatory structures, and what function and significance individuals had in the context of these interlocking relationships. In addition, this approach shows how a network is not comprised of the sum of the individual contributions, but rather develops systematically its own potential, which per se constitutes the attractiveness and significance of the network. In regard to their composition and to their own potential, networks are continually subject to developments that must be understood in the light of both external and internal factors. This article attempts to provide a historical overview of those communicative networks that existed, or began to establish themselves, in the early modern period and that possessed a markedly Christian character.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Networks of Scholars
3. Humanism – Humanist Sodalities
4. Religious Orders – Religious Communities
5. Nonconformists – Dissidents
6. Jansenism
7. Conclusion
8. Appendix
 1. Bibliography
 2. Notes

Citation

Introduction

Recently, there has been a trend in historical research to investigate not only the relationships between people and within groups and institutions but also virtual connections using network analysis.¹ One advantage of network analysis is, amongst others, that relationships can be systematically identified, examined and depicted within their historical context. Thus, it allows one to recognize efficiently which individuals interacted with one another, in what spaces and in the framework of what regulatory structures, and what function and significance individuals had in the context of these interlocking relationships. However, in addition – and here one can see the benefit of a historical network analysis – the approach reveals that a network is not comprised of the sum of the individual contributions, but rather systematically develops its own potential, which per se constitutes the attractiveness and significance of the network. It goes without saying that such descriptions are not static, but dynamic. In regard to their composition and to their own potential networks are continually subject to developments that must be understood in the light of both external and internal factors. At the moment, however, there is debate on the extent to which network analysis can and will be used in historical research: providing an account of certain networks may appear simple, but it requires considerable methodological effort, the validity and efficiency of which needs evaluation. In addition, the hermeneutic prerequisites and consequences of the approaches connected to network analysis have not been sufficiently discussed yet. This can only be judged following detailed case studies. At any rate, one cannot currently speak of network analysis as a proven and established method of historical research.

▲ 1

The following article occupies the intersection between the widespread use of the network as a central metaphor and a systematic, rule-led and quantitative network analysis. Given the lack of a generally accepted definition, the article will assume that networks establish, promote, preserve, guarantee and optimise the communication between different agents, whether they be individuals or the groups, institutions, etc. they represent. Networks can by all means be understood as a system or form of organisation, whereby the concept includes those networks that consciously circum-

vent or avoid the social, economic, cultural or religious norms of institutions and organisation.²

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A Christian, ecclesiastical or theological approach to either the content or the methodology of the topic is not self-evident. Ecclesiastical and theological history labels the study and description of Christian thought and practice that is theologically accountable and shaped by the teachings of the Christian confessions – mostly in the German and European contexts.³ As a result of this, the concept of networks is mostly applied to Christian networks. At the same time, the communicative relationships of other religions and those that extended beyond Europe have to be taken into account.

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For the period under investigation here, communicative behaviour "free of networks" is almost inconceivable. Informal communicative frameworks, which are difficult to identify yet had a remarkable social, cultural, religious and economic impact, are found everywhere.

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With the means of traditional historical narrative, one can show how network research allows us to examine effectively the multifarious relationships between agents, communicative structures, media and spaces and the effects that result from their interaction. The article will investigate early modern networks. As the European societies of this period up to the "Sattelzeit"⁴ (transition period) around 1800, were largely Christian, the networks under investigation can – to a great extent – be understood as Christian networks. Not least due to the sources available, the elites are at the centre of attention.

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Networks of Scholars

Scholarly networks in the early modern period differed from those of the Middle Ages and earlier epochs above all in their confessional character and, from the late 17th century onwards, increasingly through the attempts to overcome these confessional boundaries. One must first mention the students and proponents of Reformation around the "reformers" in Wittenberg (→ Media Link #ab) (Martin Luther (1483–1546) (→ Media Link #ac), Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) (→ Media Link #ad)),⁵ Zurich (Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) (→ Media Link #ae), Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) (→ Media Link #af))⁶ and Geneva (Johannes Calvin (1509–1564) (→ Media Link #ag), Theodor von Beza (1519–1605) (→ Media Link #ah)),⁷ and later the other centres of confessionalized elite education, for example Strasbourg (Martin Bucer (1491–1551) (→ Media Link #ai), Johannes Sturm (1507–1589) (→ Media Link #aj)).⁸ The networks of Catholic reform developed a bit later, but parallel in terms of content and structure; of particular importance were the religious orders (→ Media Link #ak), for example the Jesuits, that propelled this reform and underwent a period of formidable institutional consolidation.⁹

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These networks all shared regular, stable communication that promoted confessional identity and theological polemics. The latter was connected with the renewed attempts to construct confessional identity resulting from these networks. The medium of communication within these networks was the letter (→ Media Link #al), and one can see here many similarities to the humanist networks, which will be examined below.¹⁰ Such letters were often intended for publication and, as a result, collections of letters were printed.¹¹ The agents of the networks can be traced via their correspondence, a lot of which has been published, although much remains unpublished. Here, it is worth investigating how different networks interwove with one another through members that belonged to multiple groups. For example, Melanchthon acted on behalf of the Wittenberg Reformation, but at the same time was a member of many networks of humanists (like, for example Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1536) (→ Media Link #am)) who were loyal to Rome and critical of, or even opposed, the Reformation. Furthermore, Melanchthon also belonged to networks which inclined towards the upper German and Geneva Reformation.

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The value of these networks to communication lay, on the one hand, in the concentrated transmission of news and, on the other, in the accumulation of knowledge and in the fact that these networks could satisfy individual members' wishes

to disseminate their knowledge, depending on their situation. This can be seen in Zwingli's debate on the Eucharist, which had a forerunner in a treatise from the Dutch humanist Cornelius Hoenius (Hoen, died 1524) (→ Media Link #an) that was published as a letter. The circle of humanists around Erasmus responded to that letter so that, finally, Luther's scholarly colleague, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1480–1541) (→ Media Link #ao), could give his important lecture on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in Wittenberg. When Zwingli again defended his interpretation in a letter to Matthäus Alber (1495–1570) (→ Media Link #ap), a humanist from Reutlingen who tended towards the upper German Reformation, and Zwingli turned against the Wittenberg emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Luther himself was compelled to make a public protest. The controversy was of considerable political and theological importance: it clarified not only fundamental principles of an understanding of the sacrament and Christology, but also led to a more precise definition of the teachings in this regard within the gradually emerging confessional camps. This is also true of the contacts that were made in preparation for the Diet of Augsburg and their communicative transmission to the groups of reformers not actually taking part in the Diet.

▲ 8

While the exchange of letters was initially reserved to the correspondents who knew each other personally, it could also replace personal acquaintance, extending the network and adding to the good reputation that could result from being a member of the network in question. In this way, references for students and friends of the reformers but also applications for posts and requests were dealt with or passed on effectively. The Reformation networks, therefore, promoted the construction of institutions defined by confession (churches, schools, state laws etc.) and thus the diffusion of specific elements of the Wittenberg, upper German, Geneva or Roman Catholic confessional cultures.

▲ 9

In this way, these networks crossed over from the primarily academic space into that of the institutionalised church elites. They no longer included just professors and those devoted to the formulation of a confession's theology in the academic sphere, but also the academically educated representatives of the ecclesiastical elite, who sought to preserve the office entrusted to them (parish, superintendency, archdeaconry, diocese etc.) for their confession.

▲ 10

In addition, the pressure towards a professionalisation of the confessional ecclesiastical elite grew. The number of members without an academic education (an issue degenerating into a locus of confessional polemics that was often abused within theological controversies) fell. The ever greater level of academic standardisation increased the intersections between the confessional, academic (i.e. those founded in university spheres) networks and those of the ecclesiastical elite. This was also a product of the regular transitions between the teaching and administrative office (Magisterium). Often these dual positions of authority were (as in the early Reformation during the first half of the 16th century) unified in one person anyway. Melancthon still ascribed the Magisterium to the professors of the theological faculty. However, the foundation of consistories with their functions of ecclesiastical administration and supervision of teaching at the latest brought about an institutional intertwining of these networks that in the past had sometimes operated separately.

▲ 11

A particularity of the Protestant networks of scholars towards the end of the 16th century, but above all in the 17th and 18th centuries, were the communicative relationships based on familial ties. On the one hand, a form of "family university" emerged. On the other, the members of Protestant families who did not remain in the university sphere also sought to use the familial network to fulfil the duties of their own positions or to pursue their professional careers more effectively. Good examples of this are the Bidembach family from Tübingen¹² or the Moller family of pastors and scholars from Hamburg.¹³ On the Catholic side, using familial relationships to acquire appointments to important sees or even the papal throne was certainly not unheard of, but of course – unlike the Protestant procedures – it could not be conducted in public.¹⁴ The damage caused to the office by the depravity of the Renaissance papacy and the pressure of public criticism forced the Catholic networks to operate more in the shadows than was customary – or socially possible – for the families of Protestant scholars. In the place of familial relationships came communicative ties based on common territorial origins created by university attendance or bonds that had emerged within the religious orders (see below).

▲ 12

The space in which scholarly Christian networks were constructed was almost always the university or an institution of higher learning (Latin schools, noble's schools, knight academies etc.). Regarding the development of academic networks, one must particularly keep in mind the considerable growth of academic migration in the course of the early modern period compared to the late Middle Ages, but also the differentiation of catchment areas (state universities, regional universities, urban schools, universities or grammar schools with transregional catchment areas). Just as the aristocracy and upper middle-classes developed the so-called Grand Tour as a part of their education befitting their rank, so did studying at a distant university belong to the "educational programme" of a young scholar.¹⁵ In these circumstances networks grew not only due to the medial or personal form of mediation (letters, recommendations from agents of the network already in contact with one another), but – somewhat in contrast to the trend mentioned above – again through personal acquaintances, which emerged through studying at a university or institution of higher learning. Besides the networks that developed between members of various academic disciplines and which were mainly defined by the exchange of specialist information, there now emerged relationships based upon regional origins, which conveyed and shaped linguistic and cultural, but above all confessional identities rather than professional or disciplinary ones.

▲ 13

Humanism – Humanist Sodalities

Many of the above-mentioned characteristics of scholarly, confessional networks are evident in the sphere of late-mediaeval humanism and its further development, commonly referred to as Late Humanism that extended into the early modern period. The concept of "Late Humanism" is, one must admit, contentious in the interdisciplinary discourse.¹⁶

▲ 14

For this reason, one must first mention cultural practices at the end of the Middle Ages as expressed in the correspondence and publications of the circle around Erasmus, Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523) (→ Media Link #as) and Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522) (→ Media Link #at), for example in the so-called "Letters of Obscure Men" (→ Media Link #au) (*Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*), but later also in the various proposals for educational reform that combined confessional intent with the humanist perception of Antiquity.¹⁷

▲ 15

A special form of this humanist scholarship had emerged in the co-called *sodalitates litterariae*, circles for the study of the *studia humaniora*, the late mediaeval middleclass culture of education.¹⁸ These were more or less stably defined circles of correspondents that exchanged letters in irregular intervals. It is disputed whether their members also actually met on a regular basis. Scholars such as Konrad Celtis (1459–1508) (→ Media Link #av), Johannes Reuchlin, Conrad Mutian (1471–1526) (→ Media Link #aw) and Urbanus Rhegius (1489–1541) (→ Media Link #ax), priests such as Johann von Staupitz (1465–1524) (→ Media Link #ay), patricians such as Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530) (→ Media Link #az) and Conrad Peutinger (1465–1547) (→ Media Link #b0), but also nobles such as Ulrich von Hutten and Hartmuth von Cronberg (1488–1549) (→ Media Link #b1), and later charismatic confessional leaders, drew likeminded people around them, primarily through epistolary correspondence, with whom they discussed ecclesiastical, social and political topics. One can also demonstrate the existence of this type of learned circle in the imperial cities among leading female members of the patrician class such as Caritas Pirckheimer (1467–1532) (→ Media Link #b2), but these were few and far between. With regard to their structure but not content, they were the precursors of later Pietist and middleclass emancipatory conventicles and small societies, albeit without their sometimes exclusive understanding of membership.

▲ 16

Celtis founded his circle of friends as a loose, voluntary society with the goal of humanist study.¹⁹ Models were probably the *Academia Platonica*, re-established by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) (→ Media Link #b4) in Florence, and the *Academia Romana* of Pomponio Leto (1428–1497) (→ Media Link #b5) in Rome. The anti-scholastic thrust that characterised the humanist educational initiatives was echoed in this group. The prerequisite for co-option into a sodality were knowledge of ancient languages, a spotless reputation – if possible, confirmed by members of the sodality – and the willingness to participate independently as a humanist in the contemporary academic debates, which admittedly in the 15th century still generally took place outside the university. The external attributes of membership were often the Graecised or Latinised names of the sodalities' members.

Whether and to what extent the sodalities were formally institutionalised is contested. There is proof, however, that some of these communities had presidents and secretaries. Sodalities were created through the free exchange of opinion in their members' correspondence; others were organised locally, but also co-opted members who lived further afield. These could use the hospices financed by the sodalities or other forms of lodging or provisions. The member responsible for this served as *hospes* and organised the *contubernium sodalium* (food and lodging) for the particular section.

▲ 18

In the measure that members of the sodalities went to the universities (institutions that had come into being during the late mediaeval wave of new university foundations in the Holy Roman Empire) the sodalities became part of the academic culture depending on the extent to which the universities incorporated them. Nevertheless, in the 16th century, they still remained partially outside the academic sphere. With increasing support from the state, they transformed into academies of sciences, for example the *sodalitas litteraris Vistulana* founded by Celtis, which came to be the Polish academy of sciences based in Krakow. Others included the *sodalitas litteraria Hungarorum*, the Hungarian academy of sciences based in Pressburg (Bratislava) and the Danubian academy of sciences *societas Danubiana* based in Vienna. The above-mentioned anti-scholastic thrust allowed the sodalities to act for a time as a medium of Reformation scholarship.²⁰ Nevertheless, the inner split within humanism into pro-Reformation and pro-Roman factions brought the rapid disintegration of some societies, as in the case of the *sodalitas litteraria Rhenania*, whose headquarters changed between Heidelberg, Oppenheim and Mainz.²¹ It joined up with existing middleclass sodalities in Augsburg and Nuremberg. However, these ties also dissolved in the wake of the implementation of the upper German Reformation in the imperial cities of Southern Germany.

▲ 19

Recently, the peculiar links between humanist scholarship and reform-minded Benedictine monasticism have increasingly attracted attention.²² The examples of several Benedictines interested in humanism at the end of the 15th and during the 16th centuries demonstrate how the connection to scholarly circles was possible despite strict enclosure and *stabilitas loci*. There is still no conclusive research on the penetration of humanist scholarship and their forms of communication into the circles of mendicant orders and reformed societies of the 15th and 16th centuries, with the exception of the German variation of the Dutch *devotio moderna* in the form of the "Brethren of the Common Life" and their outstanding representative Gabriel Biel (1418–1495) (→ Media Link #b6).²³

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In regard to the history of universities and education the second half of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century were characterised by the appearance of a socially exclusive class of scholars influenced by (late) humanist norms. Thanks to improved communicative ties (printing with movable types, growing academic mobility) and an extension of the academic fields of activity, humanists – or those who considered themselves to be such – were no longer purely dependent on upper-class, often aristocratic, patronage. This emancipation of scholars also involved their disentanglement from the networks provided by their erstwhile patrons. These scholars sought to preserve the relationship to Classical education that underpinned their identity and – often as a result of this – tried to resist the massive processes of confessionalization. Certainly, the creation of confessional battle lines affected many of the various forms of late humanism. However, they resisted the attempts at confessional homogenisation and will be understood in the following as complementary to the overarching confessionalism. This scholarly culture always contained two dimensions: one connected to literature and aesthetics, the other to social and cultural history. Nonetheless, one cannot doubt the continuity of the humanist scholarly education and the handing down of its central body of knowledge.²⁴ There has been no final verdict, however, on the relationship between late humanism and the complimentary processes of confessionalisation and secularisation shaping the entire society.²⁵ The more recent research on late humanism stresses, on the one hand, the shift in emphasis occurring among the scholarly curricula and in the corpora of knowledge.²⁶ On the other, it points to the development of an exclusive, humanistically educated scholarly estate with specific cultural practices and types of behaviour.²⁷ Unquestioned remained the common Christian basis that also integrated Classical pagan elements and that was shared by all, regardless of any confessional divisions. This was an important social and cultural consequence of humanism, Reformation and the emergence of confessional divisions. Connected to this, researchers have long stressed that the practical and political variations of late humanism contributed significantly to overcoming the confessional age's inclination to religious and state crises.²⁸

Around the turn of the 16th century, rulers began subjecting their institutions of higher education to humanist reforms. The aim was to train an academic and professional elite, introduce ecclesiastical reforms and, after the Reformation, to create confessional homogeneity. To achieve this, the rulers began in the late 1520s to implement the concepts of pedagogical reform already proposed by the older generation of humanists around 1500. Terms such as educational expansion and diffusion and the diversification of educational institutions describe the results of these reform processes well. Here, the intention was that the institutions of higher learning serve as instruments of governmental confessionalisation in the various territories that sponsored them. Certainly, one goal was to legitimize elite formation in the territories and cities, but another was to create dogmatic uniformity and influence the moral and ethical development of the subjects. Despite the confessional and institutional variations in the university systems and practices of scholarship, these shared basic patterns in the 16th and 17th centuries. The late humanist culture of scholarship around 1600 – with its literary production, its personnel and institutional networks, its specific forms of communication and the diverse paths of migration for professors and students – should be understood as a "complementary culture" to the confessionalized society. Late humanism is therefore less an antithesis to the dominance of the confessional in the period, but rather a complementary cultural practice that reveals the limits of confessionalization.

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The *alba amicorum* ("books of friendship") are a specific medium which may not prove membership of scholarly networks, but which do make membership extremely likely when supported by additional secondary sources. In these albums, teachers recorded notes and comments for the migrating students, while their fellow students wrote down erudite verses in Latin and – less often – Greek or Hebrew, sometimes adding their coats of arms, as a form of souvenir. Only recently have these "books" achieved a prominent place in the research on ephemeral writings.²⁹ Entries in the *alba amicorum* may illuminate both academic migration and the connection to particular junctions of the dissemination of academic knowledge that are only mentioned in later correspondence.³⁰

▲ 23

Religious Orders – Religious Communities

In the context of the Christian networks presented here, the establishment of religious orders was at first a phenomenon that underwent developments that were characteristic for each confession. At first, the Reformation critique had renounced as typically Roman Catholic the development of monasticism in all its diversity from the earliest period of Christianity and in particular in the Middle Ages. However, in the course of Catholic confessionalization, orders from precisely these traditions, but also new ones that were more attuned to the specific demands of the age of the religious schism, turned into highly effective instruments of confessional homogenisation.³¹ The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had only allowed the establishment of new religious orders and congregations that adopted already existing and approved rules of communal life. As a result, one can only identify the specific variations of new foundations, which must above all be understood as a reaction to the challenges of the times, through a careful comparison of their concrete practices (*consuetudines*, religious rules, guides on behaviour and procedures, manuals of confession).

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Due to the increasing internationalisation and the actual size of the newly created religious orders or of those older ones that transformed themselves under the conditions of confessionalisation, one cannot simply equate the religious orders with a Christian network. Rather, within the orders specific networks developed. They had numerous communicative benefits:

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- the use of codes and semantics specific to the order;
- stable communicative ties guaranteed by the order's institutions;
- safety and protection of communication due to the Exemption, i.e. the jurisdictional subordination directly to the pope, circumventing the authority of the bishops;
- specific forms of communication (*mutuum colloquium fratrum*, i.e. a speech behaviour analogous to the intimate form of modern talking therapies);
- secure communicative spaces clearly separated from secular and ecclesiastical spheres.

Certainly, the Society of Jesus³² founded on 15 August 1534 by a circle of friends around Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) (→ Media Link #b7) provides an excellent example of a confessional network. However, it is necessary to emphasise that certain aspects of the Jesuits' development were entirely untypical. The Spanish religious order took on the classic monastic vows – poverty, celibacy and obedience. In addition, its members undertook a fourth vow of special obedience to the pope. Besides the considerable emphasis placed on education, the defining attributes of the *Societas Jesu* were its commitment to Catholic confessionalisation (→ Media Link #b8), the creation of a homogenous Catholic confessional culture and its mission (→ Media Link #b9) in not only Central and Latin America but also the Far East. The word "Jesuits" was first used as a derogatory term, but later was taken on by the order itself.

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There is not enough space here to go into the history of the order, which is distinct above all due to its suppression by the pope (→ Media Link #ba) who in 1733 yielded to pressure from the absolutist monarchs and the order's restoration in 1814. Nevertheless, the suppression of the order resulted from one of its distinguishing characteristics: the formation of scarcely visible, but highly effective networks that penetrated the ecclesiastical and state elites. Initially, these shared the attributes of the scholarly networks discussed above. However, due to the circumstances of its foundation, from the very beginning Ignatius gave the order a military structure that created hierarchical relationships and structures of communication. In a high-on dialectical inversion of this founding idea, however, opposing vertical relationships developed either as an alternative or a complement to these horizontal hierarchies, overcoming the constraints of horizontal communicative relationships.

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The primarily vertical communicative links developed within the order parallel to one another. Typically, relationships were based less on common regional origins or academic contacts than on training together during the novitiate and the ties developed through the medium of the *exercitia spiritualia*. This is a collection of meditative techniques of self-analysis and devotional reflection. Normally they were led by a director of Exercises, to whom one developed a close personal relationship, as one did to the other participants of a particular Exercise. This had a direct impact on the further communication within the order.

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Although certain institutions of the order sought to oppose these structures, they were a central element of Jesuit culture and probably also contributed to the modernising drive of increasing the efficiency of the missionaries and the strategies of confessionalisation. Clearly, the communicative value of these inner-congregational networks for the Jesuits and the new orders that followed them resulted from the tension between absolute obedience (and the strict hierarchy based on this) and considerable personal flexibility (Ignatian: "indifference"). These circumstances soon provoked the accusation of particular intransigence and allowed the Jesuits to become the ideal type of the feared but secretly admired "power in the shadows", both within the Roman Catholic Church and in Protestant polemics.³³ This, however, did not prevent the swift spread and worldwide activity of the Society of Jesus.

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Again, the advantages from communication via networks may have been the prerequisite for this. On the one hand, the Jesuits gave the impression – above all via its sermons and pastoral care, including the confession – to the outside world that they were being controlled by a centre. The casuistry specially developed for this purpose (which in the ad-measurements of penance for sins also took mitigating circumstances into account) quickly led to a greater acceptance, not least among the social elite up to and including royal houses. In this way, the Jesuits also wielded some political influence.

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Internally, the partitioning of responsibility and learning prevented a too great accumulation of power and knowledge in one person. These could only be accumulated and shared through the communicative ties of clandestine networks. It is natural for such networks that while their effects are visible; their relationship to the centre of the religious order is very difficult to research. The order's correspondence, the minutes of chapter and synod meetings, petitions to the superior-general in Rome etc. provide impressions, but there has not yet been a systematic study of this.

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Through their significant contribution to the creation of a confessionally homogenous system of education, the Jesuits took on many of the structures of classical educational networks, transforming them according to the specific conditions of the order.³⁴ Here, the institutions of higher learning founded in the German-speaking countries by the Jesuits or in order to promote Catholic confessionalisation played an important role: Baden-Baden, Bamberg, Dillingen, Erfurt, Feldkirch, Graz, Ingolstadt, Innsbruck, Landshut, Molsheim, Münster, Olmütz, Osnabrück, Paderborn, Passau, St. Blasien, Vienna.

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Although the agents of Jesuit networks appear to have been primarily members of the order, one must assume that people from outside were at least sometimes included, not least due to their social status or their position of leadership or as an intermediary. One cannot explain the considerable success of Catholic confessionalisation, for example in Poland, in any other way.

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No less varied than the members of the congregational networks were the subjects of their communication. One can summarise the dimensions of their communicative exchange, whose functional classifications, however, should not be understood too restrictively. Mutual interferences and amalgamations must also be taken into account:

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discussions on the creation, implementation and preservation of confessional homogeneity;
discussions of contents taught by catechism and missionaries;
the accumulation of knowledge regarding the various areas in which the order was active;
political, social, cultural and economic knowledge;
strategic knowledge within the structure of the order that complemented or offered an alternative to the "official" knowledge that was distributed hierarchically;
strategic knowledge to maintain the order's structures in the period of suppression.

The Jesuit networks may have adopted the last aspect, in particular, from the networks of dissidents and marginalised groups among mainstream Christianity described below.

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This is particularly true for the networks of former Jesuits which emerged following the suppression of the order in 1767, whose activities were largely covert and illegal. They performed the roles of the dissident and non-conformist networks discussed below against the background of advancing modernity and secularisation in the Age of Enlightenment.³⁵

▲ 36

A by-product of this type of network is the – sometimes uncritical – adoption of primarily secular codes, semantics and patterns of behaviour for strategic considerations. For example, the perception of a growing distance between the Jesuit networks and the original ideas behind them is evident in the criticisms of representatives of the curia, which undoubtedly contain some polemical exaggeration, of Jesuit profit seeking in the colonial missions of Paraguay and of the Jesuit participation in the development of the Chinese unitary state by passing on mathematical and astronomical knowledge. The longer the latter went on, the less it served the missionary task and the more it became part of the legitimating of the emperor's rule while also causing a mutual dependency, which no longer seemed compatible with the actual task of the mission. In the case of the Jesuit reductions in Latin America (→ Media Link #bb), it quickly became clear how far economic exploitation had pushed aside the original idea of a sensitive enculturation of Christianity that was, above all, free of violence.³⁶ Interestingly, networks within the order stabilised the existing situation, but also increasingly viewed it critically. The more, however, the attempt at internal reform failed, the greater was the development of communicative relationships across the boundaries of orders, social estates (the clergy) and sometimes even confessions.

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This description of the Jesuit networks is also relevant in more or less the same way for other, in some cases much

later religious orders and congregations – for example, those of the clerks regular (the Legion of Christ [LC]), the congregations of clerics (*Kalasantiner* [COP], the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate [OMI], the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales [OSFS], the Oratorians [CO], the Salesians of Don Boscos [SDB], the Salvatorians [SDS], the Redemptorists [in the past CSSR, now CSFR], the Divine Word Missionaries [SVD], the Comboni missionaries) – and lay orders (brotherhoods), the apostolic orders of women (Franciscan sisters) and the tertiaries within, in particular, the mendicant orders.

▲ 38

Nonconformists – Dissidents

The greater the homogenising pressure on the members of the community in this period of confessionalisation, the more often Christian networks developed that allowed nonconformist and dissident groups to survive within the confessionally homogenous societies, preserving and – in some cases – improving their status. Those groupings that deviated from the expected or demanded Orthopraxy (nonconformists) or those circles which for different reasons made theologically deviant statements (dissidents) felt themselves particularly compelled to escape the constantly increasing pressure to homogenise. The Reformation in its various specific forms had also often emerged from the effects of successful communication within individual deviant or marginalised networks. Therefore, it was only natural for the increasingly diffuse Protestant movement that other groups or individuals which were themselves in dissent with or opposed to the new mainstream of confessional culture should create their own networks. This pluralism of opinion, which already characterised the early Reformation (for example in the Wittenberg movement), was expressed in specific, often clandestine, networks in the following centuries. These – depending on the prevailing level of religious tolerance – also worked publically as independent organisations and institutions. There is not, however, enough space here to give an overview of all the groups which Luther accused of *Schwärmerei* (spiritualists, enthusiasts, non-conformists, radical dissenters).

▲ 39

The early modern dissenters and nonconformists share the fact that they first emerged in the Latin Church and the confessional spaces that resulted from the schism. Their dissent was present in their theological thought or the resulting religious practices and lifestyles. Some of the charismatic leaders and elites of these dissident groups came from the often academically educated circles of earlier followers of the Reformation (Balthasar Hubmaier (1485–1528) (→ Media Link #bc), Thomas Müntzer (1489–1525) (→ Media Link #bd), Kaspar Schwenckfeld (1489–1561) (→ Media Link #be) and others).³⁷ However, many also came from lower social strata which opposed Reformation education and professionalisation and understood themselves to be "new lay people"³⁸ (Karlstadt, Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) (→ Media Link #bf), Hans Hut (1490–1527) (→ Media Link #bg),³⁹ the Münster Anabaptists⁴⁰ (→ Media Link #bh) etc.). The networks around or created by them had initially had the central goal of collecting their deviating ideas and of solidifying, defending and transmitting their differences. This only occasionally involved scholarly criticism or the elaboration of theory resulting from it. On the whole, they simply postulated that they were different and justified this apologetically on the basis of Reformation principles (for example, those of *sola scriptura*, the emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, the negation of certain hermeneutic principles – in particular those of the Wittenberg Reformation etc.). During the course of the dissemination of the dissented issues to a broader audience, the theoretical issues gave way to concrete instructions regarding modes of behaviour of daily piety and life (attending services and the practices of the confession, infant baptism, the Eucharist (→ Media Link #bi) etc.). Processes of exchange within the dissident networks continued to promote and justify the creation of religious identity. Finally, and one should not underestimate this, these networks also allowed the communication of strategic information about their adversaries that was essential for the group's survival. In addition to facts or strategic disinformation, this included news about refuge areas, negotiating strategies, the progress and outcome of trials and the individuals involved in these trials.⁴¹

▲ 40

In the early modern societies striving towards confessional homogeneity, religious tolerance emerged only late.⁴² In most cases, it were nonconformist groups who demanded it because they wanted acceptance for their different teachings and way of life (→ Media Link #bj).⁴³ The degree to which tolerance was indeed granted or relocated in the wake of migration processes within Europe – and, from the 17th century, increasingly "exported" to non-European colonies and territories – determined the possibilities for these groups to escape the pressure to conform and instead develop their own forms of organisation and religious institutions. One of the effects of the connected process of identity building was that dissent became inflated and radicalised through this emancipation. Where the burden of defending religious dissent did not exist (for example in the tolerant territories of North America), the dissent was disassociated from its

original "Sitz im Leben", the apologetic discourse, and – now isolated – became an identifying attribute that was transferred to other constellations and conditions, for example in the English colonies. The direct connections between life and teaching could no longer be maintained and had to be reconstructed within the group's discourse on identity. This was necessarily connected to transformations in the groups' justifications of the content of their communication and its implementation in practical life. Here, non-conformism and dissidence took on decisively new functions, for example marking ethnic and territorial connections, stabilising ethno-cultural milieus etc.

▲ 41

The medium of communicative exchange is, in addition to the oral tradition, the written word (correspondence). With the further development of the technology, printed works in the form of teaching materials (catechisms, treatises), collections of sermons (→ Media Link #bl) and speeches, and other ephemeral writings acquired importance for communicating within the network. This had the – not always unintentional – result that the networks and the topics they communicated about became visible to different publics. Even when they were originally intended for internal use, many printed materials were read elsewhere and employed for reciprocal delineation and self-definition.

▲ 42

Even if these processes initially began within Protestantism, the confessional culture of Roman Catholicism was not unaffected. Influenced by its international sphere of activity – a phenomenon which for Protestantism only started to emerge in the 18th century with the missions of Pietistic and radical dissident groups – and the increasingly diverse spaces of confessional cultural work, the confessional homogeneity of Roman Catholicism which had still been postulated at the Council of Trent broke apart. Already at the Council of Trent, there had been highly divergent opinions on the elementary questions regarding the teaching of grace and justification, and the ecclesiology and devotional practices based upon it. Over time, dissident and nonconformist Roman Catholic networks increasingly developed because of this. Even if the centrally directed practices surrounding the cult were often accepted as a common external framework – or if social pressure for external homogeneity made every manifestation of dissent impossible – networks, primarily of an academic nature, developed which reflected critically upon the theological content of the Roman denomination (Trent – *professio fidei tridentina*) and the way of living based on it. These criticisms were influenced by the contact with other cultures and ways of living which challenged Rome's uncritical Eurocentric perspective. The religious orders and their missions contributed to this significantly (the Chinese rite controversy, Jesuit reductions).

▲ 43

Jansenism

A further example of the formation of inner-Catholic dissident networks is "Jansenism", which combined a specific understanding of the teachings of St. Augustine with concrete demands regarding the national church. It was a movement within the Roman Catholic Church of the 17th and 18th centuries named after the Bishop of Ypres, Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638) (→ Media Link #bo). Church doctrine accused several Jansenist tenets of heresy. The Jansenist's close ties to the parliamentary opposition to Louis XIV (1638–1715) (→ Media Link #bp) were of considerable importance for this – initially scholarly – network that emerged from a reassessment of the Augustinian teaching on grace.

▲ 44

Jansen's treatise *Augustinus* (→ Media Link #bq) – written long before his ascension to the episcopacy, but only published after his death – is an attempt to refute the Jesuit interpretation of the Bible, which he saw as semi-Pelagian. To achieve this, the Dutch scholar turned to the original writings of St. Augustine and his thoughts about the original sin of mankind and men's salvation through God's grace alone. At the same time, Jansen sought to return to an authentic Catholicism.

▲ 45

Under the leadership of Luis de Molina SJ (1535–1600) (→ Media Link #br), the Jesuits attacked Jansen's interpretation. In turn, he criticised both Molinism and Casuistry, the Jesuits' Probabilism and the Roman perception of their elite status and the arrogance of the curial and Jesuit leadership. The French cardinal and interior minister, Armand-Jean du Plessis de Richelieu (1585–1642) (→ Media Link #bs), intervened in the conflict in favour of the Society of Jesus in 1624. On the one hand, this revealed the Jesuits' close connections to the French court, but – after the suppression of the Jesuits – also those of the Jansenist network, which had played a major role in the Jesuits' expulsion. However,

when the Jansenists attacked Cardinal Richelieu during the 30 Years War, due to his alliance with the Protestants against the Catholic Habsburgs, they became his enemies.

▲ 46

The centre of the Jansenist network of resistance was the convent of Port-Royal, which originally had close ties to the French king. Jansen found support among the French bishops, but also from the philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) (→ Media Link #bt).

▲ 47

Pope Pius V (1504–1572, pontificate: 1566–1572) (→ Media Link #bu) condemned the teachings of Michel de Bay (Baius, 1513–1589) (→ Media Link #bv), an intellectual precursor of Cornelius Jansen, in the bull *Ex omnibus afflictionibus* on 1 October 1567.⁴⁴ Other papal bulls in 1643 and 1653 intensified the conflict between Rome and the French Jansenists. From 1680, the pressure on the inner-Catholic dissidents increased: the king had the convent of Port-Royal destroyed and the Jansenists were systematically persecuted. Some could escape to Brussels, for example Pasquier Quesnel (1634–1719) (→ Media Link #bw), who, however, was arrested there in 1703. The bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius* of 1713 contrasted 101 propositions of Quesnel's thought with the Roman, and thus canonical, position and condemned again the members of the dissident movement as renegades from the true faith. This gave Louis XIV a powerful tool which promoted the desired loyalty to Rome, while also encouraging a mood of opposition among the Jansenists for generations to come. Despite its relatively short zenith, Jansenism had an enduring impact on French literature. The Jansenist image of man and the teaching of grace based upon it continued to attract supporters in later centuries and became entwined with the early manifestations of French Gallicanism. The Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands owes the origins of its independence from Rome to the debate on Jansenism.

▲ 48

Conclusion

An examination of the early modern period suggests the following theses on the Christian networks which, however, require verification through further studies: at first, in the late Middle Ages, the networks which as yet connected rather a small number of people, were created by correspondence and personal relationships focused on a particular topic. Social, cultural, political and economic change and the development of the available means of communication (for example, improvements to printing technology and other methods of communicating across long distances) caused them to become boundary-spanning communicative spheres defined less and less by space, estate, ethnicity, politics or confession. The analysis of current problems and possible solutions replaced the emphasis on particular topics. The networks were not made up of the sum of the members' knowledge and their ability to pass it on. Rather, they were formed from the effects intrinsic to their systems and structures resulting from the emergence of technical and professional elites.

▲ 49

Where the early modern Christian networks contributed to the secularisation of a largely Christian context, they lost their decidedly Christian character. However, one can also observe that despite the secularisation of the Enlightenment they did not disappear, but rather underwent an Enlightened, secularising transformation. Even in times of marginalisation and supersession of Christian thought, they retained important functions and developed under the conditions of modernity as clandestine networks that were analogous to the early networks of persecuted dissidents and nonconformists.

▲ 50

In addition to work on neglected sources, in particular those of the modern period, future research on networks and Christianity must, above all, reconstruct the communicative relationships that cannot be found in the classical media. Here, the content transferred by the media is less interesting than the possible constellation of people, positions, common ideas, spaces and social facilitation. An urgent task of future research is to develop suitable methodologies for this.

▲ 51

Appendix

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1. ^ In the social sciences, the study of networks has a long tradition. For an introduction, see Pappi, *Soziale Netzwerke* 2001; on the current state of research, see, *Netzwerkanalyse* 2010. For the historical research, see the contributions in the internet forums H-Soz-u-Kult (www.hsozkult.de) and H-Net (www.h-net.org). The state of Rhineland-Palatinate is funding the "cluster of excellence" on "Social Dependencies and Social Networks", which has a strong historical component, at the universities of Mainz and Trier (<http://www.netzwerk-exzellenz.uni-trier.de>) [04.05.2011].
2. ^ See the sociological definition of networks in White, *Identity* 2008.
3. ^ Beutel, *Nutzen und Nachteil* 1997.
4. ^ Koselleck, *Einleitung* 1997, p. XV.
5. ^ Hasse, *Wittenberger Freunde* 1996; Kruse, *Universitätstheologie* 2002; Scheible, *Melanchthon* 1997.
6. ^ Locher, *Die Zwinglische Reformation* 1979; Heinrich Bullinger's correspondence has not yet been investigated for possible constellations of networks due to, amongst other reasons, its extent. However, a good example is Kirby, *The Zurich Connection* 2007.
7. ^ For Calvin's intensive European network ties, see Opitz, *Calvin* 2009; Selderhuis, *John Calvin* 2009; an analysis of Theodor Beza's considerable correspondence does not yet exist.
8. ^ On the progress of the edition of Martin Bucer's Europe-wide correspondence, see Neuhaus, *Erlanger Editionen* 2009; on his biography, see Greschat, *Martin Bucer* 2009; on Sturm see the recent Arnold, *Johannes Sturm* 2009.
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10. ^ On this in general, see Maissen / Walther, *Funktionen des Humanismus* 2006.
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12. ^ Kümmerle, *Luthertum* 2008; Asche, *Landesuniversitäten* 1998; Euler, *Entstehung* 1970.
13. ^ Prühlen, *Heinrich Moller* 2007.
14. ^ See, for example, Emich, *Bürokratie* 2001; Verstegen, *Patronage* 2007.
15. ^ Asche, "Peregrinatio academica" 2005.
16. ^ Friedrich, "Späthumanismus" 2001; Asche, *Kontinuität des Humanismus* 2008.
17. ^ Grane / Schindler / Wriedt, *Auctoritas Patrum* 1993/1997; Frank / Leinkauf / Wriedt, *Patristik* 2006.
18. ^ Hummel, *Humanistische Sodalitäten* 1940; Lutz, *Sodalitäten* 1984; Klingenstein / Lutz / Stourzh, *Studien* 1987; Smolinsky, *Kirchenreform und Reformation* 2005.
19. ^ Klaniczay, *Celtis* 1987; Aschbach, *Wanderjahre* 1869.
20. ^ This was the case for the Sodalitas Staupitziana in Nuremberg (although we have only one proof by Christoph Scheurl [1481–1542] of its existence). Indications of this are in Scheurl's introduction to his German translation of Johann von Staupitz: *Libellus de executione aeterna praedestinationis*, edited by Lothar Graf zu Dohna et al., Berlin 1979, p. 23f.; see also Christoph Scheurl's *Briefbuch: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Reformation und ihrer Zeit*, published by Franz Freiherrn von Soden et al., Aalen 1962, vol. 2, p. 42f. Nr. 159; cf. Wriedt, Art. "Scheuerl" 1996; Remling, *Bruderschaften* 1986.
21. ^ Jungkenn, *Johann von Dalberg* 1975.
22. ^ Machilek, *Klosterhumanismus* 1977. More detailed is the recent Müller, *Habit und Habitus* 2006.
23. ^ Although, at the same time, he cannot be counted as a humanist, despite knowing and implementing many of their ideas. See Faix, *Gabriel Biel* 1999; Köpf / Lorenz, *Gabriel Biel* 1998.
24. ^ Kaegi, *Humanistische Kontinuität* 1954.
25. ^ Walther, *Humanismus* 2000; Wolf, *Humanismus* 2006.
26. ^ Kühlmann, *Gelehrtenrepublik* 1982; Oestreich, *Antiker Geist* 1989.
27. ^ Füssel, *Gelehrtenkultur* 2006; idem: *Akademische Lebenswelt* 2007.
28. ^ Oestreich, *Antike Literatur* 1980.
29. ^ See the comprehensive catalogue of such ephemeral writings by Garber, *Handbuch* 2009.
30. ^ Herzog August d. J., *Stammbuch* 1979; Keil / Keil, *Stammbücher* 1893; Blankenburg / Lometsch, *Denkmal* 1969; Kurras, *Gedenken* 1987; Göhmann-Lehmann, *Erinnerungskultur* 1994; Nail, *Marburger Studenten* 1994; Steinhilber, *Tugend* 1995; Taegert, *Edler Schatz* 1995; Brednich, *Denkmale* 1997; Brod, *Stammbuch* 1997; Hasse, *Bucheintragungen* 2000; Heß, *Literatur* 2002; Schillmeit, *Stammbuch des Benedict Christian Avenarius* 2002; *Der Freundschaft Denkmal* 1998; Schnabel, *Stammbuch* 2003; Schäfer, *Stammbuch* 2008; *Stammbuch des Johann Bernhard Wilhelm Sternberger* 2008; Rasche, *Cornelius relegatus* 2008.
31. ^ An overview can be found in Jürgensmeier / Schwerdtfeger, *Orden und Klöster* 2005–2007.
32. ^ On the following, see O'Malley, *Jesuits* 1993; idem et al., *The Jesuits* 2000.
33. ^ On this, see Kaufmann, *Konfession und Kultur* 2006; Lichy, *Jesuiten als Zankapfel* 2011 [forthcoming].
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36. ^ Reinhard, *Gelenkter Kulturwandel* 1976; Caraman, *Paradies* 1979; Krauss / Täubl, *Mission und Entwicklung* 1979; Pietschmann, *Staat* 1980, Kohlhepp, *Jesuitische Guaraní-Reduktionen* 1983; Hartmann, *Jesuitenstaat* 1994.
 37. ^ There are overviews in Williams, *Radical Reformation* 1992; Goertz, *Religiöse Bewegungen* 1993; Vogler, *Wegscheiden* 1994.
 38. ^ Goertz, *Pfaffenhaß* 1987 emphasises particularly the connection between Mediaeval anticlericalism and the early modern Reformation movement; the comprehensive collection of articles by Dykema / Oberman, *Anticlericalism* 1944 takes a similar line.
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
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
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
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
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- Conrad Peutinger (1465–1547) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/56776766>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118740652>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118740652.html>)

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- Hartmuth von Cronberg (1488–1549) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/5727953>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118829564>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118829564.html>)

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- Caritas Pirckheimer (1467–1532) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/41848634>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118594591>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118594591.html>)

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- Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/120697563>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118532855>)

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- Pomponio Leto (1428–1497) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/61528159>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/100958656>)

Link #b6

- Gabriel Biel (1418–1495) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/19692948>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118510703>)

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Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556)

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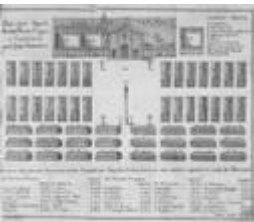
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- Suppression of the Society of Jesus (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/european-media/european-media-events/christine-vogel-suppression-of-the-society-of-jesus-1758-1773>)

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- Kaspar Schwenckfeld (1489–1561) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/47554862>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118612190>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118612190.html>)

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- Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/54144350>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118512579>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118512579.html>)

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- Hans Hut (1490–1527) VIAF  <http://viaf.org/viaf/54086076> DNB  <http://d-nb.info/gnd/123955777> ADB/NDB  <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd123955777.html>

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


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Link #bl

- Predigt (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/europaeische-medien/medien-des-religioesen-transfers/sabine-holtz-predigt>)

Link #bo

- Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638) VIAF  <http://viaf.org/viaf/9881347> DNB  <http://d-nb.info/gnd/118775952> ADB/NDB  <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118775952.html>

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- Armand-Jean du Plessis de Richelieu (1585–1642) VIAF  <http://viaf.org/viaf/12314392> DNB  <http://d-nb.info/gnd/118600354>

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- Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) VIAF  <http://viaf.org/viaf/29538862> DNB  <http://d-nb.info/gnd/118591843>

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- Pope Pius V (1504–1572, pontificate: 1566–1572) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/89607114>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118792423>)

Link #bv

- Michel de Bay (Baius, 1513–1589) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/27053334>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118651986>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118651986.html>)

Link #bw

- Pasquier Quesnel (1634–1719) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/2479682>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/119143801>)

