



Diversity, Differences, and Divergence: Religion as a Criterion of Difference in the Empire in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century

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The article examines the extent to which religious diversity was possible in the Roman-German Empire at the time of Sigismund. With a look back to the fourteenth century, it considers groups and practices that deviated from Church doctrine to varying degrees and in different ways: the Waldensians and the so-called “German Hussites” as heterodox Christian groups, the Jews as representatives of a religion that was tolerated but suspected of blasphemous and criminal practices, and people who used superstitious or even allegedly magical practices. The Heidelberg university professor and inquisitor Johannes of Frankfurt is used as a representative of the official position of the Church, whose positions provide a comparative foil. Although other religious doctrines were theoretically not accepted (with the exception of Judaism), it will be shown that the persecution of dissenters depended on infrastructural conditions. It was also crucial whether the authorities and the population were willing to take note of deviations and classify them as heretical. At times, the specific labels were used in an arbitrary manner. Particularly in the case of superstitious practices, the questions that arose were often addressed through open processes of negotiation.

Keywords: Waldensians, Hussitism, superstition, Jews, John of Frankfurt

Recogitabo omnes annos meos in amaritudine vite mee (Is. 38, 15). With these words of the Jewish king Hezekiah, the Heidelberg professor of divinity John Lagenator from Dieburg, better known as John of Frankfurt (ca. 1380–1440), began (after a dedicatory preface) his “*meditatio devota*” in 1409. In this devotional text, he reflected on the *miserabilis ingressus*, the *lamentabilis progressus*, and the *dolorosus egressus* of his life.¹ John chose a sentence often quoted in the literature on preaching and confession to reflect on his sinful life in light of the impending judgement but also of his hope in God’s grace. I have deliberately placed the “*meditatio devota*” at the beginning of my remarks, because we usually know

¹ Johannes von Frankfurt, “*Meditatio devota*,” 2. Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 138 is skeptical about the informative value of this allegedly topical text. I do not share these doubts.

John of Frankfurt better in a different role: not as a man aware of his sins and pondering his own need for redemption, but as an inquisitor.² The tension between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, between conform piety, in line with the doctrines, and non-conform piety, is thus embodied by one person. This leads us into the center of our topic: Late-medieval religion examined from the point of view of diversity.

General Remarks

The contributors to this volume were asked to focus on diversity as a concept, specifically as a “system of differentiations.”³ Understood in this way, diversity is, according to Florin, Gutsche, and Krentz, “socially and culturally constructed” and thus “subject to historical change.”⁴ In general, it can be assumed that there is a broad reservoir of possible criteria of difference and that it is subject to historical change which and how much significance is assigned to which criterion.⁵ By developing this assumption further, one can ask in general how diversity is dealt with and which particular forms of diversity are accepted in political, religious, and social terms. It can also be assumed that the acceptance of diversity is (partly) negotiated and that diversity can influence political, social, and religious negotiation processes.⁶ However, in premodern times, not all participants were able to influence this process to the same extent, and thus it has to be asked whether and to what extent the idea of negotiation works.

When attempting to apply these general considerations to the subject of religion, I started from a premise and two questions.

Religious affiliation in general and the specific dogmatic form of faith in particular were unquestionably criteria of difference at a time when the legal and social status of a person in the area of Latin Christendom depended on his or her affiliation with the Catholic Church. One need merely think of the special legal status of the Jewish population or the categorization of heresy as “*crimen laesae maiestatis*.” These categories of difference were based on normative

2 In 1425, John of Frankfurt was engaged in the trials against the so-called “German Hussites” John Drändorf and his servant Martin Borchard in Heidelberg as well as Peter Turnau in Udenheim. On this and on John’s career as inquisitor cf. Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 149 f.; Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 141 f.; Städt, *Papst Martin V.*, 205 f.

3 Florin et al., “Diversity,” 9, 11, 26.

4 Ibid., 26.

5 Ibid., 11.

6 Julia Burkhardt, Concept paper for the conference “*Diversitas Sigismundi*.”

ideas; they were therefore not arbitrarily negotiable. The non-negotiability of central religious criteria of difference concerns the core of difference, the essential differentness between the Christian and Jewish religions, but also dogmatic differences, e.g. between Catholics and Waldensians or Hussites, once certain divergent dogmatic statements had been established as the respective *propria* in a conflictual process. Within Christianity, orthodoxy and heterodoxy are separated by the readiness to recognize the doctrines of the Church and by engaging in or refraining from religious or superstitious practices.

However, it is necessary to ask about the scope for negotiation when dealing with religious difference. Was there any readiness to coexist and live with differentness if the difference was to be maintained? Was it possible to draw the theoretically given boundaries clearly in practice? Was there any willingness to ascribe or not ascribe the attribute of difference or deviation to specific persons? It should also be noted that it was not exclusively the majority that categorized a minority as deviant. In fact, we can also expect that minorities deliberately differentiated themselves from the majority in their internal communication without necessarily staging this differentiation externally. The forementioned three aspects do not affect the criteria of difference *per se*, but they draw attention to the possibility and the will of the participants to apply them, as well as to the scope for interpretation while applying them.

Negotiation processes also have to be examined from the perspective of the question as to where the fundamental boundaries of what was tolerable at the margins of religious practice were redefined. Here it was necessary to focus on grey zones between religion, superstition, and magic and to inculcate and amplify existing classifications and norms.

In view of space limitations, I cannot consider all possible varieties of religious practices, spiritual forms of expression, and theological controversies in the discussion below. I concentrate more narrowly on questions that had political implications, because the issue of how to deal with diversity and divergence is also connected to governance in the time of king Sigismund. For this reason, I deal with the ways in which the heresies of the Waldensians and the Hussites were dealt with. The treatment of the Jewish minority and the issue of superstition will only be briefly touched upon. My considerations will be limited to the German part of the Empire, not including Hungary or Bohemia. Occasional retrospectives to the fourteenth century will be indispensable for understanding. Conform piety, which, when viewed in terms of private devotion, did not have a direct political impact, will only be touched upon for comparative purposes. Considering the abundance

of possible aspects and wishing not to proceed too cursorily or arbitrarily, I will tie my comments on Catholic positions and practices back to the aforementioned John of Frankfurt. John, a scholastically influenced theologian who also made contributions to the theology of piety with his “*meditatio devota*,” was of course only one voice among many, but his view may be meaningful precisely because of its averageness.

Disguised Differences: The Heterodoxy of the Waldensians

We begin with the diversity constellation that was at times the most inconspicuous, namely the “informal coexistence”⁷ between Waldensians and Catholics. It lasted for up to 200 years. Despite sporadic regional persecution, Waldensian communities survived during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and possibly beyond in the German part of the empire,⁸ whereas the Waldensians in Bohemia and Moravia were subjected to more consistent persecution.⁹ It was not until the persecutions of the 1390s that the German Waldensians were decisively weakened and decimated.¹⁰ Researchers have investigated the reasons behind their ability to survive for such a comparatively long period of time. It was argued, on the one hand, that the Waldensians did not distance themselves from the Church in their way of life. They received the sacraments of the Church, for example. On the other hand, however, they differed from the Catholics because they rejected the doctrine of purgatory, the veneration of saints and relics, pilgrimages, and sacramentals. They refused to take an oath and denied that killing could be justified. Spiritually, they were committed to lay itinerant preachers, who also took confession. Waldensians defined themselves inwardly as the *künden* (those who knew), thus distinguishing themselves from the Catholics as the *frembden*.¹¹ In the case of Strasbourg, they lived in close

7 Utz Tremp, *Quellen*, 52.

8 Ubl, “Verbrennung” pt. 1, 64–76 on Austria. Cf. also Maleczek, “Ketzerverfolgung,” 19–35, who explicitly refers to the persecution of the Waldensians but implicitly reveals the long existence of Waldensianism in Austria. On the decades-long transmission of heterodox religious teachings in some Brandenburg towns and families despite sporadic persecution cf. Kurze, “Märkische Waldenser,” 458 f., 465 f., 475, 478 f., 498, 500.

9 Soukup, “Waldenser,” 133–46; Ubl, “Verbrennung” pt. 1, 75.

10 Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 141 f., 275–80, 296–98. On the 1360s as the beginning of the oppression of the Waldensians, see Välimäki, *Heresy*, 31.

11 Kurze, “Märkische Waldenser,” 459; Modestin, *Ketzer*, 90, 125–37; Modestin, “Augsburger Waldenserprozess,” 45, 63 f.; Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 137; Soukup, “Waldenser,” 146–55 (with the warning to construct a closed system of Waldensian doctrine). On Välimäki’s thesis that the Waldensians did not reject

proximity to one another and pursued similar trades.¹² They were endogamous and passed on their faith to their children.¹³ Their strivings not to stand out and to network closely with one another were complementary. Above all, the originally distinguishing feature of the Waldensians, the ideal of poverty, had already receded into the background by the thirteenth century, as it had come, in the meantime, to be seen as applying only to the itinerant preachers, and no longer to the simple devout or those who only sympathized with the Waldensians. This made it possible for the Waldensians to lead a lifestyle that outwardly hardly differed from that of their Catholic neighbors.¹⁴ There is evidence of good integration into the urban society in Strasbourg and in Fribourg in the Üchtland region, where there were Waldensians who were poor and Waldensians who were wealthy and well connected.¹⁵ There were also Waldensian families in rural areas with a long Waldensian tradition, even entire “heretic villages” (namely in the Mark Brandenburg).¹⁶ The readiness of Waldensians to renounce their heresy when they were discovered and thus save their own lives without denouncing others¹⁷ is as striking as the apparently effective disguises used by traveling Waldensian preachers, who pretended to be merchants.¹⁸

The Waldensians offer an instructive case study for the topic of diversity in many respects. We begin with the question of whether they actually stood out as diverse, and we continue by asking why they were apparently tolerated over long periods of time despite their doctrinal differences with the Catholic Church. We conclude with the question of the logic and dynamics of persecution, including the problem that the status of a heretic had to be ascribed to individuals (or not).

The answers that have been offered to the first question in the secondary literature are controversial. Generally speaking, the Waldensians’ readiness to

Marian devotion as fundamentally as they were accused of doing and that it was primarily an increase in Marian devotion on the Catholic side that led to the accusation of a lack of devotion, see Välimäki, *Heresy*, 218–21.

12 Modestin, *Ketzler*, 93, 110–18.

13 Kurze, “Märkische Waldenser,” 475, 478 f.; Modestin, *Ketzler*, 90.

14 Modestin, *Ketzler*, 87; Modestin, “Augsburger Waldenserprozess,” 44 f.

15 Modestin, *Ketzler*, 84 f., 93, 96, 108; Modestin, “Strassburger Waldenserprozess,” 191–94; Utz Treppe, “Hexerei,” 116; Utz Treppe, *Häresie*, 282 on similar results in other regions of the empire.

16 Kurze, “Märkische Waldenser,” 475, 479, 498. Cf. Machilek, “Deutsche Hussiten,” 267 with a comparable example from Franconia.

17 Kurze, “Märkische Waldenser,” 456, 459, 478; on the Straßburger mass abjuration see Modestin, *Ketzler*, 13; Modestin, “Straßburger Waldenserprozesse,” 198 f.

18 Utz Treppe, *Quellen*, 53; Modestin, Georg, “Weiträumige Kontakte,” 35 f.; Schneider, “Friedrich Reiser,” 78, 80 f.

dissimulate, their willingness to feign repentance and the assumption of the authorities that they were not particularly dangerous were and are considered important reasons behind their ability to externally adapt to their environment.¹⁹ Karl Ubl, however, has called into question this thesis concerning the Waldensians' alleged tendency to try to “camouflage” themselves. Ubl notes that their refusal to take oaths was a clear factor which set them apart from those around them, thus suggesting that the Waldensians were visible after all. In his opinion, other reasons played a role in the low level and sporadic occurrence of persecution before the 1390s in the Duchy of Austria. First, the rulers and inquisitors lacked comprehensive information about the Waldensians, in part because there was comparatively little written institutional information about Waldensians who had already been discovered. Second, the inquisitors had been given few means of power by the central authority (with the kingdom of Bohemia as a significant exception). Third, the population had little interest in persecuting the Waldensians. There was also reasonable fear that the Waldensians, if threatened or persecuted, might take revenge on inquisitors, apostates, or collaborators. Therefore, Ubl writes pointedly of “tolerance as a result of ignorance in the centers, pragmatic and enforced tolerance on the ground.”²⁰ Even after the beginning of a campaign of persecution in the first half of the 1390s, the city of Strasbourg was more interested in a clandestine mass abjuration than in public heretic trials so as not to gain a reputation as a heretic stronghold. A negative image like that would have jeopardized the city's honor.²¹

As far as I know, historians have not yet offered a clear explanation as to why the comparatively peaceful coexistence between Waldensians and Catholics came to an end in the 1390s. The apostasy of so-called heresiarchs and the disclosure of the names of sect followers probably only partly explain the wave of persecution launched against the Waldensians.²² The persecutions in

19 On the opposite contention that medieval theologians could well regard the Waldensians as dangerous opponents of the State and Church, see Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 306.

20 Ubl, “Verbrennung” pt. 1, 66–68, 72–76 (quotation 76). In the fourteenth century, heresy trials were often still carried out by itinerant inquisitors, who acted partly in agreement with the authorities and partly at their own initiative. A permanent inquisition did not yet exist everywhere. If there was only little institutional memory in the form of a written record about people who had already become conspicuous, heretics could not be consistently convicted and eliminated. Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 296, 298; Utz Tremp, “Einführung,” 14; Modestin, *Ketzer*, 3–10. Nevertheless, there are some references that the inquisitor Peter Zwicker had clues about heretics from documents of the former inquisitor Henry of Olomouc: Välimäki, *Heresy*, 32, 154.

21 Modestin, *Ketzer*, 3, 21; Modestin, “Straßburger Waldenserprozesse,” 191, 201.

22 Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 139, 279. It remains unclear why the heresiarchs renounced their faith. Utz Tremp assumes that it was caused by a “crisis of the Waldensian lay apostolate” leading to a fundamental uncertainty

Sigismund's time, such as the burning of John Grießer in 1411 or the persecution of the Waldensians in Fribourg in 1430, lagged behind the persecutions of the 1390s. While the persecutions in Bern and Fribourg in 1399 were linked by denunciations and the Strasbourg persecution of Waldensians of 1400 was initiated from outside and favored by a phase of good relations between the city council and the bishop, the Fribourg trial of 1430 was fueled by an external factor, namely the fear of the Hussites. Once the trial was set in motion, it could also be instrumentalized to lead neighborhood conflicts.²³ For the witchcraft trials in 1429 and 1437–1442, Georg Modestin and Kathrin Utz Tremp also asserted that Fribourg was pursuing political interests, namely to establish itself as a sovereign in former Tierstein territories.²⁴ Thus it was not only religious fervor but also political will that led to the persecution of the Waldensians. The desire of the ecclesiastical and especially the secular authorities to maintain sovereignty over the meanings and procedures of the campaign of persecution against the Waldensians is also evident in their increasing interference in the conduct of the trials.

The transition from the persecution of Waldensians to the persecution of witches in the Fribourg region also raises questions concerning the actual meanings of “Waldensianism” as a construct, i.e. as a label used to denote (heretical) difference. As Herbert Grundmann has persuasively shown, inquisitors categorized heterodox statements by labeling them with the names of older sects.²⁵ For this, in the fourteenth century, people who were probably Waldensians were labeled Luciferians. Similarly, according to Hermann Haupt, Waldensians in Griesbach and Waldkirchen were labeled Wyclifites in 1410.²⁶ And, of course, it could be useful to label an opponent within the church as Waldensian to bring him under suspicion.²⁷ At the turn of the fifteenth century, the original Waldensian name

of the believers as well as the heresiarchs. On this see Modestin, “Augsburger Waldenserprozess,” 49 and below.

23 Ubl, “Verbrennung” pt. 1 and 2; Modestin, *Ketzer*, 13–16; Modestin, “Straßburger Waldenserprozess,” 194–97, 200 f.; Utz Tremp, *Quellen*; Utz Tremp, “Denunzianten,” 8; Utz Tremp, “Predigt,” 212–14. See also Välimäki, *Heresy*, 242.

24 Utz-Tremp, “Hexerei,” 118 f. with reference to the research of Modestin.

25 Grundmann, “Ketzerverhöre,” 522, 557.

26 Kurze, “Märkische Waldenser,” 458; Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 283–97; Haupt, “Husitische Propaganda,” 246.

27 Välimäki, *Heresy*, 224 ff., 241, 243.

(*vandois*[e]) also took on the meaning of sorcerer or witch because of the equation of *vandois* with heretic per se and the association of heresy with magic.²⁸

However, in the local context, the question of who was to be condemned as a Waldensian was also negotiated on a personal level in front of the Inquisition. In individual cases, Waldensians were able to refute the accusation of heresy.²⁹ The ascriptions made at the time (i.e. the contention that someone was a Waldensian) are not the only uses of the term that may be problematic. As Ubl has shown in the case of John Grießer, there is also an inherent danger in the scholarship of making simplifications and working with classifications that do not stand up to scrutiny. Grießer, who was executed in 1411, was probably not the Hussite he was accused of being. He may have been a Waldensian. But it is also possible that he may simply have been a dissident whose concern was a social one.³⁰

What applies to individuals also applies, under different circumstances, to the Waldensian group in the period under investigation. Their contours began to soften. Long-held biblical positions such as the absolute ban on killing and the consistent refusal to take oaths were abandoned. Some Waldensians moved closer to Marian devotion. Heresiarchs turned to the Catholic Church and even became priests. Lay people may also have begun to perceive the lay apostolate as misguided. From the 1390s onwards, the Waldensians were therefore a group that was at least in a crisis-ridden process of transformation, if not in decline.³¹ Some Waldensians thus may have been amenable to Hussite ideas, when Peter Payne (around 1418–1432) and Friedrich Reiser (from around 1450) made attempts to persuade Waldensians and Hussites to unite and to remodel Waldensian teachings and structures by adopting Hussite elements.³²

28 Utz Treppe, *Häresie*, 152 ff., 353, 443–47. On a lost treatise of Denys the Carthusian titled “Contra artes magicas et errores Waldensium,” see Välimäki, “Heresy,” 147 f.

29 Utz Treppe, “Denunzianten,” 22–27.

30 Ubl, “Verbrennung,” pt. 1, 79.

31 Utz Treppe, “Multum abhorrerem,” 166 f. (citation 166); Modestin, *Ketzler*, 3, 51–53, 120–23, 130, 146; Modestin, “Augsburger Waldenserprozess,” 52 f.

32 The nature and extent of the connections between the Waldensians and Hussitism are disputed, cf. Utz Treppe, *Häresie*, 142 with a summary of the research process. The source situation regarding Friedrich Reiser, an itinerant preacher with Waldensian roots who is said to have endeavored to bring together Waldensians and German Hussites, is extremely problematic, cf. Utz Treppe, “Einführung,” 7–12, 21–25; De Lange, “Friedrich Reiser”; Feuchter, “Frauen.” On his activities: Haupt, “Husitische Propaganda,” 281–285; Utz Treppe, “Einführung,” 15–19; zu Payne see Šmahel, “Peter Payne.”

Feared Difference: The Heresy of the Putative “German Hussites”

Let us now turn to individuals who were labeled “German Hussites” by scholars. Sometimes they were condemned at their own time after having been accused of spreading certain teachings of Jan Hus, but sometimes they were simply put in this category by historians (for instance in the case of the aforementioned John Grießer, as Ubl has shown). They could simply have been one of the people who, like John Drändorf, had dedicated themselves to the *pura[.] paupertas] Christi*³³ or had explicitly Waldensian roots, like Friedrich Reiser, who was executed in 1458. In both cases, a Waldensian influence was mixed with the adoption of Hussite ideas. However, it was also possible that a wealthy priest who was presumably well connected in the city council’s circles, such as the chaplain of the Regensburg council chapel Ulrich Grünsleder, copied Jan Hus’ writings and promoted his ideas.³⁴

The authorities were highly alert to the emergence of actual or supposed Hussites, as the Hussite movement had taken on violent and revolutionary traits in Bohemia after the execution of Jan Hus in Constance. The Taborite wing of the Hussites in particular (since 1420) took on revolutionary traits, which found expression in instances of verbal and real violence. Fueled by the active advertising that the Hussite side carried out for its positions, the endeavor to combat the Hussite threat externally, i.e. in Bohemia, was accompanied by the fear of a spillover of the Hussite movement into the German lands. To prevent this, the whole population was required to take an anti-Hussite oath.³⁵ It is difficult to say how much sympathy the Hussites enjoyed in Germany, especially in the cities, and how well sympathizers were informed about the Hussite doctrines in general. Riots such as the one in Heidelberg in 1422, in which the townspeople and the electoral bodyguard alike organized a riot against the members of the university and in which the cry was heard that the attackers would rather kill students and clerics than Hussites,³⁶ may have been a mixture of a diffuse expression of sympathy and provocation. For Austria, Werner Maleczek has questioned whether the Hussites, who were feared for their campaigns and acts of violence,

33 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, D 33. From D 14, D 23 and Heimpel 25 we can conclude that Drändorf had private property.

34 Fuchs, “Grünsleder,” 228.

35 Fuchs, “Grünsleder,” 223. On the so-called “German Hussites” cf. Machilek, Franz, “Deutsche Hussiten.”

36 Hawicks, “Heidelberg,” 252; Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 150; Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 143.

were able to gain a relevant mass of followers.³⁷ Christina Traxler notes that the elementary military difficulties faced by the Hussite movement in the early 1420s in Bohemia itself as well as the national and patriotic character of the movement made it unlikely that it would have spread to Austria during its early years. Instead, she assumes that after the condemnation of Wyclif's teachings and the execution of Hus at the Council of Constance, heretical phenomena of any kind came "suddenly under the general suspicion" of being Hussite. For this reason, Traxler also warns against inferring "the existence and the spread of Hussite followers in Austria from anti-Hussite measures."³⁸ Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that the Hussites aggressively tried to defend and spread their positions. Their positions were also adopted or adapted and disseminated by others. The cases of the heretics John Drändorf and Peter Turnau, who were interrogated and condemned with the significant involvement of Heidelberg professors, including John von Frankfurt, offer two examples.³⁹

After studying in Prague, Leipzig, Dresden, Zittau, and again in Prague and after being ordained as a priest in Prague in 1417, Drändorf, a nobleman from the Margraviate of Meissen, led his life as a preacher in Prague and Neuhaus. In 1424, he traveled via the Vogtland region to the Upper Rhine valley as far as Basel. He then moved to Brabant and finally to Speyer.⁴⁰ There, he was reunited with Peter Turnau, a native of Prussia and a companion from his Zittau and second Prague years, who had only received a lower ordination in Prague and had left the city in 1414 to attend the Council of Constance. After studying law in Bologna and taking a long journey which led him to Crete, Turnau had come by detours to Speyer. When Drändorf arrived, Turnau was in charge of the Speyer cathedral school.⁴¹ In 1424, Drändorf and Turnau traveled to Heilbronn. Turnau intended to apply for a preaching prebend, and Drändorf probably wanted to preach and evangelize. Drändorf's downfall was that he meddled in the dispute between the town of Weinsberg and the lords of Weinsberg. As a result of this dispute, the town found itself in the Ban of the Imperial Würzburg District Court, the Imperial ban and the reinforced outlawry of the empire (*Acht und Aberacht*), as well as under the ecclesiastical ban.⁴² Drändorf took Weinsberg's

37 Maleczek, "Ketzerverfolgung," 33.

38 Traxler, *Firmiter*, 202 f. (203 both quotations).

39 For the basic research: Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*; Selge, "Ketzerprozesse."

40 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 25–27.

41 *Ibid.*, 30–32.

42 *Ibid.*, 27–30, 32–36, 40, D 135.

excommunication as an opportunity to incite the town to resist the unjust excommunication. He criticized what he found annoying about the church ban: the secular exercise of power by the clergy, which included the use of the ban in secular matters.⁴³ This grievance was, as Drändorf suggested, made possible by the blind obedience of the laity.⁴⁴ After Drändorf was arrested near Heilbronn, he was extradited to Heidelberg because Elector Ludwig III intervened with the Würzburg bishop who held jurisdiction; hence, Drändorf was subjected to a trial there. The Bishop of Worms and three Heidelberg professors, including John of Frankfurt, presided over the trial on the basis of a Würzburg commission.⁴⁵

In the course of the interrogation, Drändorf revealed his convictions one by one. His radical refusal to take an oath before the interrogation was seen as clear proof of his heresy at the outset of the trial. Self-confident, even defiant, he insisted that the copy of the Gospels he was given on which to take the oath was only a human product and that he could lie with or without having taken an oath. Moreover, Drändorf answered questions about his own biography and his actions by criticizing the church. He claimed that only a few clerics wanted to live according to Christ's *regula*, and he insisted that *symonia, avaricia, luxuria, et pompa* prevailed among the clergy.⁴⁶ Emperor Constantine was only allowed to give the church *bona temporalia*, but not *dominium*, and the pope should not have accepted the latter. Not every excommunication was unjust because, he added derisively: For clerics who carried weapons and bishops who invaded towns and villages were excommunicated, just as prelates who exercised temporal power were heretics and in a state of damnation.⁴⁷ All believers who professed the true faith were the Church, not the church hierarchy.⁴⁸ Drändorf also rejected indulgences. The Council of Constance did not stand for the whole Church, a statement that Hermann Heimpel has interpreted to mean that Drändorf did not consider all the articles condemned by Constantiense in fact to be condemned. Drändorf also agreed with the demand for communion *sub utraque*.⁴⁹ On other topics, Drändorf mixed statements that were influenced by Waldensian, Wyclifite, or

43 Ibid., 36 f., text no. 1 f. p. 55–64, D 36 f.

44 Cf. *ibid.*, 37, 45, text no. 1, 55–57, text 2 b, 60 f., 63, D 59; p. 70; Selge, “Ketzerprozesse,” 192.

45 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 29, 41, 146–48.

46 Selge, “Ketzerprozesse,” 195; Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 47, 67, D 1, D 19, D 53. It is worth noting that John of Frankfurt had already expressed criticism of the Church and the clergy, but he had done so at a synod and thus in an internal forum. Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 149 f.

47 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, p. 45 f., D 37, p. 166–168, D 52; also D 69, p. 174, D 71.

48 *Ibid.*, D 68, p. 174.

49 *Ibid.*, D 40 f., D 43, p. 168 f., D 53, p. 171, D 61, p. 172 f., D 78, p. 176, D 100, D 102, D 105f., p. 180 f.

Hussite ideas with Catholic elements, or he distanced himself from the Hussites, for example by rejecting Hussite iconoclasm.⁵⁰ All in all, the heretical positions of the three provenances converged in Drändorf's views. During his short trial which lasted only four days, Drändorf was also tortured. In the end, Drändorf, who had occasionally gone on the offensive and repeatedly provoked his judges, was degraded, sentenced to death, and burned.

Unlike Drändorf, who, as Marie-Luise Bulst-Thiele has suggested, may have wanted to die⁵¹, Turnau did not seek martyrdom. Rather, the trained jurispudent initially defended himself skillfully in Udenheim (a place belonging to the bishopric of Speyer), where Heidelberg professors also took part in the trial. Heimpel credited John of Frankfurt with having effectuated a turnaround in the trial. The inquisitors got hold of Turnau because of the doubts he had expressed about the “ecclesiastical doctrine and practice,” such as the relationship between the Bible, the Church fathers, younger church teachers, and ecclesiastical ministry.⁵² Turnau, who argued in a strictly Biblicist manner, argued that the church could err. Moreover, he was accused of Utraquism.⁵³ To summarize, Kurt-Victor Selge describes Turnau as a “consistent dissident,” whereas he characterizes Drändorf as an “aggressively subversive missionary.”⁵⁴

At this point, it is worth taking one more look at the other side. Hawicks described Drändorf's judge John of Frankfurt as a “vehement opponent of Hussitism,”⁵⁵ as he opposed the Hussites in various roles, including as an inquisitor, as a writer, and as a preacher. However, John differed from Drändorf not only in terms of church politics. Both came from different social classes. Drändorf was originally a well-off lower nobleman, while John was mentioned as a *pauper* at the University of Paris in 1396.⁵⁶ As John owed his rise to the church and the university, Drändorf's radical “rejection of university degrees”⁵⁷ must have been alien to him. Drändorf's apparently ambivalent attitude towards his ordination to the priesthood, which caused the court to doubt his ordained

50 Ibid., 44–47, D 76, p. 176.

51 Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 141.

52 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 32 f., 47, cf. for instance T 33–40, p. 213, T 55, T 62, T 64, p. 215, T 67, T 93–96, T. 98 p. 224, T 104–106, T 108, T 110, p. 225–227, T 120–125, T. 128, p. 229 f., T. 147, p. 129 after T 161; Selge, “Ketzerprozesse,” 198 f. Cf. also Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 142.

53 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 48; Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 142.

54 Selge, “Ketzerprozesse,” 197, 198 n. 99.

55 Hawicks, “Heidelberg,” 249.

56 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 25; Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 136.

57 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 46, T. 80.

status,⁵⁸ also hardly bore any affinities with the high esteem in which John of Frankfurt held the priesthood in his “meditatio.”⁵⁹ Further comparisons are methodologically problematic, as Drändorf’s interrogation protocols and John’s “meditatio devota” belong to completely different genres. Nevertheless, with every methodological reservation, it should be noted that Drändorf primarily denounced the sins of others by harshly criticizing the Church, while John reflected on his own sinfulness. John of Frankfurt was therefore not only a church functionary acting in terms of power politics, but also a person whose work as an inquisitor was probably in part tied to a religious doctrine that he had personally espoused. However, Drändorf’s concern for the salvation of his soul, which underlay his desire for communion *sub utraque*, also suggests a spiritual dimension. Perhaps Turnau’s occasional appeals to his conscience⁶⁰ can also be seen as an indication of internalized piety.

More can be learnt from the study of the Hussites and the trial against Drändorf and Turnau on the subject of diversity. The theological premises and ecclesiastical-political conclusions of Hussitism were considered antagonistic to Catholicity and were therefore no longer tolerable as an expression of diversity. This condemnation included people such as Drändorf and Turnau, who had designed their own heterodox faith with various Catholic, Waldensian, Wyclifite, and Hussite elements. Drändorf and Turnau were also tried as individuals, not as members of a community like many Waldensians.

Incidentally, this was also often the case for the German Hussites of the early period, who were frequently, but not always, clerics, with a Prague university background playing a role. There are no clear indications in the sources that distinct Hussite congregations formed at that time. The time was probably still too short for this and the endeavour too dangerous. The only exceptions were Flanders and Hainaut, where, according to Bart Spruyt, an “important, mostly hidden dissenting movement” existed, which apparently also absorbed Hussite elements early on. As early as the late 1410s and until 1430, a number of people there were detained. The fact that several people were arrested and meetings were held suggests that there were group structures.⁶¹ Elsewhere, despite the

58 Ibid., 26, 43, D 7–11, D 44–51, D 90, D 97, D 131, p. 157 f., 169 f., 178–180; Selge, “Ketzerprozesse,” 172, 186 on the problem of whether the ordination of Drändorf (probably an ordination without “titulus” and without episcopal “formata”) was valid.

59 Johannes von Frankfurt, “Meditatio devota,” 8.

60 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, T 26, T 53, T 102, T 111.

61 Spruyt, “Echo,” 286–91 (quotation 286); Haupt, “Husitische Propaganda,” 268 f.

idea of Peter Payne to persuade the Waldensians to join the Hussites, there are only sporadic indications in the sources to suggest that they did, at least until the 1440s. Only then did the weakened Waldensian communities appear to have come so close to Hussite ideas that it would be possible to speak of a Hussite-influenced diaspora.⁶² In my opinion, widespread hatred of the clergy and general social unrest are not enough to suggest that we can speak of the existence of Hussite religious communities before the 1440s, even if anti-clericalism in particular would have provided a starting point for the infiltration of Hussite ideas. Concerning the so-called Hussites, the sovereigns, municipal authorities, and local church institutions took the initiative to inquire about and try people regarded as suspicious. In general, we recognize an overriding political will to persecute alleged heretics.

The universities were also involved in the persecution of alleged heretics to varying degrees. Individual Heidelberg professors were involved in the fight against Hussitism at an early stage, an activity that was evidently also linked to their activities as electoral councilors. In 1421, John of Frankfurt and Conrad von Soest each wrote an anti-Hussite treatise during a campaign against the Hussites. Job Vener also took up his pen against the Hussites in 1421. Furthermore, there is evidence of a relevant sermon by John of Frankfurt and a speech by Conrad von Soest.⁶³ A later example of the anti-Hussite commitment by Heidelberg professors is the refutation of a Taborite manifesto in 1430 by Nicolas of Jawor.⁶⁴ At the University of Vienna, in contrast, scholars just respond to requests and demands until the end of the 1420s. They did not become involved in the fight against the Hussites at their own initiative.⁶⁵

The negotiation of a tolerated status, coexistence, or even integration were not on the agenda for those labeled Hussites. The religiously motivated political upheavals in the Kingdom of Bohemia had shown clearly what Hussitism was capable of, but other events also revealed the influence and power of Hussite ideas. Drändorf, whose hybrid heresy has been outlined, also regretted in a letter

62 Machilek, “Deutsche Hussiten,” 273 speaks of “singular examples” of persons in the urban milieu who sympathized with the Hussites in the 1420s. The execution of six Hussites in Jüterbock (1416 or 1417) also points to a small group (*ibid.*, 274). Machilek mentions evidence of larger groups of German Hussites, which indicate the existence of communities, from the 1440s onwards. From 1458, they were suppressed by Inquisition trials. *Ibid.*, 280 f.

63 Studt, *Martin V.*, 205, 208, 210; Hawicks, “Heidelberg,” 251; Johannes von Frankfurt, “Contra Hussitas”; Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 40.

64 Petrásek, *Häretiker*.

65 Traxler, *Firmiter*, 176–78.

to the town of Weinsberg that he and other like-minded priests were too weak to oppose *iniquitati malorum clericorum, nisi communis populus et loca imperialia suos oculus aperirent*.⁶⁶ He thus formulated a barely veiled threat. The opposition between Hussitism and Catholicism was only bridged at a later date and outside the inner empire, with the Basel and Prague Compactata. They were concluded with the participation of the Council of Basel and also under the impact of many military defeats and massive political pressure from Emperor Sigismund. Furthermore, they only applied to the Kingdom of Bohemia. This was the only case in which negotiations were held with heretics.⁶⁷ The willingness to accept difference in this case was forced by the circumstances.

Suspected and Persecuted Difference: The Jews

It is worth also taking a brief look at the Jews, a group the diversity of which had been dealt with for centuries. John of Frankfurt still held the classical position towards them, according to which the messiahship of Christ necessarily would be deduced from the Old Testament. He made no reference to the opinion that emerged in the thirteenth century according to which the Talmud, if understood correctly, also contained appropriate passages.⁶⁸ John's writing, apparently secondarily called *Malleus Judeorum*, was intended as an explanation of the former position to the theologically interested Elector Palatine Ludwig III. It was not written with any missionary intention.⁶⁹ In another sermon, John emphasized that the Jews had forfeited their first calling by God. Nevertheless, the path to salvation was not closed to anyone, because God would work on anyone if he did not close himself off. This remark can be interpreted as an expression of hope of conversion of the Jews.⁷⁰ Despite still moderate voices like his, the Jews faced an increasingly repressive atmosphere in the late Middle Ages, as

66 Heimpel, *Inquisitionen-Verfahren*, text 2 b p. 63. Bünz, "Drändorf" argues that Drändorf's activities concerning Weinsberg could be regarded as incitement to a riot.

67 Even if Jews could be brought close to heretics since the Talmud had become known, the way in which they were treated cannot be compared with the ways in which heretics were treated. In this respect, Cardinal Cesarini's argument is misguided that the Council of Basel should not be reproached for having invited the Hussites to discuss their doctrine, as discussions of faith with Jews had long been established. Eckert, "Hoch- und Spätmittelalter," 247.

68 Schreckenber, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, 209, 291 f., 293–96.

69 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Malleus Judeorum"; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 146.

70 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Simile," 31–35; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 156 even suggests, that John did not exclude the hope of salvation regardless of the conversion of the Jews.

they were accused not only of alleged ritual murders and desecration of the Host but also of anti-Christian blasphemies and heresy because their teachings had gone beyond the Old Testament in the Talmud.⁷¹ Anti-Jewish and anti-Hussite sermons were held one after the other in Fribourg.⁷² Presumably both activities reinforced each other as a means of characterizing both the Jews and the Hussites as different. As in the fourteenth century, expulsions of Jews also took place in Sigismund's time, partly in territories and partly in towns.⁷³ Karel Hruza has shown in an exemplary manner that, for fiscal reasons, Sigismund had no interest expelling Jews, but that he was careful to protect his rights and financial interests when he was unable to prevent their expulsion, and that he thereby abandoned them.⁷⁴

Three patterns can be shown in which the criterion of religious difference was instrumentalized in order to justify the expulsion of a group considered to be different but tolerated so far. First, conspiracy theories were hatched concerning the supposed cooperation of internal and external enemies. Secondly, religious pretexts were used to conceal economically and politically motivated Jewish persecution. And third, anti-Jewish stereotypes were reinvigorated in the run-up to Jewish persecution. As an example of the first, a rumor emerged in Vienna in 1419 according to which Jews, Hussites, and Waldensians had allegedly formed a *confederacio* which was allegedly directed against the Christian majority society. The Vienna theological faculty was consulted about this, but it apparently did not consider the topic urgent, as the discussion about it was postponed. Of the three groups mentioned, it was the Jews in particular who were highlighted because of their *multitud*[o], their allegedly *delicata vita*, and their writings (allegedly) containing detestable calumnies and blasphemies (i.e. the Talmud and probably also the “Toldot Jeschu”).⁷⁵ The danger scenario was exacerbated by the fact that the Jews, who were already branded as heretics, appeared here in association with other heretics. There was nothing to substantiate this conspiracy theory, of course, even if Jews demonstrably sympathized with the Hussites.⁷⁶

Secondly, the reasons for the expulsions of Jews have to be scrutinized. Petr Elbel has found little support in the sources for the seemingly self-evident as-

71 Cf. the research overview in Niesner “*Wer mit juden*,” 59–80, 95–118.

72 Utz Tresp, *Quellen*, 16–22.

73 Hruza, “Kammerknechte,” n. 12 p. 77 f., 83–116.

74 *Ibid.*, 109 f., 115 f.

75 Traxler, *Firmiter*, 121–24 (quotations 121).

76 Yuval, *Juden*, 63–68; Shank, “Unless,” 188 f.

sumption that the expulsion of the Jews from Vienna and Austria in 1420–1421 was a consequence of fear of their alleged alliance with other enemies of Catholic Christianity. Rather, the expulsion was motivated by economic reasons. However, an alleged desecration of the Host in Enns served as a pretext.⁷⁷ The final expulsion of the Jews from Vienna in 1421 was also accompanied by the fact that Jews who had already been baptized under the pressure of the authorities were forced to listen to conversion sermons held by none other than the Viennese professor Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl. These sermons differed significantly from those which Heinrich von Langenstein drafted at the end of the fourteenth century to convert Jews through good words, as they lacked any concession to the Jews.⁷⁸ However, the sermons fitted into a time in which the Council of Basel in 1434 wanted to impose forced preaching on Jews and inculcated traditional segregation regulations (1434).⁷⁹

Religious pretexts were also used in other places to dislodge Jewish communities. In 2012, Hruza called attention to the political and fiscal motives of the city of Cologne, which wanted to get rid of its Jews in 1423–24, as the respective competences and rights of disposal over the Jews were a constant point of contention with the Archbishop of Cologne.⁸⁰ However, when the city justified its actions to the king in 1431, the danger that the Jews were trying to persuade Christians to apostatize was put forward. It was also argued that foreign crusaders (probably in 1421) had attempted to slay the Jews on their way to the Hussite war, which led to concerns that such events could occur again. Further arguments included the Jewish practice of lending at interest, the expulsion of Jews from neighboring territories, the sanctity of the city of Cologne (with its relics of numerous saints and martyrs), and the rumor of well poisoning due to increased mortality rates caused by an epidemic.⁸¹ Nine months after Sigismund's death, in August 1438, the mayor and the town council of Heilbronn justified to the chancellor of king Albert II, Kaspar Schlick, and the Hereditary Marshal of the Empire Haupt II von Pappenheim their decision not to extend the Jews' residency status because they (the mayor and the town council) had been warned by scholars openly in sermons and secretly in the confession of how seriously they acted badly because they permitted Jews to remain in their community and

77 Elbel and Ziegler, "Neubetrachtung"; Elbel, "Im Zeichen," 137–40, 158.

78 Elbel and Ziegler, "Neubetrachtung," 222; Knapp, "Christlich-theologische Auseinandersetzungen," See 272–79, 281 f.; Knapp, "Frieden," 25–30.

79 Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, 494; Eckert, "Hoch- und Spätmittelalter," 248.

80 Hruza, "Kammerknechte," 85 f.

81 Von den Brincken, "Rechtfertigungsschreiben," 313–319; Hruza, "Kammerknechte," 85 f.

allowed them to practice usury. The scholars also contended that the mayor and the council debased themselves by making this concession.⁸² Consequently, this situation had to be rectified.

As a third point, the accusations of ritual murder (a recurring accusation that both fortified and relied on an anti-Jewish stereotype) merits consideration. These accusations were used to justify repressive measures against Jews and to establish a new martyr cult. In the case of Ravensburg, however, King Sigismund tried to prevent the rise of a cult concerning a pupil purportedly murdered ritually in 1429. Sigismund had the church which had been designated as a pilgrimage site razed to the ground, though he was unable to put a complete stop to the pilgrimages.⁸³ As far as I know, however, this measure taken by Sigismund was exceptional. In complete contrast, the Palatinate Elector Ludwig III, together with the parish priest of Bacharach, Winand von Steeg, ensured the revival of the declining cult of the so-called “Good Werner of Oberwesel,” who had allegedly been ritually murdered in the thirteenth century.

Blurred Differences: Piety, Superstition, and Magic

The problem of superstition, on which John of Frankfurt, among others, commented twice (in 1405 and 1425–27),⁸⁴ can only be touched upon in this paper. The first text, a “quodlibet” on the question of whether demons could be compelled and controlled through the use of amulets, signs, and words, still predates the period in which the concept of the *vaudois* was amalgamated with that of the sorcerer. However, since the fourteenth century, magic and heresy in general had been brought closer together. Nevertheless, in his “quaestio” of 1405, John argues against conjuring demons without referring to the concept of heresy. Although demons could perform healings, for example, due to their extensive knowledge of the secret powers of nature, it was forbidden and harmful to summon them. Demons, he explained, only pretended to be coerced and compelled by men in order to deceive people. Anyone who invoked them was committing idolatry. In addition to healing magic, John condemned all kinds

82 *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vol. 13, no. 239 p. 479.

83 Hruza, “Kammerknechte,” 94.

84 Johannes von Frankfurt, “Quaestio”; for the dating of the “quaestio” in 1405 instead of 1406, 1412 or 1426, see Wälz, in Johannes von Frankfurt, *Werke*, 227–30. In 1425/26, John wrote again a “disputatio” about this topic. This text was not as pragmatic as the text discussed above. Rather, it was purely academic. The second text has not yet been edited. Cf. Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 148 f.

of common divination practices. Still very much in the old church tradition, he rejected the reality of witches flights, the transformation of people into animals through demonic magic, and the visitation of goddesses of destiny at the birth of children. With those and similar superstitions John charged old women in particular.⁸⁵

Furthermore, especially interesting are the passages in which John criticized “wildly” erected little houses or huts in fields or woods, which were visited due to vows because simple-minded people told of fantastic apparitions and alleged that miracles had been performed. Believers would make gifts and votive offerings to these dubious locations, donations that the parish churches then were lacking. Quite obviously, John was opposing unlicensed spontaneous pilgrimages. He imputed them to be short-lived and therefore unsustainable, and he presumed that they were initiated because of avarice anyway. John also recalled the Savior’s warning against false prophets, but without mentioning demonic influences. In a very pragmatic way, he also cautioned that such remote places would provide a good opportunity for fornication. Furthermore, the canons forbade the offering of sacrifices in places that had not been consecrated. Like Nicolas of Jawor before him, John also warned against dubious hermits and ignoramuses who, out of shameful greed, offered to foretell the future and bless animals and humans. This too was idolatry, he insisted. Unfortunately, local priests often remained silent out of ignorance when they learned of abuses which John considered to be the remnants of ancient idolatry. John distanced himself from ignorant and brutal exorcists of the devil, who were often personally dubious figures anyway, much as he also rejected the practice of blessings, therefore citing Matthew of Krakow. If blessings were effective, he asked ironically, why would there be no blessing *contra superbiam, luxuriam vel avaritiam* or against robbers and arsonists?⁸⁶

These passages are partly set in a contemporary discursive context to which Nicolas of Jawor, among others, contributed a great deal. When dealing with spontaneous pilgrimages and blessings, they show above all how the boundaries of permissible diversity were discussed.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace the arguments used by John of Frankfurt in his more theoretical text written

85 On the context cf. Franz, *Nikolaus*, 177–180; Bracha, *Lug*, 60–64, 70, 89, 91, 95 f., 101 f.; Johannes von Frankfurt, “Quaestio,” 73–76, 78 f.; Bailey, *Fearful spirits*, 154 f., 160, 165–167, 170 f., 175 f., 193.

86 Johannes von Frankfurt, “Quaestio,” 77 f., 80 (Quotation: 80); Franz, *Nikolaus*, 168 f., 193 f.; Bracha, *Lug*, 149 f.; Bulst-Thiele, “Johannes,” 148.

87 On the problem of drawing the line between religion and superstition, see Bailey, *Fearful Spirits*, 148–94.

in 1425–25, in which he labeled people who summonsed demons heretics, as the second treatise remains unedited. It is therefore also not possible to decide whether this was an adaptation to the increasingly aggravated discourse or whether the different focus is due to the chosen level of argumentation.

Conclusion

It is worth returning, in conclusion, to our original considerations. Religion was a criterion of difference which in itself hardly left much room for negotiation. The dogmatic dividing lines were drawn by inquisitorial manuals, but they could also be seen, for example, when arguments from the Franciscan poverty controversy were used to refute the Hussites' Four Articles of Prague.⁸⁸ The doctrinal discrepancies are therefore evident in theory. This also applies to methodological determinations. John of Frankfurt, for example, accused the Hussites of clinging to the literal sense of the Bible. This methodological error was otherwise attributed to Jews.

In practice, however, the boundaries were more difficult to draw. The difficulty is evident when it came to the categorizations used for heretics, regardless of whether they were individuals or groups, as they often held hybrid positions. “Deviants” did not necessarily adopt all the doctrines and practices of a denomination that was marginalized as heretical, but possibly only some of them. They could take up and merge different ideas and even keep some elements of Catholic doctrines. In addition, whether a distinction was made between Catholics and heretics depended crucially on the willingness to recognize the heresy of the other person. In the decision-making situation, situational or context-dependent and pragmatic logics therefore competed with normative precepts.

Nevertheless, diversity was undesirable when it moved outside the normative boundaries of orthodoxy. Alexander Patschovsky pointed out early on that the heterodox could not be tolerated where there was no pluralism of truth.⁸⁹ Tolerance was only possible with the Jews as long as they were understood as “blind” bearers of Christian truth. More recently, Christoph Mandry added that pluralism could only be regarded as a value once religion had become a private

88 Traxler, *Firmiter*, 347, 349.

89 Patschovsky, “Ketzer,” 334.

matter and confession was no longer considered constitutive for the cohesion of the political order.⁹⁰

Concerning magic, the period under review was a threshold period. Magic and heresy could be connected from the fourteenth century onwards, but they were not necessarily combined. Furthermore, certain forms of superstition, as well as unlicensed forms of religion, could still be rejected without immediately being branded as magical or heretical.

In the examples outlined above, the approaches used to deal with diversity can hardly be described as “negotiation.” Both with the Jews and where pragmatism prevailed over doctrine in dealings with heretics, the power constellations were quite asymmetrical. Only when it came to the Jews and maybe minor forms of superstition was it possible to admit diversity in principle. In the case of heretics, deviance led to the elimination of the deviant as soon as it was addressed. Only in the case of the Bohemian Hussites (not examined here) did the political and military circumstances make it necessary to tolerate religious diversity, and this diversity in turn influenced political negotiation processes. Hence, I suggest we should speak of “handling diversity” when the possibility of tolerating or integrating differentness was given, no matter how asymmetrical the framework conditions may have been. On the other hand, I prefer to describe differences that could lead to the elimination of the other not as diversity, but as divergence.

Religious diversity can be found when the plurality of religious forms of expression is considered, that characterized conform late medieval piety. One can think of the variety of ecclesiastical and sacramental practices in the parishes, the numerous brotherhoods or the foundation system, which were able to combine the striving for *imitatio Christi* and an internalized relationship with God. However, these forms of religiosity were not the subject of my article

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90 Mandry, “Pluralismus,” 33.

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