

Fig. 16.1: Title page from *Några wijsor om Antichristum* [Some Songs about the Antichrist] (1536).

Otfried Czaika

Chapter 16

Rome: Jerusalem or Seat of the Antichrist? Lutheran Polemics in Sixteenth-Century Sweden

The following chapter, playing perhaps on Tertullian's famous quip, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" asks the question, "What has Rome to do with Jerusalem – during the Swedish Reformation?" In answer to this question this chapter examines "Some Songs about the Antichrist" 1536, a collection of hymns from the Swedish Reformation, including the historical difficulties associated with such an investigation, and describes a If the abstract is set in italics this should not be in italics, and vice versa. of sorts, which can be observed in these hymns and in the thought and polemic of the Swedish Reformation. Rome is here not described as a second Jerusalem or the new Jerusalem, a holy city. In contrary, Rome is depicted as a depraved place, the unholy city. However, most of the polemical elements which the Reformation used against the Roman Church, the pope, and the papacy had already existed some hundred years before Martin Luther and are thus reappropriated in the polemical writings published during the age of Reformation. "Some Songs about the Antichrist" 1536 thus show that the Jerusalem code still existed during the Scandinavian Reformation, both as an inversion and a reappropriation: the Christian's future hope is not found in a certain place but in the vera doctrina lutherana and the right conduct of life. Although these texts can be anchored in a cultural and theological context, merely deriving from the Middle Ages, they reveal that we do not know much about the context of this publication: we lack information about how and when the different ideas expressed in these polemical songs found their way to Sweden, we do not even know much about the origin of these songs, the author, or the reception of these texts.

Note: This article discusses some central aspects of Otfried Czaika, *Några wijsor om Antichristum [1536] samt handskrivna tillägg. Utgåva med inledande kommentarer* (Stockholm: Skara stiftshistoriska sällskap Finska kyrkohistoriska samfundet, 2019).

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“Some Songs about the Antichrist” 1536 (Några wijsor om Antichristum 1536)

The idea of *translatio*, especially *translatio imperii*¹ and *translatio templi*² was seminal for both the political and religious thinking of the Middle Ages. According to this thinking the Roman Empire was translated in the West to Charlemagne and later to the German emperors. Even the temple was translated – to Rome. Rome thus became the spiritual successor of Jerusalem. The translation of both political and religious power consequently produced a coherent line: while the emperor was the heir of the Roman rulers, the pope was interconnected with the Holy Land and Jerusalem through the apostles Sts Peter and Paul and was so able to claim the religious leadership. Rome was thus the place where in mediaeval thinking worldly and religious power met: the elected Roman emperors had to travel to Rome where they received the coronation through the pope.

Translatio imperii and *translatio templi* thus reveal the positive connotations of the eternal city. However, these positive connotations are just one side of the story. Jerusalem was – according to the Book of Revelation – even the place where the Antichrist occurred. Even the idea of the Antichrist was transmitted during the Middle Ages: to Rome and the Pope. While it is well known that Luther and other reformers described the pope as the Antichrist, it is less well known that this polemic had a long medieval tradition and that the idea of the Pope as the Antichrist was even transferred to the Swedish Reformation which (like the other Nordic reformations) has often been described as slower, more conservative, and less irascible than the reformations in Central Europe.

The Way of the Antichrist to Sweden

The discourse on the Antichrist and the concept of the pope as the Antichrist personified is assuredly not the most important theological *topos* of the Reformation. In fact, the idea that any living person, much less the pope as the head of the Roman Church, is the Antichrist was not even new. The Antichrist-discourse goes back to Adso de Montier-en-Der (c.910–92), whose work, *Epistola Adsonis ad Gerbergam*

¹ Werner Goetz, *Translatio Imperii: Translatio Imperii: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1958).

² For this see: Eivor Andersen Oftestad, *The Lateran Church in Rome and the Ark of the Covenant: Housing the Holy Relics of Jerusalem* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2019); and Chapter 3 (Eivor Andersen Oftestad), vol. 1, 49–55 of this series.

reginam de ortu et tempore antichristi,³ is a sort of biography of the Antichrist which became part of the medieval collective religious memory. Some two centuries after its appearance, Joachim de Fiore (c.1130/1135–1202) talked about the coming of the mystical Antichrist. The Spiritual Franciscans of the thirteenth century identified first the German emperor, and afterwards Joachim de Fiore identified the pope as the Antichrist. These ideas (among others) were then conveyed to the sixteenth century through both the frustration surrounding the Avignon Papacy and the church critique of John Wycliff (d. 1348) and Jan Hus (d. 1404).⁴

The notion that the papacy represented the personified Antichrist, an idea which was neither new nor peripheral to the Swedish Reformation, is demonstrable from the different texts of the polemical songs *Några wjsor om Antichristum* [“Some Songs about Antichrist”],⁵ published in Sweden during the 1530s (Fig. 16.1). Their repeated printing and survival, at least until the seventeenth century, further emphasizes this point. We also encounter polemic about the Antichrist in other texts such as the oeuvre of the Finnish reformer Mikael Agricola.⁶ The depiction of the Antichrist observed in his writings is clearly related to the same strains of exegetical interpretation. Yet another text, a hand-written anonymous pasquill from the late 1570s,⁷ demonstrates a highly elaborate post-tridentine Antichrist polemic. We see similar argumentation in *Historia Liturgica* (1588) by Abraham Andreae Angermannus (1540–1607)⁸—Angermannus being one of the most prominent opponents against the unclear confessional position of King John III (1537–92).

3 Daniel Verhelst, ed., *S. Adso Dervensis: De ortu et tempore antichristi*, CCCM 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976).

4 Ingvild Richardsen-Friedrich, *Antichrist-Polemik in der Zeit der Reformation und der Glaubenskämpfe bis Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003), 59–77; Gustav Adolph Benrath, “Antichrist III: Alte Kirche und Mittelalter,” TRE 1, 24–48; Gottfried Seebaß, “Antichrist IV: Reformations- und Neuzeit,” TRE 1, 28–30; Hans Preuss, *Die Vorstellung vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der konfessionellen Polemik* (Leipzig: Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1906); Volker Leppin, *Transformationen: Studien zu den Wandlungsprozessen in Theologie und Frömmigkeit zwischen Spätmittelalter und Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 482–84.

5 *Några wjsor einfaldeliga vtsatta for them som lust haffua at quädha eller höra om Antichristum och hans wesende* (Stockholm: Kungliga Bocktryckeriet, 1536).

6 The work of the Finnish reformer Mikael Agricola is available in Mikael Agricola, *Mikael Agricolan teokset, uudistettu näköispainos* (Porvoo: W. Söderström, 1987).

7 “En lithen wnderwijsning fwl medh Papisters wilfarelser, ther hwar och en Christen skall taga sigh wara före. Stelt på rijm till Antichristi präst Húru han schall stella sit handell wthi wercket”, in Terhi Kiiskinen, ed., *Fem källor från den svenska reformationstiden i Finland. Viisi Ruotsin reformaatioajan lähdeitä Suomessa* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2010), 286–96.

8 Laurentius Petri and Abraham Andreae Angermannus, *Refutatio erroris Herbesti de consecratione sacramenti eucharistici* (Hamburg: Heinrich Binder, 1588). [VD16 P 1775].

As polemical texts from the Swedish Reformation have not garnered much attention, a closer look at *Några wijsor om Antichristum* may be instructive. These polemical texts from the early reformation in the Swedish Empire illustrate how the discourse on the Antichrist was staged in Northern Europe and how critique of Rome, the papacy, and the dogmas of the Roman Church was expressed.

Oh Rome! – The Unholy City: Rome as an Anti-Jerusalem

The first song of *Några wijsor om Antichristum*, and thus the opening of the entire publication, begins with the exclamation: “Oh Rome, look how you are faring now” (“O Rom går thet nu så med tich”). In the end, the implication of this rhetorical question leaves just one possible answer: “It goes disastrously with you, Rome!” Simultaneously, the reader finds himself *medias in res*, in the papal city of Rome with all of the religious disputes between the reformers and representatives of the Roman Church during the 1520s and 1530s.

The Antichrist’s advent, for Adso de Montier-en-Der and the medieval mainstream, was clearly related to the Holy City, Jerusalem. It was there, according to Adso, that the final, apocalyptic battle would take place and the archangel Michael would defeat the Antichrist. During the Middle Ages the notion of Jerusalem as the Holy City was transferred to Rome. Architecture was one of the ways this was illustrated. For example, the columns in St Peter’s Church in Rome were supposed to originate from King Salomon’s temple in Jerusalem.⁹ This *translatio* of artefacts, ideas and, not least importantly, the claim of religious leadership to the papal city of Rome was easily turned upside-down by those who opposed the primacy of the pope. For those who criticized the papacy and claimed that the pope was not the head of the holy church but was in fact the Antichrist, it was a logical consequence to claim that Rome, and not Jerusalem, was the place in which the Antichrist would appear and where the apocalyptic events of the end time would take place. The image of the pope as Antichrist thus also implied the idea of the *translatio*, yet a *translatio* of Jerusalem’s negative connotations of Rome.

However, the question of whether Rome was an “unholy” city is much older than the polemic of the Reformation, medieval church critique, or the *translatio* conception of Rome as Jerusalem. After the sack of Rome by the Visigoths and their king Alaric in 410, church father Augustine discussed in his sermon *De urbis excidio* the question of

⁹ “It became accepted belief that these columns in St Peter’s had belonged to Solomon’s Temple itself.” Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 317. Cf. Louis L. Martz, *From Renaissance to Baroque: Essays on Literature and Art* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 218.

why God was willing to spare Sodom but not Rome. Augustine questioned: were there not even ten righteous people living in Rome?¹⁰ Despite such questioning, Augustine refused any comparison of Sodom and Rome. He claimed instead that many, in fact, survived the sack of Rome and that what happened in 410 was a trial rather than complete destruction.

Paulus Orosius (c.385–418) whom Augustine advised to write *Historiae adversum Paganos* [*History against the Pagans*] claimed, in contrast to Augustine, that the fate of Sodom was comparable with the sack of Rome. The conquest of Rome was, according to Orosius, an explicit warning and admonition mainly directed to the pagans living in Rome. Orosius emphasized this argument through the claim that the Roman bishop, Innocentius, was able to escape from Rome to Ravenna and therefore did not witness the sack of the city. Thus, Orosius's *Historiae adversum Paganos* builds a dichotomy amongst the pagans: between the non-Christians who, on the one hand, have the wrong faith, and the Christians, on the other hand, who possess the right faith.¹¹

This dialectical relation – Rome either as the Holy City, the new (perhaps even heavenly) Jerusalem and the unholy, secularized, corrupt, depraved, in the end non-Christian or even diabolical city – shaped the notion of Rome during more than a millennium after Orosius.

To this latter grouping also belongs the notion of the *Whore of Babylon* (deriving from the Book of Revelation 17–19). This idea, yet another description of the “unholy” city, also plays a vital role in the polemic expressed in *Några wijsor om Antichristum*. Could it be that already the author of the Book of Revelation had the city of Rome in his mind when he introduced the speech of the *Whore of Babylon*? In any case, in the centuries after the Revelation was composed, the *Whore of Babylon* did indeed become a metaphor for Rome.¹² This metaphor was used during the entire Middle Ages and the corresponding “destruction of Rome was expected in different ways”.¹³

This negative *translatio* we find once again as the Spiritual Franciscans compare Rome with the *Whore of Babylon*. During the thirteenth century in a work titled *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, the Franciscan Petrus Johannis Olivi (1247/48–96/98) described the Church as an adulteress. Genuine Christians had – according to Olivi –

10 Uta Heil, “Was hat Rom mit Sodom und Gomorra zu tun? De excidio urbis Romae und andere heilsgeschichtliche Katastrophen”, in *Geschichte und Gott. XV. europäischer Kongress für Theologie (14.–18. September 2014 in Berlin)*, eds. Michael Meyer-Blanck and Laura Schmitz (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016), 518–40.

11 Heil, “Was hat Rom mit Sodom und Gomorra zu tun?”, 518–40.

12 Ulrike Sals, “Die Biographie der ‘Hure Babylon’: Studien zur Intertextualität der Babylon-Texte in der Bibel,” *Forschungen zum Alten Testament*, Reihe 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), passim.

13 Andreas Fuhr, *Machiavelli und Savonarola. Politische Rationalität und politische Prophetie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), 68.

already spiritually abandoned the Church; it was only a question of time before they would abandon the Church as an institution as well. The old Roman Church would soon be replaced with a new church in which only the elect would be members. Olivi expected an imminent arrival of the end time – according to his expectation, the final age would begin in the year 1300. At that time the Antichrist would arrive and destroy Babylon, that is the sinful city of Rome. Olivi's *Lectura super Apocalipsim* thus connected the apocalyptic notion of the *Whore of Babylon* with Rome. Furthermore, Olivi accused the Roman Church of being politicized, secularized, and totally depraved as a whole. He likewise expressed the thought that the bishop of Rome (that is the pope) was a heretic because he had not followed the gospel preached by the holy Francis.¹⁴

During the age of Reformation, the notion of Rome as the *Whore of Babylon* was re-actualized. The French Reformer François Lambert claimed in his polemical publications of the early 1520s that Rome was the *Whore of Babylon* about which Chapter 17 of the Book of Revelation spoke. This enemy – according to Lambert – had to be defeated. Moreover, Rev 17 revealed the pope to be the Antichrist.¹⁵

For Adso of Montier-en-Der, the final, eschatological drama, the arrival of Antichrist, would take place in Jerusalem. Yet, the medieval and early modern Antichrist polemic transferred this event to Rome. Rome was the *Whore of Babylon* and the pope the Antichrist. Here once again we encounter a sort of *translatio*-thinking. While the Roman Church claimed that both the hegemony of the old Roman Empire and the claim of religious leadership once connected to Jerusalem had been transferred to Rome and its bishop, the medieval and early modern Church critique claimed that this transfer was especially true for the negative connotations of Rome and Jerusalem.

The idea of the unholy city, refused by Augustine and staged by Orosius, established a framework which is along the lines of *Några wjisor om Antichristum*. This framework does, however, represent a discourse which was repeatedly reformulated during the Middle Ages and which also became a part of the age of the Reformation: even Martin Luther addressed in his Genesis lectures the idea of the destruction of Jerusalem, respectively Rome, as God's punishment.¹⁶ Last but not least, this idea made its way into the polemical songs collected in *Några wjisor om Antichristum*.

14 Warren Lewis, "Freude, Freude! Die Wiederentdeckung der Freude im 13. Jahrhundert. Olivis 'Lectura super Apocalipsim' als Blick auf die Endzeit," in *Ende und Vollendung: Eschatologische Perspektiven im Mittelalter*, eds. Jan Aertsen and Martin Pickavé (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 657–86.

15 Johannes Schilling, *Klöster und Mönche in der Hessischen Reformation*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 150–60. See also Hubert Jedin, *Kirche des Glaubens, Kirche der Geschichte*, vol. 1 (Freiburg im Brisgau: Herder, 1966), 144.

16 See Luther's commentary on Gen 4:16 (WA 42,228–29); Chapter 1 (Eivor Andersen Oftestad), 21–23.

Moreover, even the idea that Rome was the *Whore of Babylon* and that the Pope was the Antichrist can be found – complete with other well-known antipapal metaphors of the Middle Ages¹⁷ – *expressis verbis* in the first three songs against the Antichrist published in Stockholm in or around the year 1536.¹⁸

Några wijsor om Antichristum *and the European Background*

The polemic found in *Några wijsor om Antichristum* cannot be separated from the dogmatic controversies between the Roman Church and the reformers. The first two songs address what was most central for Martin Luther and the Reformation: the clear and pure word of God. This, according to the reformers, had been darkened by *menniskios dict* “human invention”. The pope serves as *pars pro toto* for the Roman Church: *Scrifften haffuer tu oss förwendt* (“You [the pope] have falsified Scripture”). Martin Luther is, in contrast, described as *ringa man/[som] gudz ord haffuer han j munne* (“a humble man, who has the word of God on his tongue”) and therefore achieves what otherwise would have been impossible: the defeat of Rome. The final redemption of the world from *påuans wold* (“the pope’s violence”), however, would come only in the end from God alone and through Christ’s salvation. As well, the righteousness of works and indulgences is addressed and refuted as heresy: *Sydena med sijn stora krafft / förgaff tu swårliga monga* (“Sin with its great might, you have forgiven extremely many [people]”).

While the themes discussed in *Några wijsor om Antichristum* are a part of the common repertoire associated with the theological controversies of the 1520s and 1530s, and although they were reformulated repeatedly in many polemical pasquills and theological tracts,¹⁹ it has unfortunately not been possible to identify direct *Vorlagen* to the first three polemical songs printed in *Några wijsor om Antichristum*. All that can really be said is that these songs follow the well-known polemical

¹⁷ E.g. *affgud (idol), ullfuer (wolf), wildiwr (beast)*.

¹⁸ “Sy man haffuer dyrkat for gud / och giordt mykin prijs och äro / then stora Babilonis brudh / ther med sinne falska läre / haffuer bemengdt / och mongom skenkt / aff the iorderikes förster / betuingat mong / och giordt stort twong / och ingen man betröstat. / Unger gammal quinna och man / thet skole j weta alle / at Jesabel med Babilon hon är nw nidher fallen / som sat j prijs / och hlt sich wijs / och giorde sich mykit stolta / j sitt hoghmodh / emoot gudz budh / ty är hennes stooł försmolten[.]” *Några wijsor eenfaldeliga vtsatta for them som lust haffua at quädha eller höra om Antichristum och hans wesende*, A iiv.

¹⁹ Oskar Schade’s collection of polemical literature from the age of Reformation provides some examples for that: Oskar Schade, *Satiren und Pasquille aus der Reformazionzeit* (Hannover: Carl Rümpler, 1863), 3–65, 27–37; *Satiren und Pasquille aus der Reformationszeit*, revised 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Hannover: Carl Rümpler, 1863), 176, 226–28ff.

repertoire aimed at the Roman Church and what were viewed to be its heresies. Nevertheless, we can note that the polemical repertoire in these Swedish texts is smaller than the wide variety contained in the pasquills from Central Europe. In Luther's writings, for example, the religious enemies were sometimes described as "Turks," enemies of the true faith. Lutherans were also sometimes labelled as "Turks" by representatives of the Roman Church.²⁰ Polemical texts from Central Europe also commonly accused their religious opponents of sexual misconduct. This phenomenon is likewise not found in the Swedish texts of *Några wijsor om Antichristum* – a minor selection of texts such as *Några wijsor om Antichristum* never represents the entirety of all motifs connected with a particular genre. Both the literary and print cultures were quite restrained in Sweden during the sixteenth century. Thus, a comparison of an extant corpus of texts from the German-language area with the small textual base from Sweden is not a proper approach. It is therefore not astonishing that not all ingredients of the polemical repertoire can be found in *Några wijsor om Antichristum*. However, later polemical texts such as a handwritten Swedish pasquill from the late 1570s²¹ clearly prove that even Swedish texts could be much more elaborate and contain a broader dogmatic, rhetorical, and polemical perspective than is commonly assumed.

The last song *En nunnos ursegt* ("A Nun's Excuse") reveals – in contrast to the first three texts – an intertextual relationship connecting it to a medieval genre, the so-called *Nonnenklage*²² or *planctus monialis*.²³ In the medieval texts, a nun living

20 Amongst others: WA 3,610; WA 5,339. For this see also: Johannes Ehmann, "Luther, Türken und Islam: Eine Untersuchung zum Türken- und Islambild Martin Luthers (1515–1546)," in *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008); Leppin, *Transformationen*, 481 ff; Thomas Kaufmann, "Türckenbüchlein": *Zur christlichen Wahrnehmung "Türkischer Religion" in Spätmittelalter und Reformation*, *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte* 97 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 42–55; Leticia Alvarez-Recio and Bradley L. Drew, *Fighting the Antichrist: A Cultural History of Anti-Catholicism in Tudor England*, *Rameras De Babilonia: Historia Cultural Del Anticaticolismo En La Inglaterra Tudor* [Orig. pub. as *Rameras De Babilonia: Historia Cultural del Anticaticolismo en la Inglaterra Tudor*] (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 20–21, 27–28 ff.

21 "En lithen wnderwijsning fwl medh Papisters wilfarelser, ther hwar och en Christen skall taga sigh wara före. Stelt på rijm till Antichristi präst Húru han schall stella sit handell wthi wercket", in Kiiskinen, *Fem källor från den svenska reformationstiden i Finland*, 286–96.

22 Wolfgang Menzel, *Deutsche Dichtung von der ältesten bis auf die neueste Zeit*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Krabbe, 1859), 37–38.

23 Susanne Fritsch-Staar, *Unglückliche Ehefrauen: zum deutschsprachigen Malmariée-Lied*, *Philologische Studien und Quellen* 134 (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1995), 121; Karl Goedeke, *Grundriss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung aus den Quellen: Viertes Buch: Von der Reformation bis zum dreissigjährigen Kriege* (Berlin, 2011). See as well, *Poesia Latina Medievale*, ed. Giuseppe Vecchi (Parma: Guanda, 1958), 282; Hennig Brinkmann, *Geschichte der lateinischen Liebesdichtung im Mittelalter*, Reihe Libelli 147, 2nd revised edition., (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), 9; *Antología del latin cristiano y medieval: Introducción y textos*, ed. José Martínez Gàzquez and Rubén Florio (Bahia Blanca: Universidad Nacional del Sur, 2006), 96–99; Annette Kern-Stähler,

against her will in a monastery laments her fate and longs for sexual fulfillment with her beloved outside the monastery's walls. *En nunnos ursegt* transforms this discourse. Now, instead of worldly love, the nun's longing is for the evangelical life in accordance with Scripture and especially with God's command expressed in the first two chapters of Genesis. Secondly, it is possible to identify two German songs from the sixteenth century which clearly reveal a strong textual relationship with *En nunnos ursegt*. Not only is the narrative the same in these German texts, but even much of the wording represents nothing other than a translation. Both German texts are found in a *Liederbuch* (songbook) containing a collection of worldly songs in the vernacular. Moreover, both songbooks are themselves younger than *En nunnos ursegt*, which was first published in 1530²⁴ and again in *Några wijsor om Antichristum* (1536). The *Ambraser Liederbuch* (1582)²⁵ contains as song no. 109 *Ach Gott, wem soll ichs klagen. Ein Klaglied einer Klosterjungfrauen*.²⁶ An older version of this text, printed in 1531 in Zwickau, is found in the collection *Bergkreien*.²⁷

The fact remains, however, that songs printed in songbooks are usually part of an older oral, possibly even handwritten, tradition. Thus, the year of publication does not give us an adequately clear understanding as to the date of the composition of these texts. As was the case with the Swedish song, the German versions also clearly reformulate the ideas of the Reformation. Their claim is that monastery life is inferior to marriage and those who live in monasteries are tricked by the false doctrine of the Roman Church. It is therefore clear that all three texts, even if they utilize some pre-reformation components, were written after the Reformation.

En nunnos ursegt does not represent a translation of one of these German texts preserved in *Bergkreien* and *Ambraser Liederbuch*. The actual situation is rather more complex. The German variants of this text turn out to be more closely related to each other than to the Swedish version, which was, however, the first one to be printed.

"Zur Klausur von Nonnen in englischen Frauenklöstern des späten Mittelalters: Die Lincolner Visitation Returns 1429–1449," in *Studien und Texte zur literarischen und materiellen Kultur der Frauenklöster im späten Mittelalter*, eds. Eva Schlotheuber and Volker Honemann Falk Eisermann, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 99 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 103–18.

²⁴ *Några gudliga visor: den äldsta svenska psalmboken*, ed. Erik Person (Göteborg: Centrum, 1937); Olavus Petri, *Samlade Skrifter*, ed. Bengt Hesselmann, vol. 2 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1915), 561–69.

²⁵ Joseph Bergmann, ed., *Das Ambraser Liederbuch vom Jahre 1582* (Hildesheim: Olm, 1962).

²⁶ Albrecht Classen, *Deutsche Liederbücher des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. *Volksliedstudien* 1 (Münster: Waxmann, 2001), 28–61; Albrecht Classen, ed., *Deutsche Frauenlieder des fünfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhunderts: Authentische Stimmen in der deutschen Frauenliteratur der Frühneuzeit oder Vertreter einer poetischen Gattung (das "Frauenlied")?* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999).

²⁷ *Etlche hubsche bergkreien / geistlich vnd weltlich zusammen gebracht* (Zwickau: Wolfgang Meyerpeck d.Ä., 1531). [VD16 E 4065]. New editions of this songbook were printed 1533 and 1536 in Zwickau and 1537 in Nuremberg. Hans Rupprich, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, Band 4, Teil 2: Die Deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock, T. 2. Das Zeitalter der Reformation: 1520–1570* (München: Beck, 1973), 241.

Even if not impossible, it seems to be implausible that a Swedish song was used as a *Vorlage* for the German variants. To me the most likely solution is that an older German version of this song was in existence, which was then transferred, for example though German burghers in Stockholm or German tradesman, to a Swedish-speaking context. This older German version, then, would also have been the *Vorlage* for the songs printed in *Bergkreien* and *Ambraser Liederbuch*.

En nunnos ursegt does not explicitly refer to the Antichrist. It is generally much less polemical than the first three songs and offers a strikingly concrete example of the new, evangelical life – not an allegorical description of the deceptions of the Roman Church and its leader. This last song thus gives an explanation of one of the Reformation's most important topoi: the critique against monastic life and celibacy connected with the reformer's teachings about marriage and sexuality. However, both the title of *Några wijsor om Antichristum* and the first three songs reveal that monastic life and celibacy have to be understood as part of the false doctrine of Rome and the Antichrist. In some way, the narrative of *Några wijsor om Antichristum* can be understood as a climax. First, the Antichrist and his nature (*wesende* in the full title of the print) is presented through three songs. Finally, one of the most important questions for the Reformation is addressed: monastic vows. This fits with the picture we have of monastic life in Sweden around the year 1530 – it was an institution under pressure. Olaus Petri had criticized it, King Gustav Vasa restrained the cloisters and, finally and most importantly, monks and nuns abandoned their convents – all of this in rapid succession.²⁸ Indeed, with respect to the Roman Antichrist, monastic life and celibacy become one of his chief marks, the epitome of Rome as the unholy city.

Några wijsor om Antichristum: Translation in Time, Space – and in the Brain of the Researchers

The polemical songs of *Några wijsor om Antichristum* reveal an elaborated network of different *translationes*: firstly, the idea that Rome might not be the Holy City, but the unholy is transferred from the early Church's interpretation of the Book of Revelation via Augustine and Orosius to the Middle Ages. The image of the unholy city of Rome was merged with the notion of the personified Antichrist, deriving from Adso de Montier-en-Der's tractate and emphasized among others by the spiritual Franciscans. This translation over time shows in fact that the history of

²⁸ “Most of the mendicant houses were depopulated during the later half of the 1520s and earlier half of the 1530s.” Martin Berntson, *Klostren och reformationen. Upplösningen av kloster och konvent i Sverige 1523–1596* (Skellefteå: Norma, 2003), 342.

(religious) ideas needs the view of the *longue durée*: when Luther and other reformers claim at the beginning of the sixteenth century that Rome is a depraved city and the pope the Antichrist, they are in fact reformulating a criticism which has roots at least more than thousand years earlier.

Secondly, we can observe that there is in fact a translation, most probably from German vernacular poetry (the songs printed in *Bergkreien* and *Ambraser Liederbuch*, which probably had the same *Vorlage* as *En nunnos ursegt*), showing that there is as well a translation in time, from worldly medieval songs to religious polemics in the sixteenth century. This fact even proves that there is an interaction between texts deriving from Central Europe and polemical writing in Sweden during the age of reformation. This circumstance is in fact very interesting as many researchers in recent decades have downplayed the importance of the cultural transfer from Central Europe for the Reformation in Sweden.²⁹

But, this second circumstance even shows the black holes facing historians dealing with Scandinavian history around the year 1500. In fact, in respect to *Några wijsor om Antichristum*, we do not just lack information about how and when the different ideas expressed in these polemical songs found their way to Sweden, we also know little about the origin of these songs, the author, or the wider context and usage during the early reformation in Sweden. Most likely *Några wijsor om Antichristum* was published in 1536. It survived in a mere two copies, each representing a different edition. This fact alone exemplifies the extremely low level of transmission for written and printed artefacts.³⁰

Några wijsor om Antichristum illustrates, in fact, how little we know about the Swedish Reformation. The four polemical songs comprising this print were published anonymously, though the first letters of the different stanzas of the first song reveal the name Olaf Suensson. On this basis, Isak Collijn concluded that the song's author was a man of the same name who worked as a scribe in Stockholm during the late 1520s and 1530s³¹ – however, this is a matter of debate. Assuming the name implies

29 An overview over the different interpretations of the Swedish reformation is provided in the following publications: Otfried Czaika, "Die Reformation in Schweden, ein Forschungsrückblick und Diskussionsbeitrag," *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* (2004); Otfried Czaika, "Melanchthon Neglectus: Das Melanchthonbild im Schatten der schwedischen Lutherrenaissance," *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* (2009); Otfried Czaika, "Entwicklungslinien der Historiographie zu Reformation und Konfessionalisierung in Skandinavien seit 1945," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 100 (2009); Otfried Czaika, Prolegomena zur frühneuzeitlichen Geschichte Skandinaviens: Zur Periodisierungsdiskussion frühneuzeitlicher Geschichte und Quellenlage," in *Reformatio Baltica. Kulturwirkungen der Reformation in den Metropolen des Ostseeraums*, eds. Johann Anselm Steiger, Axel E. Walter, and Heinrich Assel (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018).

30 Isak Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600*, vol. 1, Skrifter (Uppsala: Svenska litteratursällskapet, 1934–38), 41–43.

31 *Ibid.*, 41; Olav D. Schalín, "En ny variant av 1536 års svenska psalmbok," *Nordisk tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen* 20/1933 (1933); Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi*, 1:368–70.

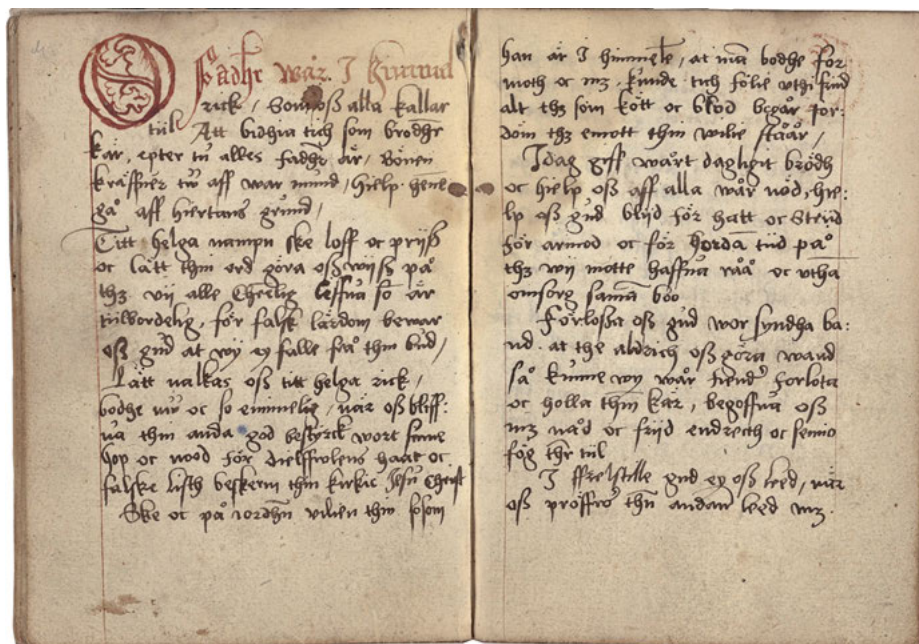


Fig. 16.2: Några wijsor om Anthichristum Stockholm, with the Lord's Prayer in Swedish (*O fadher wår i himmelrick*) (unpaginated pages 4–6).

authorship, its occurrence in the first song does not necessitate that Suensson was the author of all four songs. Furthermore, the name could have been a secret dedication to Olaf Suensson, the possible Maecenas of this publication.

Not only do we have the difficulty of establishing authorship, we also lack any firm data proving that the two editions of *Några wijsor om Antichristum* were actually printed in 1536. As the year of publication is found neither on the title page nor in a *colophonium*, the actual evidence is circumstantial at best. Both unique copies of this work survived in *Sammelbänden* or *colligates*.³² Both colligates contain several hand-written texts (Fig. 16.2) and two other works printed in 1536: the first Swedish hymnal (*Swenske songer*) and a Swedish translation of the psalms of King David (*Davids psaltare*). It is on this circumstantial basis that book historians have concluded that *Några wijsor om Antichristum* was also published in 1536. Nevertheless, the two editions of this work might have been printed several years earlier or later and might well have been bound together in 1536 or sometime thereafter. Thus, the case made for the printing date is anything but certain.

³² The first has survived in a colligate presently owned by the Swedish National Library (*Kungliga biblioteket*) in Stockholm, the second in the archive of Taivassalo parish in southwestern Finland.

Additionally, we lack any sources indicating how many copies were printed and which of the two editions was published first. At a minimum, it is certain that the preserved copies represent two very similar yet separate editions. Minor textual variants and typographical modifications spread over the whole work prove that the entire text was re-typed, thus demonstrating that the book market demanded more copies than were initially produced.

The third *translatio* of *Några wijsor om Antichristum* can be observed in the research history, and in fact it can nearly be described as a negation of translation.

Book historians, and even hymnologists, have been aware of the existence of these polemical songs, but, as pointed out above, not only the Swedish but even the other Scandinavian reformations has often been described as slower, more conservative, and less irascible than the reformations in Central Europe. This view of the Scandinavian reformations is, however, only partly true. In fact, polemical texts or radical tendencies in the Scandinavian reformations have often been overlooked as they did not fit into the national and theological narratives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³³

Among other discourses, one finds this tendency in Nathan Söderblom's idea of "evangelical catholicity."³⁴ This, along with his work on mysticism and Martin Luther,³⁵ influenced the interpretation of the Swedish Reformation as being more conservative (that is "catholic") and less radical than other reformations in Europe.

Nevertheless, as was the case with other reformations, more polemical and even radical voices could also be heard in Sweden. One example of this is found with the radical reformer Melchior Hoffmann. After his Baltic adventures in Dorpat (Tartu) and Reval (Tallinn), Hoffmann visited Stockholm in the mid-1520s.³⁶ Before he was expelled from the country, he published a polemical print in Stockholm offering an interpretation of the twelfth chapter of the prophet Daniel.³⁷ This was by no means an isolated incident. Radical tendencies can be observed in Stockholm even after Hoffmann's expulsion, at least in the atmosphere of the German-speaking milieu.³⁸

33 Czaika, "Prolegomena zur frühneuzeitlichen Geschichte skandinaviens," 884–87, 96–901.

34 Nathan Söderblom, "Evangelische Katholizität," in *Christliche Frömmigkeit und Konfessionen*, eds. Dietz Lange, Nathan Söderblom (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012). Note that the concept of "evangelical catholicity" served as an instrument to further his ecumenical ambitions.

35 Dietz Lange, *Nathan Söderblom und seine Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 145–48ff.

36 Klaus Deppermann, *Melchior Hofmann. Soziale Unruhen und Apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

37 Melchior Hoffmann, "Das Xij Capitel Des Prophetē Danielis Außgelegt" (Stockholm: Kungliga Boktryckeriet, 1526).

38 Emil Schieche, *Die Anfänge der deutschen St. Gertruds-Gemeinde zu Stockholm im 16. Jahrhundert* (Münster: Böhlau, 1952), 22–30.

In Finland (part of the Swedish Empire until 1809) Sabbatarians appeared in the 1550s.³⁹ The presence of these Sabbatarians illustrates a central problem historians have with the history of reformation in Scandinavia – the lack of sources. Aside from one single source naming the Sabbatarians, no other information exists about this radical group in Finland.

Knowing that *Några wijsor om Antichristum* was printed in two very similar editions, we may rightfully say that these polemical texts about the Roman Antichrist, printed in or around 1536, represent a kind of bestseller – at least by Scandinavian proportions. Three of the four polemical songs⁴⁰ had appeared previously in the 1530 song book, *Några gudelige visor (Some Godly Songs)*.⁴¹ The text from 1530 remains, however, unaccounted for and only the fact that these songs were a part of this print is known to us. Later, in 1572 *Några wijsor om Antichristum* were compiled with some other religious songs and printed again.⁴² The first of the songs about Antichrist, *O Rom går thet nu så med tich*, survived until the seventeenth century as a part of Swedish hymnals.⁴³

These polemical texts thus prove that they are not only a translation of ideas deriving from the Bible, the Old Church, and the Middle Ages, but these texts themselves were even transferred to later prints and were a part of other polemical and even more radical tendencies which can be observed at least punctual during the Swedish reformation. Thus these texts serve as well as a critical corrective that enriches our understanding of the Swedish reformation.

Last but not least *Några wijsor om Antichristum* illustrate the main problem confronting historians dealing with medieval and early modern Scandinavia – the sources we have are incomplete and punctual. It may be that punctual sources telling about resistance against the reformation or those expressing more radical and polemical tendencies of the reformation are simply punctual. But it could even be that these sources are paradigms and thus give us insights into what was characteristic

39 P. A. Norstedt, ed., *Gvr – Gustav Vasas Registratur [= Konung Gustaf den förstes registratur]*, ed. Johan Axel Almquist, vol. 24 (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1861–1916), 465–69. For this see as well: Jason Lavery, *Reforming Finland: The Diocese of Turku in the Age of Gustav Vasa 1523–1560*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 210 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 171–73.

40 *O Rom går thet nu så med tich* [Oh Rome, how does it go for you now]; *En nunnos ursegt* [A nun's excuse]; *Gud fadher wilie wij prijsa* [God the father we want to praise].

41 Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi*, 1:362–64.

42 Laurentsson, ed., *Någhra Andeliga Wijsor: Simeons Loffsong, Luc. Ij* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1572); Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi*, 1:406.

43 Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi*, 1:449–54; “Nyfunna tryck av Torbjörn Tidemansson,” *Nordisk tidsskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen* 17/1930 (1930), 5. The song *O Rom går thet nu så med tich* is also a part of the Swedish hymnal printed in 1695; a Finnish variant of this text can be found in the Finnish hymnal of 1701. Fredric Cleve, “Förändringar i tolkningen av reformationen avspeglade i en finländsk psalm,” in *Norden och Europa: Språk, kultur och identitet. Forskningsprogrammet Norden och Europa*, ed. Krister Ståhlberg (Copenhagen: Nordisk Ministerråd, 1999), 61.

for the Swedish reformation. Scandinavia was not only less literate than the central parts of Europe, it was also defined by another factor that has frustrated the historian's task. Most buildings in Scandinavian cities were constructed of wood and regularly destroyed in devastating conflagrations. Many sources from the age of Reformation have literally gone up in flames. The low level of literacy and the destruction of sources through fire are thus the main reasons why more is not known about Scandinavian history from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period.⁴⁴ Historians dealing with these periods therefore must always face the incomplete story of *translatio* from these historical periods to our time.

44 For this see: Czaika, "Prolegomena Zur Frühneuzeitlichen Geschichte Skandinaviens," 903–06.



Fig. 17.0: Epitaph, c.1603, from Kerteminde Church, Funen. Jerusalem is discernible in the background.