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## The Power of Names: Radical Identities in the Reformation Era

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In the summer of 1543 an Anabaptist was arrested and questioned by the authorities in Beyernaumburg, a village nestled in the southern Harz region on the border between Saxon-Anhalt and Thuringia. He was the 'Anabaptist with no name', for despite the insistence by the three pastors who questioned him to say who he was, he would not do so. He said 'He has no name, for God, his father, also has no name.'<sup>1</sup> This Clint Eastwood of the Anabaptist world perturbed the questioners, for as well as just being stubbornly obstructive, his reasons for refusing to give his name undercut the assumptions about kinship and belonging which held together early modern communities. The man not only declined to give his name, but also said he had no profession aside from a calling from God, he would not say where he was from because he rejected the whoredom of his mother, and he declared that baptism, communion, and absolution were all meaningless garbage. The Devil, not God, had created flesh, so all such earthly ties were redundant. In the ultimate act of negation, he said he 'cursed the hour when he was born', attempting to denigrate his own existence. With one simple gesture, his obstinate anonymity undermined some of the most basic ideas about identity and family. Not only was it hard to identify and track down a man who would not give his name, but he was a nameless menace for other reasons. His questioners had no choice but to refer to him as the 'Wiedertäufer', but without putting a name to a face, something fundamental about this individual was missing. People rely on names to interact, to label, and to recognise. Both names and processes of naming or de-naming, whether voluntary or forced, are fundamental to ideas about belonging and human experience. During the Reformation era, at a time when notions of self and community underwent a transformation, naming strategies take us to the heart of a fundamental dimension of devotional experience, as well as revealing the way in which lines were drawn between different confessional identities.

What's in a name? One of the most famous citations from English literature, the question asked by Shakespeare's Juliet as she tries to justify to herself her new love for Romeo and tell herself his name is of no consequence. But the name does matter, for he is not just a young man but part of a titled kinship network which entailed obligations of revenge and loyalty. Names are not just names but come with all sorts of connotations about who we are.<sup>2</sup> Scholarship has moved away from a purely semiotic model of the meaning of names to consider what names do and how they are used. Names reveal ideas about personal identity but they also relate to a range of social interactions and are intertwined with kinship, memory, geography, and gender. Names have the power to bind communities together, but if they do help to establish identities, these are neither stable nor coherent since names can change. Individuals often have more than one name which can vary depending on the social context. When married, I was 'Mrs Katherine Gibson', when at work 'Dr Kat Hill', to my father I am 'Katty', and in my gym where I practice martial arts just 'Kat', or at times I have been known by my (affectionately meant) nickname, 'Bully'. Individuals may try to recreate themselves through naming strategies. Jacques Derrida started using the name Jacques rather than Jackie when he began to publish. The simple, French name with overtones of Christian significance was suitable for the 'space of literary and philosophical legitimation'.<sup>3</sup> Names can be associated with authority, and therefore just as the act of naming and de-naming has power, so the question of who has the responsibility to confer names is important.<sup>4</sup>

The Reformation forged new identities, names, and naming practices. The defining moment of Luther's challenge to the Catholic church in 1517 was accompanied by a new title, for at around the same time that he composed the Ninety-Five Theses, he began to sign off with the Hellenized version of his name 'Eleutherius', meaning 'the freed one'. He retained this form of address for several months before reverting to the more Germanic 'Luther', but dropping forever the family name of his father, Luder, which had associations in early modern culture with dirt and immorality. The change was inextricably intertwined with the foundational narratives of the Reformation.

Scholars have vigorously debated when and where the reformer had become 'free' during the so-called tower experience, the moment at which Luther realised that he was liberated from the constraints of Catholic theology and subject to God's justice alone.<sup>5</sup> So Luder became Luther, but this was not the only transition the reformer underwent. Brother Martin became Doctor Luther, the monk became husband and father, and later prophet.<sup>6</sup> Luther was by no means the first or the only Reformation scholar to classicise his name. Johannes Reuchlin gave Philip Schwarzzerd a Greek translation of his name to celebrate his scholarly talents, and the famous epithet of 'Melanchthon' stuck. The Reformation reordered hierarchies, family relationships, and professions, and in the process it opened up spaces for new naming strategies which could express different identities.

Names were often deployed in the ideological and personal battles of confessional conflict. This could be positively, when people chose to conjure up new personas, as Luther did with his name, or when Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt took up the identity of Brother Andrew and lived as a peasant.<sup>7</sup> However, naming was often negative, and a fundamental part of Reformation invective was the use of insulting titles to censure enemies and disparage opponents. Luther had a talent for names, whether it was denouncing the Pope as the Anti-Christ or duke Henry of Brunswick as Hans Wurst, whilst Luther's Catholic opponents such as Johannes Cochlaeus lampooned him as a seven-headed monster, pointing out the reformer's many ghastly aspects and simultaneously likening him to the beast of the Apocalypse.<sup>8</sup>

Names and nomenclature are particularly important in the history of the radical Reformation (if we choose to call it such). In many ways the whole ideological edifice of the Reformation and its variations is founded on naming strategies, which pit mainstream versus left wing, magisterial versus radical.<sup>9</sup> Within these broad divisions, taxonomic structures categorise and label each variation of mainstream or radical thought. However, this terminology, whilst broadly accepted, remains problematic, since it creates unnatural separation between mainstream and radical, it gives the 'radical' reformation an ideological coherence which it never had, as if all these diverse streams of thought were connected, and yet it also compartmentalises the 'radical' movement into neat branches with a traceable lineage. Names such as Mennonite, Platonic Spiritualist, or Schwenckfelder designate belonging and genealogy, but also betray more polemical judgements about the relative worth of these movements in relation to the 'mainstream' Reformation, since the labels are often the inheritance of confessional conflict. The moniker 'Anabaptist' was, after all, an insult applied by opponents to demonstrate that those who advocated adult baptism held erroneous views. Men and women who did accept an adult baptism saw themselves as baptising properly not re-baptising because, they argued, the act performed on an infant was devoid of meaning. Consequently, in German scholarship 'Täufer' has been substituted for the derogatory 'Wiedertäufer'.

Whilst it is needless to repeat the ins and outs of arguments about what radical groups should be called, historians need to be sensitive to the legacy of the Reformation, which created a bitter tradition of naming opponents. Without mounting a full-scale iconoclastic attack on terms as meaningless, it is important to realise that a name did not just indicate a defined set of beliefs and ideas, but a variety of ways of acting, which were often constructed to fit polemical and confessional needs. Heresiography became an essential tool of those who attempted to defend a perceived orthodoxy, though orthodoxy itself was a fluid entity. Not everything is socially constructed. Differences between confessional groups were real and meaningful, and accusations of non-conformity carried weight, but the label Schwärmer (Enthusiast) or Wiedertäufer did not necessarily equate to an absolute reality. Merely to accept the terminology is (as Michael Driedger's contribution in this volume elucidates) problematic because contemporary historiography can simply seem to reinforce the intellectual schemata of the early modern world.

Recent work has focused on chipping away at the constructed terms and genealogies that have sometimes been equated to confessional identities by Reformation historians. Categorisations do not map neatly onto subjective realities and are an imperfect way of thinking about identity because they do not allow us to access experience. Luther and others spoke disparagingly of anyone who had been baptised more than once, yet in the early days of reform,

the tag of 'Anabaptist' did not necessarily designate a movement or confessional belonging but rather suspect practices that might be included with all other sorts of questionable and 'schwärmerisch' behaviour.<sup>10</sup> Anabaptist is a catchword for a collection of diverse realities, a name which tries to use one act to define people's beliefs. However, it does not consider the actuality of day to day experience, as an individual's life was not consumed entirely by being a 'Wiedertäufer'. Furthermore, labels were not fixed or stable ways of denoting certain types of unacceptable behaviour. The threat from the 'Wiedertäufer' was not ideologically distinct from that of other 'enthusiasts' or apparent troublemakers, and in a confessionally diverse area such as Strasbourg in the early years of the Reformation neat distinctions break down rapidly. Anabaptist was not even the only name of choice. The Swiss and Strasbourg reformers in particular favoured Catabaptist, literally anti-baptiser, not just re-baptiser. Though modern scholarship has plumped for Anabaptist, the more starkly negative Catabaptist was still in use in the 1530s. Ambrosius Blaurer wrote to Martin Bucer in November 1531 to report on his attempts to convert Catabaptists in Esslingen.<sup>11</sup>

Understanding the polemic deployment of these terms is essential, especially since the hostile names such as Wiedertäufer became common parlance. Even if many radical groups rejected the labels given to them, the classifications reinforced a sense of identity born out of a particular power dynamic. But we also need to understand how those branded radicals sought to name themselves; if and when they accepted the names given to them; and how they attempted to define themselves in relation to other groups or individuals, since naming practices apparently set radicals apart.<sup>12</sup> Naming was important for the authorities to give structure to the threat from non-conformists who often consisted of individuals with diverse beliefs, sometimes spread across extensive distances. The search for coherence, however, by establishing connections and genealogies through naming strategies was equally as important for Anabaptists, whether they lived in separate but coherent communities, like the Hutterites, or existed in scattered groups as in central Germany. Anabaptists often rejected the conventional kinship structures, communal bonds, and naming practices of the world around them, so scholarship should seek to explain what took their place. Investigating how names and naming were used by Anabaptists, not just for people and titles, but also places and ideas, does not just indicate how they were perceived and attacked, but reveals the fundamental structures that organised their communities in the face of persecution and hostility. Such hostility allowed Anabaptists to create legacies which have continued to provide a sense of belonging to the present day. Yet we should not make too sharp a separation between the systems of naming and the individuals who used or bore these titles. Names do more than allow us to look at social structures, or the symbolic framework of culture. They provided the potential for the creation of new identities. By understanding how naming strategies functioned, historians can go beyond the notion that names represented definitive or static divisions in the religious landscape of the early modern world, and instead use them to analyse the question of confessional experience.

The defining feature of the Wiedertäufer was the rejection of infant baptism. For adults who had already been baptised as children, this meant accepting a new adult baptism. However, for prospective parents, newly converted, the decision not to baptise infants could be emotional and difficult, provoking debates about the very nature of children. By rejecting baptism, they also rejected the most important naming ceremony in early modern Europe, the moment when the child experienced social birth, if we speak about this in anthropological terms. Namelessness was frightening because it had associations with fear, chaos, and death.<sup>13</sup> In the early modern world baptism served to introduce the child to the community, confirmed parents and lineage, and created wider kinship networks. The child's name was made public, and the priest exorcised and cleansed the newly christened child as it moved from nothingness to somethingness. Whilst reformers dispensed with some or all of the ritual cleansing elements, baptism remained and remains fundamental as a naming ceremony at which a child's identity and belonging are confirmed. Anabaptists rejected this altogether, as parents left their children unbaptised and severed the link between baptism and the introduction of the infant to the world.<sup>14</sup>

For an anthropologist such as Clifford Geertz, names are part of a symbolic world that reveals the processes by which people are individualised, and this is a universal constant across societies though the symbolic frameworks vary.<sup>15</sup> Anthropology has overstated the extent to which naming and identity went hand in hand -the relationship between symbol and effect is too neat- but it is undeniable that altering naming strategies created social, psychological, and emotional cracks in the edifice which structured community and belonging. Anabaptists removed the public proclamation of a name and identity at infant baptism, and dissolved the existing association of naming with kinships, godparents, and the community. Parents had to find alternative ways of naming and marking the acceptance of the child, and the status of infants often seemed to remain ambiguous, with them sometimes being referred to as 'midling Christi' (halfway Christians).<sup>16</sup> Simultaneously the power of naming shifted away from the church authorities to the parents or to the communal leaders in more organised Anabaptist communities. More than ritual, liturgy and theology changed with the condemnation of infant baptism; new possibilities for expressing confessional identity were offered by different naming rituals and different names, as well as by the hierarchies and bonds these names established.

For the most part scant evidence exists about what Anabaptists parents or families did if they had decided not to baptise their children, but the potential of naming strategies is clear in other contexts. Although they accepted infant baptism, English Puritan communities in Sussex at the end of the sixteenth century offer a remarkable example of the way naming practices associated with birth could be reordered to express new devotional realities. Puritans adopted grace names, names such as Repent, Fear-God, or Safe-on-high. Such memorable titles were of course immortalised by the unforgettable Praise-God Barebones whose name will forever be associated with the parliamentary assembly that sat for a mere five months in 1653. The Barebones Parliament is, one must concede, a much more dramatic label than the formal title, the Nominated Assembly. Whilst these titles have the air of the cast of characters for a Restoration comedy, they reflected a desire by a particular section of Protestant England to live out their religious hopes and ideals. Nicholas Tyacke's careful analysis of the baptismal registers reveals that some names followed a cycle of repentance for sin and rejoicing at the removal of God's wrath, whilst other names seemed to embody marital theology or express joy at contemporary events, such as the defeat of the Armada. Providence itself was to be remembered in the names of the children.<sup>17</sup>

Because Anabaptists would not have appeared on the baptismal registers, evidence for the way that they may have developed naming strategies is sketchier. In Hutterite communities, able to construct new structures from the ground up, children were not looked after by their mothers and fathers exclusively but cared for by extended relatives and members of the community, often young women, and after an initial period with the family, they attended a *klein Schule*<sup>18</sup> Named association with parents was less important on an individual level but links between infants and adults came to express a bond with a family within a family and across generations in their closed communities. Parents would often name their first child after themselves and subsequent offspring after grandparents, uncles, and aunts. The lack of diversity of family names and indeed personal names (many of which followed biblical examples) in Mennonite and Hutterite communities, which persisted beyond the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, indicates how powerful names and naming practices could be.<sup>19</sup> Hutterites living in north America today are descended from only eighteen families who fled persecution, four of whom died out, leaving fourteen surnames in use. The migrant communities split up into groups named after the leaders – the Schmiedeleut, the Dariusleut and the Lehrerleut – and most Hutterites are descended from only 400 individuals.<sup>20</sup> The Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, now based in Kansas, has in its possession a record of membership which was started in Prussia in the eighteenth century and continued in Russia and Kansas as the community moved. It provides an enduring written testimony of names and belonging, connecting Mennonites in Kansas to their own history.<sup>21</sup> In these communities, given names expressed a connection with the extended Anabaptist family and a biblical past, and surnames embodied the strength and tradition of true faith, reflecting a lineage which rooted the

group through nomenclature in a history stretching back many years and connected to locations where they had once lived.

For one community, the infamous kingdom of Münster, an account exists which discusses the way in which the Anabaptists named children in dramatic fashion, albeit from a hostile commentator. Henry Gresbeck's narrative of the events which overtook the city was written to justify his own role in bringing down the regime after he deserted his post on the Kreuztor and gave intelligence to the besieging armies. He describes in detail how children were brought to John of Leiden, who was dressed up in robes as king and holding court, to be given a name. The ceremony was public and collective; many children would be brought at once, and John would run through the alphabet, dubbing each child in turn with a name starting with the next letter of the alphabet. If he got to the end then he would turn to biblical names: David, Abraham, Isaac, Israel, Jacob, the patriarchs. Some children were named Adam and Eve. His own child, to whom he was only a stepfather as he had married the pregnant widow of John Mathias, was a girl, and he apparently named her Newborn. She was heralded as a prophet's child and a queen's child. There was no subtle imagery here. According to Gresbeck, Leiden said that no such child had been born since the birth of Christ, and no such king had reigned.<sup>22</sup> The use of the names of biblical prophets or Adam and Eve had obvious significance, lending authority to the apocalyptic regime that had been established.

The hyperbole and drama of Gresbeck's account is obvious, and he seems to want to make Leiden seem as deranged as possible with delusions of grandeur. However, it was not complete fantasy. Leiden confessed himself that he believed he had a prophetic calling to be king, and he presented himself with the apparel of a king and court, celebrated in public rituals. Furthermore, the names he apparently chose for infants were entirely consistent with the scriptural naming patterns in Hutterite and Mennonite communities.<sup>23</sup> Nor was Leiden the only Anabaptist to style himself in this way. On a much smaller scale and to much less dramatic effect, the Anabaptist Augustin Bader became convinced he was a prophet, inspired by the apocalyptic theology of Hans Hut and the Jewish Kabbalah. In a mill at Läuern near Blaubeuren, Bader gathered a handful of followers, proclaimed his infant son the new Messiah, and had robes and golden ornaments made to reflect this kingly status.<sup>24</sup> Such theatrical displays were not the norm, but whilst Bader's small gathering was hardly comparable in scale to Münster, it reminds us that communities might try to enact prophetic or apocalyptic theologies in lived experience.

Gresbeck goes further by suggesting that the whole naming strategy was based on a control of nomenclature and a complete reordering of language and power. To provide the starting point for his naming ceremony, Leiden issued a new alphabet, posted up in the streets, with words next to each letter. These seemed to convey a loose message about a king who rules over all, the wretched becoming happy, about purification, and the saints of the kingdom of God.<sup>25</sup> Gresbeck presented a system for providing titles that was bound up with the desire to tie together the strands of the religious vision of the city and to collapse present and past, both the biblical past and the immediate past of the reign of Mathias. Leiden, the king, now had the right to name, and in so doing he affirmed his power at the head of this divine kingdom. Gresbeck is not a reliable commentator, and it is unlikely that all the details he records reflected reality. Yet there is plausibility in his suggestion that the Münster Anabaptists reordered naming rituals and integrated these children into the community, albeit without baptism, by making them nominally part of the religious, linguistic dynamic. The peaceful Bruderhof of the Hutterites and the frenzied community of Münster were very different, but they did share something: the desire to use names, associated with the past and biblical tradition, to express a sense of religious belonging and shape the community.

Beyond the question of baptism and naming infants, Anabaptist communities restructured naming practices and kinship ties in more far reaching ways, as the case of the Anabaptist with no name suggests. Confessional choices impacted naming choices, and with the advent of reform, individuals had the opportunity to recreate themselves with different names and to reorder relationships with others. Thomas Müntzer derided enemies such as Egranus as a pestilential crow

gorging on carcasses but also used naming strategies in his letters to express his conviction that he had a prophetic and divine calling.<sup>26</sup> With not wholly sincere humility when he wrote to Nicholas Hausmann, Müntzer referred to himself as 'a servant elect of God', and several correspondents mirrored this image in their replies. Hans Sommerschuh communicated with Müntzer just after the reformer's departure from Zwickau in 1521, addressing him rather sycophantically as 'your Reverence' and signing off as 'the Disciple'.<sup>27</sup> Names and titles also served as a disarming strategy, allowing Müntzer to drive home his disapproval with force. The combination of familiarity and pseudo-reverence with criticism was pointed when he addressed fellow reformers. He wrote to Philip Melanchthon in March 1522 soon after Luther had returned from hiding in the Wartburg to comment on recent reforms. Müntzer opened the letter in seeming obsequious fashion:

To the Christian man Philip Melanchthon, professor of the sacred Scriptures.

Greetings, instrument of Christ. Your theology I embrace with all my heart for it has snatched many souls from the snares of the hunters.

But Müntzer quickly proceeded to express his disapproval of the Wittenberg reforms. He reproved Melanchthon for worshipping a 'dumb God' and bemoaned his ignorance for being unable to distinguish between the elect and the wicked.<sup>28</sup> Müntzer's efforts to use names to express his religious ideals sometimes went awry. In one letter to an unknown recipient, Müntzer signed off as 'filius excussionis', literally 'son of shaking', a reference to King Sisera in the Book of Job. Müntzer was attempting to use a proper Hebrew name but his etymology was confused. In a list of translated proper Hebrew titles, he gave for Sisera: 'knocking out of the rejoicing tooth'. Müntzer seemed to have confused Sisera (*gaudii exclusio*) with Sennaar (*excussio dentium*).<sup>29</sup> Despite his questionable scholarship on this point, naming was evidently important to Müntzer; he constructed identities, negotiated friendships and rivalries, and established hierarchies.

Müntzer's evocative and expressive names have to be seen in context, as part of the way the Reformation reconfigured relationships. Fraternal idioms, for example, became fundamental to early Reformation rhetoric, and Müntzer and his correspondents repeatedly drew on this language. Müntzer referred to Hausmann as 'my sweetest brother' and Franz Günther signed his letter 'your little brother in Christ'.<sup>30</sup> Titles, nicknames, derogatory insults, and new names within families and friendships, all called into question existing experience and identities because they invoked notions about kinship and social bonds, gender and the body. Gender can be considered a form of knowledge that establishes meaning for bodily differences, and names are essential for creating this knowledge since they are signs, inscribing connotations on our physicality.<sup>31</sup> Names are often, though not always, gender specific. Baptism, therefore, did not just mark acceptance in the community and bestow grace, but in part defined gender. In the late medieval ritual, after a query about the child's name and an enquiry about whether the child had been baptised already, the third question posed to the baptised asked after the sex of the child. The question mattered because the baptism ritual was different for boys and girls, with different prayers and different spaces used in the church.<sup>32</sup> When Anabaptists removed infant baptism, they dispensed with these ways in which gender norms and differences were enacted and written onto the body. Leiden's stepdaughter had no name which would identify her gender, and the Puritan grace names likewise were not gendered. In both cases, religious ideals took precedence over gendered identity.

Anabaptists also altered marriage and sexual relationships. The *Blutfreunde* in Thuringia, for example, held a form of sexual communion as a substitute for the Eucharist, engaging in sexual relations with men and women who were not their married partners. The Münster Anabaptists famously practised or enforced polygamy under the rule of John of Leiden, a fact which has led to sensationalist demonising.<sup>33</sup> In a revealing anecdote, the scribe who recorded the numbers of wives of these Anabaptists, working off information given by two boys in the city, got fed up after a while and said he could not write anymore since there were too many.<sup>34</sup> Being an Anabaptist could mean giving up earthly ties and normal modes of social and economic organisation, even when individuals did not necessarily subscribe to the notion of the community of goods. The authorities feared this meant holding even wives in common, and although this concern was greatly exaggerated, individual titles could become less important for Anabaptist communities as they

reconfigured conceptions of identity and belonging. Novel gendered and sexual practices were part of this process. Like so many other Anabaptists, the Münster authorities referred to their marital theology of polygamy in fraternal language. Men and women were brothers and sisters in Christ, and this justified the practice because it strengthened the union between God's children.<sup>35</sup> Names had a fundamental role to play in Anabaptist communities when normal modes of establishing gender norms and familial bonds were eroded. Direct reliance on biblical language could supersede other more conventional forms of address for children and adults as it expressed new realities.

Under these circumstances, existing names and labels became confused. Women were conventionally referred to by their husband's name, a feminised suffix indicating belonging and possession. However, in situations where women and men were conducting different sexual and marital arrangements, these names no longer matched the reality, and therefore a fracture developed between understanding and appearance. Different naming practices had the power both to enable new realities but also betray the conflicts caused by change. Marriage, like baptism, was partly a naming ceremony in which the wife would traditionally acquire the title of the husband, but this was not the case with the wives of the polygamous Anabaptists. The traditional marriage ceremony was apparently abandoned for a much more informal procedure, and although we must treat Gresbeck's wild accounts about how women were grabbed with some scepticism, marriage certainly did not occur with the same transference of identity through the public declaration of names. The list of Leiden's fifteen wives were all referred to by their existing names rather than his.<sup>36</sup> Possession and power were undoubtedly displayed in different ways, as Leiden apparently processed through the city with his wives in tow, the queen at the front, but it was not nomenclature that designated these women as his wives.<sup>37</sup> Names are not neutral and the rituals by which they are acquired and enacted matter; Anabaptists altered these practices, and whilst the experience of the Münster wives remains obscure, such changes had the potential to remould the reality of individual subjectivities.

In some senses, individuation through naming practices became less important for Anabaptists. New names were fundamental to creating a sense of identity but de-naming could also be a positive force for the community, especially for those Anabaptists whose sense of belonging came from giving up earthly ties and normal modes of organisation. The Hutterite communities of central Europe became famous in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for ceramic production. The objects were unusual not only for their unadorned yet elegant style and quality, but also because makers were not allowed to put their name to their work since this was a sign of pride. Though the name of a donor was permitted, designations of individual identity were not.<sup>38</sup> What marked something out as Hutterite, Haban ware, was the lack of a name, as well as the simplicity of design and the techniques. The emphasis on modesty and minimalism in all areas of Hutterite life, as well as adherence to codes of behaviour which emphasised conformity to communal rules, has continued to the present day. These communities felt the need to abandon associations with the outside world, but this insistence also had an impact on naming practices since it stressed the absence of individuality. Indeed, the unnamed Anabaptist was not alone in using a denial of his name and identity not only to frustrate the authorities, but also to express religious ideals. An English Quaker William Dewsbury, a Yorkshireman and an ex-soldier, appeared at the Northampton Assizes in the summer of 1655 before Edward Atkins, Justice of the Common Pleas. His trial proceeded:

*I[udge] A[tkins]* What is thy name?

*W[illiam] D[ewsbury]* Unknown to the World.

*I. A.* Let us hear what that name is that the world knows not

*W.D.* It is known to the light, and not every man can know it, but him that hath it, but the name the world knows me by is William Dewsbury.

*I. A.* What countryman art thou?



*W.D.* Of the land of Canaan.

*I. A.* That is afar off.<sup>39</sup>

Leaving off a maker's name or eschewing connections with worldly ties both reveal the extent to which subjective experience shaped and was shaped by names.

Dewsbury's naming strategy functioned on a macro as well as micro level. At the same time as he denied his individual earthly name, he cited a biblical place name, Canaan, to evince his association with the righteous. Names have the power to link across time and space by evoking broader associations and memories. Nomenclature on this larger scale was important to ways in which Anabaptists cast themselves in the mould of apostolic communities. This served as a rebuttal to the claims of heresy or error from opponents. Place names functioned on this larger scale, providing a focal point to draw Anabaptists together. Naming or renaming locations could be simultaneously destructive and constructive as an old association was erased and a new one assigned. All Protestants appropriated and re-serviced sacred spaces from Catholics, and this often involved removing images and objects. Iconoclasm is a form of de-naming, of taking away traditional associations through scratching out a name, a face, or destroying the saint's relics or icons connected to a shrine. But reusing spaces was also constructive as new names were chosen and locations designated for particular reasons.

Especially in the early years, reforming theologies often had eschatological overtones, including those of the peasants during the revolts of 1524-5 as well as amongst some Anabaptists. Places might be designated as new Jerusalems or gathering points for the Apocalypse, and preachers made references to biblical place names to bolster their cause. Müntzer beseeched Hausmann not to be dumb before Zion, to openly speak up against those who were wrong. In Erfurt in 1527 Hans Römer chose the city as a new Jerusalem and planned an attack, which ended in miserable failure.<sup>40</sup> New forms of political authority often accompanied newly imagined places. When Müntzer named his council in Mühlhausen the Eternal Council, he indicated the eschatological significance of his regime.

Münster too was imagined as the new kingdom of Israel. Jakob Hufschmidt confessed that one woman beseeched people to repent, for the King of Zion would come and rebuild Jerusalem.<sup>41</sup> Here, though, renaming went further. According to Gresbeck, Leiden removed the traditional names of streets and gates and gave them new ones to reflect the ethics of his regime, perhaps most dramatically designating the cathedral square as a new Mount Zion where Last Suppers were held. His account suggests that naming inscribed the rule of the king and queen onto the city, with the creation of King's Gate and Queen's Gate to mirror Leiden's authority, or the Silver and Gold Gates, which reflected the ceremonial majesty of the new kingdom.<sup>42</sup> Whilst other accounts do not include the detail which Gresbeck records, several references indicate that the Anabaptist regime did reorder the sacred and civic space of the city. Hufschmidt recalled that the city was to be divided into three parts, according to the prophecy of Zacharias, whilst Leiden in his own confession indicated that the city was divided into twelve administrative units with twelve 'dukes' and twelve gates. This reflected the geography of heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>43</sup> By assigning new names, the Anabaptists also tried to erase existing associations. Any renewed kingdom of Israel could not have names connected with Catholic saints or indeed the Jews, so it is no surprise that St Ludger's Gate and Jew Fields Gate disappeared. The new signs for the streets and gates also reportedly bore the new alphabet. According to Gresbeck, the punishment for not using the new names was to be forced to a drink of a jar of water; the reason is not clear but possibly it was a cleansing ritual. An apocalyptic naming strategy also had the advantage of being transposable; it was topographical yet it did not tie the community to one place but mapped onto the eternal geography of God's kingdom. The complete reorganisation of the layout of a city was an extreme naming process and Gresbeck's account is problematic, but the removal of traditional shrines or saint names was nothing out of the ordinary. In Calvinist Geneva, names which were too Catholic were banned at baptism, whilst Luther transformed the former Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg into his new domestic home. Protestant reformers did not always dispense with saints' names or

traditional pietistic associations, but renaming and claiming spaces anew was an important dimension to the re-organisation of confessional geography in Reformation Europe.

Names linked groups and people across spaces but also through time, for naming and remembering are inextricably intertwined. As Bodenhorn and vom Bruck have stated, 'In many contexts – whether those structuring ancient Roman oration form, Kwakiutl potlatch invocations, Papua New Guinea funeral feasts, or World War II memorials – the recitation of names is a crucial aspect of memory.'<sup>44</sup> The Anabaptist martyr stories, perhaps the most famous cultural legacy of early modern Anabaptism, relied on the recollection of names to establish genealogies. In the martyrologies, naming strategies brought the dead in touch with the living. Often recollection was performative, since martyr hymns were meant to be sung, but the collections were also memory palaces of the names of all those deemed to be essential figures. The choice of who made the cut was of course not neutral; the collection could not just name anyone but only those who were considered legitimate founders and martyrs by Anabaptists. There was no mention of Münster in histories written by many Anabaptist groups. In this way, these naming strategies were fundamental to memory creation and the formation of tradition, an active and ideological process.<sup>45</sup> The history chronicles of the Hutterites, started in the later sixteenth century, and the martyrological hymnbook the *Ausbund* which also dates to the later sixteenth century, named particular figures to establish a clear lineage. The Hutterite chronicle traces the beginning of the movement to the Swiss communities, a convention which has become the norm for accounts of Anabaptist origins. The chronicle cited Zwingli, Conrad Grebel, and Felix Mantz as three experienced and learned men who knew German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, though of course in the end Zwingli was to prove himself a coward and fell away from the true path. The chronicle went on to list what became an accepted canon of martyrs – Leonhart Kaiser, Michael Sattler, and Ludwig Hätzer, and more – whose names were not just transcribed but sung again and again.<sup>46</sup> The repetition of names drew a connecting line between past and present, establishing tradition and belonging. Names collapsed time and reflected the continuous reproduction of eras of confessional significance for these communities.

The practice of recollection and naming continues to the present day in Mennonite, Amish, and Hutterite communities, who still sing the martyr hymns of the early modern world and remember their narrative of their history. One of the only decorations that is allowed in modern Amish homes is a list of family members going back several decades, providing a direct connection with the past.<sup>47</sup> Even the names of the communities themselves embody this link. The label 'Mennonite' or 'Hutterite', contains within it a very clear reminder of the fact that these communities saw themselves as continuing the legacy of figures such as Jakob Hutter or Menno Simons. The names evolved in the context of the confessional conflicts of the early modern world. Communities that settled in Moravia, the followers of Jakob Hutter, did not initially refer to themselves as Hutterites. The designation came only later in the century, possibly as a hostile label, but by the 1570s it had been adopted as a positive self-description. This suggests that the right to name was not a simple process since the trajectories of power could shift when it came to labelling. Like the title of the kingdom of Israel or Jerusalem, 'Hutterite' was transferable. It was not tied to one place when Hutterites were expelled from Moravia, as they moved across eastern Europe, and or when they settled finally in America. More recent terms such as 'Dariusleut' likewise embody these ideas. The use of a Germanic name which draws a specific connection with ancestors reminds Hutterites of where they have come from, but also that they followed these individuals as they moved to new homes. The name even alludes to scripture, a people in exile perhaps. These communities have an acute sense of their origin story of migration from Europe, but on another level names such as Hutterite also enabled this migratory identity.

For me and perhaps many others who were interested in history at a young age and as immortalised by the razor sharp wit of Sellar and Yeatman, the name of the fourteenth-century Plantagenet John of Gaunt conjured up for me the image of an 'emaciated peer'. Names have evocative power to create a sense of identity, and the fact that this does not necessarily correspond to reality does not always concern us. Gaunt, as we well know, refers to Ghent, but for

me and many others, as much as we know the truth, the image of this man as a drawn and haggard noble still swims before my mind's eye. For human interactions and any sense of self, names are inescapable, whether these are personal names, place names or names given to ideas and movements. They are a fundamental part of the way people organise communities and hierarchies but they are also unstable and contingent. Names can be made and remade, altered and forgotten. The names inherited from the Reformation era, therefore, do not reflect stable social, intellectual, or cultural categories of radical and mainstream but rather provide a useful starting point for re-evaluating accounts of the so-called Radical Reformation. To appreciate how Anabaptists and other non-conformists evolved and functioned and how they came to occupy the position of the 'radicals' of the Reformation, scholarship must deconstruct the process of naming in relation to questions of social interaction, memory, and identity, and with a wide frame of reference to the broader cultural and intellectual contexts of Reformation Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Wappler, *Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526-1584* (Jena, 1913), pp. 469-71; Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Geheimes Archiv 10024, Loc .10238. fo. 120r-122v.

<sup>2</sup> This particular passage of Shakespeare has been the subject of much discussion by scholars such as Derrida about signifiers, identity and meaning; Jacques Derrida, 'Aphorisme Countertime', trans. Nicholas Royle, in: *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (London and New York, 1992), pp. 414-33. See also Nicholas Royle, *Jacques Derrida* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 122-3; Lynette Hunter and Peter Lichtenfels, *Negotiating Shakespeare's Language in Romeo and Juliet: Reading Strategies from Criticism, Editing and the Theatre* (Farnham, 2009), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'A 'Madness' Must Watch Over Thinking', in: *Points...Interviews, 1974-1994*, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al., ed. Elisabeth Webe (Stanford, 1995), pp. 339-364, here pp. 343-4.

<sup>4</sup> Gabriele vom Bruck and Barbara Bodenhorn (eds), *The Anthropology of Names and Naming* (Cambridge, 2006); Caroline Hough (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* (Oxford, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> The deep associations with the name Luther and his new identity in German culture are suggested by the extent to which it has become intertwined with histories of psychoanalysis and identity. It featured in the case of the nineteenth-century German judge Daniel Paul Schreber, a paranoid schizophrenic, whom Sigmund Freud and later Thomas Lacan studied. At a moment of crisis in 1894, Schreber said his 'lower God' Ahriman referred to him as Luder, an abusive name with implications of rottenness, but also connected with the reformer's name change; Eric L. Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig* (Chicago, 2001), p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, *Luder – Luther – Eleutherius: Erwägungen zu Luthers Namen* (Göttingen, 1981); Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet* (London, 2016), pp. 99-100; Markus Wriedt, *Luther's Theology*, trans. Katharina Gustazs, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Luther*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge, 2000), p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Ronald J. Sider, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt: The Development of His Thought, 1517-1525* (Leiden, 1974), pp. 12-13; Carter Lindberg, *The Third Reformation: Charismatic Movements and the Lutheran Tradition* (Macon, 1983), pp. 64-5.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Luther, *Wider das Babstum zu Rom vom Teüfel gestiftt* (Wittenberg, 1545); Luther, *Wider Hans Worst* (Wittenberg, 1541); Johannes Cochlaeus, *Septiceps Lutherus* (Leipzig, 1529). See also Gotthelf Wiedermann, *Cochlaeus as a Polemicist*, in: *Seven-Headed Luther: Essays in Commemoration of a Quincentenary 1483-1983*, ed. Peter Newman Brooks (Oxford, 1983), pp. 195-205.

<sup>9</sup> See the classic work on the Radical Reformation by G.H. Williams. This voluminous study remains the iconic work on the 'Radical Reformation', and in the preface to the third edition, Williams reiterates the tripartite division between the Magisterial Reformation, the Counter-Reformation and the Radical Reformation; George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Kirkville, 1992), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Amy Nelson Burnett, *Luther and the Schwärmer*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, eds Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and Lubomir Batka (Oxford, 2014), pp. 511-24; John S. Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists: Luther, Melanchthon and Menius and the Anabaptists of Central Germany* (The Hague, 1964).

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<sup>11</sup> Manfred Krebs and Hans Georg Rott (eds), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer VII: Elsaß, I. Teil: Stadt Strasbourg 1522-1532*, (Gütersloh, 1959), p. 350. See for example Ulrich Zwingli, In *Catabaptistarvm Strophas* (Zurich, 1527).

<sup>12</sup> The rest of this paper will focus predominantly on Anabaptists, though of course radicalism included many other candidates.

<sup>13</sup> On the importance of naming at birth in relation to identity and the notion of social birth see Linda Layne, 'Your Child Deserves a Name': Possessive Individualism and the Politics of Memory in Pregnancy Loss, in: vom Bruck and Bodenhorn (eds), *Anthropology of Names*, pp. 31-50.

<sup>14</sup> Kat Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief in Reformation Germany: Anabaptism and Lutheranism in Central Germany* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 98-135.

<sup>15</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Person, Time and Conduct in Bali*, in: *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* by Clifford Geertz (New York, 1973), pp. 360-411.

<sup>16</sup> Wappler, Thüringen, p. 331.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, *Popular Puritan Mentality in later Elizabethan England*, in: *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530-1700*, N. Tyacke (Manchester, 2001), pp. 90-110.

<sup>18</sup> or past and contemporary practices of child-rearing and education in Hutterite communities see John A. Hosteler, *Hutterite Society* (Baltimore, 1997), pp. 206-33; Tamara Berger-Prößdorf, *Hutterites: An Historical Overview*, in: *Montana Journal* 3.2 (1993).

<sup>19</sup> Hosteler, *Hutterite Society*, p. 242.

<sup>20</sup> Karl Andreas Peter, *The Dynamics of Hutterite Society: An Analytical Approach* (Edmonton, 1987), p. 62; Robert Friedman, John Hofer, Hans Meier and John V. Hinde. (1989). *Hutterian Brethren* (Hutterische Brüder), in: *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. Retrieved 29 October 2016,

from [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Hutterian Brethren \(Hutterische Br%C3%BCder\)&oldid=121144](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Hutterian_Brethren_(Hutterische_Br%C3%BCder)&oldid=121144).

<sup>21</sup> The register is entitled *Die Erste Stamm Nahmen Unserer Bisher so genante Oude Vlamingen oder Groningersche Mennonisten Societaet alhier in Preussen*. On the Alexanderwohl Mennonites see A.J. Dyck, "Hoffnungsaus in Kansas", *Mennonite Life: An Illustrated Quarterly* (Newton, October, 1949), 18-19; Cornelius Krahn and Glenn Penner. (March 2011). *Alexanderwohl* (Molotschna Mennonite Settlement, Zaporizhia Oblast, Ukraine). *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. Retrieved 15 October 2016,

from [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Alexanderwohl\\_\(Molotschna\\_Mennonite\\_Settlement,\\_Zaporizhia\\_Oblast,\\_Ukraine\)&oldid=132408](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Alexanderwohl_(Molotschna_Mennonite_Settlement,_Zaporizhia_Oblast,_Ukraine)&oldid=132408). Digitised versions of the registers are available at [https://mla.bethelks.edu/metadata/cong\\_15.php](https://mla.bethelks.edu/metadata/cong_15.php).

<sup>22</sup> *False Prophets and Preachers: Henry Gresbeck's Account of the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster*, ed. and trans. Christopher S. Mackay (Kirksville, 2016), pp. 210-15.

<sup>23</sup> osephe Niesert (ed.), *Münstersche Urkundensammlung, Erster Band: Urkunden zur Geschichte der Münsterischen Wiedertäufer* (Coesfeld, 1826), pp. 178-9.

<sup>24</sup> Anselm Schubert, *Täuferum und Kabbalah: Augustin Bader und die Grenzen der Radikalen Reformation*, (Gütersloh, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> *False Prophets*, ed. Mackay, pp. 210-11.

<sup>26</sup> Müntzer to Luther, 9 July 1523; *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer*, trans. and ed. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 56.

<sup>27</sup> Müntzer to Nicholas Hausmann, 15 Jun 1521; Hans Sommerschuh to Müntzer, 31 July 1521; Müntzer, ed. Matheson, pp. 34, 39-40.

<sup>28</sup> Müntzer to Melancthon, 29 March 1522; Müntzer, ed. Matheson, pp. 43-4.

<sup>29</sup> Müntzer to an unknown recipient, 14 July 1522; Müntzer, ed. Matheson, pp. 51, 431-2.

<sup>30</sup> Müntzer to Nicholas Hausmann, 15 Jun 1521; Franz Günther to Müntzer, 25 January 1522; Müntzer, ed. Matheson, pp. 35, 43. On fraternal language see also Kat Hill, *Brotherhood, Sisterhood, and the Language of Gender in the German Reformation*, in: *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 17.2 (2015), pp. 181-95.

<sup>31</sup> Barbara Bodenhorn and Gabriele vom Bruck, 'Entangled in Histories': An Introduction to the Anthropology of Names and Naming, in: *Anthropology of Names*, eds vom Bruck and Bodenhorn, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> Susan Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London and New York, 1997), p. 44.

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- <sup>33</sup> On ideas of gender and sex in Anabaptist groups see Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood and Belief*, pp. 167-98.
- <sup>34</sup> *False Prophets*, ed. Mackay, p. 213, n. 553.
- <sup>35</sup> *False Prophets*, ed. Mackay, pp. 110-14.
- <sup>36</sup> Hermann von Kerksenbrock, *Anabaptistic furoris: Monasterium inclitam westphaliae metropolim evertentis; historica narratio*, 2 vols, ed. Heinrich Detmer (Münster, 1899-1900), vol. 2: pp. 658-9.
- <sup>37</sup> *False Prophets*, ed. Mackay, pp. 143-6.
- <sup>38</sup> *False Prophets*, ed. Mackay, pp. 143-6.
- <sup>39</sup> A true testimony what was done concerning the servants of the Lord (London, 1655), p. 1. Many thanks to Clive Holmes for providing this reference.
- <sup>40</sup> Hill, *Baptism, Brotherhood, and Belief*, p. 69.
- <sup>41</sup> Niesert (ed.), *Münstersche Urkundensammlung*, p. 155.
- <sup>42</sup> *False Prophets*, ed. Mackay, pp. 208-10.
- <sup>43</sup> Niesert (ed.), *Münstersche Urkundensammlung*, pp. 155, 180.
- <sup>44</sup> Bodenhorn and vom Bruck, 'Entangled in Histories', in: vom Bruck and Bodenhorn (eds), *Anthropology of Names*, p. 2.
- <sup>45</sup> Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 197-249; Peter Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit: Zur Kultur des Martyriums in der frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 2004).
- <sup>46</sup> *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*, trans. and ed. by the Hutterian Brethren (Rifton and Robertsbridge, 1987), vol. 1: pp. 43-7.
- <sup>47</sup> See for example <http://amishamerica.com/5-things-decorating-the-walls-of-amish-homes/>. Retrieved 20 October 2016. For an account of contemporary Amish cultures see Steven M. Nolt and Thomas J. Meyers, *Plain Diversity: Amish Cultures and Identities* (Baltimore, 2007).