

Luther and the Reformation in Denmark

Von Martin Schwarz Lausten*

Dear colleagues! Dear guests!

I am going to mention a few main points from the theme »Luther and the Reformation in Denmark«, illustrated in this exhibition, and what can be seen here in this exhibition is only a small number of the many books, letters and pieces of art which are preserved in the collections of the Royal Library, the National Museum and the National Archives. I shall try to avoid repetition of what I said in my lecture on Sunday evening. But if some of you feel that you are hearing too much about the Danish Reformation in these days, I want to remind you of one of the important pedagogical principles of Philipp Melanchthon: »Repetitio est mater studiorum!«

I The Christian Humanism

An important prerequisite of the evangelical – Lutheran – movement in Denmark was Christian humanism. Students who returned from universities such as those of Paris, Louvain, Wittenberg, Leipzig and Rostock, brought back humanist ideas. Nearly 1.700 matriculated at European universities in the period from 1451-1535.¹ Most famous among them is Christiern Pedersen (ca 1480-1554), who graduated from Paris and published a number of mainstream humanist books, apart from several devotional works strongly influenced by Christian humanism.²

Another Danish humanist was Petrus Parvus Rosæfontanus († 1559), who in the year 1519 wrote an introduction to a work, »Hortulus synonymorum« (1520) by Henrik Smith († 1563). Here Petrus emphasised the importance of studies in

* Lecture in The Royal Library Copenhagen 6th August 2002 at the presentation of the exhibition »Luther and the Reformation in Denmark«.

1 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Københavns universitet i middelalderen 1479 - ca. 1530. In: Københavns Universitet 1479-1979/ ed. by Svend Ellehøj; Leif Grane. Vol. 1. København 1991, 17-24.

2 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Christiern Pedersen. In: The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation/ ed. by Hans J. Hillerbrand. Vol. 3. NY; Oxford 1996, 237f.

Latin, Greek, Hebrew, rhetoric and classical authors, and he praised some of the famous humanists such as Erasmus: »the learned, great general for the literary army, the object for all Christendom's enthusiasm«, Petrus Mosellanus (1493-1524) and Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus (1457-1520). And Petrus cited Wittenberg as a centre for humanist learning and referred to »Melanchthon as the most learned«, while Martin Luther is mentioned as »the theological doctor who most excellently seeks the truth of God«.³ This is the first time that Luthers name is mentioned in a Danish book.

II King Christian II Humanist Reforms and Conversion to Lutheran Belief

It was around this time that Christian humanism started to have an impact within the university of Copenhagen. It had been encouraged by King Christian II (1481, 1513-1523, 1559), who wanted to improve the quality and standing of the university. He encouraged the Carmelite friars to establish a college in the vicinity of the university, and the leader of this college, Paulus Helie (Poul Helgesen, ca 1485 - ca 1535) was given a lectureship in theology at the university.⁴ Christian II was instrumental in bringing the Wittenberg-educated Martin Reinhard († after 1523) to Denmark, as royal chaplain, and Matthias Gabler († after 1526) as lecturer in Greek. The king also managed to entice Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt (1486-1541) to Copenhagen, and he seems to have been intended for a position as court preacher and royal advisor with special responsibility for a new ecclesiastical appeal court which Christian II intended to create. But something went wrong between these two men, Karlstadt left Denmark after three weeks. Back home in Wittenberg he refused to say directly the cause for his short stay in Denmark, except that he »had felt fear for a certain person«. Christian II was not a man you should come into conflict with.⁵ The king also worked out a set of new laws by which he intended to reform the Danish society, the system of education and some ecclesiastical matters. The old scholastic textbooks were to be burned and

3 Henrik SMITH: *Hortulus synonymorum* (1520)/ ed. by Inger Bom. København 1974, preface.

4 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Helgesen, Poul. *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. 4. edit. Vol. 3. Tü 2000, 1607 f, see below page 123 f.

5 Ulrich BUBENHEIMER: *Consonantia theologiae et iurisprudentiae: Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt als Theologe und Jurist zwischen Scholastik und Reformation*. Tü 1977, 230-237; Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: *Die Universität Kopenhagen und die Reformation*. In: *University and Reformation: lectures from the University of Copenhagen Symposium*/ ed. by Leif Grane. Leiden 1981, 101-103.

replaced by modern humanist textbooks. Student were to be taught classics, to read Terence (185-159), Virgil (70-19), Cicero (106-43), history and the Old and New Testament.⁶ However, before these laws could be fully introduced Christian II had been forced into exile. By the end of 1522 the Danish lay and ecclesiastical aristocracy was in rebellion against him. The cumulative effect of the king's autocratic rule and his often brutal actions against opponents generated the revolt. His recent actions in Sweden where, in 1520, he had executed around eighty members of the nobility, including two bishops (The Stockholmian Bloodbath), had caused European consternation, while his high-handed treatment of the archbishopric of Lund had angered the papal Curia. Accompanied by his queen Elisabeth (Isabella, 1501-1526), sister of the emperor Charles V, three under age children, and a group of loyal associates, he arrived on May 1 in the Netherlands, where he expected to gain economic and political support from the queen's imperial family. This exile, which caused the king numerous disappointments and defeats, came to last eight years, until finally he was able to persuade the emperor to assist him in an attempted recovery in October 1531. The recovery failed, and Christian II was arrested by the new king in Denmark, his uncle Frederik I (1471, 1523-1533) and held imprisoned by him and his successor for 27 years, until death liberated him in 1559.

One of the most significant reasons as to why Emperor Charles V and his co-reigning members of the family in Europe did not wish to help Christian II was the fact that Christian and his wife Elisabeth only a few month after the beginning of their exile were strongly convinced by the Lutheran faith. Martin Luther himself preached for them in Schweinitz outside Wittenberg in October 1523, and from the Saxonian secretary George Spalatin (1484-1545) we know that the king by that occasion on the spot converted to evangelical faith. After Luthers preaching the king burst out that he had never before heard the evangelium been preached in that way. He would keep it in his mind to the day of his death.

And so he did. Shortly after he moved to Wittenberg, stayed for weeks in the house of the artist Lukas Cranach (1471-1553), heard Luther preaching and sources tell us how very often the two men associated with each other. Luther was deeply impressed by the »conversion« of this famous and notorious Danish king. In 1524, 1526 and 1527 Christian also stayed for some time in Wittenberg, and when he was not here he corresponded with Luther and Spalatin.

6 Johannes Oskar ANDERSEN: Overfor Kirkebruddet: den første lutherske bevægelse og Christi-
ern IIs forhold dertil. København 1917, 139-163.

Christian II's conversion to evangelical faith was of course politically stupid, deeply depending on help from the emperor as he was. But he was serious in his belief and unmoveable. Now he had to harmonise his new Lutheran conviction with his political aim, the recovery of Denmark. And as a Lutheran he naturally became still more dangerous to the new king and the aristocratic council in Denmark.⁷

The first direct consequence was his initiative to translate Luther's German New Testament into Danish, which was completed and published in Wittenberg, supplied with Luther's prefaces, a few months after (1524). It was the first time that the New Testament was published in Danish, but characteristically used for the political purposes of the king also: to keep the common man in Denmark in the faith of the exiled king and to demand him back. In front of the translation of the Pauline letters a preface was inserted, written by the king's most trusted man in his exile, Hans Mikkelsen († 1532), a former merchant and mayor in Malmö and now counsellor to the king. In this preface he brought a serious accusation against the leaders of the Roman church in Denmark for their participation in religious and political crimes: they had corrupted the true meaning of the Scripture to the common man, and on several occasions they had issued »anti-Christian« documents and had thus deceived the common people and kept them in »Babylonian Captivity«. He emphasised that now the king and he had found the truth in the evangelical belief and realised that salvation was possible only by hearing the Word. This, however, was also possible now for the Danish population, because their natural and anointed king had become evangelical, and the preface concluded in an appeal manifesting obedience to this king. Here Mikkelsen referred to the well-known texts, Roman 13 and Peter's 1. letter cap. 3. But time was running out by now, he wrote. – The last page in this preface was typographically set up ingeniously as an hourglass, which can be seen in show case nr. 3.⁸

Another consequence of the king's and the queen's Lutheran faith was on a personal level, since they immediately incurred anger, indignation and hostility from the queen's devoted imperial family, culminating at first at queen Elisabeth's deathbed in 1526. In a letter to Luther Christian II, brokenhearted, gave an account for the queen's last hours, emphasising that she passed away in the *evangelical* faith and that she received communion »in the correct Christian way«,

7 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Christian 2. mellem paven og Luther: tro og politik omkring »den røde konge« i eksilet og fangenskabet (1523-1559). København 1995, English summary, 467-476.

8 THET NØYE TESTAMENTH: Christiørn II's Nye Testamente. Wittenberg 1524/ ed. by Bertil Molde, Volmer Rosenkilde. København 1950, Aa ij - Aa iiii.

just as he was intensely polemic against the Roman Church throughout the letter. The king asked Luther not to show the letter to anyone. But fortunately did so. He gave it to Spalatin, and that's why we still know it. However: a detailed report was composed also by the Roman counterpart, a report which was put in the coffin of the deceased. The father Thomas Blanckaert, who was present at the queen's deathbed, wrote this report that maintained that she passed away in the Roman Catholic faith under observation by Roman ceremonies (masses, the extreme unction etc).⁹

Another consequence was that the king attempted to appoint evangelicals at his exile-court in the Netherlands, but when the king once was abroad the government arrested some of his people. One of them, Willem van Zwolle († 1529), master of the royal household, was burned at the stake as an Lutheran heretic.

It should also be mentioned that the king managed to convince his sister Elisabeth (1485-1555) about the evangelical faith. She also became a convinced Lutheran, but she was married to one of the most devoted Roman Catholic princes, Elector Joachim I of Brandenburg (1484, 1499-1535). So Christian II planned and put into effect that she fled from her husband in Berlin. She settled in Torgau and in Lichtenberg. The flight was a political scandal of huge dimension and absorbed princes of both confessions and their counsellors for years, but Elisabeth did never return to her husband. Christian II visited her often, and she visited now and then the Luther-family in Wittenberg, but unfortunately she became ill, physically and mentally. Luther was of course glad over her conversion, but he shook his head over her condition.¹⁰

In 1526 when Christian II visited Luther in Wittenberg, Luther was about writing his »Ob Kriegsleute auch in seligem Stande sein können«. Here Denmark is mentioned – as the only place at all in Luther's writings. But, alas! Not in a positive way. The behaviour of the Danes towards their king Christian II was a terrifying example of blasphemy. They had turned away from their anointed, from God vocated king, and they could be sure, that God soon would punish them. – Luther's book can be seen on show case nr. 5.¹¹

But ten years later on Denmark carried through the Lutheran Reformation. Luther stick to Christian II, also after his failed recovery. Luther wrote a letter of consolation to the king in the prison and he wrote to the Danish king and begged

⁹ WA Br 4, 23-26 (976), Christian II to Martin Luther, Zweynarde 28. January 1526; Lausten: Christian d. 2 mellem paven og Luther, 142-162.

¹⁰ Ibid, 195-211. 252-300.

¹¹ WA 19, 635, 22 - 636, 1; 641, 3 - 642, 27.

him to show mercy and release the king. But this king, Frederik I, never answered Luther. In the following years Luther now and then mentioned the imprisoned Christian II in his Tabletalks. »Has anyone ever heard something like this?« He once bursted out when telling about the strange fate of Christian II, the notorious nordic king who became evangelical, but ended in a lifelong prison.¹²

III The Lutheran Reformation of Duke Christian in Haderslev, the Duchy of Schleswig

The Reformation in the Kingdom of Denmark was closely linked to the developments in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that the evangelical movement made its earliest impact here, and in the geographical position of the duchies between Germany and Denmark, and finally their close political affiliation with Denmark.

Duke Christian, the later Danish king Christian III (1503, 1533-1559) had benefited from having the evangelically inclined Wolfgang von Utenhof (1495-1452), as tutor. Utenhof had taken up his position in 1518 after having graduated in canon law from the Wittenberg university. Not only was he well versed in Christian humanism, but he had also witnessed Luther's attack on scholasticism and the Curia. He was evidently a strong influence on his young pupil. As a member of the delegation of his uncle, Elector Joachim I of Brandenburg, the young Christian attended the Diet of Worms in April 1521 and was moved by Luther's bold defence. The elector Joachim was the one, whose wife Elisabeth fled in the year 1528 because of her new evangelical convincing, planned by the exiled Christian II! In connection with duke Christians marriage with the evangelical Dorothea of Saxony-Lauenburg (1511-1571) he was given the small fief of Haderslev/Tørning in the present South Denmark. It consisted of approximately sixty parishes. Here initiated a Lutheran Reformation in 1526. He managed to attract two well educated German theologians to Haderslev, Johann Wenth (ca 1490-1541), a recent graduate from Wittenberg, and Eberhard Weidensee (ca 1486-1547), who held a doctorate in canon law from the university of Leipzig and had also spent time in Wittenberg and had played in important part in the Reformation of Magdeburg.¹³ The duke dismissed the dean of the collegiate chapter in Haderslev. He estab-

12 WA TR 3, 340, 7 (3470b), 27. Oktober bis 4. Dezember 1536; WA Br 6, 366-368 (1962), Luther to Christian II, Wittenberg 28. September 1532; 12, 488 f (4333 = 1963), Luther to Frederik I, Wittenberg 28. September 1532.

13 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Eberhard Weidensee. Schleswig-Holsteinisches Biographisches

lished a school for re-training for all the local priests and for evangelical ministers in Haderslev, and he expelled the mendicant orders from Haderslev. At a synod of the clergy which met in the spring of the 1528 the duke presented them with the so-called »Haderslev Articles« (»Artickel vor de Kerckheren vp den Dorpern«), which gave firm instructions on how the Lutheran faith should be preached, what ceremonies should be used, how the clergy were to live. So keen was the duke in his Lutheran faith that he did not let it be free to the pastors to marry – as Martin Luther did – but he demanded that everyone must marry, and if somebody did not want to, he had to tell the duke his reasons!

These »Haderslev-Articles« was not found until the end of the 19. century. It is the first evangelical church order to emerge in Scandinavia and its dependence on Luther and Wittenberg is obvious. Thus duke Christian as early as 1526 established a princely, Lutheran territorial church in his tiny duchy in Schleswig which was identical to similar much larger territorial churches in Germany. The Roman Catholic establishment in Denmark must have been deeply worried by this Protestant experiment on their doorstep, conducted, if not with royal assent, then certainly without any attempt by the king Frederik I to hinder this son's evangelical undertakings.¹⁴ – In showcase nr. 2 we show the »Haderslev Articles« and books from the conflict which arose when the evangelical »Schwermer« Melchior Hoffman (ca 1500-1543) travelled around in the duchies in the late 1520'ties. He was expelled after a disputation in Flensburg, where Johannes Bugenhagen (1485-1558) and the theologians from Haderslev participated and where the duke Christian was present.¹⁵

IV The Popular Evangelical Movement in the Kingdom of Denmark since about 1525

In March 1523 Frederik I had succeeded the expelled Christian II on the throne. Unique and remarkable is it that Luther is mentioned directly in the coronation charter, where the new king had to promise:

Lexikon/ ed. by Olaf Klose ... Vol. 5. Neumünster 1979, 276 f; Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Johann Wenth. Ibid 6. Neumünster 1982, 299-301.

¹⁴ Hans Valdemar GREGERSEN: Reformationen i Sønderjylland. Aabenraa 1986, 49-173; the »Artickel vor de Kerckheren vp den Dorpern« – »Haderslev Articles« – ibid, 244-249; Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: The early Reformation in Denmark and Norway 1520-1559. In: THE SCANDINAVIAN REFORMATION: from evangelical movement to institutionalisation of reform/ ed. by Ole Peter Grell. Cambridge 1995, 14-16.

¹⁵ Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Melchior Hofmann og de lutherske prædikanter i Slesvig-Holsten

»Not to allow any heretics, disciples of Luther or others to preach or to teach secretly or openly against the heavenly God, the belief of the holiest Church, the holiest father the Pope, or the Roman Church, but where they are found in this kingdom, We promise to punish them on life and property.«¹⁶

But in spite of this coronation charter forced upon Frederik I by a conservative Council, it was during *his* reign that the evangelical movement started to advance in Denmark. And this illegal popular evangelical movement benefited from the general feudal crisis which characterised Danish society in this period.

Two assemblies of the king and the council of the aristocracy and all the bishops in Odense in 1526 and 1527 signified a turning point. They agreed that those who in future were to be appointed to bishops should no longer seek the Confirmation of their appointments from the pope, and the sums that candidates had previously paid to Rome, were in future to be paid to the Danish king. And by now the church in Denmark had become split: The Roman Church remained the official church, governed by the bishops, but the Lutherans had now also the right to form their own parishes with their own pastors and their own services. Ten years of conflict, spiritual war, between the defenders of the Roman Church and the eager aggressive Lutheran preachers followed.¹⁷

The only defender of the Roman church of some quality was the Carmelite leader Paulus Helie (Poul Helgesen), but he was not a traditional scholastic. He shared the Christian humanist platform of his idol Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/69-1536) and criticised the late medieval piety. He was hostile to scholastic theology, because it relied on medieval commentators rather than the texts. Instead Helie wanted to focus on the text of the New Testament, Christ, Peter and Paul as he said, and he was advocating strongly the teaching of the classical languages.¹⁸ He could agree with Luther on many of his demands for reforms, and he was also

1527-1529. Kirkehistoriske samlinger: 7. række 5 (København 1963-1965), 237-285; Klaus DEPPERMAN: Melchior Hoffman: soziale Unruhen und apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation. GÖ 1979, 84-132.

16 DANSKE KONGERS HAANDFÆSTNINGER. In: Aarsberetninger fra Det Kongelige Geheimearchiv/ ed by Caspar Frederik Wegener. Vol. 2. København 1858-1860, 65-79, quotation 71, 12-16.

17 Lausten: The early Reformation in Denmark and Norway ...; Ole Peter GRELL: The Catholic church and its leadership. In: The Scandinavian Reformation, ..., 70-94.

18 SKRIFTER AF PAULUS HELIE/ ed. by Peter Severinsen. Vol. 1. København 1932, 182 [27 f], Paulus Helie Epistula ad Petrum Iuari, Schelschör 3. November 1524; see above note 4. On the theology of Poul Helgesen, see Johannes Oskar ANDERSEN: Paulus Helie. København 1936, 50-92. Poul Helgesen's reaction to Luther see Gert POSSELT: Paul Helgesens læsning af Luther. Historisk tidsskrift 89 (København 1989), 225-254.

like Luther of the opinion that man was saved by faith alone, but simultaneously he underlined the necessity of true piety. Good deeds could not be disregarded in connection with salvation. Helie was strongly critical of traditional piety, but he had no intention of leaving the Roman church. Pious theological learning and pious living could reform the church.¹⁹

On the other side stood the evangelical preachers. An important reason why the controversies between Paul Helie and these men were so bitter is that the leading men on this wing were old students of Paul Helie, young monks who had studied under him in the Carmelite college in Copenhagen. Here they had learned a critical attitude to Danish catholicism and the bishops, they had learned to prefer the New Testament instead of scholastic studies, they had heard him demand reforms. But Paul Helie naturally did not imagine that they would go even further and, breaking entirely with the Catholic church, become Lutheran preachers. In his »Chronicon Skibyense« he savagely characterizes them as being heretical, cheeky, sly, villainous, drunken, mendacious, bawdy and shameless.²⁰ Apart from these men, the main opponent to Paul Helie was the former Johannite monk Hans Tausen (1494-1561), who had studied in Rostock, Louvain and Wittenberg, where he became an burning Lutheran. When he settled in Viborg in Jutland (1526), writes Helie in his chronicle, »the Lutheran poison began to sneak into Jutland«.²¹

The reformatory movement was a typical market town phenomenon, it spread to all the larger towns during the late 1520'ties and the beginning of the 1530'ties. In eastern Denmark Malmø became the center from 1527 and a few years later also Copenhagen.

The preachers gave voice to the dissatisfaction with which most of the urban population viewed the wealthy Roman institutions and clergy. Their social awareness is demonstrated by their plans for a social re-organisation of society in the fields of education, poor relief and health care.²²

As to them the old distinction between lay and clerical was false. They emphasised the priesthood of all believers, they wanted the services held in the vernacular, and they stated

19 Lausten: Die Universität Kopenhagen und die Reformation, 99 f.

20 Paulus HELIE: Chronicon Skibyense. In: Skrifter af Paulus Helie/ ed. by Marius Kristensen, Hans Ræder. Vol. 6. København 1937, 107 f. 112-117.

21 Ibid, 107; Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Hans Tausen. In: The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation/ ed. by Hans J. Hillerbrand. Vol. 4. NY; Oxford 1996, 145 f.

22 Lausten: The early Reformation in Denmark and Norway ..., 22-29.

»that a poor person, boy or girl, who sits on a cartload of dung and sings the Ten commandments or some praise from the gospel, he or she is better esteemed by God than many priests, monks or canons who grumble and shout from morning till night without true Christian faith and godliness, because they do not contemplate in the least what they sing and read.«²³

Paul Helie was chocked. He held that singing of the women in the churches entailed that »the minds and hearts of many will be stimulated more to sinful thoughts than to any piety«.²⁴

The theology of these evangelical preachers has been debated in recent scholarship, and it has been claimed that they stood closer to the humanist-evangelical movement, differing from Luther on several points. So they differed from Luther in their emphasis on the Bible, which they considered to be »the law of Christ«, which offered directions for the spiritual as well as the material domain. They remained unaffected by Luther's more flexible attitude to the Bible and his concept of the Word as means of grace, not to mention his distinction between law and gospel. Likewise, they differed from Luther in their understanding of Christ, salvation and the sacraments. Perhaps they had not understood Luther here. None of them, except Hans Tausen, had ever been in Wittenberg. But these differences were probably of little or no consequence to the preachers. They considered themselves to be Lutherans and that was also how their antagonist Paul Helie perceived them. – In the showcases nr. 4 and 5 are some of the polemic writings from the two parts to be seen.²⁵

V The Royal Reformation in the Kingdom, 1536/37

After the death of Frederik I in 1533 the bishops and the majority of the lay nobility attempted to put back the clocks. They avoided electing a successor to the king, took temporary control of the government and tried to re-establish the old church as the only permitted church. However they lost control over the develop-

23 Peder LAURENTSEN: Orsagen oc een rett forclaring paa then ny Reformats ... vdi then Christelige Stadt Malmö. Malmö 1529. Facsimile/ ed. by Krister Gierow. Malmö 1979, 42; Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Peder Laurentsen. In: The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation/ ed. by Hans J. Hillerbrand. Vol. 2. NY; Oxford 1996, 402 f; Ole Peter GRELL: The city of Malmö and the Danish Reformation. ARG 79 (1988), 311-339.

24 Poul HELGESEN: Svar paa den bog, som borgmester og raad i Malmö lod udgaa om Reformationen i deres by, 1530. In: Skrifter af Paulus Helie/ ed. by Marius Kristensen. Vol. 3. København 1933, 116. 118 f; Paul HELGESEN: Een kort vnderwijsning til een kristelig foreening och forligilse. Roskilde 1534. In: Skrifter af Paulus Helie/ ... Vol. 5. København 1935, 311 f.

25 Niels Knud ANDERSEN: Confessio Hafniensis: den københavnske Bekendelse af 1530; studier i

ments and the civil war broke out. The inhabitants of the cities wanted the imprisoned Christian II as a king again. Faced with this dangerous rebellion the lay and ecclesiastical aristocracy were forced to elect Frederiks oldest son, the Lutheran duke Christian from Haderslev to protect their interests. He guaranteed the lay aristocracy their privileges, and so they let down the bishops. Concerning the religious issues, the new king's promises were vague when he pointed out that following victory he would introduce a good Christian order in every way. On 6th of August 1536 a victorious Christian III could make his entry into Copenhagen. He imprisoned all the bishops and held them responsible for the devastation of the civil war, and all the episcopal property and estates were confiscated for the crown's benefit. The rest of the council were forced to accept this procedure and had to sign letters of obligation to Christian III.

On a meeting with the nobility and representatives from the cities and the farmers on the 30 of October 1536 the king described the new constitution for the kingdom and the change from a Roman to a Lutheran Christianity. Lay and ecclesiastical authority were separated and the clergy were excluded from direct influence on the kingdom's political affairs. This was a position which did not differ materially from Luther's. However Christian III seems to have been worried about how to justify the imprisonment of the Roman bishops, so the king requested Luther's verdict. In his letter of the 2 of December 1536 Luther offered totally his support to Christian III, using arguments from his own theological concept on the relationship between spiritual and temporal government: »It delights me that your Majesty has eradicated the bishops, who refused to halt their persecution of the word of God and caused confusion in secular government.«²⁶

In his eager to do it in the correct way Christian III now tried to persuade Luther himself, or Melancthon og Bugenhagen to travel to Copenhagen in order to help him with the carrying out of the reformation.²⁷ – Luther's mentioned verdict and Christian's letter to the elector of Saxony is to be found in showcase nr. 6.

The following year the kingdom's break with the old Church and the creation of a Lutheran state was celebrated by four ceremonies, which took place in August and September 1537:

den begyndende Reformation. København 1954, dt. Zsfassung, 466-473; Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Reformationen i Danmark. 2. Edit. København 2002, 52-87.

26 WA Br 7, 602-604 (3112), Luther to Christian III, Wittenberg 2. December 1536.

27 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Religion og politik: studier i Christian III's forhold til det tyske rige i tiden 1544-1559. København 1977, 20, dt. Zsfassung, 343-348.

1. The coronation and anointing of the royal couple in a »Protestant« ceremony led by Bugenhagen, at Our Lady's Church in Copenhagen. In the ceremonies and speeches the theoretical foundation for the new state was expressed. Previously, the coronation had been a grand ecclesiastical occasion, where the Roman archbishop had anointed the king, who through the ceremony achieved a degree of holiness which placed him in an intermediary position between clergy and laity. At the previous coronation ceremony the king would be dressed like a deacon and given the eucharist in both forms at the coronation. Considering Luther's doctrine of the separation of the two realms, spiritual and temporal, the coronation of Christian III performed by Bugenhagen looks distinctly odd. They did it so that the Roman ritual was maintained, but evangelical, »Christian«, changes were added. Bugenhagen, who had never received episcopal ordination, anointed the king. The climax of the ceremony was announced by a fanfare of trumpets and a hymn sung by Bugenhagen and twelve ministers, upon which the king, sword in hand, read the text for the day, promising to use both the sword and the gospel for the benefit of the people.

This ceremony can hardly have reminded the congregation in Our Lady's Church in Copenhagen of Luther's doctrine of the separation of the two kingdoms. Instead it was Melancthon's concept which was expressed. For him the Christian prince was the principal member of the church (*praecipuum membrum ecclesiae*), and his main task was to be the keeper of both the tablets of the Law of Moses (*custos utriusque tabulae*).²⁸

2. Bugenhagen ordained the seven new Lutheran bishops in the same church. At that occasion the Danish church »lost« the *successio apostolica* in the Roman Catholic sense of that expression.

3. Christian III signed the new Lutheran church ordinance. In a letter in front of it the king stated his right and his duty to re-create true Christian worship, and he mentioned that this ordinance had been approved by Luther in Wittenberg.²⁹ – In showcase nr. 7 you can see the Church »Ordinance«.

4. The University of Copenhagen was re-opened, now as a Lutheran university. It did not lose its ecclesiastical character, in spite of it becoming the responsibility

28 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: *König und Kirche: über das Verhältnis der weltlichen Obrigkeit zur Kirche bei Johann Bugenhagen und König Christian III. von Dänemark*. In: *Johannes Bugenhagen: Gestalt und Wirkung, Beiträge zur Bugenhagenforschung/ aus Anlaß des 500. Geburtstages des Doctor Pomeranus* ed. by Hans-Günter Leder. B 1984, 150-156.

29 *KIRKEORDINANSEN 1537/39: tekstudgave med indledning og noter (latin / dansk)*/ ed. by Martin Schwarz Lausten. København 1989.

of the king, the state. It only changed confession, administration and curriculum. Also here Bugenhagen was the driving force. The university was modelled on Wittenberg. The bishop of Zealand, with residence in Copenhagen – on the same place where he is living now – became also professor of theology.³⁰ – In showcase nr. 6 the »*Ordinatio lectionum in Academia Hafniensi*« from 1537 is to be seen.

VI Luther's and Wittenbergs Influence on the Danish Reformation Church

If there had been some doubt about the theological position of the preachers in the 1520'ies, this doubt was totally eliminated now by Christian III. He emphasised that the Danish Church was theologically firmly anchored in Lutheranism as espoused in Wittenberg. Together Luther and Melanchthon constituted doctrinal authority, while their theological differences were conveniently ignored.

Wittenberg became the spiritual centre of Denmark. In the 30 years from 1530 to 1559, almost 250 Danish students went to Wittenberg, many of them supported by the king. Unceasingly the king run after learned men in Wittenberg who could serve in Denmark as professors, court chaplains or bishops, »for [as he once wrote to the professors at Wittenberg university] you know perfectly what kind of men we have got here in Denmark«!³¹ Wittenbergs powerful influence also manifested itself in the literature connected with services. The majority of available works were translations of German writings. In addition to the many catechetical writings, the most important literary aids for pastors was Hans Tausens' »Postille«, inspired of course from Luthers Kirchenpostille,³² while the main literary achievement of the period was Christian III's Danish Bible from 1550, a translation of the Luther-Bible from 1545.³³ The Wittenberg tradition also

30 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: K benhavn s universitet 1536-1588. In: K benhavn s Universitet 1479-1979/ ed. by Svend Elleh j; Leif Grane. Vol. 1. K benhavn 1991, 79-167.

31 SAMLING AF K NG CHRISTIAN DEN TREDIES BREVE, NAVNLIG TIL ANSEETE TYDSKE REFORMAT RER. In: Aarsberetninger fra Det Kongelige Geheimearchiv/ ed. by Caspar Frederik Wegener. Vol. 1. K benhavn 1852-1855, 217 (3), Christian III to Johannes Bugenhagen, K benhavn 13. March 1541. Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Die Beziehungen zwischen D nemark und der Universit t Wittenberg in der Reformationszeit. In: Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik: Studien zur deutschen Universit tsgegeschichte; Festschrift f r Eike Wolgast zum 65. Geburtstag/ ed. by Armin Kohnle; Frank Engehausen. S 2001, 238-257.

32 HANS TAUSEN: Postil. Vol. 1-2. Facsimile/ ed. by Bj rn Kornerup. K benhavn 1934.

33 BIBLIA: det er den gantske Hellige Scrift/ transl. in Danish by Oluf Chrysostomus; Niels Hemmingsen; Hans Henriksen; Johannes Machab us; Peder Palladius; Christi rn Pedersen; Jens Sinning; Peder Tidemand. K benhavn 1550. Facsimile. K benhavn 1928.

won the day in the liturgical rules contained in the »*Ordinatio Ecclesiastica Regnorum Daniæ et Norwegiæ*«. The first hymnal appeared in Malmö in 1528. It has unfortunately not survived, but it was followed by a number of others. The capstone was Hans Thomisøns's (1532-1573) hymnal of 1569, the privileged hymnal until almost the beginning of the 18. century (1699).³⁴ – In showcase nr. 8 the Danish Bibel and Hans Thomisøns Hymnal can be seen.

Petrus Palladius (1503-1560) became the first Lutheran bishop of Zealand and the most important advisor to the king, concerning theology, moral and matters of conscience. He had studied for six years in Wittenberg under Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Caspar Cruciger (1504-1548), Justus Jonas (1493-1555) and the other Wittenberg professors and had crowned his studies with the theological doctorat in 1537 with thesis, written by Luther himself – about belief and good deeds. He was an excellent theologian and administrator and intermediary. His more than fifty books, treatises and lectures demonstrates the influence of the Lutheran theology and the Melanchthonian method.³⁵ The same can be found by his brother, Nicolaus Palladius (Niels, † 1560), who became bishop in Lund, and by Hans Tausen, who ended as bishop in Ribe in Jutland.³⁶

In his »Book of visitation« (»En Visitatsbog«), written as a handbook for his colleagues, Petrus Palladius describes how he tells the peasantry about the new Lutheran faith on travels around Zealand in the 1540'ies. Through simple, often allegorical language, Palladius explains the faith and its consequences in daily life, deliberately excluding all theological terminology. Clearly, an impressive pedagogical mind is at work behind the tolerance, sense of humour, use of anecdotes and the creative language which characterises his work. Palladius has considerable understanding for the tough and toilsome life of the peasant and urges the parish people to feast and even to have a drop too much occasionally, celebrating the arrival of »the shining day of the gospel«. Undoubtedly the succes of the

34 Hans THOMISSØN: *Den danske Psalmebog*. København 1569. Facsimile/ ed. by Samfundet Dansk Kirkesang. København 1997.

35 WA 39 1, 198-257. 260-263; Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: *Peder Palladius og kirken 1537-1560: studier i den danske reformationskirke*. Vol. 2. København 1987, dt. Zsfassung, 393-401; Jørgen ERTNER: *Peder Palladius' lutherske teologi*. København 1988, 90-197, dt. Zsfassung, 743-751.

36 Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: *Biskop Niels Palladius: et bidrag til den danske kirkes historie 1550-1560*. København 1968; TRO OG TALE: *studier over Hans Tausens Postil*/ ed. by Knud Eyvind Bugge. København 1963.

37 Peder PALLADIUS: *Danske skrifter*/ ed. by Lis Jacobsen. Vol. 5: *En Visitatsbog*. København 1925-1926; Peder PALLADIUS: *En Visitatsbog*/ ed. by Martin Schwarz Lausten. København 2003.

Danish Reformation owes a great deal to enlightened and flexible Lutheran theologians and church leaders such as Palladius.³⁷ – In showcase nr. 8 the » Book of visitation« of Palladius (the manuscript was found in the 17. century) as well as other books from him and his colleagues are to be seen.

One of the other bishops, Oluf Chrysostomus († 1553), from the northern part of Jutland has also left us an extremely remarkable evidence: when visiting the pastors in his diocese in the beginning of the 1550s he wrote down the titles of the books in their bookshelves. The average was 14 books. – In show case nr. 9 we have reconstructed the library of Dominus Jørgen (Øster Brønderslev sogn). He owned 8 books, among those were the Catechisme of Urban Rhegius (1489-1548), the Danish translation of the Pentateuch by Hans Tausen, the »Postilla« by Antonius Corvinus (1501-1553), the Catechisme by Petrus Palladius. NB! He did not own a whole Bible!³⁸

Remarkable is also the Predella from the church of Torslunde, Zealand. Painted in 1561 and showing the main elements in the new evangelical services. An extract of this is to be seen on your invitation-card. – A copy of the Predella in full size is shown in the exhibitionroom.

The Reformation king Christian III was a pious Christian, firmly anchored in Lutheranism. His daily life was characterised by a series of services, prayers, hymns and sermons. The king occasionally preached himself and took considerable interest in the theological debates of the day. Throughout his life he corresponded regularly with Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas, Georg Major (1502-1574) and other learned men in Wittenberg, all of whom he greatly admired. He sent them gifts, butter and herings – already at that time excellent Danish exportarticles! Bugenhagen once received furs to a new coat, and after having experienced that the butter and herings did not held the expected standard when arriving in Wittenberg he changed these gifts into money. Everyone of the great reformers in Wittenberg received 50 Daler each year – that corresponded to the fourth of the professors charge in Copenhagen at that time, and I mentioned on Sunday evening how keen the king read the theological books, which he received from Wittenberg. However the king took a dim view of any public theological debate. The truth was to be found in the Lutheran understanding of Christianity as expressed in the Lutheran confessional writings. This side of the king went hand in hand with a

38 Daniel Høffding WULF; Thomas Skat RØRDAM: Biskop Oluf Chrysostomus' Fortegnelse over præsternes bøger i Vendelbo Stift. Kirkehistoriske samlinger: 3. række 1 (København 1874-1877), 165-212.

burning hatred of the Roman belief. In his private letters, he applies very rough terms to the pope and the Roman Church. He wanted total uniformity in doctrine and ceremony and acted quickly to stamp out heterodoxy.³⁹

»Be sure, I shall be the father of the superintendents!« The king once declared to Bugenhagen.⁴⁰ This was a fitting remark. The Danish church did not receive an archbishop as a result of the Reformation. Nor did the king become a »higher bishop« (*summus episcopus*) as elsewhere. But in actual practice, Christian III had become the authority-wielding father of the Danish Church.

The last letter from Luther to Christian III Luther wrote only a few weeks before he travelled to Eisleben, where he died in February 1546. He sent the king news and told joyful how the pope and the cardinals in Rome had celebrated masses and held dinners and parties to celebrate that the faithful German duke Heinrich from Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1489, 1514-1542, 1568) had succeeded in exterminating Lutheran heretics – as they falsely thought. But now the Lutheran princes had conquered him, and this fact demonstrated, wrote Luther, that God did not care at all about their damned masses. Luther also thanked the king for all what he did for him and the colleagues in Wittenberg and wrote at last: »By now I daily is walking on the edge of the tomb.«⁴¹

Christian III answered that it was not necessary at all to thank him. He would indeed do much more if he knew how he could please the Wittenbergers. The news, Luther had sent him, confirmed him of the fact that the allmighty God destroyed the attacks from the godless papists against his holy church, and the king expressed the hope that God would let Luther live still for many years, the Christian church and our true doctrine to encouragement and advantage. But by the time when this letter left the royal chancellery in Copenhagen Luther had passed away. Later the king's secretary wrote on the copy in the king's copybook: »Nota bene: this last letter did the good and pious Luther not reach to read in this world.«⁴²

39 Lausten: Religion og politik, 221-317. Martin Schwarz LAUSTEN: Den hellige Stad Wittenberg: Danmark og Lutherbyen Wittenberg i reformationstiden. København 2002, 125-194.

40 [Johannes BUGENHAGEN]: Superintendentibus Regni Danicæ, dominis et fratribus suis, D. Pomeranus gratiam, misericordiam et pacem Dei patris nostri per Jesum Christum ... (1539). Kirkehistoriske samlinger: 2. række 3 (København 1864-1866), 469-482, quotation, 480.

41 WA Br 11, 260-262 (4187), Luther to Christian III, Wittenberg 14. January 1546; quotation, 260, 15.

42 Samling af kong Christian den Tredies breve, navnlig til anseete tydske Reformatorer 1, 242 (22) Æ WA Br 11, 306f (4211), Christian III to Luther, Aarhus 3. March 1546.