

The Reformation in Norway: a political and religious takeover

by Ole Peter Grell

In a modern, geographical context it seems somewhat bizarre to include Norway in the Baltic Reformation. After all, Norway borders the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, but not the Baltic Sea. However, from an early modern perspective it appears a much more reasonable proposition. To the merchants of the great Baltic trading organisation of the period, the Hansa, Norway fell very much within the sphere of their Baltic *dominium*. Thus, the Hansa in general, and the city of Lubeck in particular, maintained a large and dominant presence in the only Norwegian city of any consequence, Bergen. By the early sixteenth century there might have been around 3000 Germans in Bergen, close to 50% of the population of the city. The Hansa had for generations maintained a considerable, official representation with its own buildings and wharf (Bryggen) in Bergen which totally dominated the rest of the city (Stranden) even beyond the introduction of the Reformation. The significance of Bergen for Lubeck in particular, and for the Hansa in general, is clearly illustrated by the fact that shippers as well as merchants who traded on Bergen had by the sixteenth century created their own corporations in Lubeck, with their own buildings and coat of arms. The latter incorporated a crowned stockfish symbolising the most significant commodity being exported from Bergen. A splendid example of this coat of arms can still be seen in the hall of the Lubeck seafarers, the so-called Schiffergesellschaft in Lubeck.¹

Despite legally remaining an independent kingdom until 1536 when King Christian III finally incorporated it as a province of the kingdom of Denmark in his coronation charter, Norway had long been dominated by its sister-kingdom in the south, from where most of its Royal administrators were recruited within the Danish nobility. The Union Treaty of 1450, which stated that the two kingdoms of Denmark and Norway should remain united and equal in eternity under the same

¹ See D. Ellmers, Dreimaster, Bootshaken, gekronter Stockfisch – Die Wappen der Schiffergesellschaft als Programm, in: Seefahrt, Schiff und Schifferbruder. 600 Jahre Schiffergesellschaft zu Lübeck 1401–2001, ed. by Rolf Hammel-Kiesow. Lübeck 2001, pp. 21-27.

king, proved unable to protect Norway from a political and economic takeover by its richer and far more populous neighbour to the south. Furthermore, by the time of the Reformation Denmark and with it Norway was also emerging as one of the major Baltic powers.

Having come out of the civil war of 1533–1536 victoriously the Lutheran King, Christian III, found himself in an exceptionally powerful position at the beginning of his reign, making it possible for him to face down most of the political and religious opposition he had encountered. Consequently, he imprisoned the Catholic bishops in Denmark while confiscating most of the wealth belonging to the Danish Church. The following year Christian III introduced a new Lutheran Church Order (1537/39) produced under the guidance of Luther's friend and collaborator Johannes Bugenhagen, who only six years earlier, in 1531, had presided over the introduction of a similar new, Lutheran Church Order in Lubeck.² The Latin title of the Danish Order, "*Ordinatio Ecclesiastica Daniae et Norwegiae*", indicates that it was also meant to cover Norway. In reality, however, 99% of the new Lutheran Church Order dealt exclusively with the Danish Church while only one small paragraph referred specifically to Norway, clearly implying the subordination of the Norwegian church to its Danish sister-church.

We shall immediately proceed to appoint Superintendents to all the seas in Norway, whom we shall instruct to do their utmost to make sure that every parish has good preachers and the true word of God. That nothing shall be remiss in what concerns the preaching of the word of God and the salvation of men. And they shall deal with other matters in accordance with this our Order until we ourselves come to Norway, which we, with God's assistance, expect to do soon. Then we shall on the advice of the Superintendents deal with matters which are not covered by this Order and introduce a new Order which will deal with this.³

² For the Reformation of Lubeck, see Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, *Die Reformation als religiöse und politische Neuorientierung der Stadtgemeinschaft*, in: *Lübeckische Geschichte*, ed. by A. Grassmann. Lübeck 1997, pp. 377–390.

³ For the Lutheran Church Order of 1537/39, see *Kirkeordinansen 1537/39 (The Church Order of 1537/39)*. Odense 1989; for the paragraph on Norway see pp. 137 and 233 (my translation).

Christian III's promise to travel to Norway as soon as possible, and issue a Lutheran Church Order for the country suited to the local conditions, was never fulfilled. Considering that Christian, while Duke of Schleswig and Holstein, had served as his father, King Frederik I's governor in Norway during 1529, and shown a good grasp of the political situation in the country, his failure to undertake the journey in the late 1530s is indicative of how far down his agenda Norway came.⁴ In fact Norway had to wait another seventy years before the country finally received its own Lutheran Church Order in 1607.⁵

Thus, it was left to the new Norwegian superintendents, whom Christian III had also promised to appoint in the immediate future, to make sure that the 'word of God was preached and all things necessary for the salvation of men' were provided. Even in this case the King proved slow to act and initially only the superintendent for Bergen was appointed on 26 August 1537. Thus, the Catholic Archdeacon of the Bergen chapter, Geble Pedersson, became the first Lutheran superintendent to be appointed not only in Norway, but in the whole of the recently united kingdom of Denmark-Norway. The Danish superintendents were not officially appointed until early September. We know that Geble Pedersson was the only representative of the Norwegian Church who was present in Copenhagen for the celebrations marking the official introduction of the Reformation in Denmark-Norway, but why he was appointed before his Danish colleagues remains a mystery.⁶ Geble Pedersson's protégé Absolon Pedersson, however, reports that Geble was ordained together with his Danish colleagues by Johannes Bugenhagen, and that he was the only new superintendent to show good breeding by sending Bugenhagen a couple of pitchers of wine in appreciation of his efforts. The fact, that Geble had already been elected two years previously by the chapter to succeed Bishop Olav Torkellsson, who had died in May 1535 and thus turned out to be the last Catholic bishop of Bergen, does not seem to have counted against him. That he had also been the favoured candidate of the sub-

⁴ For Christian's stay in Norway in 1539, see M. Schwarz Lausten, *Christian den 3. og kirken 1537-1539*. Copenhagen 1987, p. 12.

⁵ See T. Rasmussen, *Utkastet til en egen norsk kirkeordinans fra 1604* (The draft for a specific Norwegian Church Order in 1604), in: *Reformationens konsolidering i de nordiska landerna 1540-1610*, ed. by I. Brohed. Oslo 1990, pp. 57-73, especially p. 58.

⁶ M. Schwarz Lausten, *Biskop Peder Palladius og kirken 1537-1560* (Bishop Peder Palladius and the church 1537-1560). Copenhagen 1987, p. 380 f. See also A.B. Fossen, *Bergens Bys Historie. Borgerskapets by 1536-1800* (The History of the City of Bergen. The Burghers' City 1536-1800). Vol. II, Bergen 1979, p. 104.

sequently deposed Catholic Archbishop of Trondheim, Olav Engelbrektsson, who had led the Norwegian opposition to Christian III during the recent civil war, did not appear to have caused him any problems either.

Clearly, Christian III was pursuing a deliberate and well-planned strategy for the Reformation of the Norwegian Church, in line with the instructions he had already issued to the Royal administrator of Bergen Castle, the Danish nobleman Esge Bille. Back in June 1537, a couple of months before the official introduction of the Reformation, the King had forwarded a letter to Esge Bille about what actions to take, or more precisely not to take, with regard to the Norwegian Church. Bille was specifically ordered not to interfere, but to allow 'church officials and parish priests to continue in accordance with their traditions and not to instate new preachers in order that the poor, simple and common people should not fall out with each other and become frightened. In due course, the King would find means whereby they could be brought to a better understanding of the word of God'.⁷

Geble Pedersson, with his humanist leanings, he had studied in the Netherlands, first attending a school in Alkmaar and later the famous, humanist University of Louvain where he obtained an MA in philosophy, fitted this plan perfectly, providing both continuity and a positive humanist outlook which made him sympathetic to a 'gentle', Lutheran Reformation in Norway. In this he differed from most of his colleagues within the Catholic Church in Norway. It is noteworthy, that while studying in Louvain Geble Pedersson had befriended two prominent, Danish students there, Christian Torkelsen Morsing, the physician, later professor of medicine and first Protestant Vice-Chancellor of the University of Copenhagen and the nobleman, Vincens Lunge, who was later to play such an important part in the political and religious events leading up to the Norwegian Reformation.⁸

However, the appointment of Geble Pedersson proved to be the exception, and the other bishoprics remained leaderless for the next

⁷ The instruction to Esge Bille is printed in: *Reformationen in Norden. Kontinuitet och fornyelse* (The Reformation in the Nordic countries. Continuity and Renewal), ed. by Carl-Gustav Andren. Lund 1973, p. 114 (my translation).

⁸ See the oration about Geble Pedersson by his protégé Absolon Pedersson, in: *Absolon Pedersson Dagbog og Oration om Mester Geble* (The Diary of Absolon Pedersson and his Oration about Master Geble), ed. by K. Valkner. Oslo 1963, p. 42: "Oration om M: Geble".

four years, until Jon Guttormsson was made superintendent for the diocese of Stavanger and Hans Reff was given the amalgamated dioceses of Hamar and Oslo in 1541. The former archbishopric of Trondheim had to wait a further five years until Thorbjorn Olavsen Bratt was appointed superintendent, a decade after Archbishop Olav Engelbrektsson, had fled the country in April 1537.⁹

The first four superintendents appointed to lead the Reformation of the Norwegian Church differed markedly from their Danish counterparts in that none of them had been active as evangelical preachers nor studied in Wittenberg prior to the Reformation. Instead, they were all recruited from within their local Catholic, cathedral chapters, apart from Hans Reff, who had been the last Catholic bishop of the diocese of Oslo, appointed in 1525 and deposed in 1537. Considering, that Reff had then been the chosen candidate of Archbishop Engelbrektsson, his re-appointment as a Lutheran bishop/superintendent in 1541 is both surprising and unique. Thus, Reff became the only properly ordained and confirmed Catholic bishop in Scandinavia to serve in the same capacity within one of new Protestant churches.¹⁰

The sitting cathedral chapters appear to have been able to have their chosen candidates for the vacant sees appointed as superintendents by Christian III. Apart from Jon Guttormsson, who had been a canon in the Stavanger chapter and about whom little is known, the others were clearly strongly influenced by humanism. Geble Pedersson, as we have seen, had attended the University of Louvain while Hans Reff had studied at the University of Paris, and Thorbjorn Olavsson Bratt, who had been dean of the Trondheim chapter and who had originally been elected by his colleagues in 1542, spent the next four years studying at the Universities in Copenhagen and Wittenberg before his appointment in 1546.¹¹ Evidently Christian III's instruction to Esge Bille in June 1537 was to be taken seriously. No drastic changes were to be made to either the theology or the personnel of the Norwegian Church. Undoubtedly, the King and his advisors believed that the new evangelical teachings had so far made little popular impact in Norway,

⁹ See O.P. Grell, *The Catholic Church and its leadership*, in: *The Scandinavian Reformation. From evangelical movement to institutionalisation of reform*, ed. by O.P. Grell. Cambridge 1995, p. 99.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 96 f. and 99.

¹¹ T. Ellingsen, *Det nye embedet i kirken. Superintendentens plass i norsk reformasjonshistorie* (The new office in the church. The role of the superintendents in the Norwegian Reformation), in: *Reformationens konsolidering* (see note 5), pp. 178-197, especially pp. 183 f.

and in order to prevent disturbances and open opposition to the new regime and religious order, only a gradual and moderate Reformation from the top under the guidance of trusted and reliable clergy from within the old church could guarantee stability.

In this context it is interesting to note that when the first and by then sole Norwegian superintendent Geble Pedersson together with the royal administrators, Claus Bille and Truid Ulfstand, met up with the cathedral clergy during the summer of 1539 to debate how best to promote the Lutheran Church Order, they proved unable to find a local candidate for the vacant position as superintendent for the diocese of Oslo. They concluded that no-one could be found to take on this task.¹² Was this really the case or was it simply a tactical move in order to have Hans Reff elected?

Local, suitable candidates were, however, clearly thin on the ground in Norway. Norway, of course, had no university of its own and the few humanists among its clergy had been inspired through their studies abroad. Likewise, chances of attracting evangelical or Lutheran candidates from Denmark were probably limited due to an inadequate supply and the far better career prospects in their home country. Furthermore, the potential dangers of introducing Danish superintendents with no experience of Norwegian conditions who could easily destabilise an already dangerously unstable situation would not have tempted Christian III and his advisors in Copenhagen. Norway, after all, had recently demonstrated a strong support for the cause of the deposed King Christian II, when he had landed with a force of around 7000 lansquenets in November 1531. Especially, the Norwegian bishops had been prominent in their support for the deposed King. Together with Archbishop Olav Engelbrektsson, the bishops of Hamar and Oslo, Magnus Lauritsson and Hans Reff, had provided Christian II with both troops and money during his brief and eventually disastrous campaign. Bearing in mind that both Engelbrektsson and Lauritsson had remained loyal to the exiled king to the bitter end, they had escaped lightly, paying only large fines, from a political venture which might well have destroyed them both.¹³ Their survival might well have owed a great deal to the fact that Frederik I, King of Denmark and Norway, died shortly after the imprisonment of Christian II in April 1533.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹³ See A. Heise, *Kristiern den Anden in Norge og hans Faengsling (Christian II in Norway and his imprisonment)*. Copenhagen 1877.

When, on the death of Frederik I, civil war broke out in Denmark due to the attempt of the Catholic bishops and their conservative allies within the Council to reverse the dead King's pro-evangelical policies, the Norwegian Archbishop and his allies once more rallied around the cause of Christian II, who they, surprisingly enough, saw as their best chance of guaranteeing the survival of the Catholic Church in Norway while simultaneously preventing the growing control over the Norwegian government by Danish officials. In this context it is noteworthy that by now Archbishop Engelbrektsson was opposed by his former ally, the Danish nobleman Vincens Lunge, who had married into one of the few powerful noble Norwegian houses, the Austraat family. A decade earlier, in 1524, Lunge together with Archbishop Engelbrektsson had been instrumental in drawing up a special Norwegian coronation charter for Frederik I, modelled on the Danish charter the King had signed a year earlier. It stated that Norway was in future to be an elective kingdom, and not to be subject to automatic Royal succession, while in future all the main fiefs were to be given to Norwegians only. Like the Danish coronation charter the Norwegian, however, proved unable to restrain King Frederik I's policies of strengthening the crown at the expense of the national nobilities.

By 1529, however, Archbishop Engelbrektsson and Vincens Lunge had fallen out with each other and become arch-enemies. This was undoubtedly linked to Lunge's and his mother-in-law, Lady Inger's growing attraction to Lutheranism. Vincens Lunge's extensive humanist training, he had studied in France and at the University of Louvain, where he had acquired doctorates in both philosophy and law before returning to Copenhagen where he had not only become professor of law, but also Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1521, had undoubtedly paved the way for his evangelical views.¹⁴

Vincens Lunge, who for long periods resided in Bergen, played a significant part in promoting the evangelical cause in the city at an early stage. Already in the spring of 1525 he had informed Archbishop Engelbrektsson that the Bergen Bishop, Olav Torkellsson, was contemplating resigning his bishopric and withdrawing to a monastery, because of the difficulties he had encountered with the Germans in Bergen. This may well be an oblique reference to the presence of evangelical, German preachers, such as the former German monk, Antho-

¹⁴ For Vincens Lunge, see *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon* (Danish Dictionary of National Biography). 3rd edition (henceforth DBL); C.F. Allen, *De tre Nordiske Rigers Historie* (The History of the Three Nordic Kingdoms). Vol. IV,2, Copenhagen 1870, pp. 214-266.

nius, who had become minister to the Hallvard Church in Bergen, which had been granted to the resident German population.¹⁵

However, when Bishop Torkellsson wrote to Archbishop Engelbrektsson the following year, he did not refer to any problems with the German population of Bergen in general or the Hansa in particular. Instead, his troubles were according to him caused by Vincens Lunge. The situation was serious enough to make Torkellsson contemplate resignation and retirement, and he had already left Bergen for the safety of his country-seat in Ask. He inquired whether it would be possible for him to move his residence permanently away from Bergen to avoid the molestation and insults he suffered from Vincens Lunge, not to mention the desecration which 'the Holy Church suffered from the Lutheran sect'. It would appear from this letter that Bishop Torkellsson had already lost control over much of his clergy, not only in the city churches, but also within the cathedral chapter. Clearly, some of the clergy were openly supporting the evangelical cause and had started to marry. Torkellsson was desperately seeking support and affirmation of his ecclesiastical jurisdiction from the Archbishop, especially over the chaplains at the Royal chapels who evidently presented him with particular problems. Torkellsson specifically mentions the activities of Vincens Lunge's chaplain, Soren Clemmentson, who together with his assistants had visited every inn in Bergen to inform the laity that they were no longer to donate money towards the cost of candles used at the Mass in the cathedral.¹⁶ Evidently, the Bishop was not only on the defensive against a growing evangelical movement encouraged by the Royal administrator, Vincens Lunge, but the letter shows him to have been more or less paralysed, unable to take any counter-measures. Torkellsson's standing might never have been great within Bergen. His main interests appear to have been financial and administrative, while he himself traded actively using the privileged tax-position of the Church. The arrival of evangelical ideas evidently served to provide the ideological rationale for a further to undermining of his status. He was nick-named Bishop Butter-barrel by the resident Hanseatic merchants on Bryggen, and was exposed to ridicule, with crowds marching round his residence singing pasquades and drumming on empty butter barrels.¹⁷

¹⁵ K. Valkner, *Reformasjonens innforelse i Bergen* (The introduction of the reformation into Bergen), in: P. Juvkam, *Bjorgvin Bispestol. Byen og bispedømmet* (The Bishopric of Bjorgvin. The city and the bishops). Oslo 1970, pp. 167-181, especially pp. 173 f.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁷ *Oration om M: Geble* (see note 8), p. 27.

On his part, Vincens Lunge, with his considerable political acumen and flair, might well have recognised the changed political climate by 1526 when King Frederik I and his government began to pursue much more pro-evangelical policies in Denmark.¹⁸ Furthermore, Lunge always had a good eye for the possibilities of augmenting his personal estate, and a politically emasculated Catholic Church with considerable landed estates offered plenty of potential. Thus, in 1528 Lunge managed to obtain a Royal grant of the large nunnery, Nonneseter, near Bergen. By 1529 it was common knowledge that Lutheran hymns were sung at table at Lunge's residence in Bergen, and at his mother-in-law's estate at Austraat.¹⁹ In 1529 Vincens Lunge also seems to have instigated an iconoclastic attack on one of the churches in Bergen and the plundering of the Dominican monastery in the city. These activities all added fuel to the conflict between Archbishop Engelbrektsson and Lunge and caused it to develop into open warfare.

But what was the German or Hanseatic input in these evangelically inspired events of the late 1520s? After all, Bergen, being the only Norwegian city of any consequence with a population of around 6000 people, was, as we have seen, dominated by a large resident, German population, both within the city proper and within the Hanseatic setup on Bryggen.²⁰ Even if Bergen did not quite have the same urban significance and qualities of the somewhat larger cities of Malmo or Copenhagen, it was a city of particular mercantile importance, especially to the Hanseatic cities of the Baltic, such as Lubeck and Rostock.²¹

Despite the fact that the Reformation was not formally introduced into either Lubeck or Rostock until 1531 itinerant evangelical preachers had been active in these cities since the early 1520s.²² We can probably safely assume that some of those preachers reached Bergen on the many ships travelling between the city and the Baltic.

¹⁸ See Grell, Catholic Church (see note 9), p. 97

¹⁹ Valkner, Reformasjonens (see note 15), pp. 169 and 174; see also DBL.

²⁰ For the size of Bergen, see Fossen, Bergens Bys Historie (see note 6), p. 3.

²¹ See J. Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norge i det 16. aarhundred (The Hansa and Norway in the sixteenth century), in: Studier i norsk historie 1537 – ca. 1800 (Studies in Norwegian History 1537 – ca.1800), ed. by S. Imsen and S. Supphellen; Lydriket 1537–1660 (The dependent state 1537–1660), ed. by S. Imsen. Oslo 1981, pp. 275–299, especially p. 282.

²² For the Reformation in Lubeck, see Hauschild, Reformation (see note 2), pp. 380–383; for the Reformation in Rostock, see W. Trossbach, Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten bei der Durchsetzung der Reformation in den Hansestädten Wismar, Rostock und Stralsund, in: Archive for Reformation History 88 (1997), pp. 118–165, especially pp. 142–150.

We know from the Lubeck chronicler Reimar Kock and the Danish humanist, Paulus Helie, that the new evangelical ideas travelled along the established trade routes to the cities of Copenhagen and Malmo, so we can safely assume that this was also the case for Bergen. These preachers, undoubtedly in the first instance intended to preach for the resident members of the Hansa, but Reimar Kock emphasised that their preaching was also highly appreciated by the 'common man'. Their preaching in low German would have been widely understood in the major trading centres in both Denmark and Norway. Likewise Danes and Norwegians who visited the Hanseatic cities of the Baltic would have been able to observe the effect of the new evangelical ideas for themselves. Thus, in his scathing attack on the previous mayor of Malmo, an ardent supporter of the deposed King Christian II, Paulus Helie, emphasised the dangers such visits presented:

Your letter clearly illustrates what a dangerous thing it is when someone graduates or acquires his doctorate after about a month's studies. I know all about this, since a good deal of the "teachers" we receive from Germany every day seem to be able and learned enough not only to ridicule Popes, Bishops, priests and monks, but also to debate all the doctrines which have come into existence in the Holy Church in fourteen hundred years, and that immediately after they have participated in the drinking of a barrel of 'prysing' in Danzig or Konigsberg or a barrel of beer in Stralsund.²³

The former German monk, Anthonius, who might have arrived in Bergen as early as 1526, is likely to have belonged to this group of itinerant, German evangelical preachers, who regularly travelled through the Sound to spread the Gospel.²⁴ The fact that the Hanseatic factors and craftsmen on Bryggen in Bergen apart from the Hallvard Church also acquired the use of the Martin Church for the German community, including the right to appoint their own preacher during the 1520s, would indicate a growing evangelical interest among this community.

²³ Cited in O.P. Grell, *The City of Malmo and the Danish Reformation*, in: *Archive for Reformation History* 79 (1988), p. 311-339, especially p. 330.

²⁴ For this date for Anthonius's arrival, see Valkner, *Reformasjonens* (see note 15), p. 174.

By 1529 the evangelical movement in Bergen also managed to obtain Royal support. In August that year King Frederik I extended his growing practice of issuing Royal letters of protection to individual evangelical preachers in Denmark to Norway. Two preachers in Bergen, Jens Viborg and Herman Fresze were issued with such letters protecting them from any attempt of the Catholic Church and its Bishops to stop their activities in Norway. Before the official introduction of the Reformation in 1537 a failed attempt was made to blow up the house of Herman Fresze. Beyond that, his activities have left no trace. His colleague, Jens Viborg, however, eventually became vicar of the Cross Church in Bergen and died in 1552.²⁵

By 1529 it would appear that evangelical, German preachers had managed to supplant Norwegian priests at the Maria and Martin churches in Bergen. The conservative, civic leaders of Lubeck desperately trying to hold back the evangelical tide in their own city, now sought to expand their anti-evangelical campaign to Bergen. They wrote to the Norwegian Council complaining about the new, evangelical preachers in Bergen who, they claimed, deceived the simple, common man. They wanted the Council to intervene and stop their activities. We can safely assume that this request failed. Two years later, in 1531, by which time the great majority of the Hanseatic cities, including Lubeck, had officially embraced the Reformation, the city-fathers of Lubeck, realising the immediate threat of an invasion from the exiled King Christian II, who was not a friend of the Hansa, requested the Council's protection of the Hanseatic merchants on Bryggen, even if some of them were 'Lutherans'.²⁶

It would also appear that by 1531 Catholic services were no longer held at the Cross church in Bergen and that some form of evangelical service had been introduced by Jens Viborg, who had received a letter of protection two years earlier. This is evident from a letter written

²⁵ Ibid., p. 175. Valkner's conclusion that the letters of protection were linked to the issue of a general letter of protection for all evangelical preachers in Denmark in 1527, and that they were issued because of what was considered to be particularly dangerous conditions for the two preachers cannot, however, be correct. See O.P. Grell, *Herredagen 1527. Problemer omkring vaernebreve og deres retslige status i forbindelse med den paa herredagen konstituerede kirkepolitik* (The diet of 1527. Problems regarding letters of protection and their legal status in relation to the diet's ecclesiastical policy), in: *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger* (Church History). Copenhagen 1978, pp. 69-88.

²⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 175. For the letters from Lubeck, see *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*. Vol. 1-21, Christiania 1847-1946, here Vol. XI, nos. 522 and 523. See also Vol. VIII, no. 642.

by Frederik I to the Norwegian Council. The King, however, was obviously not worried about the fact that the Mass and other Catholic services had been discontinued, but he was concerned about what had happened to the income and goods of the church, such as items made of gold and silver, which he considered to be the property of the Crown.²⁷

In 1533, like their counterparts in Denmark, the Norwegian bishops and their allies sought to reverse the progress made by the evangelical movement in the reign of Frederik I. With the two most prominent, Royal administrators missing – Esge Bille having been taken prisoner by the Hansa and imprisoned in Lubeck and Vincens Lunge having joined the forces of Christian III in Jutland in Denmark – Archbishop Olav Engelbrektsson was able to take control in Norway, apart from Bergen where the castle remained in the hands of Vincens Lunge's associate, Tord Roed, and the city under the control of the resident Hanseatic merchants.

Engelbrektsson's political aim of having Christian II reinstated as King of Norway was doomed from the start. By the summer of 1535 his only hope of success rested solely on the intervention of the German Duke, Frederick of the Palatinate, who had married Christian II's daughter, Dorothea, in May that year. Apart from his ambition to restore the Catholic Church to its former glory Engelbrektsson's political aim has traditionally within Norwegian historiography been seen as an attempt to restore national independence, limiting the influence of Denmark and the Hansa. There is, however, little evidence to support such a view. As I have argued elsewhere, Engelbrektsson is, in my opinion, best understood as a traditional Catholic bishop, who sought to protect and revive the Catholic Church in Norway. A pro-Norwegian policy was after all also promoted by evangelicals such as Vincens Lunge.

This view is further supported by the political developments which followed in the wake of the Archbishop's apparent change of heart in the autumn of 1536. Having realised the impossibility of having Christian II re-instated Engelbrektsson finally appeared willing to accept Christian III as king of Norway by September 1535. However, during the final negotiations in Trondheim in January 1536 between the Archbishop, the Norwegian Council and Christian III's representatives among whom were Vincens Lunge, Engelbrektsson threw all political caution to the wind and imprisoned most of his political and reli-

²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 175 f.

gious opponents, including former allies such as the Bishops, Hans Reff and Magnus Lauritsson. Among the prisoners were also his long-standing arch-enemy, Vincens Lunge, whom he had murdered. Acting on the promise of troops from Duke Frederick of the Palatinate, which, as it turned out never materialised, the Archbishop was only able to hold out for a little over a year and eventually fled Norway.²⁸

The sources to the early history of the evangelical movement in Norway leading up to the official introduction of a Lutheran Church Order in 1537 are, as we have seen, few. From them, or perhaps the lack of them, we can safely assume that there was very little or no evangelical activity outside the city of Bergen – the country's only city of some size – before 1537. Undoubtedly some noble families such as the Austraat family, which Vincens Lunge married into, embraced the new evangelical ideas, but they like the inhabitants of Bergen were the exception. Not surprisingly, Norway, lacking its own university and with no printing press in the country, was at a clear disadvantage. Not surprisingly, no major, local reformer materialised in the country, nor for that matter was any Reformation literature produced locally. Instead, the Reformation relied nearly exclusively on itinerant, foreign preachers and imported evangelical pamphlets and broad-sheets travelling across the Baltic from the Hanseatic cities. In this Norway, or more precisely Bergen, did not differ from the other major Scandinavian cities such as Copenhagen, Malmo and Stockholm who similarly depended on German inspiration. However, these cities all had their own printing presses and seem to have been able quickly to attract local talent won over to the evangelical ideas, some of whom managed to establish themselves as prominent advocates of the Reformation, not only through their preaching, but more significantly through their publications for which there clearly was a receptive local market. Consequently, no major reformers materialised in Bergen on a par with Peder Laurentsen, Frans Vormordsen and Hans Tausen in Malmo and Copenhagen respectively or Olaus Petri in Stockholm who could have provided theological guidance and leadership for the nascent evangelical movement.

Apart from a few names of German and Danish/Norwegian evangelical preachers who were active from the mid to late 1520s we know little about the type of Protestantism available in Bergen, nor the size of the evangelical movement there. However, the fact that the last Catholic Bishop preferred to move his residence away from the city in

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 177, and Greel, *Catholic Church* (see note 9), pp. 94-99.

1526 would indicate that by then there was little support for the old church and its leaders. By the beginning of the 1530s the evangelical party might well have been in control of Bergen, encouraged and promoted by Vincens Lunge and protected by King Frederik I through his use of Royal letters of protection for individual, evangelical preachers.

Outside Bergen the evangelical movement remained more or less non-existent. By the time the country received its first Lutheran Church, it was not only a Reformation from above – by Royal *fiat* – but also, as in the case of the early evangelical inspiration, coming from without. This time not in a German, but rather in a Danish form, as an appendix to the Danish Lutheran Church Order.

The Lutheran Church Order of 1537 had, in other words, a very slight evangelical foundation on which to build. This, however, was a problem which the new Royal administration in Copenhagen was well aware of, from King Christian III himself to the new superintendent of Sealand, Peder Palladius. Palladius had recently returned to Copenhagen having finished his education under the tuition of both Luther and Melanchthon at the University of Wittenberg, in order to take charge of the new Lutheran Church. He was not only to become superintendent of Sealand, but he also became professor of theology at the University of Copenhagen. In this double capacity he was to serve as *primus inter pares* not only among the Danish superintendents, but also among their Norwegian colleagues.²⁹

According to Absalon Pedersson, his benefactor Geble Pedersson, was regularly corresponding with Peder Palladius in Copenhagen, initially trying to recruit Danish evangelical ministers for his diocese. This scheme failed, according to Absalon, because of rumours to the effect that Norway was a dangerous country populated by unruly people who were not adverse to murdering clergymen, and that, furthermore, the income from the Norwegian livings were supposed to be meagre.³⁰

Instead, Geble Pedersson and Palladius changed their strategy. Talented, young Norwegians were sent to Copenhagen to study at the University, residing with Peder Palladius. Thus, Absalon Pedersson lived with Palladius during the five years he studied in Copenhagen

²⁹ See Schwarz Lausten, Biskop Peder Palladius (see note 6), p. 380-386.

³⁰ Oration om M: Geble (see note 8), p. 44. See also O. Kolsrud, Folket og reformasjonen i Norge (The people and the Reformation of Norway), in: Lydriket (see note 21), pp. 112-135.

between 1544 and 1549, sponsored by Geble. Apparently, Palladius had by then managed to convince Geble to finance Absalon's studies for a further three years at the University of Wittenberg. The Bergen superintendent's generosity was not restricted to Absalon and he seems to have financed the studies of at least another nine, future Norwegian ministers or schoolmasters during the 1540s and early 1550s. Apart from them a number of other Norwegian students attended the University of Copenhagen at this time, and Absalon tells us how he personally intervened with Palladius on behalf of six poor Norwegian students who could not make ends meet while studying in Copenhagen. Palladius subsequently approached Christian III who provided a grant for them. Evidently, Peder Palladius played a prominent role not only in attracting Norwegian students to the University of Copenhagen, but also in supporting them. So much so, that Absalon Pedersson describes him as 'the father of the Norwegian students and their refuge when missing something'.³¹

Geble Pedersson's main contribution to the Norwegian Reformation would appear to have been in the field of education. Apart from his support of students, he personally made sure that the Latin school could be reopened in Bergen and that the necessary finances were in place to secure its continuation, not to mention actively recruiting qualified teachers for the school.

However, for Geble Pedersson the Reformation also meant a change to the way people in Bergen ought to live their lives. The boozing and fornication in particular involving a considerable number of the Hanseatic factors and their apprentices on Bryggen, who were, of course, often young and unmarried men or men who had left their wives behind in the Baltic, now became a target for a moral crusade by Geble. The fact that the young Hanseatic merchants and their apprentices had always constituted a somewhat unruly section of the urban landscape in Bergen, mattered little in the changed circumstances of the Reformation. Geble Pedersson was able to engineer support for his cause from Palladius, who added a post-script to a small volume he had already dedicated to the Norwegian ministers *Brevis Expositio Catechismi* (1541). In it, Palladius threatened the Germans in Bergen with God's 'serious punishment' unless they repented and changed their ways. Palladius also used the opportunity to praise the work of Geble Pedersson and 'the other Christian preachers, German and Danish, in Bergen' for their continuous admonitions of the ungodly,

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45 f.

whereby the 'kingdom of the Devil' was gradually diminished.³² It is puzzling that Palladius exclusively refers to German and Danish preachers. Were there no Norwegian, evangelical/Lutheran preachers in Bergen at this point in time, bearing in mind that the post-script in the form we know it is from the 1546-translation of the catechism?

According to his protégé Absalon, Geble Pedersson made good use of Palladius's work. Hardly had he received a copy before he assembled the leaders of the Hanseatic community in Bergen and had the book read aloud to them, threatening them with having it translated into many languages in order to make their immorality known abroad. This apparently had the desired effect as did the catechistic preaching of the three resident, German preachers, whose sermons Geble regularly attended, taking copious notes.³³

Palladius did not restrict his support to Geble Pedersson and the diocese of Bergen. In January 1551 he intervened in a case which had caused serious problems for the then superintendent of Oslo, Frans Berg. It involved the former headmaster of Our Lady's School in Copenhagen, Jon Andersen, who had become lecturer in theology at the cathedral in Oslo. In Oslo he had caused offence by his immoderate drinking and his disobedience to his superior, the superintendent Frans Berg, who had threatened to resign unless he received support. Palladius had stepped in and written a threatening letter to Jon Andersen, strongly admonishing him to mend his ways. Unless Palladius received a letter from Andersen's superior in Oslo – the superintendent Frans Berg – informing him of a dramatic improvement in his behaviour, Palladius would approach the King and encourage him to recall Jon Andersen. This would not only make Jon Andersen a target of Royal anger, but God himself would condemn him for his drunkenness and disobedience. The letter appears to have done the trick and Jon Andersen hung on to his job.³⁴

As in Denmark, it proved difficult to root out much traditional, Catholic worship in Norway. However, reading Peder Palladius one can only conclude that the problems in Norway were on a far greater scale. Here the problem was not restricted to the continuation of a few

³² See Peder Palladius, *Efterskrift til En kort Katekismusudlaeggelse, 1546* (Postscript to the Short Catechism), Reprint ed. by L. Jacobson. Copenhagen 1911–1912 (Peder Palladius' Danske Skrifter. 1), pp. 335–340, especially p. 336.

³³ Oration om M: Geble (see note 8), pp. 56 f.

³⁴ Schwarz Lausten, Christian (see note 4), pp. 196 f.

Catholic rites and pilgrimages.³⁵ In 1546, while celebrating the fact that all four Norwegian dioceses had finally been provided with Lutheran superintendents, Palladius emphasised the depth of ungodliness among the common man in Norway caused by continuous, popish superstition. Palladius pointed his finger at two major problems for the new Lutheran church in the country. The first was the continued adoration of Our Lady on Saturdays, which Palladius described as

the false and horrible idolatry, which the blessed mother, the Virgin Mary, of Jesus Christ is disgraced with, against the first and the second commandment, and in the kingdom of Norway has constituted a proper chapel of Satan with these Saturday celebrations, created around the true church of God, which knows the value of keeping Sunday holy, and values lawful work, both on Saturdays, as on other weekdays, according to God's commandment, wherein He says, in the sweat of your brow you shall eat your bread.³⁶

Evidently the liturgical devotion to Mary had become a prominent feature of pre-Reformation Norwegian Catholicism with a strong following of the so-called Saturday Mass Office. As such it became a major target for the first Norwegian superintendents and their spiritual leader in Copenhagen. Palladius acknowledged that 'the Devil will always have his chapel inside God's church, but good and faithful shepherds would forcefully dismantle all his chapels in order that God's church can expand unimpeded'.³⁷

Another major profanity, according to Palladius, was the Norwegian devotion to the cult of St. Olave. His shrine in Trondheim cathedral had been a famous place of pilgrimage in Norway since the Middle Ages. Furthermore, this shrine for the first Christian King of Norway, who became Patron Saint of the country, had long served as a focus for those who sought an independent Norway. It was no accident that King Olave's corpse was eventually reburied, thereby simultaneously removing a potentially dangerous focus for Norwegian 'nationalism' and Catholicism.³⁸

³⁵ For Denmark, see O.P. Grell, *Scandinavia*, in: *The Reformation in National Context*, ed. by B. Scribner (et al.). Cambridge 1994, p. 123.

³⁶ Palladius, *Efterskrift* (see note 32), p. 335 (my translation).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 336 (my translation).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 337. See also Schwarz Lausten, *Biskop Peder Palladius* (see note 6), p. 385.

Thus, with the Reformation the Norwegian church was no longer led from within the country, by a primate residing in the ancient archbishopric of Trondheim, which was also the pilgrimage centre of the country, containing the shrine of St. Olave. The political gamble of the last, Catholic Archbishop, Olav Engelbretsson, undoubtedly played a part in this development and might help explain why the government of Christian III in Copenhagen left the diocese of Trondheim vacant for so much longer than the other Norwegian dioceses. Instead, this role fell to Peder Palladius, superintendent of Sealand and leading professor of theology at University of Copenhagen. He regularly corresponded with his Norwegian colleagues, especially the first appointee Geble Pedersson. He also wrote, as we have seen, a short explanation of Luther's catechism, aimed at the new 'Lutheran' clergy in Norway, and he dedicated a couple of his publications to them in the 1550s – "Translation of Psalm 137" (1554) and "The Altarbook" (1556).³⁹ Likewise, Palladius appears to have played a major part in providing tertiary education in theology at the University of Copenhagen for talented Norwegians, not only being instrumental in raising funds for them, but also providing many of them with accommodation, and one would assume some supervision and teaching on the model he himself had encountered in Wittenberg.

Similarly Palladius's input in the appointment of new, Norwegian superintendents is likely to have been significant from the start. He would have examined the theology of most candidates in his capacity as professor of theology at the University before he undertook their ordination in Copenhagen. In his book, *St Peder's Ship* (1554), Palladius specifically mentions the superintendent of Trondheim, Thorbjørn Olavsøn Bratt and Hans Reff's successor in Oslo, Anders Madsen, among the learned superintendents who had been examined by the University of Copenhagen.⁴⁰

The fact that all the superintendents who followed in the immediate footsteps of the first Lutheran superintendents in Norway all turned out to be Danes who had been active in the evangelical movement in Denmark is highly significant. Clearly, the government in Copenhagen with the support of Palladius, felt that the time had come for a more concerted effort to promote Lutheranism in Norway, and that such an effort would be best sustained by introducing experienced and

³⁹ Schwarz Lausten, *Biskop Peder Palladius* (see note 6), p. 383.

⁴⁰ Peder Palladius, *St. Peder's Ship*, 1554, Reprint ed. by L. Jacobsen. Copenhagen 1916–1918 (*Peder Palladius' Danske Skrifter*. 3), p. 107.

loyal Danes as superintendents, who relied exclusively on the central government in Copenhagen and its leading theologian, Peder Palladius.

The first generation of superintendents had consisted primarily of local humanists, who had been deliberately chosen from within the old cathedral chapters in order to secure continuity and stability in a country which remained predominantly Catholic. By the time successors had to be found for these men the government in Copenhagen felt secure enough to elect outsiders who had been active within the Reformation movement in Denmark. The first to be appointed was Anders Madsen. He succeeded Reff as superintendent in 1545. He had been among the evangelical preachers active in Denmark before the Reformation and had become the first Lutheran minister of the Church of the Holy Ghost in Copenhagen and later been promoted to dean of the city. He obtained his MA in theology from the University of Copenhagen in 1544, evidently obtaining the necessary academic qualifications for promotion to superintendent just in time for the vacancy of the diocese of Oslo and Hamar. However, even at this stage it was far from easy for Christian III to recruit Danes for positions in the Norwegian Church. Anders Madsen had only accepted the post in Oslo after considerable pressure from the crown and then only for one year in the first instance.⁴¹

In the event Anders Madsen lasted three years. He died in 1548 the same year the diocese of Trondheim fell vacant on the death of Thorbjørn Olavsens Bratt. Madsen was succeeded by another Dane Frans Berg. Berg, who had benefitted from a Royal scholarship while studying at the University of Rostock, had succeeded Peder Palladius as headmaster of the Latin school in Odense in 1531 when Palladius left for Wittenberg. He had also been active in the evangelical movement and after the Reformation he first became minister at the cathedral in Ribe, moving to the church of St. Nicholas in Copenhagen in 1546, where he demonstrated his Lutheran credentials and evidently caught the eye of Palladius and the crown.⁴²

Likewise, Thorbjørn Olavsens successor was a minister who had been active in the evangelical movement in Denmark. Hans Gaas, had studied at the universities of Copenhagen and Wittenberg and like Berg and Palladius he was a native to the island of Funen where he served as a minister until his promotion as superintendent of Trondheim.

⁴¹ Ellingsen, *Det nye embedet* (see note 11), p. 184.

⁴² For Frans Berg, see DBL.

Interestingly, Gaas owed his promotion to Christian III's leading councillor, the nobleman Johan Friis. The chapter in Trondheim had requested Friis to find them a suitable candidate for the vacancy. That Friis should have promoted Gaas with whom he is likely to have been familiar due to his personal power-base on Funen is hardly surprising. However, that the chapter in Trondheim found it opportune to abandon their traditional right to nominate a candidate in order to ingratiate themselves with Johan Friis and the government in Copenhagen is symptomatic of the political weakness of the Norwegian church by 1548. Gaas accepted his appointment and obtained the necessary MA in theology from the University of Copenhagen before his ordination in 1549.⁴³

The chapter in Bergen, however, proved less obliging on the death of Geble Pedersson in 1557. They made an attempt to have their own candidate appointed, but had to accept the crown's choice, the Dane, Jens Skjelderup. Skjelderup, who had studied in Copenhagen, Wittenberg and Rostock where he obtained his doctorate in medicine in 1556. Skjelderup held the professorship of physics at the University of Copenhagen prior to his appointment as superintendent. Considering his interests in medicine Skjelderup's appointment was unusual and can probably be explained by his failure in getting the vacant professorship in medicine at the University of Copenhagen that year.⁴⁴

Both Skjelderup and Berg founded virtual dynasties of Lutheran superintendents and ministers. Jens Skjelderup's son, Peder, became superintendent of Trondheim and his grandson eventually succeeded him to the diocese of Bergen, not to mention his son-in-law, Joergen Eriksson who became bishop of Stavanger in 1571. Frans Berg's son-in-law Jens Nilsson succeeded him as superintendent of Oslo in 1574 while his son Claus became a canon to the Oslo chapter and another son, Laurids became a teacher to the Latin school in the city.⁴⁵

The third generation of superintendents in Norway were similar to the second in that they were also Danes, even if a couple had spent some time in Norway prior to their appointment, often teaching in the Latin schools and, as we have seen in the case of Eriksson and Nilsson,

⁴³ For Hans Gass, see DBL and Ellingsen, *Det nye embetet* (see note 11), p. 186.

⁴⁴ For Jens Skjelderup, see Ellingsen, *Det nye embetet* (see note 11), p. 187, and V. Helk, *Dansk Norske Studierejser fra reformationen til enevældens 1536–1660* (Danish and Norwegian study trips from the Reformation to Absolutism 1536–1660). Odense 1987, p. 381.

⁴⁵ See Helk, *Studierejser* (see note 44), pp. 381 f. and 166, and Fossen, *Bergens Bys Historie* (see note 6), p. 309.

married into the families of sitting superintendents. Even so, the government in Copenhagen and the faculty of theology at the University of Copenhagen maintained a tight control on appointments in Norway.⁴⁶

Apart from the continuous improvements to secondary education which preoccupied the first Lutheran superintendents in Norway, they also, at least from 1550 onwards, tried to spread the new Lutheran faith within their dioceses through the use of visitations. As opposed to Denmark this proved no easy task in Norway, and Royal orders were regularly issued throughout the 1550s emphasising the obligation of local, lay authorities to assist the superintendents in order that they could inspect their dioceses. Local parishioners, however, proved averse to make an appearance when visitations took place. The King threatened those who stayed away with punishments and fines.⁴⁷ Whether this had much impact is questionable. Frans Berg, superintendent of Oslo and Hamar, complained about the lack of attendance during his visitations. Later in the 1570s Jens Nilsson encountered similar problems. The practice of diocesan visitations would appear to have been used in Oslo and Trondheim exclusively while lower level visitations within the rural deaneries remained at best sporadic during the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ Evidently, the Norwegian superintendents were not helped in their task by the considerable physical size of their dioceses, which covered mountainous regions which were difficult to travel. But clearly the majority of the rural population in Norway remained indifferent if not down-right hostile to the new Lutheran faith well into the later sixteenth century.

The fact that by 1560 the first Norwegian translation of the Bible had appeared, together with a hymn book – a translation of the Dane, Hans Thomissoen's hymn book – and liturgical manuals, seem to have had a limited impact. All religious renewal still had to filter down from the top.

Likewise, the use of synods remained sporadic in Norway during the sixteenth century. As opposed to Denmark, where we have a constant synodal activity from the introduction of the Reformation, ope-

⁴⁶ See Ellingsen, *Det nye embetet* (see note 11), p. 188.

⁴⁷ Schwarz Lausten, *Biskop Peter Palladis* (see note 6), p. 382.

⁴⁸ See I. Montgomery, *Synoden som ett led i reformationskyrkans inre konsolidering. Synoderna i Bergen 1584 och 1589* (The synod as a part of the internal consolidation of the Reformation church. The synods in Bergen 1584 and 1589), in: *Reformationens konsolidering* (see note 11), pp. 76 f.; H. Faehn, *Den liturgiske utvikling i Norge* (The liturgical development in Norway), in: *Ibid.*, pp. 286 f.

rating from national via diocesan down to local synods within individual deaneries, in Norway only intermittent diocesan synods took place, and then only within the dioceses of Stavanger and Bergen. It would seem that the first generations of Norwegian superintendents opted for either visitations or diocesan synods as a way of promoting the Lutheran Reformation and secure uniformity among their clergy, never both. Furthermore, they were only able to initiate these activities at very irregular intervals. The issues they dealt with when they were able to hold visitations and synods did not differ from those of their Danish counterparts. The real difference was that these issues had already been tackled forty to fifty years earlier in Denmark, confirming that the implementation of the Reformation was much slower in Norway.⁴⁹

Ideologically the Reformation of Norway can to a large extent be seen as a Danish takeover, i.e. a Reformation from both without and above. As such it constituted an important element in the political takeover already announced in Christian III's coronation charter. Not surprisingly Christian III also took the opportunity to improve the crown's economic power base in Norway, by confiscating most of the land and goods belonging to the Catholic Church. Here he went considerably further than in Denmark. It has been calculated that the crown only controlled 4% of all landed property in Norway on the eve of the Reformation, as opposed to the 44% belonging to the Catholic Church. Christian III only left the around 15% of the landed property belonging to the local parish churches untouched and was able to lift the crown's land holding from an insignificant 4% to a highly significant 26% of all landed property. Furthermore, most of the Norwegian Church's treasures and relics in gold and silver were confiscated and transferred to the royal coffers in Copenhagen. It was in other words both an economically and politically emasculated Norwegian church which emerged from the Reformation, finding it both financially and organisationally difficult to implement many of the changes necessitated by the Reformation.

Lack of sensitivity to local traditions by the government in Copenhagen did nothing to make the Reformation more palatable to the Norwegian people. In Norway the tithe had from the Middle Ages been split in four parts, one part for the bishops, one for the priests, one for the parish churches, and one for the poor. In Denmark it had been divided into only three parts, shared between bishops, priests and

⁴⁹ See Montgomery, *Synoden* (see note 48), pp. 74-95, especially p. 82.

parish churches. The new Lutheran Church Order followed the Danish practice. This caused deep dissatisfaction in Norway, especially within many rural parishes where the peasants refused to hand over the part they had traditionally retained for their poor. It would appear that the government in Copenhagen found it difficult to introduce the new tripartite way of dividing the tithe, and it may have failed to implement it until the early seventeenth century. However, the crown immediately succeeded in taking over that share of the tithe which had hitherto been given to the bishops, thus adding a new type of income to its growing revenues.⁵⁰

The example of Bergen clearly illustrates the changes brought about by the Reformation. In the later Middle Ages Bergen with its population of around 6000 had benefited from 20 churches and 5 monasteries serviced by between 400 to 500 clergy. The clergy, in other words, had constituted between 7-8% of the city's population. Furthermore, the late medieval, Catholic clergy had been an important economic force within the city, spending much of its income from the considerable landed estate of the Church in the city. By the Reformation the monasteries were gone as were many of the parish churches. The new Protestant clergy constituted an insignificant group of around 10 people who together with their families numbered around 40-50 people, or 10% of the original, Catholic clergy and considerably less than 1% of the whole population. Irrespective of their much smaller number the new Protestant clergy were also an economically much weaker group than their Catholic predecessors. Much of the revenue which had previously gone to Catholic churchmen in Bergen enhancing their spending power, now bypassed the city and ended up in Copenhagen.

Briefly the dominant position of the German Hansa on Bryggen might have been enhanced by the turmoil of the civil war leading up to the Reformation, expanding their trade and the number of parish churches in which the German population was served by German ministers, but gradually the influence of the burghers of Bergen grew vis-à-vis the resident Hanseatic population. Thus, in 1536 Bergen was allowed to appoint its first burgomaster and by 1540 the city was allowed to elect two. It is noteworthy that this significant expansion of the magistracy coincided with the Reformation. Gradually, with forceful royal support through Danish noblemen and royal admini-

⁵⁰ See R. Fladby, *Samfunn i vekst – under fremmed styre 1536–1660*. (Social and economic growth under foreign control 1536–1660) Bergen 1986 (*Handbok i Norges Historie*. 5), pp. 58-63.

strators such as Vincens Lunge and Christopher Valkendorf the city of Bergen was able to gain the upper hand in both political and economic terms vis-à-vis the Hanseatic factors on Bryggen. This is evident in a variety of areas from both trade and finance to religion, where the superintendent of Bergen gradually managed to supervise and control the German ministers serving the German parish churches. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Hanseatic leadership on Bryggen fought a rearguard action to prevent their own merchants and craftsmen from abandoning Bryggen in order to become citizens in Bergen proper.⁵¹ Thus the Reformation served indirectly to enhance Bergen's economic role in the second half of the sixteenth century.

However, none of this would have been possible without the itinerant, evangelical, German preachers who arrived on Hanseatic ships and introduced the new ideas to the Norwegian population, thereby preparing the political and religious takeover effectuated by Christian III in 1537 in connection with the introduction of the Lutheran Reformation in Norway. The government in Copenhagen managed to engineer a rapid takeover in both the political and economic domain by placing loyal, Danish administrators in all the major castles in Norway while simultaneously confiscating most of the landed estate belonging to the Norwegian church, thus adding financial muscle to its efforts. Considering that very few places beyond Bergen had sampled evangelical preaching before the introduction of the Lutheran Church Order the government in Copenhagen decided wisely to proceed with care in matters of religion, in order not to unsettle the majority of the population who remained Catholic. For those reasons the Norwegian Reformation had to be long and slow in order to succeed. What was begun in Copenhagen in 1537 was eventually accomplished 70 years later when Norway finally received its own Lutheran Church Order.

Redaktion durch Mark Hatlie, Tübingen

⁵¹ See Fossen, *Bergens Bys Historie* (see note 6), pp. 3-13, 52-69, 104-112 and 309-316.