

Wittenberg – Bugenhagen – Denmark

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Introduction

Over a period of just under two years, from 1537 to 1539, the Wittenberg theologian Johannes Bugenhagen stayed in Denmark, summoned by the Danish king, Christian III (1503–1559). Four things in particular occupied him during his stay: the completion of the Danish Church Ordinance, the coronation of Christian III, the instalment of the country's new superintendents (bishops), and the reestablishment of the University of Copenhagen. As it is one of the best researched as well as one of the most published periods in Danish Reformation history, the work by Bugenhagen is equally well described and analyzed in so far as the written sources permit. However, only few scholars seem to have been wondering as to why Christian III wanted to summon Bugenhagen at all. This question shall be the subject of the following account.

Looking back it is evident, as it must have been for his contemporaries, that Christian III would reform the Danish Church according to Lutheran theology after the civil war had been brought to an end. Even at an early stage of his life the indications were clear. Accompanied by Johan Rantzau, the young Christian travelled in Germany in 1521 and besides visiting Wittenberg he attended, in the company of his uncle, the Elector Joachim of Brandenburg, the Diet of Worms at which Luther, through his appearance and actions, won the young prince over to his cause.¹

Shortly before his marriage to Dorothea of Sachsen-Lauenburg in 1525, Christian received as maintenance the fiefs of Haderslev and Törning in Southern Jutland from his father, the Danish king Frederik I (1471–1533). In the very same year he began to interfere in the eccle-

¹ 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*, ed. by Hans-Günter Leder. Berlin 1984, pp. 144–167, here p. 144; Ejvind Slottved, *Christian III*, in: *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon. Vol. III*, København 1979, pp. 297–302, here p. 297; H.V. Gregersen, *Reformationen i Sønderjylland (The Reformation in Southern Jutland)*. Aabenraa 1986 (Skrifter, udgivne af Historisk Samfund for Sønderjylland. 63), pp. 54 ff.

siastical affairs of his fiefs,² and through his personal instigation, a Reformation proper took place in the fiefs in 1528. At this time no one could be in any doubt as to Christian III's inclination towards Lutheranism.³

After the death of Frederik I in April 1533 the Danish Herredag (i.e. parliament) decided to postpone the election of a new king. This decision formed the prelude to the following years' civil war that ended with the surrender of Copenhagen and Christian III's entry into the city in July – August 1536.⁴ During the tense period that passed between the postponement of the election of a new king and the outbreak of the war in the spring of 1534, duke Christian consulted his German acquaintances and relatives, among whose were his brother in law, duke Albrecht of Prussia, and count Philipp of Hessen, whom he visited in Kassel in February 1534, as to how he could reform the Danish Church.⁵ Two years later, in the spring of 1536, just after the surrender of Malmö (April 6th) and with the besieged Copenhagen as the only city that still resisted the king's army, it seems as if Christian III's ideas as to how the Danish Church should be reformed had become more concrete. In a letter to Philipp of Hessen, dated April 16th, 1536, he asked the count to bring about that Luther, Melanchthon or Johannes Bugenhagen could come to Denmark in order to assist in reforming the Church.⁶ The final result is well known: it was Johannes

² Gregersen, *Reformationen* (as note 1), pp. 63 ff.; Schwarz Lausten, *König* (as note 1), pp. 145 ff.

³ Gregersen, *Reformationen* (as note 1), pp. 118 ff.; Schwarz Lausten, *König* (as note 1), pp. 146 ff.

⁴ Concerning the civil war (known as *Grevens Fejde*), see C. Paludan-Müller, *Grevens Fejde*. Vol. I-II, København 1853/54; Reprint 1971; P.G. Lindhardt, *Skandinavische Kirchengeschichte seit dem 16. Jahrhundert*, in: *Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte*. Vol. 3, Lfg. M3, ed. by Bernd Moeller. Göttingen 1982, p. M238; O.P. Grell, *The Emergence of Two Cities. The Reformation in Malmö and Copenhagen*, in: *Die dänische Reformation vor ihrem internationalen Hintergrund*, ed. by Leif Grane and Kai Hørby. Göttingen 1980, pp. 128-145, here pp. 128 ff.

⁵ Schwarz Lausten, *König* (as note 1), p. 148 f.; Martin Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen 1537/39* (*The Church Ordinance of 1537/39*). København 1989, p. 12; Hans-Günter Leder, *Bugenhagens reformatorisches Wirken in Dänemark*, in: *Hans-Günter Leder, Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus – Vom Reformator zum Reformator*. Studien zur Biographie, ed. by Volker Gummelt. Frankfurt a.M. 2002, pp. 357-408, here p. 359.

⁶ The letter by Christian III to count Philipp of Hessen. Rigsarkivet, København, *Filmsamlingen*, D, nr. 18, Marburg I; Schwarz Lausten, *König* (as note 1), p. 149; Martin Schwarz Lausten, *Weltliche Obrigkeit und Kirche bei König Christian III. von Dänemark (1536-1559)*, in: *Dänische Reformation* (as note 4), pp. 102; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), pp. 13 f.

Bugenhagen who arrived in Denmark, where he stayed from July 5th, 1537 to mid-June 1539.⁷

Johannes Bugenhagen was born in Wollin in Pomerania in 1485. At the beginning of the 16th century he matriculated at the University of Greifswald and a few years later, probably without a degree, he proceeded to the town-school of Treptow. During his stay at Treptow he received Holy Orders and in 1521 he travelled to Wittenberg where he became a close friend and colleague of Luther. During the years 1527–1539 Bugenhagen was away from Wittenberg most of the time as he was engaged in the preparation and implementation of the church ordinances in North Germany (Braunschweig 1528, Hamburg 1529, Lübeck 1531 and Pomerania 1533) and later in Denmark.

Negotiating Bugenhagen's Mission in Denmark

The course of events during the period from the sending of the letter to Philipp of Hessen in the spring of 1536 to Bugenhagen's arrival in the summer of 1537 has been well documented and thoroughly researched. However, a few of the relevant events shall be mentioned once again.

The reply from the count to Christian III's letter has not been preserved, but it seems as if he had recommended the king to approach the Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony directly. When Christian III finally wrote to the Elector towards the end of August 1536, the king had defeated and entered Copenhagen (August 6th) and imprisoned the bishops.⁸ The king was no longer as ambitious as before and, at this

⁷ The time of arrival is known from one of Bugenhagen's letters, dated Februar 4th, 1538, in: Dr. Johannes Bugenhagens Briefwechsel, ed. by Otte Vogt. Hildesheim 1966, p. 168. The time of departure can be deduced from a letter from Bugenhagen to Christian III, dated July 6th, 1539, in: *Ibid.*, p. 197; Leder, *Bughaghens Wirken* (as note 5), pp. 404 ff. Taking the letter by Christian III to Philipp of Hessen into consideration (see note 6) it has to be regarded as a bit of a coincidence that it was Bugenhagen who actually came to Denmark. It cannot be maintained, as Leder does, that Christian III's reason for bringing Bugenhagen to Denmark depended on a personal relationship established at the hearing of Melchior Hoffmann in Flensburg in 1539; *ibid.*, p. 359.

⁸ The letter from Christian III to the Elector is dated August 23rd, 1536; S.J.J. Müller, *Entdecktes Staatskabinet*. Bd. IV, Jena 1714, p. 318 f.; C.T. Engelstoft, *Kirke-Ordinantsens Historie. En Undersøgelse* (The History of the Church Ordinance. A Study). København 1860–1862 (*Ny Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, II), pp. 1–110 and 369–442, here p. 23; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 13; Leder, *Bughaghens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 360; Johannes Bergsma, *Die Re-*

point, only requested to “borrow” Bugenhagen and if necessary also Melanchthon at a later stage. The Elector refused Christian III’s request claiming that he needed Bugenhagen in connection with the council that the pope had summoned to Mantua.⁹ Eight months later Christian III wrote once again to Johann Friedrich renewing his request to “borrow” Bugenhagen and this time the king was lucky: the Elector gave his permission.¹⁰

Several questions arise. First of all, why was it so important for Christian III to get Bugenhagen to Denmark that he pursued the matter even after having received a refusal in the first instance? Part of the answer appears in the letter of August 23rd, 1536 in which he writes that “at this time learned and able men who can make and establish a Christian arrangement in the realm are missing”.¹¹ At first sight the king’s allegation seems to be slightly odd. First of all because evangelical preachers had been at work in Denmark since 1525/26 and at least in 1530 had formed a group of no less than 20-30 persons.¹² This leads

form der Messeliturgie durch Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558). Hildesheim 1966, p. 116; Jenny Schnell, *Die Dänische Kirchenordnung von 1542 und der Einfluss von Wittenberg*. Breslau 1926, p. 14; Schwarz Lausten, König (as note 1), p. 150.

- ⁹ Other conditions may be taken into consideration as well. It has been mentioned that Christian III’s harsh treatment of the bishops gave rise to concern in Germany and that doubt about as to how well consolidated Christian III’s power was existed. Leder, *Bugenhagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 360; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 14; Niels Knud Andersen, *Bugenhagen i Danmark*, in: *Teologi og tradition, Festskrift til Leif Grane* 11. januar 1988, Red. by Thorkild Grosbøll (u.a.). Århus 1988, pp. 111-130, here p. 112; Engelstoft, *Kirke-Ordinansen* (as note 8), p. 24; Schwarz Lausten, *Weltliche Obrigkeit* (as note 6), p. 150. Furthermore, it is not to be overlooked that the Elector, being allied to Lübeck, at least formally had been the enemy of Christian III during the civil war; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 13.
- ¹⁰ Draft in Rigsarkivet, København, Tyske Kancelli. Udenrigske Afd. Alm. Del. Nr. 103; Müller, *Staatskabinet* (as note 8), pp. 333 ff.; the letter, dated April 17th, 1537, reached the Elector at Torgau on May 14th. May 16th, Bugenhagen was given permission to travel to Denmark; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), pp. 14, 18 and 23; Schnell, *Kirchenordnung* (as note 8), p. 74; Bergsma, *Die Reform* (as note 8), pp. 116 f.; Leder, *Bugenhagens Wirken* (as note 5), pp. 361 f.; Engelstoft, *Kirke-Ordinansen* (as note 8), p. 26; Andersen, *Bugenhagen* (as note 9), pp. 115 f. and 121.
- ¹¹ „...wir doch dieser Zeit mit dergleichen gelerten vnnd geschickten Leuten nit versehen/die vnns im Reich solche Christliche Ordnung anstellen vnnd vffrichten möchten...” – here quoted from Schnell, *Kirchenordnung* (as note 8), p. 14, n. 32; Andersen, *Bugenhagen* (as note 9), p. 111; Leder, *Bugenhagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 413.
- ¹² A little more than 20 preachers were present at the parliament in Copenhagen in the summer of 1520; Niels Knud Andersen, *Confessio Hafniensis. Den københavnske Bekendelse af 1530* (The Copenhagen Confession of 1530). København 1954, p. 46.

to the next questions: what in the eyes of the king made the preachers unqualified and what kind of task did he have in mind that made him regard them as unqualified?

In as much as we have knowledge about the preachers as individuals and about their background certain facts can be established. They were attached to individual congregations, mostly in the towns, they came from both the secular and the regular clergy, and apart from one outstanding personality, Hans Tausen, none of them were educated at a university.¹³ Furthermore, as is demonstrated by Niels Knud Andersen in his dissertation on the Copenhagen Confession of 1530, most of the preachers adhered to the Biblical, humanistic reformatory school of thought rather than that of Luther.¹⁴

The letter of August 23rd, 1536 uses the words “Christian arrangement” (*Christliche Ordnung*). What Christian III might have had in mind could have been a written ordinance like the existing ones known from Braunschweig (1528), Hamburg (1529), Lübeck (1531), and Wittenberg (1533).¹⁵ But he might just as well have had in mind the implementation of the reform through a general visitation of each individual church in the country.

In both respects it was a comprehensive administrative and theological task, not the least because it was a reform that should embrace a whole country in which quite varied conditions existed. With a background such as this, it is, perhaps, understandable that Christian III at the beginning might have been a bit sceptical as to the ability of the preachers the following events would demonstrate that Christian III’s scepticism was not entirely justified.

Even though Christian III did not succeed in getting Bugenhagen to Denmark at first, the reformatory work did not grind to a standstill. In November 1536 Christian III issued a summons to the preachers as

¹³ A few had attended the University of Copenhagen but this was already in 1515/1520 in rapid decline and could hardly be characterized as a university; Niels Knud Andersen, *Det teologiske Fakultet 1479–1597* (Theological Faculty 1479–1597), in: *Københavens Universitet 1479–1979* (The University of Copenhagen 1479–1979). Vol. V, ed. by Leif Grane. København 1980, pp. 1 ff.; see also Andersen, *Confessio* (as note 12), pp. 43 f.; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), pp. 144 ff.

¹⁴ Andersen, *Confessio* (as note 12), pp. 423 ff.

¹⁵ Most scholars who have dealt with the calling in of Bugenhagen and his stay in the country focus on this aspect of the wordings “*christliche Ordnung*”. Schwarz Lausten, for example means that this was Bugenhagen’s most important task during his stay. Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 23. The exceptions are Engelstoft and Niels Knud Andersen, see below.

well as to representatives from the chapters to convene in Odense at a "generale concilium" on epiphany 1537.¹⁶ That Christian III ordered the Danish clergy to begin composing a new Church ordinance could have been the result of an appeal from the Elector of Saxony,¹⁷ but it should not be overlooked that the preachers had submitted an application in which they not only appealed to Christian III asking him to start the reformatory process but also offered their own assistance.¹⁸

Today, it is not known whether the meeting in Odense took place at all, followed up by a later meeting in Haderslev in the winter of 1537 or whether the original arrangements for one reason or another were changed after issuing the first summons so that only a meeting in Haderslev actually took place.¹⁹ It is also not known whether the summoned clergy were the ones who actually wrote the first draft of the Church ordinance²⁰ and whether a finishing draft was available at the end of the meeting. But from a complaint that the chapter of Lund, which at this time still adhered to the old faith, delivered to the king at the beginning of February 1537, it can be deduced that the principal

¹⁶ The summons is dated November 11th, 1536, Kancelliets Tegnelser, Danske Magazin p. 76; Schwarz Lausten, Kirkeordinansen (as note 5), pp. 14 ff.; Bjørn Kornerup, Om Haderslev-mødet 1537 (The Conference at Haderslev 1537). København 1948–1950 (Kirkehistoriske Samlinger. 6. Rk., Vol. VI), pp. 32–40, here pp. 32 ff.; Engelstoft, Kirke-Ordinansen (as note 8), p. 27; Andersen, Bugenhagen (as note 9), p. 113; Schnell, Kirchenordnung (as note 8), pp. 15 ff.

¹⁷ Leder, Bugenhagens Wirken (as note 5), p. 361; Andersen, Bugenhagen (as note 9), p. 113.

¹⁸ The Address (known as Prædikanternes "Andragende") is published, among others, by William Norvin, Københavns Universitet i Reformationens og Orthodoxyens Tidsalder (The University of Copenhagen during Reformation and Orthodoxy). Vol. 1–2, København 1940, here Vol. 2, pp. 1 ff. The Address itself is not dated, and the proposed datings vary between 1536 and 1538. It is most reasonable to assume that it had been written in the summer or early autumn of 1536 and at least before October 1536 as the Reces of October 30th, 1536 complies with some of the wishes expressed in the Address; Schwarz Lausten, Kirkeordinansen (as note 5), p. 12.

¹⁹ Concerning the discussion about the different meeting places, see Engelstoft, Kirke-Ordinansen (as note 8), pp. 28 ff. and 34 f.; Kornerup, Haderslev (as note 16), pp. 32 ff.; Schwarz Lausten, Kirkeordinansen (as note 5), pp. 15 ff.; Schnell Kirchenordnung (as note 8), pp. 17 ff.

²⁰ Concerning this discussion, see among others, Engelstoft, Kirke-Ordinansen (as note 8), pp. 39 f.; Jørgen Stenbæk, Den danske kirkeordinans af 1537/39 – Teologi og funktion (The Danish Church Ordinance of 1537/39 – Theology and Function), in: Reformationens konsolidering i de nordiska länderna 1540–1610 (The Consolidation of the Reformation in the Scandinavian Countries 1540–1610), ed. by Ingmar Brohed. Oslo 1990, pp. 130–155, here p. 132; Schnell, Kirchenordnung (as note 8), p. 12.

lines were clear in so far as to its reformatory character.²¹ The composing of the first Draft, which today is preserved in a Danish, adjusted copy, based on a now lost Latin version²² had probably been finished during the spring of 1537 and at the latest at the beginning of April. On April 17th Christian III dispatched a draft to Luther in Wittenberg asking him to look it through and make adjustments on certain points.²³ It is on the very same day that Christian III wrote to Johann Friedrich, asking once again to “borrow” Bugenhagen.²⁴

The Draft of the Church Ordinance is, of course, not a confession like, for example, *Confessio Augustana*, but even in the uncorrected version the confessional standpoint is evident. Indirectly, through the sources that the authors used, among which Engelstoft mentions Luther’s “*Formula missae et communionis*” from 1523, Melancthon’s “*Unterricht der Visitatoren*” from 1528 and the North German church ordinances by Bugenhagen.²⁵ The adherence to Lutheranism is demonstrated directly in the wordings at several places in the Draft, negatively in the dissociation from both the Roman Church²⁶ and the radicals.²⁷ Positively, the adherence to Lutheranism is demonstrated, for example, in some of the subjects on which the clergy were to preach, and, most evident, in the list of books that the clergy were to purchase.²⁸ Thus, the Danish clergy had demonstrated that they were

²¹ The complaint is dated February 6th, 1537. Draft in the archives of the chapter of Lund, Landsarkivet in Lund, Domkapitlets arkiv, A, Indkomne Handlingar, 1473–1653; Kornerup, Haderslev (as note 16), pp. 34 ff.

²² The text of the Draft has been published by H. Knudsen in 1849–1852 as well as by Martin Schwarz Lausten in 1989 (see *Kirkenordinansen* [as note 5], pp. 45 ff.). To this edition I shall be referring in the following. Concerning the discussion about the creation of the Draft and its relationship to the now lost Latin original, see Engelstoft, *Kirke-Ordinansen* (as note 8), pp. 6 ff.; Schnell, *Kirchenordnung* (as note 8), pp. 8 ff.; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), pp. 19 ff.

²³ WA Br. (Martin Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Briefwechsel*. Weimar 1930 ff.), Vol. 8 (1938), no. 3148, pp. 69–72; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 18. It must have been a copy of the now lost Latin original that was sent to Luther. Leder does not seem to be aware of the relationship between the existing Danish Draft and the now lost Latin original; Leder, *Bugenhagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 361, n. 21.

²⁴ See note 10.

²⁵ Engelstoft, *Kirke-Ordinansen* (as note 8), pp. 46 ff.; Jenny Schnell comes to almost the same conclusion; Schnell, *Kirchenordnung* (as note 8), pp. 56 ff.

²⁶ Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), pp. 52 ff.; Stenbæk, *Kirkeordinans* (as note 20), pp. 139 ff.

²⁷ Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 57; Stenbæk, *Kirkeordinans* (as note 20), pp. 139 ff.

²⁸ Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 90; Stenbæk, *Kirkeordinans* (as note 20), pp. 139 ff.

able to compose a Lutheran-inspired Church Ordinance without any direct help from outside.

The Draft was returned from Wittenberg at an unknown time. Bugenhagen might himself have brought it back when he arrived at the beginning of July 1537.²⁹ Some of the adjustments and corrections to the original Draft may be the result of a perusal by the Wittenberg theologians, for example the question about a possible consideration for those who had misgivings about receiving Holy Communion in both kinds. Christian III refers to this problem in his letter of April 17th, 1537 to Luther, and as there is an empty space at the relevant place in the Draft, the addition, placed in the left-hand column of the manuscript, must derive from Luther himself.³⁰ Other corrections may derive from the hand of Bugenhagen, but it is no longer possible to reconstruct which, if any, of the changes are his. A final adjustment to the Church Ordinance, so to speak through "remote control" by the Wittenberg theologians, thus, was possible. Even so, Christian III still wishes to get Bugenhagen to Denmark, commenting that the Church Ordinance needs further adjustments, not by inferior persons but by excellent, experienced and distinguished persons.³¹ The character (and the quality) of the Draft demonstrates that the remarks about "inferior persons" by Christian III were not rooted in reality, and must, therefore, have been aimed solely at the Elector in an attempt to persuade him to send Bugenhagen. While the scepticism expressed by Christian III in the autumn of 1536 might be understandable to a certain degree, in the spring of 1537 it comes as a surprise. The time factor may have played a role, as there can be no doubt that it was a matter of urgency to the king to get the Church Ordinance completed and, as far as it can be derived from the correspondence of the time, it was not uncommon for three to four weeks to elapse between the dispatch and the reception of a letter,³² so he might have feared an unnecessary lapse of time before the Church Ordinance could be completed. Still, this cannot be the whole explanation and, therefore, the

²⁹ Schnell, *Kirchenordnung* (as note 8), p. 74.

³⁰ Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 20; Schnell, *Kirchenordnung* (as note 8), p. 66; Stenbæk, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 20), p. 140; Engelstoft, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 8), p. 16.

³¹ Leder, *Bughagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 361; Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), p. 23.

³² As can be seen, for example, in the letter from Christian III to the Elector in the spring of 1537, see note 10.

question arises: did Christian III have something else in mind in wanting the presence of Bugenhagen? In other words, did Christian III have a hidden agenda?

Bugenhagen in Denmark

It is to be assumed that Bugenhagen began the revision of the Church Ordinance right after his arrival in Copenhagen.³³ Equally, it is to be assumed that he is behind most of the corrections and additions that can be pointed out through a comparison between the Draft with the Latin version, the “*Ordinatio Ecclesiastica Regnorum Daniæ et Norwegiæ et Ducatum Sleswicensis Holsatiæ etcet.*”, authorized by the king on September 2nd, 1537.³⁴

The influence by Bugenhagen on the “*Ordinatio Ecclesiastica*” expresses itself in different ways. First of all, there are more detailed specifications for the nomination and ordination as well as for the maintenance of the clergy, including the superintendents. Secondly, six to seven chapters have been added to the original Draft as well as a preamble, the so-called King’s Letter.³⁵ As a result of the corrections the Lutheran spirit of the “*Ordinatio*” presents itself even more clearly.³⁶

Hans-Günter Leder, who is one of the leading authorities on Bugenhagen, admits that it is impossible to ascertain how extensive Bugenhagen’s share in the “*Ordinatio Ecclesiastica*” actually is, just as he observes that the specific Danish character is still evident in the “*Ordinatio*”. Even so, he considers the contribution made by Bugenhagen to be extensive.³⁷

It is evident that Bugenhagen has influenced the “*Ordinatio*” but it is worth noticing that this influence was conveyed in two stages. First, through the Danish authors in their use of the North German church ordinances when composing the Draft (the indirect influence) and, secondly, by Bugenhagen himself during his stay in Denmark (the

³³ Leder, *Bugenhagens Wirken* (as note 5), pp. 364 f.

³⁴ The text of the “*Ordinatio Ecclesiastica...*” is published in Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen* (as note 5), pp. 93 ff.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 129 ff., 136 ff. and 93 ff.

³⁶ Stenbæk, *Kirkeordinans* (as note 20), p. 140.

³⁷ Leder, *Bugenhagens Wirken* (as note 5), pp. 365, 357 and 407 f. Equally positive opinions are expressed in the article on the life of Bugenhagen: Hans-Günter Leder, *Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus. Leben und Wirken*, in: Hans-Günter Leder, *Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus – Vom Reformator zum Reformatoren. Studien zur Biographie*, ed. by Volker Gummelt. Frankfurt a.M. 2002, pp. 26, 30 and 37.

direct influence). This latest contribution is, however, of limited extent. The assessment of Bugenhagen's direct influence is, up to a certain point, supported by the circumstances. Only two months passed between the arrival of Bugenhagen in Copenhagen and the authorization of the "Ordinatio", whereas he used between four to seven months to complete the church ordinances of Braunschweig, Hamburg, and Lübeck respectively.³⁸ In August he, furthermore, had to both prepare and participate in the coronation of Christian III and Queen Dorothea.

As mentioned above, the wording "christliche Ordnung" in the letter by Christian III of August 23rd, 1536 can also refer to the practical implementation of the reform through a general visitation. Engelstoft interpreted the contents of the king's letter in this way and, furthermore, he added that the thought of developing a church legislation was not at hand.³⁹ Niels Knud Andersen agreed with this interpretation of the letter, while he on his part added that the general visitation was still what Christian III had in mind when he contacted the Elector the following spring, renewing his request to "borrow" Bugenhagen.⁴⁰

A letter by Bugenhagen to the theologians in Strasbourg, dated February 4th, 1538, reveals that the first visitation, the general visitation, was well under way in the winter of 1537/38. The tone in the letter is optimistic, Bugenhagen declares that Christ rules through his pure Gospel in all the churches and all over the countryside in the whole of Denmark. However, conditions were not that rosy.⁴¹ What is important to notice in this connection is that Bugenhagen himself did not take part in the general visitation. Indirectly, it can be established that his absence from the general visitation created displeasure at the time as he, in his Address to the Danish Church, written in the spring of 1539, defends himself explaining why he did not participate.⁴² In the

³⁸ Leder, Johannes Bugenhagen (as note 37), pp. 32 ff.

³⁹ Engelstoft, Kirke-Ordinantsen (as note 8), p. 23.

⁴⁰ Andersen, Bugenhagen (as note 9), pp. 111 and 121.

⁴¹ Briefwechsel (as note 7), p. 168; Schnell, Kirchenordnung (as note 8), p. 78; Leder, Bugenhagens Wirken (as note 5), pp. 364, n. 33 and 386; Andersen, Bugenhagen (as note 9), pp. 122 f.

⁴² Dated April 28th, 1539. Holger Fr. Rørdam, Et nyt Bidrag til Oplysning om Dr. Johan Bugenhagens Virksomhed i Danmark (A New Contribution to the Information about the Activities of Dr. Johannes Bugenhagen in Denmark). København 1864-1866 (Ny Kirkehistoriske Samlinger. III), pp. 465-482, here pp. 469-482; German translation by Jørgen Glenthøj, Bugenhagens Sendebrief an die dänische Kirche, in: Zeitschrift für evangelisches Kirchenrecht 32 (1987), pp. 360-377; Danish translation by Jørgen Glenthøj, Johannes Bugenhagen: Sendebrev til Den danske Kirke. Mundelstrup 1986.

Address Bugenhagen notes that he regarded his mission as fulfilled at the moment the “*Ordinatio Ecclesiastica*” was completed and had been authorized. As a reason for not participating in the general visitation, he argues that, “no duty concerning the congregations had been ordered me, not to mention that I can do nothing for the congregations as I have no knowledge of the language”.⁴³ The reason for his continued stay in the country is, as he claims, his engagement in the reestablishment of the University of Copenhagen.⁴⁴

At the beginning of his article on Bugenhagen in Denmark Niels Knud Andersen asks, first, what Bugenhagen’s commisorium was and, secondly, did he succeed in fulfilling his mission?⁴⁵ Since he, as mentioned above, interpreted the words “*christliche Ordnung*” in Christian III’s letter from August 1536 to be an expression of the king’s wish that Bugenhagen should conduct the general visitation of the country’s churches, he must, considering the statement by Bugenhagen in the Address to the Danish Church about having finished his work at the moment the “*Ordinatio*” had been authorized, conclude that Bugenhagen did not fulfil his mission.⁴⁶

The linguistic barrier that Bugenhagen himself mentions as one of the reasons for not participating in the general visitation is obvious as it must have been for Christian III, too. There is, of course, the possibility that Christian III did not realise the existence of this problem until Bugenhagen had arrived in the country, but that does not seem likely.

The position of Christian III

After the surrender of Copenhagen and the imprisonment of the bishops it was urgent for Christian III not only to consolidate his power

⁴³ Rørdam, *Et nyt Bidrag* (as note 42), p. 480; Glenthøj, *Sendebrev* (as note 42), p. 15; Glenthøj, *Sendebrief* (as note 42), p. 374.

⁴⁴ Rørdam, *Et nyt Bidrag* (as note 42), p. 481; Glenthøj, *Sendebrev* (as note 42), p. 16; Glenthøj, *Sendebrief* (as note 42), p. 375. On the history of the reestablishment of the University of Copenhagen and Bugenhagen’s contribution, see Holger Fr. Rørdam, *Kjøbenhavns Universitets Historie fra 1537 til 1621* (History of the University of Copenhagen, 1537–1621). Vol. I, København 1868/69; Norvin, *Universitet* (as note 18), Vol. 1.

⁴⁵ Andersen, *Bugenhagen* (as note 9), p. 111.

⁴⁶ Niels Knud Andersen does not in so many words say that Bugenhagen failed his mission, but his opinion is quite clear. In this way Hans-Günter Leder and Niels Knud Andersen, respectively, represent the extremes in the opinion of the contribution by Bugenhagen in the Reformation of the Danish Church, cf. Note 37.

in the realm but also to strengthen his position in relation to the Church.

The purpose of the "Ordinatio" was primarily to put the conditions of the Church in order, but, more or less directly, it also served to define the relationship between the Church and the Crown. A comparison between the Draft and the "Ordinatio" reveals that the changes, which are of relevance to the Crown, resulted in a strengthening of the Crown's position. A few examples: In the "Ordinatio" it is stated that the clergy has to swear allegiance to king during the process of nomination and ordination;⁴⁷ there is no mention of this in the Draft.

According to the Draft the superintendent shall carry out the general visitation alone; in "Ordinatio" the superintendent is accompanied (and controlled) by a royal magistrate, the prefect, and the visitation now takes place "cum publica nostra autoritate".⁴⁸ The strengthening of the position of the Crown is, however, most obvious in the circumstances concerning a leading superintendent. The preachers had reckoned with such an office in their Address, which might explain why it is included in the Draft.⁴⁹ In the Draft the office is mentioned four to five times, first at the beginning of the chapter concerning the superintendents and the rural deans,⁵⁰ secondly in the description of the procedure of nomination and ordination, in which the leading superintendent bestows his "confirmatz" on the priest.⁵¹ Finally, the leading superintendent is mentioned in the chapter describing the dismissal and the election of a new "ordinary" superintendent.⁵² In the "Ordinatio" the leading superintendent disappears completely, but in the case of dismissal and election of a new superintendent he is replaced by the king.⁵³

Concerning the king's position it is also important to take into consideration the coronation of Christian III that took place in the church of Our Lady in Copenhagen on August 12th, 1537, exactly a year after

⁴⁷ Schwarz Lausten, Kirkeordinansen (as note 5), pp. 112 and 140 f.; Schwarz Lausten, Weltliche Obrigkeit (as note 6), p. 104.

⁴⁸ Schwarz Lausten, Kirkeordinansen (as note 5), pp. 87 and 133; Schwarz Lausten, Weltliche Obrigkeit (as note 6), p. 104.

⁴⁹ Norvin, Universitet (as note 18), p. 2. Interestingly, the leading superintendent is not mentioned in the Draft in its basic form but is introduced in the additions written in the left hand column.

⁵⁰ Schwarz Lausten, Kirkeordinansen (as note 5), p. 87.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 67 and 82.

⁵² Ibid., p. 89.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 112, 126, 129 and 134 f.

the imprisonment of the Catholic bishops.⁵⁴ Denmark had a long tradition of coronations and there is no reason to believe that Christian III would have wanted to break from that tradition. One of the first indications of his intentions dates from the time of the civil war, in 1535, and the next time we hear about his plans is when he confirms the privileges of Copenhagen, on July 28th, 1536.⁵⁵ The invitations were sent out in May 1537.⁵⁶

It was important for Christian III to be crowned not only because it permanently sealed the end of the old regime, but also because it endowed him with legitimacy of both a religious and secular, political nature.⁵⁷

In carrying out the changes in the “*Ordinatio*” that resulted in a strengthened Crown and in serving as an “*ordinator*” at the coronation, Bugenhagen occupied a key position.

Why was Bugenhagen brought to Denmark?

Being convinced in his Lutheran faith, to Christian III the only possibility was to reform the Danish Church according to Lutheran theology, and the only way in which this could be realized was by having a tight grip on the Church.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Christian III would at any price try to prevent that the Church, in the future, could develop into being that kind of political power it had been during the later Middle

⁵⁴ It is, probably, no coincidence that the coronation took place on this date. Concerning the coronation, see Frederik Münter and G.C. Werlauff, *Aktstykker vedkommende Kong Christian den Tredies og Dronning Dorotheas kroning i Vor Frue Kirke i Kjøbenhavn* (Documents Concerning the Coronation of King Christian III and Queen Dorothea in the Church of Our Lady in Copenhagen). København 1831; Arthur G. Hassø, *Kong Kristian III's og Dronning Dorotheas Kroning den 12. august 1537* (The Coronation of King Christian III and Queen Dorothea on August the 12th 1537), København 1937 (*Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*. 6. Rk. Vol. II), pp. 287-377.

⁵⁵ Andersen, Bugenhagen (as note 9), p. 117. Leder notes that it is not known when Christian III got the idea of being crowned; Leder, *Bughagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 375.

⁵⁶ Kancelliets Tegnelser, *Danske Magazin* 3.Rk.. Vol. VI, København 1860, pp. 129 ff.; Paludan-Müller, *Grevens Fejde* (as note 4), Vol. I, p. 442, nr. 243; O. Nielsen, *Kjøbenhavns Diplomatarium I*. København 1872, p. 388, nr. 268; Hassø, *Kong Kristian* (as note 54), p. 302; Andersen, Bugenhagen (as note 9), p. 117. Leder is, obviously, not aware of the existence of this information, published in Tegnelser; Leder, *Bughagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 375.

⁵⁷ Andersen, Bugenhagen (as note 9), p. 117; Leder, *Bughagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 384.

⁵⁸ Stenbæk, *Kirkeordinans* (as note 20), pp. 136 ff.

Ages. Only by keeping a firm grip on the Church would he be able to prevent that from happening. In this way the strengthening of the king's control over the Church, of which the changes in the "Ordinatio" bears evidence, served, at least, a two-fold purpose. The Address by the preachers demonstrates that there were factions among them that had a different understanding of the relationship between the Church and the secular power, as the section of the Address that mentions a leading superintendent is hinting at a more independent Church.⁵⁹ That kind of Church bore the seeds of a Church that not only might be a difficult partner in cases of diverging opinions in matters of doctrine between the Church and the king but at worst an outright opponent. The step from being an opponent in matter of doctrine to being a political opponent was but a small one.

It was under these circumstances that Christian III needed Bugenhagen. Having been the faithful follower of Luther since the early 1520s,⁶⁰ Bugenhagen had the full Wittenberg-authority behind him, which was of importance, for example, at the coronation of Christian III. By letting a Wittenberg theologian act as "ordinator" Christian III's power as king had been endowed with an indisputable Lutheran character.⁶¹

Furthermore, by letting a foreigner serve as "ordinator" at the coronation, Christian III gained the advantage of being independent, in every way, of the Danish clergy. In this connection it is hardly a coincidence that the coronation took place before the instalment of the seven new superintendents on September 2nd, 1537.⁶² Bugenhagen also served another practical purpose: as a theologian he was able to dress up the king's points of view in the right theological clothes.

But, most importantly, Bugenhagen played a role in the king's internal Church policy, placed as he was as a sort of intermediary between the secular authority and the representatives of the Church. In this way the king could make it appear as if the separation between the two regimes was maintained: conflicting views on part of the king and the clergy respectively would appear as a controversy among the clergy and not between the clergy and the secular power.

⁵⁹ Stenbæk notes that the Danish reformatory movement was marked by two different opinions on administration, a decentralized, democratic and a centralized Church of the country, corresponding to the tension between Biblical Humanism and Lutheran theology; Stenbæk, *Kirkeordinans* (as note 20), p. 131.

⁶⁰ Leder, *Johannes Bugenhagen* (as note 37), pp. 19 ff.

⁶¹ Leder, *Bughagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 376.

⁶² Perhaps there is also a point in the fact that the "Ordinatio" was not authorized until after the coronation of the king; Leder, *Bughagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 376.

In the short term Christian III used Bugenhagen to place the Danish clergy in a subordinate position in which he, through the strengthening of the Crown as expressed in the “*Ordinatio*”, could keep them in the future as well. One example: as is evident from that section of the Address to the Danish Church in which Bugenhagen defends himself against the laments from the superintendents over their bad economic conditions⁶³ he was the one who on behalf of the Danish clergy negotiated with the Rigsråd (Council of State) about their wages. The Danish clergy was reduced to mere on-lookers.

Through the presence of Bugenhagen in Denmark and through his co-operation both in the completion of the “*Ordinatio*” and at the coronation, Christian III gained independence from the clergy. Secondly, he strengthened the Crown’s position with regard to the Church in the short as well as in the long term.

Conclusion

An analysis of the course of events that led up to Bugenhagen’s arrival and his stay in Denmark has revealed that Christian III had a double purpose in getting him to Denmark. The obvious one was to carry through the Reformation of the Church, in the drawing up of a Church Ordinance and (perhaps) through a general visitation. When Christian III, forced by the circumstances, put the Danish clergy to work composing a draft for a church ordinance, it turned out that not only were they quite capable to do so, even composing one in which the Wittenberg-Lutheran influence is unmistakable. The contribution by Bugenhagen in the final edition of the Church Ordinance, the “*Ordinatio*” is of limited extent. It adds up to rewriting a few chapters, correcting others, and adding a few new ones. Bugenhagen had nothing to do with the following general visitation, which might be the result of a change of heart by Christian III.

An assessment of the contribution made by Bugenhagen in carrying out the Reformation of the Danish Church should, thus, be placed somewhere in between the enthusiasm expressed by Hans-Günter Leder and the disparagement expressed by Niels Knud Andersen.⁶⁴

⁶³ Rørdam, *Et nyt Bidrag* (as note 42), pp. 478 ff.; Glenthøj, *Sendebrev* (as note 42), pp. 13 ff.; Glenthøj, *Sendebrief* (as note 42), pp. 372 ff.

⁶⁴ See notes 37 and 46.

However, the analysis also reveals that Christian III must have had a hidden agenda, determined by political considerations.⁶⁵ It was the intension of Christian III to continue the process that his father, Frederik I, had begun.⁶⁶ But while the effort by Frederik I was limited to try to clip the political and economic wings of the Church, Christian III wanted to control it. In this respect the contribution by Bugenhagen consisted, first, of being able to give the royal wishes the correct theological wording. Secondly, by his participation in the coronation Bugenhagen not only contributed to the legitimacy of Christian III's royal power, he also bestowed the Crown with an unmistakable Lutheran character. Thirdly, through his work, fully in accordance with the king's wishes, the importance of the Church was reduced to that level, where Christian III wanted it to be.

From a slightly cynical point of view, it could be asserted that the most important contribution by Bugenhagen in the Danish Reformation process was to function as a pawn in Christian III's political game of winning the control over the Church.

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⁶⁵ Leder is aware of the king's political motives; Leder, *Bugenhagens Wirken* (as note 5), p. 375; Hans-Günter Leder, *Bugenhagen und König Christian III. von Dänemark – Anmerkungen zu ihrem Briefwechsel*, in: Hans-Günter Leder, *Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus – Vom Reformator zum Reformator. Studien zur Biographie*, ed. by Volker Gummelt. Frankfurt a.M. 2002, pp. 409-430, here p. 410.

⁶⁶ Lindhardt, *Kirchengeschichte* (as note 4), p. M236 f.; Schwarz Lausten, *Weltliche Obrigkeit* (as note 6), p. 93.