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'A Changing Church in an Age of Migration'

'Hamburg – a border town in Danish-German (church) history'

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Hamburg – a border town? For anyone who, on a summer Saturday, is stuck in the usual traffic jam on the northbound A7 motorway, the Danish border seems extremely far away. Two-and-a-half centuries back in history, however, a person might pass the Millerntor (the western city gate), have a stroll along the Reeperbahn and, after about 20 minutes, would cross the border and enter the Danish city of Altona. Or, likewise, he might leave the city eastward, pass the suburb of St Georg, enjoy the sight of fields and pastures of Eilbek, a village belonging to Hamburg's Holy Ghost Hospital, until, after little more than an hour on foot, he would reach a huge outlier marking the Danish border and with it Wandsbek, a small village and manor, which in those days was owned by count Schimmelmann, who, by then, had made a fortune as a Hamburg merchant and become minister of finance in the royal Danish government.

Geographically, the Danish-German border has moved northwards since then, of course. As a result of the Danish-German war of 1864 the surroundings of Hamburg became part of the Prussian province Schleswig-Holstein, which extended to almost Kolding and Esbjerg in Jutland. The present Danish-German border results from a referendum in 1920 in the aftermath of the First World War, and, to complete this part of the story, in 1937 Altona and Wandsbek as well as Harburg on the southern banks of the Elbe were incorporated into the city-state of Hamburg. This, however, did not apply to the Lutheran church. Until the 1970s Altona and Wandsbek belonged to what was formerly a Prussian Church province, while Hamburg was a ‚Landeskirche' in its own right and constitution, and it took until 2007 that the organizational structures in the confines of Hamburg and its adjacent regions were re-organized completely.

Anyway, the convenient proximity of Hamburg, Altona, and Wandsbek will play a role when it comes to deal with 17th and 18th century church history, with confessional strife and enlightenment, and with shifts within Lutheranism towards a diversity of beliefs. Moreover, we will find that this history cannot be properly understood, unless we take the impact of migration into account.

But let us start from scratch. Neither the political nor the religious relations between Hamburg and Denmark were smooth and easy-going for most parts of a millennium. In 811 Charlemagne founded Hamburg – or to be more precise: the Hammaburg, a small, but strategically well located, fortified place – as a nothern outpost of the Holy Roman Empire. This, in fact, resulted from a peace treaty, which designated the river Eider (about a hundred kilometres north of Hamburg) to be the border between the Danish and Carolingian territory. Hence, Holstein (the territory between Eider and Elbe) including the Hammaburg was defined part of the Empire, whereas what later on became the duchy of Schleswig was ruled by the Danish kings.

Soon after, the Hammaburg also became seat of a bishopric. It was explicitly intended to be a centre for missioning the Danes and Swedes. This function was underlined by creating Ansgar bishop of

Hamburg in 831. For the Benedictine monk Ansgar was an experienced missionary, who had already been sent to the Danes and Swedes a couple of years before. In spite of what hagiography tells us, we must not overlook that mission did not only mean spreading the gospel but also extending imperial influence. The Danish Vikings, however, returned the favour of being missioned in their own way in 843, when they raided and destroyed the Hammaburg settlement and church. To cut things short: Ansgar managed to escape to Bremen, which marked the beginnings of what should become the archbishopric Hamburg-Bremen in 864, and at least a century later it resulted in two cathedrals, the one in Bremen being the see of the archbishop and the one in Hamburg being ruled by the chapter. The latter even harboured a papal grave for a couple of decades, when pope Gregory V. died in exile in Hamburg.

About the same time, that is in the 960s, the Danish King Harold converted to the Christian faith and was baptized, but could not enforce the new religion among his people. It was left to his grandson, king Knut the Great, to call missionaries into his realm and make the Danes accept baptism – be it by force or persuasion. But these missionaries were not German, but English – for the simple reason that Knut was not only king of Denmark and Norway, but also of England. Fostering the church in England was part of his way of enforcing and securing his rule, and missioning Denmark by English priests was meant to integrate his realms on both sides of the North Sea. Even though, all Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian bishoprics that were founded in the 10th and 11th centuries were subject to the archbishopric Hamburg- Bremen. But Hamburg's canonic influence in Scandinavia ended, when Lund (nowadays Sweden, by then Danish) was created an archbishopric in 1104 and the purview of Hamburg-Bremen was reduced to the dioceses located in the northern parts of the Holy Roman Empire.

Let's turn the page to the next chapter. While the Danes were occupied with their own affairs for the major part of the 12th century, the county Holstein was peacefully held in fief by the counts of Schauenburg, who, in this capacity, also were the secular lords of Hamburg. Hamburg was a gradually thriving town. It is no longer a matter of debate that the famous privilege in favour of Hamburg's harbour and trade was not granted by emperor Friedrich Barbarossa in 1189, although this date is celebrated annually by a huge popular festivity in May. We will take up the point of the forgery soon. Anyhow, Hamburg was no longer only a settlement with an archdiocesan seat and cathedral, but also a town with a parish church dedicated to St Peter, a harbour and, hence, a population living on crafts as well as on trade. And it is clear that count Adolf III. of Schauenburg regarded the efforts of extending the town to the west beyond one of the arms of the Alster river as a worthwhile enterprise. In addition, he founded the parish church of St Nicolai in this new part of town and immediately got into trouble with the cathedral chapter. For the chapter claimed the patronage, which, of course, was a matter of power and money rather than religion. In 1195 Adolf III. ended the dispute by ceding the patronage by bestowing the chapter with the chapel in question. Henceforth any priest in any of the parish churches was not only subject to the chapter's jurisdiction, but also had to pay the chapter a considerable amount of money when being installed and a share of his income deriving from baptisms, weddings, funerals etc.

In Denmark at about the same time (1187), Waldemar, the king's younger brother, was enfeoffed with the duchy of Schleswig and developed a bellicose life task, namely to extend Danish rule to the south coast of the Baltic Sea, and successfully conquered the counties Holstein, Schwerin, Mecklenburg, and Pomerania. Not only did Adolf III. lose the deciding battle, but also was kidnapped in Hamburg and in order to be released from prison had to sign a treaty by which he ceded Holstein to Waldemar – meanwhile Waldemar II., king of Denmark. To make things worse, emperor Friedrich II was not much interested in what was going on in the northern-most parts of his, i.e. the Holy Roman Empire, but – understandably – preferred to take his abode in Italy and to engage in the kingdom of Sicily. Hence, he

contented himself with enfeoffing Waldemar with the recently conquered counties.

But this situation did not last long. Also, Waldemar and his son were kidnapped, returned the counties to their former lords, but soon after waged war again, and on St Mary Magdalene's day (22 July) in 1227 he encountered a coalition army on the battle field at Bornhöved. The coalition consisted of count Adolf IV. of Holstein, the archbishop of Bremen, the cities of Lübeck and Hamburg and some others, and it won the battle – with the help of St Mary Magdalene, who screened the blinding sunshine from the coalition army by her coat, as later chronicles would have it.

Whether there is truth in it or not, the victory of Bornhöved had a couple of effects for Hamburg that cannot be overestimated. First, it restored peace, the most important precondition for a thriving economy in general and trade in particular. Secondly, Adolf IV. was far-sighted enough to grant privileges and liberties to the Hamburgers that laid the basis for an almost autonomous status with regard to rule, administration, and jurisdiction. Thirdly, as mentioned before, it is doubtful that the 1189 Barbarossa privilege ever really existed. More likely, Adolf IV. invented it and pretended that already his father had obtained it from the emperor's hand. And he achieved that; it really became an imperial privilege – by Friedrich II's confirmation. Anyway, it guaranteed that all merchants, their merchandise and ships could freely come and go on the Elbe and that their overseas trade was liberated from all tolls and taxes. Moreover, the inhabitants had the monopoly on fishing in the distance of two miles up and down the Elbe and were guaranteed free importation of wood and corn for their subsistence from Holstein. Finally, no castle should be built within a two-mile radius, and the town was exempt from feudal military service. All three aspects laid the basis for Hamburg's gradually growing prosperity, which we can gauge, when considering how the cityscape changed during the following 150 years. From 1245 on the cathedral was rebuilt as a three-aisled hall church, which was completed in 1329 and was added another two aisles by the end of the 14th century. By 1250 already, St Nicolai had been erected as a three-aisled hall church and was enlarged before 1400. Also St. Jacobi, first mentioned as a pilgrims' chapel in 1255, was rebuilt in the second half of the 14th century, and only St. Katharinen, the fourth of the parish churches, was completed after 1400. In addition, the town got a first town hall around 1230 and a more refined one sixty years later. Not to mention the fortifications that protected the growing number of inhabitants, until more modern ones were built four centuries later.

But Adolf IV. was not only a ‚modern' ruler according to what can be called modern in those days, but – fourthly – also a pious man. Out of gratitude for the saint's support during the battle of Bornhöved, he founded St Mary Magdalene's monastery in Hamburg in 1227. It was one of the earliest Franciscan convents north of the Alps, and it is worth mentioning that the Franciscans represented a ‚modern' approach to monasticism by settling in the towns, concentrating on pastoral care and preaching, and by living up to the ideal of poverty. In fact, Adolf IV. himself joined the Hamburg convent, became a monk and later on was ordained as a priest in Rome, while his wife Heilwig joined a Cistercian convent in the neighbourhood of Hamburg on the banks of the Alster. St Mary Magdalene's had a church that was almost as spacious as any of the main parish churches and became a popular burial place as well as it attracted a considerable number of fraternities particularly of craftsmen, who made it their spiritual ‚home' and provided it with donations, bestowals, and foundations.

Descriptions of the interior suggest that the Franciscan church had an impressive program of spiritual works of art by the second half of the 15th century. On the western wall there was a danse macabre, that is a series of scenes in which Death calls various representatives of the medieval society to dance with him to the other side of the threshold. From pope and emperor to rich merchant and poor peasant, from old man to beautiful maid and small child, all of them are unprepared, of course. So a rhymed dialogue ensues about their misdoings and the obligations they violated during lifetime. The

theme of this frieze was not unique. The most famous presentations existed in Paris, Basle, and Lübeck. But as far as we can reconstruct the Franciscan version in Hamburg, it accused more leniently and in a spirit of a prospective redemption.

Above the danse macabre, there was a painting of Adolf IV. both as a victorious knight standing and a Franciscan monk lying in his grave. At the other end of the nave, the high altar showed scenes from the life St Franciscus on weekdays and a Last Judgement on holidays – with a pope being led to eternal damnation by a devil, as a 17th century (obviously Protestant) travel report relates joyfully. And between danse macabre and Last Judgement, i. e. over the whole length of the nave, the floor consisted of tomb slabs, on which the congregation was seated during service, even after the Reformation. So, it was a congregation of the living and the dead, so-to- speak. Almost nothing of that survived. Most of it was removed under the impact of the enlightenment, which detested medieval art and catholic theology, and the church was demolished in 1805, although it had played an important role during the Reformation. We will come to that later.

But also, the medieval parish churches, not to mention the cathedral, were adorned with most splendid altarpieces reflecting both the growing wealth among the burghers and the increasing zeal and anxiety to procure the salvation of their souls after death. Hence, on the eve of the Reformation, the 12 churches and chapels were endowed with a total of more than 170 side altars, at which 278 secular priests read masses, vigils, hours, and intercessions for the souls of the donators. Some of them were removed during and after the Reformation, but many more got lost, when church interiors were refashioned under the auspices of the enlightenment by the end of the 18th century. Yet, some are still extant and give us an impression of their excellency.

So, the high altar of St Petri church, completed by Meister Bertram in 1383, is now exhibited in the Kunsthalle. Meister Bertram, by the way, originated from the Westfalian heartland of the counts of Schauenburg and Holstein and had moved to Hamburg in the 1360s. The retables that used to be shown on weekdays are lost. But those to be seen on Sundays show biblical scenes from the creation of the world and the expulsion from paradise to the annunciation and birth of Christ including the flight to Egypt – all of them painted on gold ground. On special holidays these retables were opened and gave sight on gilded figures representing the prophets of the Old Testament, the disciples of Christ, and an array of other saints centred around the crucified Christ with Mary and St John. Its basis is filled with figures representing church fathers like Origen and Augustinus.

But also the side altars – in many cases endowments by guilds and fraternities – were of great artistic quality in many cases – like the altarpiece dedicated to the Holy Trinity, with which the Coopers‘ Guild originally endowed the cathedral and which, now, functions as high altar in St Jacobi, or the altar dedicated to St Luke and endowed by the guild of painters, which, too, can be seen in St Jacobi nowadays.

Let us jump into the political field once more and turn to the 15th century. Hamburg still was part of the county of Holstein. But with the almost autonomous status mentioned before, it also had become a member of the Hanseatic League. For quite a time particularly Hamburg and the much more powerful

Lübeck held a kind of monopoly of trading in the territories around the Baltic Sea and had developed an intense trade with Holland and Flanders as well as England. Thus, the Hanseatic League had had a dominating influence on Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. But when the Dutch and English started to compete with the Hanseatic Cities in the Baltic, the Hanseatic League fought them by capturing their ships when they tried to enter the Baltic through the Sound, the narrow strait between Denmark and the south of Sweden, which in those days also belonged to Denmark. As a reprisal the Dutch and English did the same with Hanseatic ships when sailing in the North Sea. The Danish king took advantage of this situation and discovered that he could impede the passage through the Sound and demand toll, which the Hanseatic Cities disliked, of course, and were ready to wage war on Denmark. This, however, played into the hands of count Adolf VIII. of Holstein, who for quite a time had tried to get the duchy of Schleswig as a hereditary fief. So, he joined the Hanseatic League in the war against Denmark. In the end, Hamburg, Lübeck and a couple of other cities were exempted from the Sound toll, and Adolf VIII. achieved his goal. But unfortunately, he died without an heir, and therefore his wife's nephew, meanwhile elected king Christian I. of Denmark, succeeded him in 1459. Hence, the Danish king became the ruler of Hamburg as well.

At least, he and his successors believed so. Yet, in fact, emperor Sigismund had tried to reform the structures of the Holy Roman Empire in order to strengthen his (actually rather weak) position, and it was part of his policies to lean on the support of the Free Imperial Cities. Free Imperial Cities were self-governed city-states, but part of the Empire and, hence, only subject to the emperor and the imperial Diet, which also meant that they had to pay imperial taxes and in addition contributions in the case of warfare. So, Sigismund put Hamburg on the list of Free Imperial Cities a few decades before Christian I. inherited Holstein including Hamburg. But for the city the Danish option looked more advantageous. Its privileges granted an extraordinary degree of independence, and each time a new king asked for the city's homage, the town council managed to negotiate a ritual that symbolized mutual respect and partnership.

Vis-a-vis the dubious king Christian II., who intended to curtail Hanseatic domination and integrate Sweden into his realm by military action, Hamburg remained neutral, left it to Lübeck to support the Swedish, but did not lift a finger to prevent Christian from being dethroned in 1523, not least because Christian II. was in favour of the Lutheran cause, while Hamburg's town council, at that time, was not. With his grandson Christian that was different, since matters had changed. Christian had met Luther at the Diet at Worms in 1521 and the young man was deeply impressed. When his father made him duke of Schleswig and Holstein, he took pains to introduce the Reformation against the opposition of the bishops and enacted a Lutheran Church Ordinance in 1528, just a year before Hamburg adopted Lutheranism as well. When his father died in 1533, the Danish State Council, which was in charge of electing the king, refused to do so – unsurprisingly, because it was dominated by nobles and bishops who still adhered to the old faith. Nonetheless, an assembly of nobles in northern Jutland proclaimed Christian king of Denmark, which resulted in a terrible civil war with bloodshed and pillage on both sides. In the end, Christian III. won – but only with the support of Hamburg and Lübeck. He and his wife were crowned in 1537. The ceremony was the first to be accommodated to Lutheran faith by Luther's collaborator Johannes Bugenhagen.

Hamburg's commitment on Christian's behalf paid off, particularly in terms of the city's protection in the confessional strife that shook the Holy Roman Empire, and it is no wonder that Hamburg preferred to remain under the shelter of the Danish kingdom, when we consider that emperor Charles V. was ardently rejecting and fighting Protestantism. But matters changed considerably around and after 1600. For Christian IV. vigorously strove to strengthen and centralize the Danish monarchy, to tap new financial resources, and to make Denmark the dominating power in the north. This included a number of measures that were meant to force Hamburg under his rule. In this situation, Hamburg took

advantage of a lawsuit which emperor Charles V. had filed in 1548. The emperor had claimed that Hamburg was a Free Imperial City and, hence, had to pay imperial taxes. For decades Hamburg had argued that it was not, but subject to the Danish crown. But when Christian IV. began to direct his policies against Hamburg's interests, the city's town council swapped their attitude and in secret provided the imperial law court with documents which proved that the emperor was right. So, in 1618 the highest-ranking court in the Holy Roman Empire decided that Hamburg was due to fulfil their obligations on behalf of the empire. But, unfortunately, Christian IV. did not accept the sentence, lodged an appeal, and additionally forced Hamburg to sign a treaty saying that the city should act, as if it was Danish, until the appeal was settled. As a matter of fact, the imperial court never came to a conclusion, and it took until 1768 that Denmark relinquished its claims – as the result of political and financial transactions that are too complicated to go into detail here. Although – or rather because – it was undecided whether Hamburg was imperial or Danish for more than two centuries, we may sum up the political reality of the early modern period by quoting a line from a baroque opera: „The servant who has one master is a wretched man. The servant who has two, actually has none. "

As already mentioned, Hamburg became Lutheran in 1529, when town council and citizens' assembly approved of a reformed political constitution, which included a protestant Church Ordinance. This act was the result of a process that had started seven years earlier with a quarrel between the churchwardens of St Nicolai and the cathedral chapter. It was about lay education and the poor quality of the grammar school at St Nicolai. But since the responsibility for the school lay in the hands of one of the canons, it also was an attack on the chapter's dominance concerning almost everything ecclesiastical and the misuses that were inherent in this system. In fact, St Nicolai became one of the two vanguards that were fostering the Lutheran movement and promoting the process of the Reformation. In many German cities, Luther's principle of ‚sola scriptura' (only the Holy Scriptures are relevant in religious matters) lead to the demand for sermons preaching the gospel ‚pure and unadulterated', and together with his completely different conception of priesthood this resulted in the demand for the clergy to be elected by the parishioners. In Hamburg, it was the lay administrators and burghers of St Nicolai who created precedents in 1524 by electing Johannes Bugenhagen without any participation of the cathedral chapter. Awkwardly, they failed to involve the town council as well, so that the latter hastened to inform Luther's collaborator that they did not acknowledge the election and that Bugenhagen should stay where he was, namely at Wittenberg. So, he did not come in person, but sent a tract addressing the ‚most honourable city of Hamburg' in which he dealt with education and the proper organization of schools as well as an organization of poor relief according to a proper understanding of the term ‚good works', i. e. in compliance with the gospel. And again, St Nicolai was the first in Hamburg to install a common chest in 1527, which a couple of months later was introduced in the other three parishes, too.

I mentioned two vanguards. The other one was based in St Mary Magdalene, which, for this reason, I have dealt with in greater detail earlier. At almost the same time, when St Nicolai and the cathedral chapter quarreled about the grammar school, Stephan Kempe, a Franciscan who had taught at the University of Rostock, was sent to the convent of St Mary Magdalene's. In his sermons he propagated Luther's teachings and almost at once attracted a growing number of listeners. When the Franciscan order intended to send him back, a delegation of 60 burghers literally threatened to withdraw all kinds of support on which the mendicant order's convent was living, so that Kempe remained and went on preaching, which provoked the Dominicans and the cathedral chapter to sharpen their attacks on the Lutheran movement. Kempe was the pivotal figure in the theological debates, particularly in the disputations which, in the end, helped the town council to decide in favour of the new faith and ask Johannes Bugenhagen to come to Hamburg in order to draft a Church Ordinance like the one he had penned for the city of Brunswick a year before. Unsurprisingly, the structure of the two texts resemble

each other. But while the Ordinance for Brunswick contains a lot of more explanatory passages which Bugenhagen apparently had taken from his sermons, the Hamburg Ordinance seems to have been the attempt to align what already had been put into practice by the Hamburgers with his own concepts and with negotiations that must have taken place while drafting it. In the end, Hamburg got a constitution that was unique among the Free Imperial Cities. For the men who administered the common chest in their respective parish also became the core of their parish's church council and formed the highest-ranking boards in the citizens' assembly who negotiated almost all political matters with the town council, not to forget that the town council and sixty of them exercised the episcopal rights. Hence, the political, ecclesiastical, and the constitution of poor relief were neatly interwoven, until the separation of state and church in 1860. Hardly ever did a city's constitution come as close to the protestant ideal of a political body being congruent with a corpus Christianum. But it had a price: Only Lutherans could become citizens with full political rights. It took until 1817 that a non-Lutheran was elected member of the town council, i. e. of the city state's government, and it needed a revolution to grant full political and civil rights to the Jews in 1849.

Change of scene: At about the same time as in Hamburg, Lutheranism trickled into the Low Countries, nowadays Netherlands and Belgium, but immediately had to face harsh forms of persecution. Already in the early 1520s, first, books and, then, people were burnt. Nevertheless, parishes existed, e. g. in Brussels and Antwerp, albeit more or less clandestinely, but with close contacts to Hamburg and Bremen. It may be considered an early, but by no means exceptional case showing that religious communication and protestant solidarity leaned on the same networks as international trade.

Apart from Lutheranism it was the radical and militant Anabaptism that grew among the Dutch and scandalized public opinion, particularly since Dutch Anabaptists had taken over the rule in the Westfalian diocesan town of Münster. They had installed what we may call a terrorist regime, and were as brutally defeated in 1535 by armed forces. But the movement continued to exist, albeit split up into several branches under the impact of repression. Due to the incessant travels, preaching and writing of Menno Simons, a pacifist version of Anabaptism found its followers along the Frisian coast and in Schleswig-Holstein. They soon were called Mennonites, but hardly were welcomed. While Menno Simons was offered an asylum on the rural estate of a Holsatian noble family for the last 15 years of his life, the Hanseatic Cities agreed on not tolerating Anabaptism within their city walls.

By mid-16th century Calvinism had begun to spread in the Low Countries. After the iconoclastic upheavals of 1566 king Philipp II., Charles's successor as king of Spain, authorized the duke of Alba to suppress the protestant movement with whatever bloodshed it might afford. In 1572 the Dutch Revolt broke out, and in 1585 the most important hub of European trade, Antwerp, fell into the hands of the Spaniards and with it most of today's Belgium. In the course of events many fled the southern parts of the Low Countries. Dutch migration to Hamburg began as early as the 1550s, however mostly for economic reasons, which became even more graspable, when in 1568 the company of Merchant Adventurers withdrew from Antwerp to Hamburg. For they were crucial in the exportation of English wool and cloth to the continent. Hence, numerous Dutch cloth manufacturers followed suit. Whoever of them established a household in the city had to undergo an examination on what his confession of faith and whether he attended Lutheran service and Holy Communion. This attempt to defend Lutheran mono-confessionalism against heterodox immigrants was no longer feasible when, after the fall of Antwerp, hundreds of families migrated to Hamburg.

From an economic point of view especially the merchants were welcomed. For they brought with them their capital, their trade networks, and their advanced knowledge of trading and financial practices, even though the guilds of craftsmen were anxious about the technically more skilled immigrant competitors.

From a confessional point of view the Dutch caused a problem. Although their majority was Lutheran, there also were Calvinists, Mennonites, and even a few Catholics among them, not to forget the Sephardic Jews who followed a bit later. Hamburg's church was uncompromisingly Lutheran, and the Geistliche Ministerium (the assembly of all clergy) kept a watchful eye on whatever might threaten either orthodoxy or Hamburg's mono-confessional status or both. Therefore, it was unimaginable that any of the other confessions would be allowed to hold their services publicly. This, however, was not the greatest of problems, since the Dutch had been accustomed to private religious gatherings for decades. But baptisms, weddings, and funerals needed at least a certain degree of institutionalization.

In this situation Count Ernst of Schauenburg enters the scene. He was the last descendant of the medieval Adolfs mentioned before and still in the possession of the small county of Holstein-Pinneberg, a next-door neighbour to Hamburg so-to-speak. In 1600 he offered freedom of trade and free exercise of religion to the Mennonites, in 1602 the same to the Calvinists, and in 1611 a cemetery to the Jews in a village on the banks of the Elbe next to Hamburg called Altona. In fact, his major intent was economic, and religious tolerance was meant to be an incentive for the Dutch exiles to leave Hamburg and settle in Altona. The same plan had already been put into practice by the count of Hanau in the neighbourhood of Frankfurt. With a remarkable success, he had founded Neu-Hanau especially for the Dutch exiles who were seeking a peaceful shelter which they did not have in Frankfurt. In Schleswig-Holstein the idea was taken up a second time, when, in 1621, Friedrichstadt was founded with the intention of attracting Dutch Remonstrants (a liberal wing of Calvinism, also known as Arminians), after they had been condemned by the synod of Dort just two years before. The privileges guaranteed not only religious freedom for the Remonstrants in an otherwise Lutheran environment, but based the newly founded town on tolerance, so that also Dutch Mennonites and a handful of Lutheran families were among the exiles who actually built a town which still looks like a copy of Dutch towns.

But let us return to Altona and count Ernst's privileges: From this moment on, Hamburg was afraid that Altona would become a serious competitor. Therefore, the city government concluded a contract with ‚those of the Dutch Nation' in 1605, who were given almost the same economic rights and exemptions from tolls and taxes as the burghers without the requirement of becoming burghers, which spared them some duties. In return, the 130 heads of household, who signed the contract, had to organize that ‚those of the Dutch nation' paid a considerable annual contribution to the city's treasury. Significantly, the contract addressed the ‚Dutch nation' irrespective of religion. It simply excluded the question of confessions, and it could do so, because whoever among the non-Lutherans wanted to attend a service of their confession simply had to cross the border and walk to Altona. So, non-Lutheran immigrants had the choice whether to establish their business in Hamburg or not. The freedom of trade in Altona, of course, was an incentive especially for craftsmen because in Hamburg they would have to join a guild in order to be allowed to work and the guilds handled admissions restrictively. For merchants, on the other hand, staying in Hamburg was more attractive because of the economic infrastructure and, not least, because overseas trade demanded co-operation and networking.

In this context we should add a word on the Anglicans. In 1611 Hamburg signed a contract with the company of Merchant Adventurers. In terms of trade the English were more or less equated with Hamburg's merchants. Moreover, they were given a spacious house by the city, the English Court, with rooms for accommodation and the company's conventions, with a warehouse, and with a chapel where the about 100 Anglicans could worship. At that time, the Anglicans were the only non-Lutherans who officially were allowed to attend their services in Hamburg, and although their numbers decreased significantly during the following 200 years, the Anglican service never ceased and the parish exists until today, as you will know.

In fact, only a minority of the Dutch moved to Altona. The majority contributed to Hamburg's

tremendously increasing prosperity, which was also due to the fact that many of them were Lutherans who integrated rapidly into the city's elite. The increase in prosperity is reflected in the numbers of inhabitants, which rose from about 20,000 in 1550 to 60,000 in 1650, but also in a number of institutions which were founded and financed according to Dutch models, like the Bank, the Stock Exchange, the orphanage and other poor relief institutions, not to forget the new fortification which prevented Hamburg from being sieged during the Thirty Years' War and all the others that followed until the Napoleonic era. Unsurprisingly, 18th century travellers tended to say that Hamburg looked like a Dutch city.

The fact that Hamburg became the most important hub of trade and financial services in Europe next to Amsterdam (and ranking even before London) had an interesting side effect. Since information of all kind was easily available here, many states sent their diplomats. According to international law they were allowed to practice their religion in their residences and maintain a chapel and chaplain on behalf of their households. Inspite of the legal limitations, the Prussian ambassador opened his doors to other Calvinists residing elsewhere in the city, so that they could attend service in his house, and the Emperor's ambassador did the same for the Catholics. Neither was hailed by the Lutheran church and the clergy took every opportunity to rail against the ungodly religious practices within the city walls. But the city government closed their eyes on it in order to avoid further trouble.

However, trouble was imminent when the Jesuits did not only celebrate mass in the chapel of the imperial ambassador, but considered Hamburg a base camp for missioning both in the city and in the northern territories of the Holy Roman Empire. The embassy was located next to St Michaelis, the pride of Lutheran Hamburg, and around 1710 it needed more than just a renovation. This offered the opportunity to add a new chapel to it, dedicated to Charles Borromeo, who as archbishop of Milan had become both a central figure of the Counter-Reformation and very popular, so that he was canonized in 1610. Of course, dedicating the chapel to this saint was intended to irritate the Lutheran clergy, and they were even more infuriated when the Jesuits celebrated mass with the doors open, so that it could be perceived by anyone who passed by. So, in 1713 harsh Lutheran sermons resulted in a riot directed against the chapel, which in the course of events was destroyed and the altar brass, monstrances and the like were displayed throughout the city in a carnevalesque procession. The outcome was expensive. The city had to send a delegation to Vienna where they should apologize ceremonially, and it had to pay a fine which almost covered the costs of the Karlskirche in Vienna – an apotheosis of the counter- reformation that was also dedicated to Charles Borromeo and a display of the emperor's power.

But what became of Altona? In 1640 the Danish king inherited Holstein-Pinneberg including Altona and hastened to confirm the privileges concerning freedom of trade and religion. For they complied with his intentions to make the place a competitor that would do harm to Hamburg's prosperity. In 1664, Altona was raised to the status of a town and given the privilege of a toll-free harbour. Moreover, the Jews got their own jurisdiction and subsequently the senior rabbinate was in charge for the whole of Schleswig-Holstein. Within half a century Altona's population grew from some 3,000 to 12,000 inhabitants in 1710. From then on, it was the second largest town in Denmark after Copenhagen. During the following decades particularly the Mennonites were engaged in building a harbour infrastructure and in enhancing trade and shipping. The Mennonites, however, provide a good argument that the relations between Hamburg and Altona were not only competitive, but also symbiotic. There were Mennonite merchant houses on both sides of the border and family ties made it easy to form joint ventures. Others followed suit. So, when mercantilistic policies hampered Hamburg's direct trade with Denmark (including Iceland and Norway and some colonies in the Caribbean), Hamburg's merchants shipped their goods under Altona's Danish flag, and vice versa in case of Danish warfare under the neutral flag of the Free Imperial City. But, admittedly, for most of the

18th century Altona's merchants profited more from Hamburg's mercantile infrastructure than the other way round, so that some historians prefer to speak of Altona's parasitic existence.

Let us turn to the last chapter of this talk and see what all this meant with regard to the history of Protestantism in the 18th century. Generally speaking, this history is about an increasing pluralism and individualism. Although Hamburg officially continued to be a stronghold of orthodox Lutheranism, international trade made the city also a hub of cultural transfer. Around 1700 Pietism gained many followers. Of course, the networks of German Lutheran Pietism were most important. But also, the writings of French Jansenists were distributed. John Bunyan's ‚A Pilgrim's Progress' was published here in a German translation throughout the 18th century. On the other hand, the early enlightenment played an even greater role. Professors of Hamburg's sort of university college were crucial for the proliferation of ‚physico-theology' in Germany which they received from the Anglican clergyman and Fellow of the Royal Society William Derham, who had claimed that the „Being and Attributes of God" could be demonstrated „from His works of Creation ". Even more influential became adopting the English moral weeklies and adapting them to German conditions, which promoted the gentleman ideal in alignment with John Locke's philosophy amongst German readers. In short, the internationally operating mercantile elite with their European networks and overseas travels developed a sense of cosmopolitanism – and, alongside, a sense of neglecting the dogmatic boundaries that separated the Christian confessions. This went hand in hand with the reception of an enlightenment that was questioning many of the basic Lutheran dogmata and putting a strong emphasis on moral philosophy instead. After a number of fiercely fought literary battles during the 1760s and 1770s, rationalism gained ground in Hamburg, and in 1789 a new order of service was introduced which cut down the treasures of Lutheran liturgy, reduced the share of church music, and gave more weight to the sermon.

The situation in Danish Schleswig-Holstein was different. From the 1770s on, Denmark introduced a series of reforms that converted the realm into one of the most modern states. Serfdom was abolished as was censorship and freedom of speech and of the press were introduced. As a king Christian VII. was a mess, but his ministers were all deeply rooted in enlightenment thought, and they all were nobles from Schleswig-Holstein with close connections to the enlightenment circles in Hamburg and Altona. As one of the latest reforms, a new Lutheran church agenda was introduced in 1797. It brought about significant changes in the liturgy as well as in the order of readings, in which no reading from the Old Testament survived and all New Testament readings referring to miracles were replaced, since they contradicted reason. The new agenda was followed by a radically ‚modernized' hymnal a year later. Both reflected the influence of the enlightenment and of a decisive theological rationalism – and both were received with a wave of popular protest throughout the country. This wave of protest cannot fully be explained by the conservatism of a predominantly agrarian society. It also reveals the long-term effects of the reign of Christian VI.

King Christian VI., who reigned in the 1730s and 1740s, was deeply influenced by Pietism, as it was centred on August Hermann Francke and the Halle orphanage. He fostered their missionary activities in the Danish colonies in India and the Caribbean, and, even more, was devoted to impart their teachings to his subjects. He decreed a common school system and made the confirmation and, hence, a previous religious instruction obligatory, and he introduced a hymnal that contained a large portion of pietist spiritual poetry alongside the well-known older hymns and which was in use for more than a generation – time enough to account for a pietist current that opposed the rationalist reforms as well.

On this point, Altona comes in again. Around 1770 the ‚Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft' (German Christian Fellowship) was founded. (It actually happened to be founded in London, by the way.) It was a transconfessional network of all those who opposed theological rationalism. It was inspired by the

English Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge as well as English evangelicalism. Its select committee and centre was located at Basle in Switzerland, but it was organized as a network of sub-societies scattered over the German-speaking lands, and Altona soon figured as one of them as did Christiansfeld, a settlement of the Moravian Brethren (Herrnhuter), founded in 1771 on royal Danish soil. Also, the manor of Emkendorf ought to be named in this context. where the count and countess Reventlow hosted a circle of like-minded poets and writers – among them Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, who lived in Hamburg and on an appanage granted by the Danish king, and Matthias Claudius, who lived in the above-mentioned village of Wandsbek in the vicinity of Hamburg.

At the core of the Altona sub-society we find the van der Smissen family, who ranged among the most prosperous and influential Mennonites with close contacts to business partners in England, who were Quakers, apart from Mennonites in the Dutch Republic and an extended business network in Germany. To cut things short: Briefly after 1801 Jacob van der Smissen was involved in the fusion of the German networks with those of the English evangelicals centred at the Religious Tract Society, the London Missionary Society, and, above all, the British and Foreign Bible Society. He actually became a kind of relais station transmitting mail and money, tracts and bibles either via the port of Altona or the one of Hamburg, depending on whether Denmark or Hamburg could provide a safe and neutral flag during the Napoleonic wars. Quite a number of German bible societies owed their existence to the financial or organizational support of the British and Foreign Bible Society and became cores of the German revivalism after 1814. This actually was also the case with the Hamburg and Altona Bible Society. It was founded in 1814 by a group of lay and clergymen who were Lutherans, Mennonites, and Calvinists from both sides of the German-Danish border.

It would be nice, if I could end my lecture on a millennium of Danish-German political and religious history with this tone of reconciliation. But unfortunately, the Napoleonic era had given rise to nationalism, which clouded the German-Danish relations throughout the 19th century. And while the neo-pietist revivalism widely gained ground in Denmark, rationalism prevailed in Hamburg, although the revivalist minority had a great impact in the fields of social reform and inner mission among German protestants. Johann Hinrich Wichern and Amalie Sieveking should be named in this context. But their activities and enterprises had little to do with Denmark, but were predominantly inspired by the like-minded movements in England.

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