



GENDERED PATRONAGE AND CONFESSIONALIZATION

Anna of Saxony as a “Mother of the Church”

By Pernille Arenfeldt

“... queens shall be the care-takers of the church ...”
(Martin Mirus’s funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony (1585)).¹

“... the kings will be your care-takers and the princesses will provide
for you ...” (Georg Raut’s funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony
(1585)).²

“... the kings shall be your care-takers and their consorts your wet-
nurses ...” (Luther’s translation of Isaiah 49:23).³

This paper examines some of the ways in which the electress Anna of Saxony (1532-1585) acted as a patron of the Saxon church and its clergy as well as the potential impact of the consort’s patronage on the confessional developments of electoral Saxony. Departing from the content of the electress’s correspondence, the analysis brings attention to the fact that early modern women also – and perhaps particularly – bestowed personal patronage that resulted in less visible and less tangible products than the art and architectural works that tend to dominate the study of female patronage.

I would like to thank the members of Forum for Renaissance Studies for their generous invitation to contribute to the seminar on Renaissance Women as Collectors and Patrons of Art and Culture and for their encouragement to prepare the paper for publication. I am indebted to Eric Jacobsen, Minna Skafte Jensen, Mara Wade, and Kevin Mitchell for insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

¹ “... Königinnen sollen der Kirchen Pflegerin sein ...”, funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 62.

² “... Die Könige werden deine Pfleger / vnnnd die Fürstinne deine Ernehrerin sein ...”, funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 283 and 291.

³ “... die Könige sollen deine pfleger, vnd yhre furstyn deine seugammen sein ...”, Isaiah 49:23. Quoted from *D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe; die Deutsche Bibel* (“Weimarer Ausgabe”) 1906-1961, vol. 11:1, 148.

This paper will examine some of the ways in which the electress Anna of Saxony (1532-1585) acted as a patron of the Saxon church and its clergy as well as the potential impact of the consort's patronage on the confessional developments of electoral Saxony. In his 1865 biography of the electress, Karl von Weber characterized her as a pious and generous *mater ecclesiae*. Although no specifics were mentioned, von Weber referred to Anna's involvement in the construction of the Annakirche in Dresden and suggested that she was also responsible for the construction of a new church in Stolpen as well as for the glass window that was commissioned for the chapel by the castle of Zerbst.⁴ However, with the exception of one isolated exchange with Lucas Cranach the Younger regarding a commission for the chapels of the castles of Annaburg and Augustusburg,⁵ the thousands of letters that are preserved in the electress's letter-books contain no references to this form of patronage. While the electress's correspondence indicates that her *personal involvement* in the patronage of art and architecture may have been marginal, her letters do reveal that she actively promoted the careers of some theologians.

Departing from the content of the electress's correspondence, this paper brings attention to the fact that early modern women also – and perhaps particularly – bestowed personal patronage that resulted in less visible and less tangible products than the art and architectural works that tend to dominate the study of female patronage.⁶ In addition to presenting some of these less familiar forms of patronage, the goal of this analysis is to assess if Anna of Saxony's support for the church/clergy may have enabled her to shape the confessional development of the territory.

The theories/theses of confessionalization are highly contested, though mainly as a result of the sometimes implicit suggestion of social disciplining.⁷ There is widespread agreement among scholars that the new territorial churches in the Protestant territories were institutions of prime importance for inner-territorial developments. In the words of Heinz Schilling, "The interpenetration of religion and society made the formation of confessional

⁴ Von Weber 1865, 361.

⁵ Lucas Cranach to Anna of Saxony, Wittenberg 25 May 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, 118 a-b; Anna of Saxony to Lucas Cranach, Annaburg 24 Oct. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, 118 a-b.

⁶ The literature on female patronage, particularly by royal and noble women, is currently witnessing rapid growth. The tendency to focus on patronage of art and architecture is unmistakable and appears clearly in several contributions to Campbell Orr 2004.

⁷ The most important contributions to the discussion remain: Reinhard 1977; Schilling 1981; Schilling 1988; Schilling 1995a; and Schilling 1995b; excellent overviews of the debate are presented by Thomas Kaufmann (in Kaufmann 1996 and Kaufmann 2003).

churches a political and social fact”.⁸ In this analysis, confessionalization refers to the gradual emergence of and intense competition between different Protestant denominations/interpretations of Scripture, including the secular authorities’ efforts to disseminate what they considered the true understanding of God’s word.

The term “patronage” is as contentious as “confessionalization”. Drawing upon the comprehensive discussions in German historiography, and particularly on the influential work by Wolfgang Reinhard, in this paper patronage is considered to be one of several tools with which authority was exercised and reconfirmed in early modern Europe (a so-called *Herrschaftstechnik*). In contrast to friendships that are characterized by symmetry and exist between persons of equal rank, a patron-client relationship refers to the bond between individuals of different rank and means. The unequal standing of the participants implies that the exchange of support and favors remains asymmetrical and that the hierarchical relationship between the participants is thereby confirmed through each exchange.⁹ However, the uneven distribution of power does not imply that only the client was dependent on the patron. Because the exchanges serve to confirm a hierarchy, a patron also has a vested interest in retaining the relationship and it is thus founded on a mutual dependence. In addition to emphasizing the social dynamic of the patron-client relationship, this conceptualization underlines the importance of considering continual relationships rather than isolated and/or “completed” exchanges between individuals and is consistent with the patterns that are reflected in the correspondence of Anna of Saxony.

After a brief introduction to the Saxon electress, the paper will examine: (i) the ways in which the theological authorities defined the consort’s duties as a “mother of the church”; (ii) the electress’s far-reaching support of the prominent theologian Nikolaus Selnecker; (iii) relationships between the consort and the court chaplains as well as other leading Saxon theologians with a view to assessing her potential influence on decision-making within the Saxon church; and (iv) Anna of Saxony’s recommendations for theologians to other consorts.

⁸ Schilling 1995a, 655.

⁹ Reinhard 1979; Reinhard 1998. See also the recent discussions in: Droste 2003 and Emich, Reinhardt, von Thiessen, and Wieland 2005.

Anna of Saxony

Anna signs her letters as “Anna, Electress of Saxony, born in the Royal House of Denmark”,¹⁰ thereby specifying her position in Saxony and her dynastic affiliation with the rulers of Denmark. She was the eldest child of Christian, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and his wife Dorothea, born of Saxony-Lauenburg. After a civil war (1534-1536) that was prompted by a succession crisis following the death of Anna’s grandfather Frederik I of Denmark, the Danish Council of the Realm elected Anna’s father Christian (III) as Danish king in 1536. The following year Anna’s parents were crowned as King and Queen of Denmark.¹¹ In 1548 Anna married August, Duke of Saxony (1526-1586), the younger brother of Moritz, Elector of Saxony. When Moritz was killed in the battle at Sievershausen in 1553, August inherited the electoral title his brother had gained in 1547 and Anna became Electress of Saxony.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the Oldenburgs and the Albertine branch of the house of Wettin were the wealthiest and most powerful Lutheran dynasties in Europe. However, the positions of Anna’s husband, her father, and, after 1559, her brother resulted from recent achievements and were not to be taken for granted in a reality where the past decades had been dominated by frequent and significant changes in the distribution of territories, titles, and power in large parts of Europe. Because this analysis focuses on the consort’s religious patronage, it must be stressed that the religious/confessional developments had great political significance during the turbulent decades of the Reformation. Similarly, the church/confession constituted a central component in the consolidation of power in both Denmark and Saxony during the sixteenth century.¹²

In both Saxon and Danish historiography, the electress has been characterized as a devoted wife and mother, though also as a woman of considerable political influence. The biographical accounts also emphasize her extensive knowledge of health remedies, capable management of the electoral fiefs for which she was responsible, and her unwavering religiosity.¹³ It is

¹⁰ See for example, Anna of Saxony to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 3 May 1570, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

¹¹ Porskrog Rasmussen 2006 presents a concise summary of the political development in Denmark during the sixteenth century. See also Venge 1980, 306-339; the brief biography of Christian III in *DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 3, 297-302; as well as the overview of Anna’s biography in *DKBL* http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/1057/query/anna_kurfyrstinde/ (retrieved 22.12.06).

¹² Regarding Denmark, see Schwarz Lausten 1987 and Ingesman 2006. Regarding Saxony during the second half of the sixteenth century, see Hasse 2000.

¹³ The available biographies of Anna of Saxony remain strongly influenced by Karl von Weber’s comprehensive account from 1865 (von Weber 1865). See Sturmhoefel 1906,

widely assumed that Anna of Saxony played a decisive role in shaping the confessional stance of the electorate. Prompted by his consultation of the documents that were confiscated and produced during the process against the so-called Crypto-Calvinists in the 1570s, Karl von Weber discussed whether or not Anna interfered inappropriately in the confessional politics of Saxony. Casper Peucer, who was considered to be one of the leading proponents of the introduction of Calvinist practices into Saxony, referred to the “gynecocracy” within the electoral household and clearly considered Anna to exert an unwelcome influence upon the government of both the territory and the church that was inappropriate for a woman.¹⁴ In his discussion of the case, von Weber discards the critique of Anna and concludes firmly that she did not transgress the boundaries that were defined by her gender.

The fall of the so-called Crypto-Calvinists in Saxony in 1574 can be viewed as a defining moment in the confessional development of the Holy Roman Empire, leading ultimately to the Formula of Concord and thus to a lasting division of Protestantism in the Empire. If, in fact, the electress played a central role in the Saxon developments, then she inevitably influenced the greater confessional developments of the German-speaking territories during the second half of the sixteenth century. Although von Weber rejected the validity of Peucer’s accusations, the allegations of a “gynecocracy” – whether or not they were “justified” – reveal that the consort’s role as a mother of the church contained profound ambiguities. In an attempt to clarify the consort’s position within the Lutheran church, the following section examines how this was presented by the theological authorities of the sixteenth century.

ADB vol. 1, 680 (in the entry on August of Saxony), and *NDB* vol. 1, 302. The Danish reception of the image created by the Saxon historians can be found in the first and second editions of *DBL* (*DBL* 1st ed., vol. 1, 284-286, and identical text in *DBL* 2nd ed.); these views were updated in the third and latest edition of *DBL* (*DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 1, 251-252), and in *DKBL*, see http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/1057/query/anna_kurfyrstinde/. However, because until very recently new research has only been carried out on rather peripheral aspects of Anna’s life, the dominant nineteenth-century views are only now being re-written. Recently, several important contributions to Anna’s biography have appeared, see for example: Hasse 2000, 242-270, with particular emphasis on Anna’s religious beliefs, her library, and – according to Hasse – her lack of influence on the censorship of theological literature published in Saxony; Roebel 2004, 51-73, especially 57-58, as well as Hasse 2004, 135-155, especially 137 and 147, on the electress’s relationship to Caspar Peucer (1525-1602); Keller 2000, 263-285: a brief analysis of the possibilities and limits inherent in Anna’s position as consort; Keller 2003, 365-382, on the correspondence between Anna of Saxony and the Austrian noblewoman Brigitta Trautson; Keller 2004, 205-230; and, Arenfeldt 2004; Arenfeldt 2005; and Arenfeldt 2006.

¹⁴ Peucer’s allegations against Anna have been summarized innumerable times. The best available account is Hans-Peter Hasse’s recent analysis of Peucer’s *‘Historia carcerum’* (Hasse 2004).

“... queens shall be the care-takers of the church ...”

As the introductory quotes reveal, Martin Mirus and Georg Raut summarized the consort's role as *Kirchenmutter* with a rephrasing of Luther's translation of Isaiah 49:23. This seemingly innocent passage disguises a tension between a consort's rank and her gender – a tension that was circumvented both in the sixteenth-century texts and in von Weber's later biography of the electress.

Mirus's and Raut's characterization of the consort's role in relation to the church was not unusual. In the didactic treatises and panegyric literature, the sixteenth-century Protestant theologians consistently presented the female consort as a *Kirchenmutter*, a *Hausmutter*, and a *Landesmutter* (a mother of the church, a mistress of the house, and a mother of the territory and its population).¹⁵ Next to having an unyielding faith,¹⁶ the consort was instructed to be an active defender of God's true word.¹⁷ Correspondingly, both Nikolaus Selnecker and Martin Mirus praised Anna for the great efforts she had made to “clean the church and schools in these territories of the malicious [distortions of God's word]”. Mirus compared the electress to Esther and to the Roman empresses St. Placilla (wife of Theodosius I) and Placidia (wife of Theodosius II) as well as Theodosius's sister St. Pulcheria (399-453) who had all been steadfast patrons of the church, alerted their husbands and brother to threats of heresy, and fought together with the (male) rulers against the infidels. Just like these praiseworthy women, Mirus explained, Anna had defended the true word of God when the Saxon church had been threatened by Calvinism and dangerous teachings.¹⁸

In his “mirror-of-princesses” (1563) the Lutheran Joachim Magdeburg also referred to Esther as a role model, and stressed that a high-ranking woman should be willing to sacrifice all worldly possessions for the support of the church. He specified this further with references to the constructions of God's temples and support for the clergy.¹⁹ Johann Bugenhagen expli-

¹⁵ This is discussed at greater length in Arenfeldt 2006, particularly in chapters 3, 8, and 9.

¹⁶ Funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 8-9; funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 62.

¹⁷ Magdeburg 1563, C2(2)-C3(2) & C4(2)-C5(2).

¹⁸ Funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 56 & 61-62. Similar accounts can be found in Polycarp Leyser's sermon, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 121-122, and in Johann Habermann's sermon, printed as the ninth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 193.

¹⁹ Magdeburg 1563, C(2)-C2(1).

cated the same duties in the 1537 Coronation of Christian III and Dorothea of Denmark,²⁰ and the funeral sermons for Anna of Saxony praised her for having fulfilled these very obligations. As a true patron of the Saxon church, the electress had supported the clergy both in the church and in the schools and universities, and she had been a generous provider for the “good” pastors (those who preached the “true” word of God) as well as for their widows and fatherless children.²¹

Throughout the theologians’ accounts, the consort is considered a secular authority and, according to Luther’s teachings, she therefore was responsible for the dissemination of God’s word. However, as the various Protestant denominations were not yet clearly established, the latter half of the sixteenth century was characterized by a plethora of competing interpretations and practices, and a female consort needed extensive theological knowledge to differentiate “truth” from distortions. This, of course, is at odds with Luther’s exclusion of women from priesthood due to their purported intellectual inferiority.²² The question remains how the consort – as a secular authority – could promote God’s true word and prevent it from abuse if she – as a woman – was considered intellectually inferior? In other words, how would a consort know which theologians to bestow her patronage upon?

The prominent position ascribed to a consort within the Lutheran church was in stark contrast to women’s exclusion from priesthood. This tension between a consort’s rank and gender became visible in Caspar Peucer’s allegations of a Saxon “gynecocracy” and must be kept in mind when examining Anna of Saxony’s religious patronage and its consequences for the confessional development of a territory.

The electress’s patronage of Nikolaus Selnecker

Anna of Saxony exchanged more letters with Nikolaus Selnecker than with any other theologian. Their correspondence spans more than twenty years²³

²⁰ Lauterbeck 1572, XXIX b.

²¹ Funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 62; see also the sermon by Zacharias Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 270-271; the sermon by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 283-284 & 290; and, finally, the sermon by Adam Hermann, printed as the fifteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* 1588, 313.

²² See Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks’s introduction to *Luther on Women* (Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 1-14). See also Jancke 1998 for an analysis of some of the strategies with which a woman could legitimize her participation in church affairs.

²³ The earliest preserved letter exchanged between Anna of Saxony and Nikolaus Selnecker is dated Frankfurt a. M. on 7 Oct. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, 61 a, and the last is

and, as suggested in the available literature, he enjoyed far-reaching support from the electress.²⁴

Selnecker served as court chaplain and tutor of the electoral children in Albertine Saxony from the late 1550s to the mid-1560s,²⁵ but lost his position in 1565 when he supported a colleague who was openly critical of life at court. After his dismissal from Dresden, Selnecker became professor in Jena (1565-1568). In 1568 he returned to electoral Saxony, but again left the electorate because the Philippist theologians in Wittenberg repeatedly attacked him for false teachings and he became *Generalsuperintendent* in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. Parallel to the service in Wolfenbüttel, Selnecker was in charge of the reorganization of the church in Oldenburg. In 1573 he returned to electoral Saxony and was appointed as a professor in Leipzig the following year. Throughout this rather turbulent career, Selnecker repeatedly turned to Anna for support, and his appointment in Leipzig is widely considered to be a result of her influence.²⁶ His career strongly indicates that the development of Anna's relationship to Selnecker deserves attention.

Selnecker's service in the electoral household brought him into close contact with both Anna and her children for seven years. Already from the early 1560s, he employed this contact to nurture the electress's favor. In 1562, as he was preparing the publication of his interpretations of several Psalms,²⁷ he asked Anna's permission to dedicate the work to her.²⁸ Three years later, he published a collection of biblical sayings.²⁹ This work was dedicated to Anna and August's eldest daughter Elisabeth, and Selnecker of course presented Anna with a copy.³⁰ During Selnecker's service in Jena, he did not dedicate any works to the members of the electoral family, but the practice was resumed in the early 1570s. In 1573 he sent Anna a bound copy of the Ecclesiastical Statutes he had composed for Oldenburg,³¹ two years

Selnecker's letter to the electress, dated Leipzig 25 Sep. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, 22 a (original page no. 145 a).

²⁴ Hasse 1995; Hasse 2000.

²⁵ Hasse 1995, 94.

²⁶ See the overview of Nikolaus Selnecker's career in Hasse 1995, 94-96.

²⁷ Presumably the first of his three-volume interpretation of David's Psalms (1563-1565) that subsequently was dedicated to Anna's husband, August of Saxony. See Selnecker 1563.

²⁸ Anna of Saxony to Nikolaus Selnecker, Frankfurt a. M. 7 Oct. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, 61 a.

²⁹ Selnecker 1565.

³⁰ Anna of Saxony to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 13 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, 27 b.

³¹ Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna of Saxony, Gandersheim 28 Nov. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, 56 a-b.

later he dedicated the first edition of *Historica narratio et oratio* to her son Duke Christian,³² and in 1580 he dedicated his *Passio / Christliche, kurtze und tröstliche Erklerung der Historien von dem Leiden und Sterben unsers Herrn ... Iesu Christ* to Anna.³³

It was not unusual that the more prominent theologians dedicated publications to members of the electoral family. Johann (Avenarius) Habermann dedicated a revised and reprinted edition of his prayer book to the younger daughter Dorothea in 1574,³⁴ and presented Anna with three copies of the book.³⁵ Hieronymus Weller, Philipp Wagner, Christoffer Fischer, and Johannes Schütz also dedicated and presented their publications to the electress.³⁶ However, while dedications to members of the nobility was a common practice, the number of works Selnecker dedicated to Anna and her children is remarkable and testifies to his careful cultivation of the electress's protection.

When Anna received works that were dedicated to her or her children, she often expressed her appreciation with financial remuneration. Hence, she sent the Wittenberger theologian Johann Habermann ten Thalers as a confirmation of her "most gracious inclination" towards him upon the receipt of the three copies of his prayer book,³⁷ and Hieronymus Weller was given a remarkable thirty *Guldengroschen* when he sent Anna two copies of his interpretation of the 86th and 145th psalm, which was dedicated to her.³⁸ Selnecker too received financial rewards for the books he presented to the electress and her children: in 1565 she sent him five *Guldengroschen* and in 1580 he was given twenty Thalers.³⁹ While this form of literary patronage appears as the most common way in which Anna supported the Saxon cler-

³² Hasse 1995, 99-103; Selnecker 1575; Nikolaus Selnecker's letter to Anna dated Leipzig 5 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, 55 a-b.

³³ Selnecker 1580; Anna of Saxony to Nikolaus Selnecker, Annaburg 12 Jan. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, 4 b.

³⁴ Habermann 1574. See also Hufschmidt 2001, 105-106, where she summarizes the content and wide circulation of the book among noble women. Regarding Habermann's biography see *NDB*, vol. 1, 467.

³⁵ Anna of Saxony to Johann Habermann, Annaburg 24 Dec. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, 253 b-254 a.

³⁶ Anna of Saxony to Hieronymus Weller, Senftenberg 9 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, 145 a-b; Anna to Philipp Wagner, Bockendorf 30 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, 92 b-93 a; Anna to Christoffer Fischer, Augustusburg 3 Jan. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, 132 a (original page no. 1 a); Anna to Johannes Schütz, Augustusburg 24 Jan. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, 7 a.

³⁷ "... zu bezeugung vnser gnedigst neigung ...", Anna of Saxony to Johann Habermann, Annaburg 24 Dec. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, 253 b-254 a.

³⁸ Weller 1566; Anna of Saxony to Hieronymus Weller, Senftenberg 9 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, 145 a-b.

³⁹ Anna of Saxony to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 13 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, 27 b and Annaburg 12 Jan. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, 4 b.

gy, the support for Selnecker went further. Encouraged by the electress's support and perhaps forced by necessity, Selnecker asked for more. When he was returning from Jena to Wittenberg in 1568, he asked Anna to exercise her influence with a view to improving his salary and his housing allowance.⁴⁰ Towards the end of 1573, he asked her to further his appointment in Leipzig and to make sure that his semi-annual salary would be at least 300 Thalers.⁴¹ Finally, in 1582 he turned to the electress with three considerable requests: (i) he asked for an assistant who could help him in his office as superintendent; (ii) he begged her to do what she could in order to ensure that two of his sons were each granted an annual scholarship of 100 Thalers for the next three or four years; and (iii) he described his house's serious state of disrepair and asked to be given the lumber necessary for its extensive repair.⁴²

Regrettably, Anna's replies to these requests are unknown, but the recurrences, combined with Selnecker's praise of Anna's generosity in his letter from 1582, suggest that she did indeed provide at least some assistance. Yet, earlier in his career in 1565 when Selnecker asked Anna to intercede on his behalf in order to have his debt of 50 Thalers to August's chamber cancelled, she declined because August himself had rejected his earlier requests.⁴³ While this shows that not all requests were met with positive responses, it does reveal that Anna considered them carefully. Moreover, the fact that she volunteered an explanation for declining the request in 1565 can be read as an indication that she usually responded positively.

In the mid-1570s another service was added to the exchanges that tied Selnecker and Anna together. In the late 1560s Anna had accepted the responsibility for the education of a young nobleman from Denmark, Corfitz Grubbe, to whose relatives she considered herself indebted. Grubbe was first taught "in the house" of Elias Vogel, a local administrator in and later mayor of Dresden,⁴⁴ he then attended the elite school in Pforta, and between 1575 and 1577 he was "in the house" of Nikolaus Selnecker.⁴⁵ Like the nu-

⁴⁰ Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna of Saxony, Leipzig 22 July 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, 54 a-b.

⁴¹ Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna of Saxony, Gandersheim 28 Nov. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, 56 a-b.

⁴² Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna of Saxony, Leipzig 28 March 1582, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, 10 a-12 a.

⁴³ Anna of Saxony to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 13 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, 27 b.

⁴⁴ Regarding Vogel's biography see the funeral sermon by Balthasar Meisner, Meisner 1597.

⁴⁵ Regarding Corfitz Grubbe's early education, see Anna of Saxony's letters to the principal (*Rector*) of the school in Pforta, Dresden 13 March 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, 23 b-24 a, and Dresden 11 Feb. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, 150 a as well as the reply from the

merous book dedications to Anna and her children, the electress's decision to entrust the education of Corfitz Grubbe to Selnecker must be viewed in the context of his former role as preceptor of the electress's own children. Throughout Grubbe's years in Saxony the electress monitored his progress closely and this reinforced the trust that already existed between her and Selnecker.⁴⁶

Just as Anna's support for Selnecker went beyond the literary patronage, his efforts to ensure the electress's continued favor also exceeded the literary dedications. In 1573 rumors circulated that he was sympathetic towards the teachings of the gnesio-Lutheran Flacius Illyricus. When Selnecker became aware of these accusations, he immediately denied them in a letter to Anna.⁴⁷ Six years later Selnecker – for unknown reasons – doubted the elector's grace and, again, he turned to Anna, who assured him that she knew nothing of any such loss of favor.⁴⁸ Finally, in 1584, when he again was accused of false teaching, he wrote a letter and begged her not to believe such malicious rumors.⁴⁹ These examples and the repeated pleas for financial and material support suggest that Selnecker habitually used Anna as a broker between himself and the elector. They reveal that his trust in her and her pa-

principal, Pforta 3 Feb. 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, 179 a-b. In 1574 Anna asked the Saxon Councilor Lorenz Lindemann to negotiate the terms for his stay with Selnecker, see Anna to Lindemann (1520-1585), Dresden 12 March 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, 159 a, and Lindemann to Anna, Leipzig 16 March 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, 181 a-182 a. In 1577, Selnecker suggested that Grubbe should be enrolled at the university to study law, see Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 11 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, 134 a-b. Regarding Grubbe's education see also: Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Mühlberg 18 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, 91 b-92 a; Annaburg 19 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, 168 a (original page no. 16 a); and Dresden 11 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, 134 a-b. In 1575, Anna requested that Selnecker bring Grubbe with him on his planned trip to Celle, DrHSA Kop. 518, 91 b-92 a. See also Grubbe's letter to Anna, Leipzig 9 Sep. [1577], DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, 180 a-b. After his return to Denmark (in the early 1580s), Grubbe served as secretary in the German Chancellery in Denmark (1584-1591), see "Frederik II'dens og Formynderstyrelsens Hof og Regeringspersonale", 188.

⁴⁶ Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna of Saxony, Dresden 15 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, 31 a-b; Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Mühlberg 18 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, 91 b-92 a; Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Annaburg 19 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, 168 a (original page no. 16 a); Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Leipzig 7 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, 193 a-194 a; and Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 11 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, 134 a-b.

⁴⁷ Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna of Saxony, Dresden 9 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, 53 a-b.

⁴⁸ Anna of Saxony to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 10 May 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, 306 b (original page no. 140 b).

⁴⁹ Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna of Saxony, Leipzig 25 Sep. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, 22 a (original page no. 145 a)

tronage of him exceeded and, to some degree, was independent of that of her husband.

The consort and the court chaplains

The correspondence between Anna and Selnecker suggests that it was his service in the electoral household that brought him under her – rather than her husband’s – protection, and this observation raises the questions regarding the consort’s interactions with other court chaplains.

The chaplains’ pastoral duties within the princely household implied a constant availability,⁵⁰ and numerous cases confirm that Anna frequently turned to the chaplains for moral support and advice on a range of questions. Hence, during the summer of 1568 when Anna was residing at Torgau, her court mistress (*Hofmeisterin*) Catharina Kleinin, who was responsible for the youngest children in Dresden, informed Anna that the children’s *Nachtwächterin* (“night watcher”) was experiencing “fantasies and idle stories”. The electress encouraged Kleinin to be patient with the “poor old woman” and instructed her to consult with Doctor Neefen who could provide a remedy that would “strengthen her head”. But the court mistress should also “instruct the court chaplains to console [and] teach the poor old woman in order to rid her of such fantasies”.⁵¹

Anna also turned to her chaplains and the leading theologians of the territory with her own worries. When she was concerned that her married daughter Elisabeth might be subject to dangerous influences in the Zwinglian/Calvinist Palatinate, she consulted with the chaplain Philipp Wagner and enclosed written instructions (presumably on the Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist) from him with her own letter to Elisabeth.⁵² Two years later, Anna informed the theologian Johann Stössel that he could

⁵⁰ Ambrosius Keul accompanied the electoral family to the Diet in Augsburg 1566, see Anna of Saxony to Hans Grantz, “Hofffurier itzo zu Augsburg”, Dresden 16 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, 80 a-b; Philipp Wagner accompanied the electoral couple during their visit to Denmark in 1572, see Sturmhoefel 1906, 106. See also the examples below regarding Paul Noviomagus, the Danish court chaplain, who accompanied Dorothea of Denmark to Saxony on several occasions.

⁵¹ “... den Hoffpredigern ... anzeigen lassen das sie die arme alte frau trosten vnterrichten vnd von solcher fantasy ab..Ben ...”, Anna to Catharina Kleinin, Torgau 7 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, 80 b-81 a.

⁵² Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth’s court mistress Anna von Wolfersdorf, Dresden 20 May 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, 238 a-239 a. This discrepancy between the Lutheran and the Zwinglian understanding of the Eucharist had dominated Elisabeth’s troubled marriage to Johann Casimir, Count Palatine; see chapter 9 in Arenfeldt 2006.

send his consolations (*Trostschrift*) to Elisabeth by way of her court chaplain.⁵³

Like Selnecker, other court chaplains also served as preceptors for the princely children or were in other ways given responsibility for them. Christian Schütz thus sent reports on the well-being of the children in 1567,⁵⁴ and when Anna's daughter Dorothea was only four years old, the electress explained to Philipp Wagner that Dorothea now had completed "her ABC book" and asked him to provide a catechism within which the "alphabet and the syllables" were printed at the beginning.⁵⁵

Similarly Anna's own education had been guided by the theologians most closely associated with her parents' household. Tileman van Hussen was responsible for her (and her brother Frederik's) education, at least until appointed Bishop of Schleswig in 1542.⁵⁶ Her later exchanges with one of his successors Paul Noviomagus, court chaplain and preceptor of her brother Magnus from the mid-1540s,⁵⁷ suggests that Anna had also developed a close personal relationship to him before her marriage. After twelve years in Saxony Anna was still in contact with Noviomagus and her letters to him were characterized by confidentiality. In February 1560, Anna asked him to elaborate on the recent rumors about Frederik II's marriage negotiations and requested an update regarding another, even more secret but unspecified "subject in question".⁵⁸ Anna clearly trusted Noviomagus and viewed him as a well-informed source on matters pertaining to her immediate relatives, even if Frederik by this time resided far from Kolding, had his own chaplain, and was on difficult terms with his mother, the dowager queen Dorothea. Anna also employed Noviomagus as well as the physician Cornelius Hamsfort to influence her mother. In the spring of 1560 and again in 1561 Anna asked Noviomagus and Hamsfort to help persuade her mother to visit Saxony during the coming summer. Dorothea had repeatedly ensured Anna that she would come to Saxony, and Anna had begged that she would undertake this trip – already postponed several times – during the coming sum-

⁵³ Anna of Saxony to Johann Stössel, Heldburg 7 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, 94 a, Stössel's *Trostschrift* was presumably a collection of biblical quotes intended to provide consolation for the difficulties with which people were faced in worldly life.

⁵⁴ Anna of Saxony to Christian Schütz, Grimmenstein 21 April 1567, DrHSA Kop 512, 211 a-b.

⁵⁵ Anna of Saxony to Philipp Wagner, Bockendorf 30 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, 92 b-93 a.

⁵⁶ See the article on Tileman van Hussen, *DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 6, 616-617.

⁵⁷ See the article on Paul Noviomagus, *DBL* 1st ed. vol. 12, 329-330.

⁵⁸ Anna of Saxony to Paul Noviomagus, Dresden 15 Feb. 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, 119 a-b.

mer.⁵⁹ Whether it was the result of Noviomagus's and Hamsfort's influence or not, Dorothea arrived with both the chaplain and the physician in Saxony at the beginning of September 1560 and stayed until the end of November.⁶⁰ The following year, Anna re-employed this successful strategy in order to bring her mother to Saxony.⁶¹

Anna's attempt to influence her mother through the court chaplain and her physician can only be read as an indication that they were among her closest employees. Anna knew both men personally, and she evidently believed that her mother would listen to their advice. Noviomagus was indebted not only to Dorothea, but also to Anna and August: just like Hamsfort's sons, one and perhaps two of Noviomagus's sons attended the renowned school in Meissen during the 1560s,⁶² a privilege they doubtlessly obtained via Anna and her mother.

One of the most unequivocal expressions of a particularly close relationship between Anna and her court chaplains is disclosed in the communications between the electress and Susanna, the widow of the court chaplain Ambrosius Keul.⁶³ Only a few days after Keul's death in 1567, Anna expressed her condolences to his widow. She referred to the deceased as "our faithful court chaplain and pastor" and assured the widow that she shared the grief of her and her children. But Anna's support for the widow extended beyond her consoling words. In closing, she promised the widow her protection, "with regard to your livelihood and that of your children, we will always keep you in gracious protection and support. So you can free yourself of this worry".⁶⁴ The explicit promise to protect and support the widow

⁵⁹ Anna of Saxony to Paul Noviomagus and Cornelius Hamsfort, Dresden 20 April 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, 127 a-b.

⁶⁰ Regarding Dorothea's arrival in Saxony see the letter dated Dresden 8 Sep. 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, 143-144. Regarding the dowager queen's return to Denmark, see Anna of Saxony to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 10 Dec. 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, 151 a – b.

⁶¹ Anna of Saxony to Dorothea, Dresden 26 March 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, 163 a-b; Anna to Paul Noviomagus and Cornelius Hamsfort, Dresden 26 March 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, 167 a. See also "Samling af Dronning Dorotheas Breve ...", letter no. 47-50, dated btw. 1 May and 22 June 1561, 103-106.

⁶² Regarding Hamsfort's sons, see Dorothea of Denmark's letter to Anna of Saxony, Kolding 8 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, 8 a – b; regarding Noviomagus's sons see von Weber 1865, 403-406; von Weber did not, however, identify the two boys correctly. Their identity is revealed in Dorothea of Denmark's letter to Anna of Saxony, Kolding 7 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, 8 a-b.

⁶³ Keul's last name appears as Claviger in Hasse 2000, According to Zeißler 1856, 15, Keul served as court chaplain from c. 1558.

⁶⁴ "... vnsern gewesen trewen hoffprediger vnd sehsorger", and "... waß dan dich vnnd deines Kindes [versorgung] belangt wollen wir dich vnnd sie altzeit Im gnedigstenn befelch vnnd furderung haben. Derwegen du dich dieser sorg auch entschlahen magest ...", Anna of Saxony to "Susanna Magistrj Ambrosij Keulen nach gelass Witwe zu Dresd", 19

is remarkable and indicates that perhaps the widow was given a pension. The close contact between the electress and the deceased chaplain's family appeared already two years prior to his death, when Anna informed a trusted friend that, "today the Almighty God released the wife of our court chaplain Master Ambrosius [from her female burden] and bestowed upon them a young daughter".⁶⁵

During the fifteen years that followed Keul's death, there is only one trace of the contact between Anna and Keul's widow,⁶⁶ but in the fall of 1582, Susanna turned to the electress with a plea. The widow had fallen seriously ill and feared death was near. She therefore asked for Anna's permission to commend her six children to the electress in case she died.⁶⁷ Anna replied,

[I]f it is according to your wish and [given that] you provide your children with trustworthy guardians, we are willing to take in your daughters and support them until they have their trousseau and can be provided for [: get married]. We also [will ensure] that your sons will be given good opportunities.⁶⁸

The electress did not simply give the widow a general reassurance. She answered in great detail and emphasized the exact conditions and gender-specific ways in which she would be able and willing to provide for the children. Both the specificity with which Anna replied to the widow as well as the reference to her earlier assurance underline the sincerity of the electress's promises.

The close relationship between the consort and the court chaplains is immensely significant, not least because the office of the court chaplain, in the words of Wolfgang Sommer, gained decisive importance within the government of the church. During the latter part of the sixteenth century and

April 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, 210 a-b. It appears from the chaplain's letter to Anna dated Dresden 26 Sep. 1565, that he also participated in the education of the princely children, DrHSA Loc. 8529/3, 253 a-255 a.

⁶⁵ "... das d Almechtig Goth vnsers hoffpredigers Magisterj Ambrosij weib heut dato gnediglich entbund vnd sie mit einer Jungen tochter ... begabt hatt", Anna of Saxony to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 15 Sep. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, 45 b.

⁶⁶ Anna of Saxony to the Town Council in Freiberg, Annaburg 12 Oct. 1579, Kop. 521, 340 a (original page no. 174 a).

⁶⁷ "Susanna Magri Ambrosij Keills hinterlassenen Wittbe" to Anna, Freiberg 23 Oct. 1582, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, 61 a-62 a (original page no. 34 a-35 a).

⁶⁸ "... [wir s]eindt ... gnadigst erbötig, wofern dir doran zu gnaden geschicht, Vnd du gedachten deinen Kindern getreue vormunder zuwegen bring kanst ... deine töchtere zu vnß zunehmen vnd so lange aus gnaden zuunterhalten, biß dieselben ausgestattet vnd versorget werden können, ... [,] auch deine sohne sonst desto besser vnterbracht werden möge ...", Anna of Saxony to "Magisteri Ambrosij Keulß nachgelassene Withwe zu Freiberg", Lichtenberg 4 Nov. 1582, DrHSA Kop. 525, 78 b-79 b.

until the end of the Thirty Years' War, Sommer maintains that the court chaplains in Electoral Saxony gained almost all the rights associated with the later office of the territorial bishops ("quasi-landesbischöfliche Rechte").⁶⁹ Although Sommer focuses his analysis on the first half of the seventeenth century, Saxon court chaplains did not gain their exceptionally privileged status suddenly. Their powerful position developed gradually, and as a parallel to this, Hans-Peter Hasse also ascribes considerable influence on the confessional stance of the territory to the court chaplains in his analysis of Saxon censorship and confessionalization in the 1560s and 1570s.⁷⁰

These observations imply that the court chaplain and the consort (as well as the prince) could exert mutual and considerable influence on each other simply by way of the daily verbal exchanges, which inevitably escape the attention of the historian who is forced to rely on written accounts. If, however, the Saxon chaplains indeed enjoyed *quasi-landesbischöfliche Rechte*, the consort is likely to have been privy to the most important aspects of and decision-making within the church administration. The scarcity of references to these subjects in Anna's correspondence should not be taken to imply that she did not participate in them. Rather, the physical proximity of the court chaplains enabled her to engage verbally – and thus inconspicuously – in these questions.

The electress's direct participation in theological discussions of great political consequence is confirmed by an exchange between her and the theologians who represented electoral Saxony during the so-called Altenburg colloquy in 1568-1569. The aim of the Altenburg colloquy was to resolve the disagreements between the so-called "Flacian" theologians in Ernestine Saxony and the "Philippists" who dominated the University of Wittenberg and electoral Saxony. In December 1568 the negotiations in Altenburg had been underway for almost three months, but showed few signs of a constructive outcome and Paul Eber, the most senior theologian in Albertine Saxony, reported the difficulties to the electress. In her reply, Anna encouraged Eber to continue the efforts for a "Christian accord".⁷¹ One month later, Anna received a second report from Altenburg. It was sent jointly by Eber and the court chaplain Christian Schütz, who begged Anna to convince August that he should recall them from the meeting.⁷² However, rather than furthering their request, the electress replied that because August had organized the colloquy out of a peace-loving and good-hearted Christian disposi-

⁶⁹ Sommer 1995, 316-317.

⁷⁰ Hasse 2000, 213-214 & 304-332.

⁷¹ Anna of Saxony to Paul Eber, Dresden 22 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, 148 a-b.

⁷² Paul Eber and Christian Schütz to Anna of Saxony, Altenburg 23 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, 42 a-46 a.

tion and with the noble intention of furthering God's honor and accord within the church, they should continue the talks and overcome their current reservations by means of Christian serenity.⁷³

The relationship between Anna of Saxony and the court chaplains as well as her far-reaching inclusion in the negotiations during the colloquy in Altenburg highlight the fact that she – as a result of her close relationships and patronage of the leading theologians – was considered an influential person in the government of the Saxon church. But does this imply that she – and other consorts – also influenced the appointments within the church?

Appointments and recommendations

While the sources remain silent on Anna's potential involvement in the appointments of theologians within the Saxon church, her correspondence shows that she did participate actively when "lesser" offices within the church had to be filled.⁷⁴ The letters also reveal that one of the most common ways in which Anna furthered the career of an individual theologian was by recommending him to other rulers or consorts, thereby disclosing the involvement of princely women in these decisions as a common practice. Through this form of patronage the electress could at once bestow support on a Saxon theologian and maintain her dynastic network by providing a favor. Her recommendations of theologians to other consorts deserve attention for several reasons: they document that consorts in several other Protestant territories were indeed involved in the selection of theologians for the territorial churches; they provide an insight into the consorts' considerations regarding the choice of priests; and they reveal just how well informed Anna was about the theologians within Saxony.

In 1567 Elisabeth of Mecklenburg asked Anna to recommend a suitable clergyman. The electress proposed that Elisabeth choose Paul Krell, the son-in-law of Georg Major, but qualified her recommendation by adding that although he was very learned, he had "no particular grace for preaching",⁷⁵ thereby showing her detailed knowledge of both the family connections among the Saxon theologians and her personal knowledge of the individual. While Elisabeth was grateful for the suggestion, she and her husband ulti-

⁷³ Anna of Saxony to Paul Eber and Christian Schütz, Dresden 28 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, 5 b-6 a.

⁷⁴ See for example Anna's involvement in the appointment of a sexton for the church in Torgau: Anna to Kaspar Heidenreich, Superintendent in Torgau, Gommern 24 June 1581, DrHSA Kop. 523, 149 a (original page no. 36 a), and her intercession on behalf of the son of one of her female servants who desired the post as organist in Meissen, Anna to Kasper Eberhard, Dresden 26 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, 39 a.

⁷⁵ "... keine sonderliche gnade zu redder ...", Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 20 Sep. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, 251 b-253 a.

mately chose another candidate – possibly because of Krell’s family tie to Major, whose controversial teachings on the doctrine of justification and the importance of good deeds were at the center of an intense dispute throughout the Protestant territories during the 1550s and 1560s. This explanation gains plausibility because the theologians in Mecklenburg objected particularly strongly to Major’s teachings and the two consorts were acutely aware of this subject: Elisabeth and Anna had debated the subject in their correspondence only a few years earlier.⁷⁶

Although Anna was unable to provide a theologian for Elisabeth at the time, the duchess nevertheless returned to Anna for help when a new superintendent was needed in Schwerin five years later and this resulted in an appointment.⁷⁷

In 1570 the Lord and Lady of Schönburg needed a new pastor for their core possession, the imperial fief of Glauchau.⁷⁸ As the recruitment for this office met with obstacles, the Lady of Schönburg and Anna became involved in the negotiations. Dorothea von Schönburg wrote to Anna concerning the superintendent in Schneeberg Andreas Praetorius, to whom she and her husband had offered the post.⁷⁹ According to Anna, August and his councilors were not pleased with this choice, because it would compel them to find a new superintendent for Schneeberg. In an attempt to prevent this,

⁷⁶ Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 18 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, 270 a-b. The objections of the theologians in Mecklenburg against Major’s teaching on the importance of good deeds were addressed most explicitly in Anna’s letter to Elisabeth, Dresden 27 Jan. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, 6 b-8 a. Yet, the subject is present already in her letter from September 1567. While Elisabeth herself appears to have followed Luther’s teaching closely, Anna took a more pragmatic stance, “... Wir wissen Goth lob aus Gottes gnaden, worauff wir vnsern glauben vnd vertragen setzen soll vnd das wir aus gnaden vmb Chrj verdienst willen vnd nicht durch vnser werck gerecht geachtet vnd selig werden müssen ... darumb lassen wir vns solch muthwillig gezeuch ... nicht anfechten. Man darff aber der leuten Gutte werck bej dieser Zeit nicht sehr erleiden noch verbeith, dar zu wir doch verpflichtet sein, das derselben leider sonst nicht viell geschehe noch gesehen werdenn ...” (Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 27 Jan. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, 6 b-8 a). In other words, Anna knew that she – as Luther taught – was saved by her faith, but she nevertheless considered it useful if the “common wo-/man” continued to believe that good deeds also played a role. Regarding Major and his teachings on good deeds, see Kolb 1976. Hamm 1986 discusses the importance and variations of the doctrine of justification throughout the Reformation.

⁷⁷ Von Weber 1865, 361-362.

⁷⁸ The remainder of the possessions held by the Lords of Schönburg were Saxon fiefs, see *Sachsen. Handbuch der historischen Stätten* 1965/ 1990, 324-325. The example discussed here is significant because it shows how the composite nature of the Schönburg-possessions and their Lutheran confession forced them to negotiate with the Saxon elector even in matters that concerned their imperial fiefs.

⁷⁹ Anna of Saxony to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 28 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, 169 b-170 a.

they proposed an alternative, but unnamed, candidate. He, however, was rejected by Georg and Dorothea of Schönburg and the negotiations continued. After further discussions the elector and his councilors decided to present a new candidate as superintendent for Schneeberg to the judge and town council and, when he was approved, Praetorius was finally allowed to accept the office he had been offered by the Lady and Lord of Schönburg.⁸⁰ When Anna wrote to inform Dorothea von Schönburg about the outcome she consistently wrote “Your Lord and You ...” when referring to their choice of theologian: “Your Lord and You desire and want [Praetorius] for the office as pastor in Glauchau”.⁸¹ She thereby brought attention to Dorothea’s participation in the selection.

Several comparable examples can be found in the correspondence: in 1571 Anna sent a pastor to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, and in 1575 the electress assisted Barbara von Liegnitz-Brieg with the recruitment of a theologian.⁸² The frequent requests from other consorts presumably reflects the particular status enjoyed by the University of Wittenberg as a center of the Reformation and its continued prominence with regard to the education of Lutheran theologians.

In the light of the other consorts’ active participation in the selection of clergy, Anna’s active role as mediator, her documented participation in the appointments for several “lesser” church offices in Saxony, as well as her forthright exchanges with some of the most senior Saxon theologians, there can be little doubt that she was also able to influence the appointments of clergy for the Saxon church – including Selnecker’s professorial appointment in 1573-1574.

Scholars have often discussed just how far the princes’ control of “their” Lutheran churches extended, especially the degree to which they could determine the appointments for the offices within the church.⁸³ In his analysis of Philipp Melanchton’s contribution to the ideological foundation of the territorial church in Albertine Saxony, Ralph Keen argues that the rulers there were granted even greater control of the church than Luther had sug-

⁸⁰ Anna of Saxony to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 28 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, 169 b -170 a.

⁸¹ “... gedachter Pretorus, wie Ewer herr vnd Ir ... Lust vnd willen zu PfareAmbt zu Glaucha ...”, Anna of Saxony to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 28 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, 169 b-170 a.

⁸² Von Weber 1865, 361-362. Regarding Katharina von Brandenburg-Küstrin, see Anna’s letters to her, Dresden 18 April 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, 230 a-231 a, and Stolpen 12 Aug. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, 272 b-273 a.

⁸³ See for example Karant-Nunn 1979; Schwarz Lausten 1987; Wartenberg 1988; Koch 1989.

gested in his writings.⁸⁴ In spite of these recurring questions regarding the relationship between secular authorities and the administration of the Protestant churches, it has remained unexamined if and how the secular rulers' greater influence on the church extended to female consorts.

If Anna did exercise her influence, it happened – most likely – through verbal exchanges. This implies that the consort's potential influence on the distribution of higher offices within the *ecclesia* can be disclosed only indirectly, that is, either in other sources that refer to her influence or make it probable on the basis of a meticulous reconstruction of her relationship to the candidate whom she may have wished to advance. Finally, as Heide Wunder has argued, there are reasons to believe that “‘smart’ wives did their part in making their influence undetectable”.⁸⁵ Given the formal exclusion of women from priesthood, this observation has immediate relevancy to the study of religious patronage during one of the most intense phases of confessionalization.⁸⁶ As the allegations of a Saxon “gynecocracy” in the early 1570s reveal, the consort risked harsh criticism if her influence became too conspicuous.

As reflected in her correspondence, Anna of Saxony's patronage of the Saxon church was dominated *not* by lavish building projects or commissions of art works. In contrast, her support for the church took the form of protection and financial support of individual theologians. While it is tempting to see an immediate link between the greater emphasis on literary patronage and the Lutheran/Protestant emphasis on the *word* (God's word), further research is required before it can be determined if this is a general tendency during the Reformation era and the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, this analysis does reveal that through her support the electress was able to further individual careers, thereby also contributing to the dissemination of a particular understanding of the “true” word of God. As demonstrated by Hans-Peter Hasse, the patronage of specific works and theologians was an important component of the Lutheran confessionalization of Saxony.⁸⁷

While the consort could exercise influence over the church, her position as a “mother of the church” was characterized by a pronounced tension between her gender on the one hand and her status as a secular authority on the other. As the introductory quotes to this paper reveal, the theologians who authored the funeral sermons for Anna of Saxony left no doubt that the consort had status as a secular authority and that she therefore bore a responsi-

⁸⁴ Keen 1991; Keen 1997.

⁸⁵ Wunder 1992/1998, 159-160.

⁸⁶ Regarding the 1570-1580s as a core period of confessionalization, see Hasse 2000, 15-16

⁸⁷ Hasse 2000, particularly his conclusion 375-382.

bility to the new territorially defined churches. Hence, the consort's patronage and the associated involvement in church matters raised questions about the appropriate order of the genders. Furthermore, her role as a "mother of the church" must be considered in relation to Luther's doctrine of the Two Regiments and the extent to which the worldly authorities were accountable to God for their government.

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The following abbreviations occur in the footnotes and bibliography: *ADB* = *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*; *DrHSA* = Sächsische Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden; *DBL* = *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*; *DKBL* = *Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon*; *HAB* = Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; *NDB* = *Neue Deutsche Biographie*; *RA* = Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen.

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