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European University Institute  
Department of History and Civilisation

**The Political Role of the Female Consort  
in Protestant Germany, 1550-1585.  
Anna of Saxony as “Mater Patriae”**

*By*

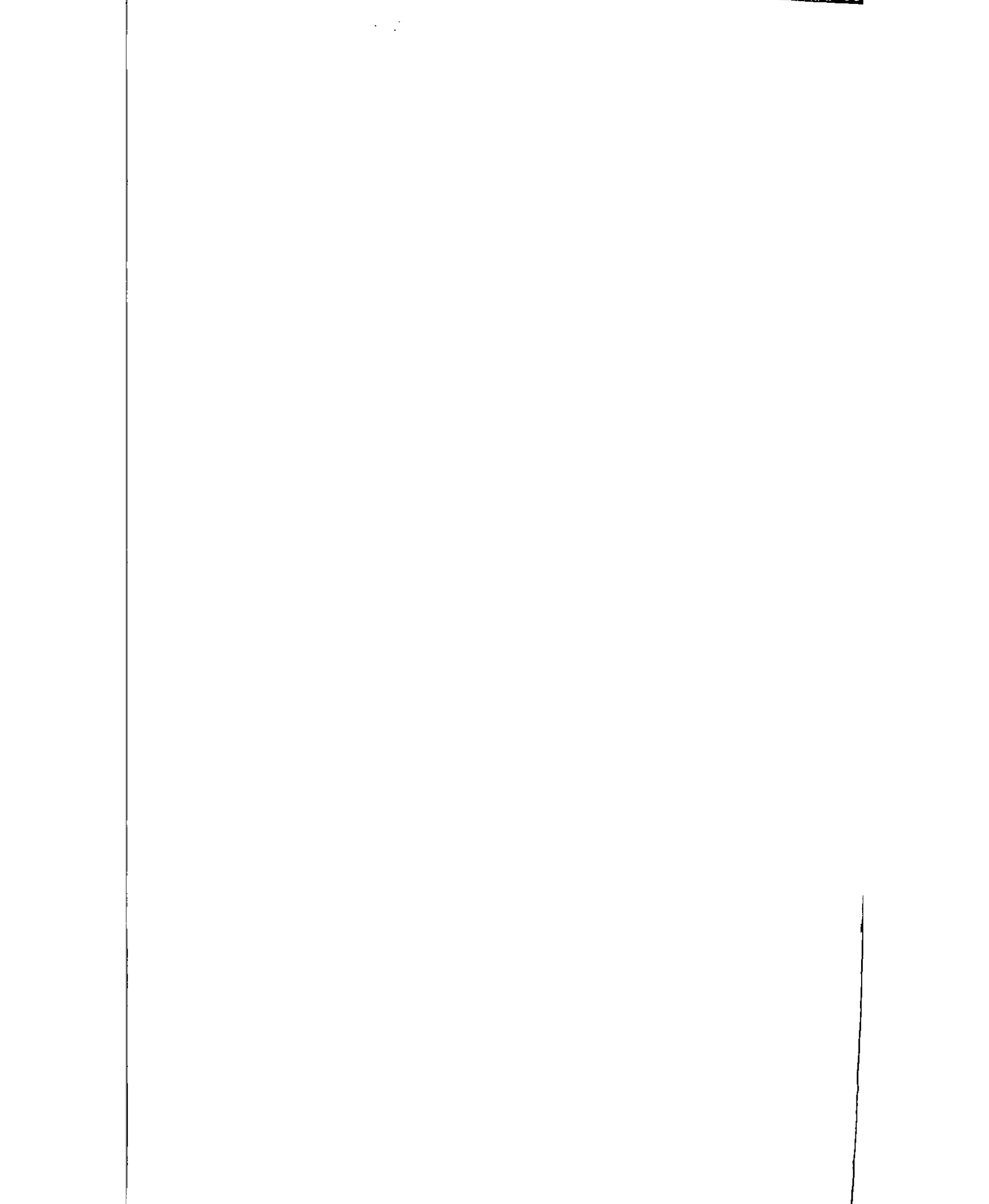
**Pernille Arenfeldt**

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of  
Doctor in History and Civilisation  
from the European University Institute

Florence, 20 March, 2006

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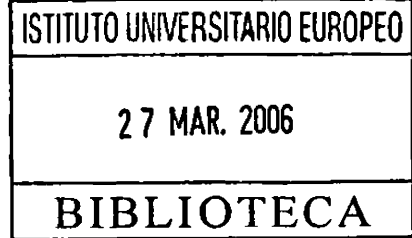






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**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE**  
Department of History and Civilisation



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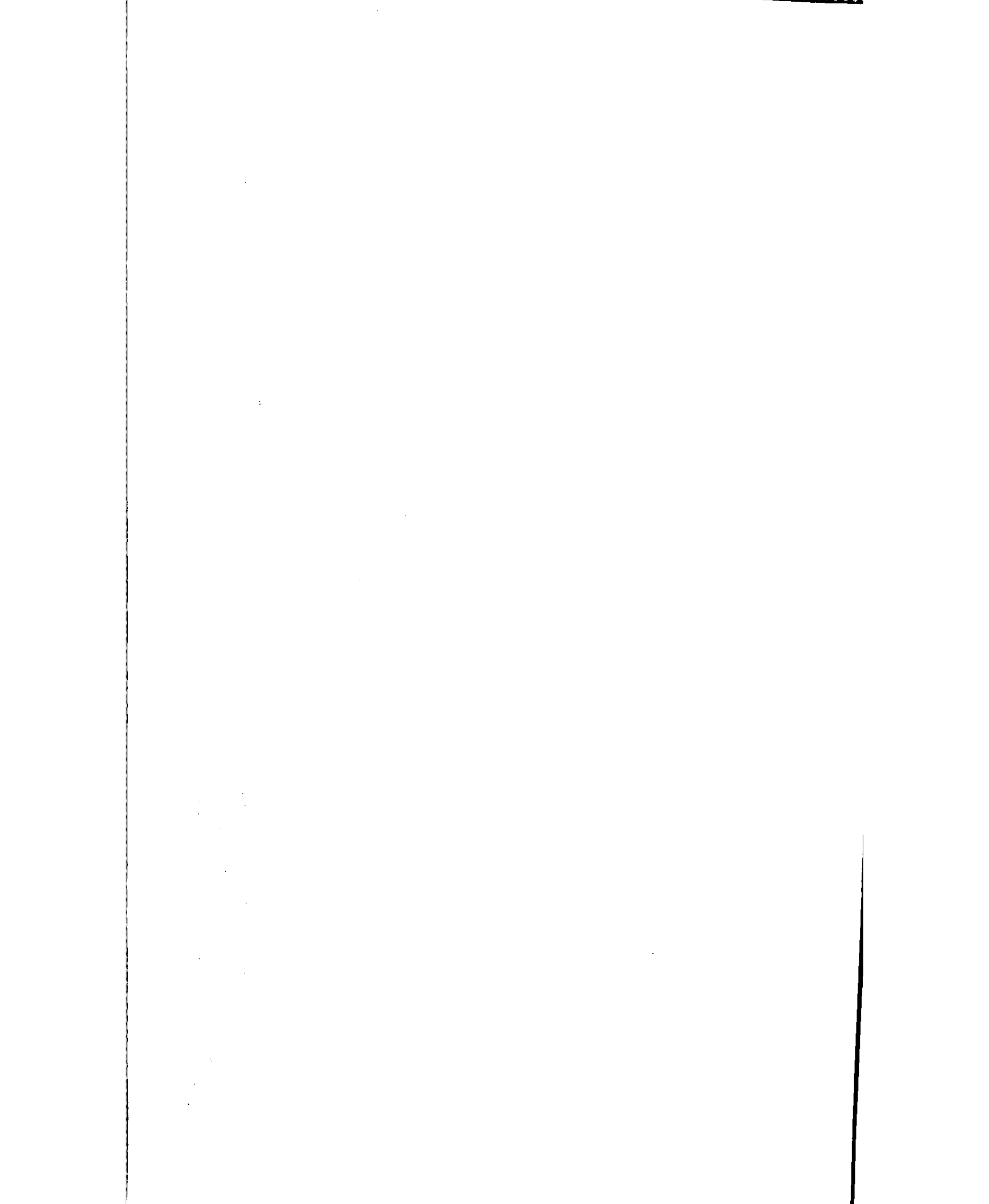
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**Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining  
the degree of Doctor of the European University Institute**

**Examining jury:**

**Professor Giulia Calvi, European University Institute, Florence**  
**Professor Susan Karant-Nunn, University of Arizona, Tucson**  
**Professor Regina Schulte, European University Institute/Ruhr-Universität  
Bochum (Supervisor)**  
**Professor Heide Wunder, Universität Kassel (External Supervisor)**



## **Table of Contents**

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>Note on Conventions</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Princely Women and Politics in the Early Modern</b>	
<b>Dynastic State: Conceptual Framework of the Analysis</b>	<b>9</b>
Gender and politics	10
Gender and rank in sixteenth-century Germany	11
Early modern politics	15
Gender history, court history, political history: Formal and informal power	18
The territory, the dynasty, the court, and the female consort	20
Luther's conception of three domains of life as an analytical tool	29
Structure of the analysis	33
<b>Chapter 2. The Correspondence of Anna of Saxony</b>	<b>37</b>
The preserved correspondence	37
Quantitative overview of the correspondence	43
A typology of letters	53
From the "outside" to the "inside": Dimensions of social reality	57
The preparation of a letter and the significance of autograph letters	60
Purposes of letters	69
Ritualized language	74
<b>Chapter 3. The Ideal Consort</b>	<b>89</b>
The ideological horizon of a Lutheran consort	89
The ideal consort according to the Lutheran theologians	100
The <i>Landesmutter</i> in the socio-political order	124
<b>Chapter 4. Mediating Resources: The Consort's Double Dynastic Affiliation</b>	<b>129</b>
The female consort as an active conduit of exchange	132
Brokering marriages	152
The consort's double dynastic affiliation and her dynastic capital	183
<b>Chapter 5. The Duty to Deliver an Heir</b>	<b>191</b>
A child or an heir	192
Embodying the future: Pregnancies and childbirths	202
Politics and the reproductive duties of the consort	241

<b>Chapter 6. The Consort's Care for the Ill and the Women in Labor</b>	<b>247</b>
Sources of knowledge and the gender of medicine	249
The usages of medical and apothecarial knowledge	266
Forbidden practices and dangers of medical knowledge	278
Midwifery	285
Gendered responsibilities for subjects, friends, and clients	292
<b>Chapter 7. "A Government of Grace".</b>	
<b>The Consort as Intercessor and Appeal Institution</b>	<b>295</b>
Intercessions, supplications, and the selection of cases	296
Accommodated requests	297
Rejections and qualified answers to requests	303
The female consort as intercessor	313
<b>Chapter 8. A Mother of the Church</b>	<b>327</b>
Inferior but equal	331
Promoting morality and defending orderliness	336
The electress and the Saxon schools	343
The consort's participation in the appointments within the <i>ecclesia</i>	348
Patronage of individual theologians	352
Confessional patronage and the duties of a Christian consort	363
<b>Chapter 9. The Consort and the Theological-Dynastic Disputes</b>	<b>367</b>
Overview: The fall of the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists	369
Anna of Saxony and the rapprochement between Saxony and the Palatinate	372
Anna of Saxony and the "Flacians"	377
The electress and the Palatinate, 1570-1573	383
The revelation of the Crypto-Calvinists, 1573-1574	392
Dynastic struggle over a princely woman's conscience	396
Confessional conflicts or gynecocracy	407
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>413</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>427</b>
Manuscript sources	427
Sources and literature published before 1600	431
Sources and literature published after 1600	435



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## Note on Conventions

### *Names*

In all but a few cases, the original German and Danish spellings of names has been retained. Hence, Friedrich III of the Palatinate appears as Friedrich, whereas Frederik II of Denmark is Frederik. Anna's brother-in-law Moritz of Saxony is referred to as Moritz, rather than the anglicized Maurice that sometimes is used. The modern English-language spelling has only been followed in the most common place-names (Saxony, the Palatinate, Denmark, Munich, Cologne, etc.) and the names that are so well known in English that it would seem artificial to retain the original German spelling (as, for example, William of Orange).

Princely women are always named according to the territory within which they were consorts. Anna, Electress of Saxony, thus appears as Anna of Saxony rather than Anna of Denmark as she sometimes is referred to in the German historiography. When the dynastic or territorial background of the women is relevant to the argument, this is of course mentioned in the text.

When genealogical and biographical facts (dates of births, deaths, marriages, and reigns) of territorial rulers and consorts are provided, the information is from *Europäische Stammtafeln*<sup>1</sup> unless a reference is provided to other sources.

### *Transcriptions and translations*

Original German and Danish quotes from sources and literature are provided in the footnotes and an English translation is provided in the texts. Unless otherwise noted, the translations are my own. In the original quotes, an effort has been made to keep transcribed passages from the sources as close to the originals as possible and punctuation has only been added when it was deemed absolutely necessary to convey the meaning of the quoted passage. In the English translations of the quotes, the punctuation follows current English-language practices. In several cases, the interpretation of a quote depends upon the exact wording of the original text and, as a result, the translations are subject to considerable restrictions. Regrettably, this implies that certain English translations may appear idiomatically "unusual".

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<sup>1</sup> *Europäische Stammtafeln*, Neue Folge, ed. by Detlev Schwennicke, vol. I-XXIII (1977-2005)

## List of Abbreviations

*ADB* – *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*

(see the bibliography for publication details)

*BBKL* – *Biographisch-Bibliographisch Kirchenlexikon*

(see the bibliography for publication details)

BSB – Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

*DBE* – *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie*

(see the bibliography for publication details)

*DBL* – *Dansk biografisk Leksikon*

(see the bibliography for publication details)

*DKBL* – *Dansk kvindebiografisk Leksikon*

(see the bibliography for publication details)

DrHSA – Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden

*DWB* – *Das Deutsche Wörterbuch* by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm

(see the bibliography for publication details)

HAB – Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel

KB – Det kongelige Bibliotek (The Royal Library), Copenhagen

*NDB* – *Neue Deutsche Biographie*

(see the bibliography for publication details)

RA – Rigsarkivet (The [Danish] State Archives), Copenhagen

SLUB – Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden

TKUA – Tyske Kancelli Udenlandske Afdeling

(The German Chancellery within the early modern Danish central administration. The Chancellery was divided between the “Danish Chancellery” and the “German Chancellery”, referring to the language that prevailed within these two administrative divisions. Hence, TKUA always appears in conjunction with RA)

UBH – Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

## Introduction

In a letter to the Augsburg patrician Martin Pfinzing, Anna of Saxony referred to herself as the *Landesfürstin* of Saxony.<sup>1</sup> The term Anna used to describe her position is significant because it cannot simply be translated as “territorial princess” or female consort. Rather, the term *Landesfürstin* constitutes a female counterpart to the term *Landesfürst*, which is best translated as territorial ruler. In the letter she takes upon herself the responsibility for the well-being of the Saxon subjects, thereby acting in accordance with the literal meaning of the term with which she describes her position.

More than ten years ago, Heide Wunder concluded that “the ruling couple [in early modern Germany] regarded itself as an ‘office-holding couple’, as the father and mother of the land – analogous to the position of the master and mistress of the house. Since the exercise of power was legitimated by eminent descent, women could assume the highest position in feudal political systems”<sup>2</sup> This is exactly what the Saxon electress expressed when she referred to herself as *Landesfürstin* and it is also implied in the associated terms *Landesmutter* and *Mater Patriae*, which both recur throughout numerous texts that were produced during the lifetime of Anna of Saxony.

The goal of this work is to examine the political role of the female consort in the Protestant territories of sixteenth-century Germany. In doing so, the analysis focuses on the ways in which the princely women viewed their office and its political dimensions. It will be demonstrated that the female consorts were conscious of and reflected upon the key position they held in a political system that was shaped by hereditary rights. However, in addition to the biological-political duty to deliver an heir, the princely women also identified a range of responsibilities related to both the territories and the dynasties they belonged to. By way of their rank and their office, the female consorts were viewed as authorities and, in order to fulfill the duties that were considered integral parts of the office, the women employed the authority invested in them.

Nevertheless, the position of a female consort was characterized by tensions. The hierarchical order of the early modern estate-based society co-existed with a hierarchical gender order and, although the female consorts were elevated by rank, the alleged inferiority of their sex could conflict with the role they were designated in the political system by their

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<sup>1</sup> Anna of Saxony to Martin Pfinzing, Weidenhain 1 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 356, fol. 476 a – 477 a (original page no. fol. 57 a – 58 a).

<sup>2</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), p. 162.

rank.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, in order to examine the political role of the female consort, one must examine how gender and rank (that is, how the gender order and the political order) interacted in the early modern society.

Contrary to what one may expect, the analysis does not provide a series of examples in which a female consort intervened in “grand politics”. Although references will be made to women who independently attempted to mediate peace between belligerent princes and tried to shape the elections for the secularized bishoprics in Northern Germany, the analysis relies on the women’s daily routines in order to demonstrate the political dimensions of seemingly prosaic practices.<sup>4</sup>

The analysis is based on the vast correspondence that survives from Anna, Electress of Saxony (1532-1585, Electress 1553-1585). Approximately 25,000 letters to and from the Saxon electress have survived. She corresponded with both men and women and with members of almost all groups of society: from the Holy Roman Emperor and his consort to widowed women in Saxon villages. The large majority of the letters were, however, exchanged between Anna and princely women from other Protestant territories of Northern Europe. The correspondence thus permits access into a far-reaching network of princely women and the examples from the life of the Saxon electress are naturally contextualized by the way she and her correspondents shared and reflected upon issues arising from common experiences.

Early modern Germany consisted of approximately 420 territories and the majority of these included a female consort at any given time.<sup>5</sup> However, as the territories ranged from wealthy and extensive electorates to minor enclaves, the lives of the consorts varied greatly. Because this study centers on the lives of a few princely women, and above all on Anna of Saxony, the examples that will be discussed are not necessarily representative for all princely woman in the Protestant territories of sixteenth-century Germany. An effort has been made to contextualize the examples from Anna’s life with those of other consorts. However, in several cases the comparisons with other consorts reveal contrasts rather than

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<sup>3</sup> For related observations, see Harris (1990) on aristocratic women in Tudor England; Dilcher (1997) on women in early modern Germany; and Hartmann (2003) on princely women in early modern Europe. Regrettably, both Dilcher’s and Hartmann’s analyses are confined to a normative reality.

<sup>4</sup> This approach is, of course, inspired by Clifford Geertz’s “thick description”. See his influential essay “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture” (Geertz (1973/2000)). See also Giovanni Levi’s critical assessment of the relativism he identifies in Geertz’s approach, Levi (2001/2004), pp. 97-119, here pp. 104-107.

<sup>5</sup> Bepler (2002a), p. 135. Naturally, there was no female consort in most of the ecclesiastical fiefs (Catholic bishoprics as well as convents).

similarities and thereby show how differently the lives of princely women could unfold. In this respect, many of the examples constitute cases of the so-called “exceptional normal”, that is, cases that may seem marginal and unusual in a quantitative context but reveal that which was humanly possible within a particular time and space.<sup>6</sup> Given the extraordinary volume of Anna’s correspondence, it may even be reasonable to view the Saxon electress as a “normal exceptional” female consort and, in keeping with the preferred metaphor of micro-historians, to conceptualize the electress’s correspondence as a magnifying glass (or a zoom lens) with which the consorts’ (Anna’s as well as her correspondents’) views of their position and its political significance can be examined in detail.<sup>7</sup>

The correspondence allows the political significance of the consort’s position to be accessed though the lens of the women themselves, thereby emphasizing their views and voices and – hopefully – overcoming the risk of reducing the princesses to mere attachments of their “political” husbands.<sup>8</sup> However, it is not sufficient only to examine in detail what the women did and thought in their capacity as female consorts. The findings of micro-analyses have to be thoroughly contextualized if their significance is to be disclosed or, as Gianna Pomata has summarized in a discussion of the relationship between gender history and so-called “universal history”, “History, like a movie, can be made of a judicious mixture of long shots and close-ups”, because both perspectives reveal and conceal different aspects.<sup>9</sup>

While the analysis will contain biographical elements, it is *not* a biography of Anna of Saxony.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the Saxon electress, her closest female relatives will figure prominently in the analysis, especially her mother Dorothea of Denmark (1511-1571), her paternal aunt Elisabeth of Mecklenburg (1524-1586), and her daughter Elisabeth, Countess Palatine (1552-1590). Nevertheless, the decision to examine the political role of the female consort on the basis of the extensive correspondence that is preserved from the Saxon electress means that she claims a privileged position in the analysis. Consequently, a brief introduction to this main protagonist can help delineate the geographical and chronological frames of the analysis.

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<sup>6</sup> Grendi (1977), pp. 506-520; Medick (1994), pp. 46-47; Levi (2001/2004), pp. 112-113.

<sup>7</sup> Ginzburg (1993), pp. 26-27; Medick (1994), pp. 49-50; Pomata (1998), pp. 114-116.

<sup>8</sup> See James Daybell’s introduction to *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (2004), p. 9, for a related argument.

<sup>9</sup> Pomata (1998), p. 115; Ginzburg (1993), pp. 26-27.

<sup>10</sup> See Giovanni Levi’s insightful discussion of the usages of biographical approaches in Levi (1989), pp. 1325-1336, here particularly the section titled “La biographie et les cas limites”, pp. 1331-1332; Bodeker (2003); Revel (2003).

In her letters, Anna appears as “Anna, Electress of Saxony, born in the Royal House of Denmark”,<sup>11</sup> thereby specifying her position in Saxony and her dynastic affiliation with the rulers of Denmark. In both the Saxon and the Danish historiography, the electress has been characterized as a devoted wife and mother, though also as a woman of considerable political influence. In addition, the established narratives of her life emphasize her religiosity, her knowledge of health remedies, and her capable management of the agricultural production at the electoral fiefs she was responsible for.<sup>12</sup>

Anna was born in 1532 as the first child of Christian, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and his wife Dorothea, born of Saxony-Lauenburg. After a civil war (1534-1536) prompted by the succession crisis that followed the death of Anna’s grandfather Frederik I of Denmark, the Danish Council of the Realm elected Christian (III) as the new Danish king in 1536. The following year Anna’s parents were crowned as King and Queen of Denmark.<sup>13</sup>

Among the first steps taken by the new ruling couple was the Lutheran Reformation of the Danish church, a change they already had instituted in their possessions in Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>14</sup> In accordance with their strong confessional convictions, Christian and Dorothea entrusted the education of Anna to one of the first Lutheran professors of theology in Copenhagen and later Bishop in Schleswig, Tilemann van Hussen (1497-1551).<sup>15</sup> Together

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<sup>11</sup> See for example, Anna of Saxony to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 3 May 1570, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>12</sup> The available biographies of Anna of Saxony remain strongly influenced by Karl von Weber’s comprehensive biography from 1865 (von Weber (1865)). See Sturmhöfel (1902), *ADB* vol. 1, p. 680 (in the entry on August of Saxony), and *NDB* vol. 1, p. 302. Minor revisions were presented by Kötzschke and Kretzschmar (1935/1995), pp. 211-235. 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, pp. 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 (1979), pp. 251-252), and in *DKBL*, see [http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/1057/query/anna\\_kurfyrstinde/](http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/1057/query/anna_kurfyrstinde/). However, because new research until very recently only has been carried out on rather peripheral aspects of Anna’s life, there are strict limits for the degree to which the dominant nineteenth-century views can be re-written. Recently, several important contributions to Anna’s biography have appeared, see for example: Hasse (2000), pp. 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), pp. 51-73, here pp. 57-58, as well as Hasse (2004), pp. 135-155, here pp. 137 and 147, on the electress’s relationship to Caspar Peucer (1525-1602); Keller (2000), pp. 263-285: a brief analysis of the possibilities and limits inherent in Anna’s position as consort; Keller (2003), pp. 365-382, on the correspondence between Anna of Saxony and the Austrian noblewoman Brigitta Trautson; Keller (2004), pp. 205-230, on the purpose and composition of the electress’s correspondence; and, finally, my own analysis of the correspondence between Anna and her daughter Elisabeth (Arenfeldt (2004)).

<sup>13</sup> See Venge (1980), pp. 306-339, on the political developments in Denmark in conjunction with the civil war known as *Grevens fejde*; the biography of Christian III in *DBL* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., vol. 3 (1980), pp. 297-302; and the brief biography of Anna in *DKBL* [http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/1057/query/anna\\_kurfyrstinde/](http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/1057/query/anna_kurfyrstinde/) (22.05.04).

<sup>14</sup> Schwarz Lausten (1987); Venge (1980), pp. 304-305 and 318-331; and the biography of Christian III in *DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 3 (1980), pp. 297-302.

<sup>15</sup> See the biography of Anna in *DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 1 (1979), pp. 251-252, and the biography on Tilemann van Hussen, in *DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 6 (1980), pp. 616-617.



with her parents and younger siblings, Anna spent most of her childhood at Koldinghus, their favored residence located approximately 100 kilometers north of the town of Schleswig. Although little is known about the details of her upbringing, it is clear that both her parents and van Hussen placed a strong emphasis on Lutheran learning.

At the age of sixteen (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 and, upon this succession, the twenty-one-year-old Anna became Electress of Saxony. Already two years after her wedding, Anna had given birth to her first child and during the next twenty-four years another fourteen children were born, though only four survived to adulthood. When Anna died at the age of fifty-three in 1585, she had lived almost three-quarters of her life in Saxony.

Both the House of Oldenburg in which Anna was born and Albertine branch of the House of Wettin into which she married had strengthened their positions during the turbulent decades preceding or following the Reformation. Following a period of confessional and political unrest during the 1520s and 1530s, the reign of Anna's father (1536-1559) is viewed as a period of stabilization. Reforms were introduced to stabilize the co-operation between the monarch and the influential Council of the Realm, the relationship between different parts of the composite monarchy was clarified, and the mutually dependent processes of consolidating the new church and developing a centrally governed state were accentuated.<sup>16</sup>

The developments in Saxony during the second half of the sixteenth-century show similar traits. After the "Partition of Leipzig" in 1485 (when the brothers Ernst and Albert divided the territories that belonged to the House of Wettin), the Albertine branch of the House of Wettin was secondary to their Ernestine cousins who retained the dynasty's electoral fief and the associated title and privileges.<sup>17</sup> However, during the Schmalkaldic War, Duke Moritz, the head of the Albertine Wettins, sided with the Emperor Charles V. Together with other Lutheran princes, the Ernestine Wettins fought against the imperial alliance and, after the imperial victory in 1547, Charles V rewarded Moritz for his support

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<sup>16</sup> Venge (1980), pp. 318-347; Gamrath and Ladewig Petersen (1980), pp. 361-394; and the brief biography of Christian III in *DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 3 (1980), pp. 297-302.

<sup>17</sup> Keller (2002), pp. 68-70; Blaschke (1985).

by transferring the electoral title (and large territories) from the Ernestine Elector Johann Friedrich I to Moritz and his Albertine successors.<sup>18</sup>

When Moritz was invested with the electoral dignity at the Diet in Augsburg in 1547, August was recognized as his legitimate heir if his brother died without leaving a son. This advance of August's status is generally presented as an implicit precondition for the marriage that subsequently was negotiated between him and Anna.<sup>19</sup> Their engagement was confirmed on 11 March 1548 and in October 1548 the marriage was celebrated in Torgau.<sup>20</sup> However, the sudden rise of the Albertine Wettins remained intensely contested by their Ernestine cousins until the so-called Treaty of Naumburg (*Naumburger Vertrag*) was concluded in 1554, and the conflict between the two branches resurfaced again in the 1560s. However, after 1566-1567, the Albertines' ascendancy over the Ernestines was unquestionable,<sup>21</sup> and Electoral Saxony remained the leading Protestant territory of the Empire until the gradual rise of Brandenburg in the seventeenth century.

Anna's native House of Oldenburg also came out of the turbulent first decades of the sixteenth century in a strengthened position. In spite of the final dissolution of the Union of Kalmar, the kings of Denmark maintained control of the lucrative trade in the Baltic and the tenuous victory of Anna's brother Frederik II of Denmark over his Swedish counterparts Eric XIV/Johann III in the Nordic Seven Years War (1563-1570) confirmed the Danish *Dominium Maris Baltici* until the rise of Sweden during the Thirty Years War.<sup>22</sup> While the Danish primarily economy was sustained by tolls from the Baltic trade and a large export of cattle,<sup>23</sup> the Saxon silver mines constituted the most important economic base of the electorate during the sixteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

Hence, by the middle of the sixteenth century, the Oldenburgs and the Albertine Wettins were the wealthiest and most powerful Lutheran dynasties in Europe. However, the positions of both Anna's husband and her father (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,

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<sup>18</sup> Keller (2002), pp. 128-133; Groß (2001), p. 54; Kötzschke and Kretzschmar (1935/1995), pp. 212-213.

<sup>19</sup> See the biography of Anna in *DBL* 3rd ed., vol. 1 (1979), pp. 251-252.

<sup>20</sup> "Ægteskabstraktat mellem Hertug August af Sachsen og Christian III's Datter Prinsesse Anna; med dertil hørende Arveafkald" [Kolding 7. Marts 1548] in *Danmark-Norges Traktater 1523-1750*, vol. 2 (1905), document no. 71, pp. 526-533.

<sup>21</sup> Keller (2002), pp. 133-135.

<sup>22</sup> Lockhart (2004), pp. 1-4 and 13-62, provides a concise summary of the status of the Oldenburg territories in English. See also Frandsen (2001), pp. 297-339.

<sup>23</sup> Gamrath and Ladewig Petersen (1980), pp. 403-428.

<sup>24</sup> Keller (2002), pp. 201-207.

titles, and power in large parts of Europe. The volatility that dominated both Scandinavia and the German-speaking lands during the Reformation era must be kept in mind when the consorts' views of their position and their actions are examined.

In addition to Anna's dynastic links to Denmark, the marriages of her aunts, uncles, and siblings tied her closely to a series of other Protestant princes and consorts. Her father's siblings had married members of the ruling dynasties in Prussia, Mecklenburg, and Hessen; her maternal aunts and uncles were in Saxony-Lauenburg, Sweden, Oldenburg, Braunschweig-Lüneburg, and Mecklenburg. The marriages of her own siblings established additional ties to Braunschweig-Lüneburg(-Celle) and Mecklenburg. Her father's mother was from Brandenburg and, finally, her mother's mother constituted yet another link to Braunschweig-Lüneburg(-Wolfenbüttel). The geographical orientation and confessional homogeneity of the marriages of the Albertine Wettins was similar: Anna's mother-in-law was from Mecklenburg, August's sisters were married to princes in Saxony-Lauenburg, Brandenburg, and Braunschweig-Lüneburg, and her sister-in-law in Saxony (Moritz' wife Agnes) was from Hessen. This pattern was continued by the marriages of Anna and August's children: their eldest child Elisabeth married Johann Casimir of the Palatinate, their son Christian married Sophie of Brandenburg, and the two youngest daughters married to Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel and Saxony-Coburg.

It is within this dynastic network and geography that Anna engaged in extensive correspondence and managed her office as female consort in Electoral Saxony.



## Chapter 1

### Princely Women and Politics in the Early Modern Dynastic State: Conceptual Framework of the Analysis

During the past decades the literature on women at the European courts and on the female members of the ruling dynasties has grown rapidly. Two recent anthologies allow some of the recurring difficulties inherent in combining gender history with court history and political history to be specified. In her introduction to *Queenship in Europe*, Clarissa Campbell Orr concludes that by “[l]ooking at the court through the lens of queenship”, the contributions to the collection bring increased attention to the courts’ dynastic dimensions and polycentric nature.<sup>25</sup> She also points out that the female consorts at the Baroque Courts throughout Europe “were able to obtain considerable political power”.<sup>26</sup> Hence, although the volume sets out to examine the role – particularly the political role – of the queen consort, the focus is limited to the courts, which in turn appear polycentric and with a strong dynastic dimension when approached through queenship. While these conclusions are noteworthy, they also suggest that the court is perhaps not the most appropriate unit of analysis for a study of the political role of the consort.

In contrast, the contributions to *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung in der Frühen Neuzeit* examine various aspects of the relationship between gender and authority (*Herrschaft*) in the ruling dynasties of early modern Germany.<sup>27</sup> The dominant unit of analysis in most contributions is the dynasty,<sup>28</sup> though the authority that is examined is not confined within the dynasty and includes the women’s role in the rule over entire territories.

Whereas the two anthologies differ with regard to their focus on court and dynasty, the well-known and problematic dichotomies of formal versus informal power and power versus authority are addressed in relation to gender by several contributions to both volumes. With the notable exception of Peter Wilson’s analysis of the consorts in early eighteenth-century Württemberg, the contributions to *Queenship in Europe* emphasize the informal power of the

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<sup>25</sup> Campbell Orr’s introduction to *Queenship in Europe* (Campbell Orr (2004)), pp. 1, 6 and 12-14

<sup>26</sup> Campbell Orr (2004), pp. 8-9.

<sup>27</sup> *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Heide Wunder (2002), especially Heide Wunder’s introduction (Wunder (2002a)), pp. 17-27

<sup>28</sup> Cordula Bischoff’s contribution on the gender-specific decoration of the residences and Sabine Stange’s analysis of the portraits of rulers and consorts constitute partial exceptions, though both highlight the awareness of rank and dynastic affiliations, see Bischoff (2002), pp. 176-177; and Stange (2002), pp. 195-196.

consorts.<sup>29</sup> Wilson, on the other hand, departs from the same conclusions that define the premise for *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, namely the legal framework within which women could and did exercise authority in early modern Germany. As Heide Wunder shows in her introduction to the same volume, the widowed noble/princely mother was considered the primary candidate when a guardian had to be chosen for a minor heir. In their capacity as mothers with a “natural interest” in the succession of her son (and thus in the territory), numerous princely women governed German territories for extended lengths of time during the early modern period.<sup>30</sup> Hence, womanhood did not exclude high-ranking women from authority,<sup>31</sup> and when the alleged inferiority of women in some contributions to *Queenship in Europe* becomes a determinant that rules out female authority, the important interactions between gender and rank are overlooked.<sup>32</sup>

These initial observations reveal that a study of the female consort requires careful consideration of the units (dynasty, territory, and court) within which she was expected to fulfill a defined role. In addition, several key concepts have to be clarified in order to examine the political role of the female consort. In this chapter, an effort is made to clarify the meaning of gender and politics in relation to the early modern dynastic state, thereby specifying both the analytical terminology and the context(s) within which the female consort is situated in this analysis. At the end of the chapter, a brief overview of the structure of the analysis is presented.

### **Gender and politics**

Gender and politics are the two terms which first demand clarification: *gender* because its exact definition is highly contested, and *politics* because the meanings and usages of the words have changed significantly during the course of development of modern European languages. The task of combining gender and politics in an analysis of an early modern reality is complicated by at least three factors: (i) gender and politics are in their current

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<sup>29</sup> Campbell Orr (2004), pp. 7-12. The emphasis on informal power is most pronounced in the following parts of the volume: Bryant (2004), pp. 98-99; Ingrao and Thomas (2004), p. 123; Hughes (2004), pp. 149-150; Noel (2004), pp. 179-180; and the essay by Bregnsbo (2004), pp. 362-364. Yet, it also can be detected, albeit more implicitly, in the contributions that center on the queens' cultural patronage.

<sup>30</sup> Wunder (2002a), pp. 9-11. See also Bettina Elpers's analysis of eight medieval consorts who all ruled on behalf of minor sons, Elpers (2003); and Pauline Puppel's detailed analysis of widowed consorts as regents and the legal framework within which this practice was defined in late medieval and early modern Germany, Puppel (2004), pp. 34-143.

<sup>31</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), p. 202.

<sup>32</sup> See my review of *Queenship in Europe* for further elaboration (Arenfeldt (2005a)).

meanings anachronistic terms in relation to the sixteenth century; (ii) gender history and political history have been two of the most antagonistic fields of history;<sup>33</sup> and (iii) gender is a category that is considered to permeate all of society, whereas politics is generally used to designate a particular domain of society.

The decision to apply gender and politics as categories in an analysis of a sixteenth-century social reality is thus a conscious choice of two anachronistic terms. The usage of anachronistic terms is almost inevitable. However, to ensure that they are employed as heuristic tools and not simply superimposed on the reality of sixteenth-century Germany, the relationship between these analytical terms (the *Wissenschaftssprache*) and the language of the sources must be considered.<sup>34</sup>

### **Gender and rank in sixteenth-century Germany**

The individuals who are at the center of this work can be described with the term “princely women”. The two words reveal (i) their sex and (ii) their rank, and the women were acutely aware of being women as well as queens, electresses, or duchesses. These two constituents of “who they were” were God-given realities of their bodies (womanhood throughout the body and rank conceived as located in the blood<sup>35</sup>) and God’s word stipulated the implications of being both a woman and of high rank.

Both rank and gender are relational categories (rank gains its meaning through references to higher or lower ranks and gender is generally defined as the meanings attributed to the perceived differences between men and women) and as such can only be perceived through a study of relationships either between individuals, between differently gendered or ranked groups, or between individuals and groups or institutions.<sup>36</sup> However, whereas gender results from a binary opposition between the sexes, the hierarchy that was defined by rank consisted of multiple levels and, in contrast to the sex of an individual, rank remained open to change (rank could change when a woman married and if the territorial possessions associated with a title were lost or gained).

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<sup>33</sup> Kühne (1998), pp. 171-231; Wiesner (1994), pp. 51-52.

<sup>34</sup> Koselleck (1983) p. 13; Bodeker (2002), pp. 77-79.

<sup>35</sup> The “location” of womanhood throughout body and mind is closely related to the teachings on the four humors and the view of women as “moist” and “cold” that was used to “explain” the alleged intellectual inferiority of women, see for example Laqueur (1990), pp. 25-62 and Wiesner (2000), pp. 30-35. Regarding rank as “located” in the blood (particularly in Northern Europe), see Gaunt (2001), pp. 263 and Asch (2003), p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> This definition of gender has its origin in the considerations by Natalie Zemon Davis (Davis (1976)) and Joan Wallach Scott (Scott (1986)). While Davis’s and Scott’s considerations are much more complex than the relational dimension, this aspect is central and allows the parallels between gender and rank to be established.

Throughout early modern Europe the gender order was derived from and sanctioned by effective syntheses of theology, medicine, law, and ethics.<sup>37</sup> With the exception of the medical component in the prevailing explanations of the gender order, the political order of the estate-based society was legitimized by similar sources. Christianity was *the* fundamental component in the justifications of and prescriptions for status quo. The nature and origins of both the gender order and the political order were integral parts of the Christian doctrines, including the teachings that were promoted by the Protestant reformers.<sup>38</sup> The two inter-related orders were defined by references to the/a(n invented) beginning and as absolute principles of social organization. The consistently misogynist interpretation of the differences between man and woman constituted the basis of the gender order and a series of institutions simultaneously reflected and reinforced it.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, and in spite of the new status ascribed to the clergy in the Protestant territories, the medieval conception of the society of the three estates and the associated religious legitimation of monarchical/princely rule was supplemented by increasing legislative measures that defined the rights and duties of the different estates.<sup>40</sup>

Although the Reformation constituted a partial challenge to the medieval notion of the three estates (see further discussion below) and altered the understanding of marriage, the fundamental principles and justifications of both the gender order and the political order remained largely unchanged.<sup>41</sup> The Christian doctrines sought to eternalize the political status quo,<sup>42</sup> and to naturalize the hierarchical order of the sexes.<sup>43</sup> However, as Heide Wunder has stressed, it is the same negation of change that betrays the importance of gender and its relevancy for the organization of societies.<sup>44</sup> The importance of the political order

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<sup>37</sup> Maclean (1980), pp. 82-92; Wunder (1997a); Wunder (1998a).

<sup>38</sup> Regarding gender, see Wunder (1997b), pp. 32-34; regarding social/political order, see Walther (1990), pp. 155-284, particularly pp. 191-210.

<sup>39</sup> Wunder (1998a) pp. 57-61.

<sup>40</sup> See for example Gamrath and Ladewig Petersen (1980), pp. 380-382; Schwarz Lausten (1987), pp. 129-178; Schilling (1994), pp. 350-358.

<sup>41</sup> Harrington (1995), pp. 274; Schorn-Schütte (1996b); Wunder (1998a); Walther (1990), pp. 200-211. This, however, does not imply that the Reformation did not bring about changes, simply that the hierarchical order defined by gender and rank remained largely unchanged. One of the long-lasting disagreements in Reformation research centers on whether or not the new status of marriage benefited women or if the new teachings on the order of the house and the institutions that were founded to ensure that the moral teachings were enforced subjected women to greater patriarchal control, see the summary and the further references provided in Wiesner (1994), pp. 65-68. For a concise discussion of the effect of the Reformation on women in a Saxon town, see Susan Karant-Nunn's analysis of women in Zwickau (Karant-Nunn (1982)).

<sup>42</sup> This is for example visible in the widespread usage of biblical kings (and queens) as "good examples", see the analysis in chapter 3 for concrete examples.

<sup>43</sup> Wunder (1998a), pp. 57-61.

<sup>44</sup> Wunder (1998a), pp. 57-58; see also Bourdieu (1998/2001), pp. vii-ix.



was more explicit and, during the Reformation era, the nature and extent of secular authority was intensely debated.

The norms that prescribed the appropriate and gender-specific behavior were aimed at entire societies and sought to regulate the patterns of behavior of all members of societies. However, as Renate Dürr has shown, the appropriation of gender-specific norms was shaped by the social position of individuals.<sup>45</sup> Even if Dürr's analysis concentrates on the female servants in urban households, her conclusions show that it is imperative to consider rank and gender simultaneously in a study of early modern Europe. The tension between the emphasis on an invented beginning and constancy in the Christian anthropology and the ways in which the same norms could be modified to correspond with the rank of individual women emphasizes the need to examine both the rank-specific adjustments of gender norms as well as the gendering of ranks and estates. This latter expression "the gendering of ranks and estates" does not imply that certain ranks or estates were male or female gendered, but simply that being a woman was different than being a man in any part of society. In other words, one must examine the interplay between the competing hierarchies that were established by gender and rank. When the focus is on the female consorts, the intersection between the two "orders" instantly reveals a tension between these women's elevated status as integral members of the secular authorities and their inferior status as women.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout this work both gender and rank will be conceptualized as (i) key components of the existing social structures, and (ii) structuring forces that also shape social relations. This conceptualization is inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as:

[A] system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations

...<sup>47</sup>

In other texts, Bourdieu has characterized *habitus* as "cultural unconscious", "set of basic, deeply interiorized master-patterns", and "mental and corporeal schemata of perceptions,

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<sup>45</sup> Dürr (1995); Dürr (1998), pp. 337-347.

<sup>46</sup> This intersection between rank and gender has already been defined as a key point for the understanding of the position of early modern women, see Dürr (1995); Dilcher (1997), pp. 55-72, and with particular focus on princely women: Hartmann (2003), pp. 135-152. However, both Dilcher's and Hartmann's analyses are confined to the normative level.

<sup>47</sup> Bourdieu (1980/1990), pp. 52-65, quote from p. 53. While this is the clearest definition of *habitus* provided by Bourdieu, the term and its underlying argument is employed throughout his works. See David Schwartz's detailed analysis of Bourdieu's usage of the term *habitus* in Schwartz (1997), pp. 95-116.

appreciations, and action". *Habitus* thus includes both the bodily and cognitive basis of action.<sup>48</sup> Although the *habitus* is durable, it is not eternal and not determining; it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to potential modifications resulting from experiences.<sup>49</sup> While the *habitus*, that is, the system of at once "structured and structuring structures", is collectively shared, it is internalized by individuals through upbringing and experience. In Bourdieu's thinking, it thus constitutes the essential linkage between individuals and collectives and is intended as a tool with which the subject-object dualism can be overcome. The individual acquires the *habitus* through its social embeddedness and this "cultural unconscious" constitutes the basis on which the individual develops a practical sense of action or, as Bourdieu has phrased it, a "sense of the game", thereby envisioning the greater social life as a game that includes all individuals.<sup>50</sup> In this respect, the individually performed practices are always related to – but not determined by – the *habitus* and the objective structures inherent in the *habitus* will be reproduced, though always with the possibility of modifications by individual and subjective actions.<sup>51</sup>

When exemplifying the importance of *habitus*, Bourdieu often refers to gender and class and presents the prevailing gender order and social order as two of the most powerful components of *habitus*, that is, of the structures that condition the actions of an individual.<sup>52</sup> Viewing rank and gender as key elements of the *habitus* allows the analysis to focus on the ways in which these factors shape the social action and experience of individuals, but it does not – as the subsequent chapters will reveal – imply that these were the only factors that conditioned the behavior of princely women in early modern Germany. Indeed, as concluded by Heide Wunder, "gender did not have the universal structuring force in [the early modern] estate-based society",<sup>53</sup> and neither did rank. The

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<sup>48</sup> Schwartz (1997), pp. 95-116, here p. 101.

<sup>49</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), p. 133.

<sup>50</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), pp. 120-122.

<sup>51</sup> It is this last argument that has given rise to the most profound critique of Bourdieu's conception of the *habitus* and some of his opponents maintain that he is a "structuralist in denial"; see for example de Jong (2001), who uses the expression "structuralist in denial"; Jenkins (1982); King (2000). Bourdieu's response to his critics' claim concerning the alleged determinism in his thoughts is concisely formulated in Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), pp. 132-137.

<sup>52</sup> While the importance of class and gender is stressed in a number of Bourdieu's works, class is examined most systematically in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Bourdieu (1984)). The crucial impact of gender and gendered socializations is discussed at great length in *Masculine Domination* (Bourdieu (1998/2001)). *Masculine Domination* elicited extensive debate, but the critique centered on Bourdieu's negative assessment of identity politics as the impetus for change rather than on gender as a key constituent of the *habitus*. See Lois McNay (1999), pp. 95-117, for a critical discussion of *Masculine Domination*.

<sup>53</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 204-205.

strength of Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus* lies in its flexibility (or, some may say, its vagueness) that compels the analysis to consider the dialectics between different structuring forces that condition each other, including but not limited to gender and rank. Among the other factors that will be considered are age, familial relationships, and material wealth.

The challenge in this study is to examine when and how either gender or rank appear as the structuring force and when, how, and why one may at times be dominant. As Natalie Zemon Davis phrased it almost thirty years ago, it seeks to explain why gender roles – in this case in relation to rank – sometimes are tightly prescribed and sometimes fluid, sometimes markedly asymmetrical and sometimes more even.<sup>54</sup> In practical terms, the chosen definition of gender and rank means that both factors and their interplay will be central when the position of female consort and the consort's political role is analyzed in relation to individuals, groups, institutions, and ideas. It also implies that both gender and rank will be viewed as relational categories that shaped the specific forms of social relationships lived by princely women, but that the structuring force of either can be expected to have varied from one situation to another.

### Early modern politics

Historians have been remarkably reluctant to articulate what political history is. Faced with the challenge to define the field in a brief encyclopedia entry on political and constitutional history, Rohan McWilliam suggested that political history,

[M]ay be understood as the history of public life and institutions as well as the study of the operation of power at all levels of society. It is particularly concerned with the way in which society acquires structure. [... It ...] includes ... administrative history and has links to diplomatic, legal, and military history, as well as to the study of political thought. ... Political history has often been solidly empirical, lending itself to a narrative form. It ... privileges events and individuals rather than deeper social processes. ...<sup>55</sup>

With the exception of one sentence (that political history includes “the study of the operation of power at all levels of society”), McWilliam defines the field on the basis of the tradition. As appropriate as this is in a brief article in a reference work, the approach leaves political

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<sup>54</sup> Davis (1976), pp. 83-103, here p. 90.

<sup>55</sup> See Rohan McWilliam's article “Political and Constitutional History” in *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* (1999), vol. 2, pp. 941-944. McWilliam's discussion relies heavily upon the controversial writings by Geoffrey R. Elton (see especially Elton (1970) and Elton (1991)) and does not seem to consider Quentin Skinner's systematic challenge of Elton's ideas (see Skinner (2002), pp. 8-26).

history de-historicized. Polemically phrased, it reproduces the nineteenth-century definition of politics that is inherent in a (too) straightforwardly defined "public life".

But what constituted politics in the sixteenth century? Discussing the development of the meanings ascribed to the word "Politik", Dolf Sternberger pointedly stresses that a definition of "the political" is inevitably normative.<sup>56</sup> In this analysis, the difficulties are compounded by the intersection of three different and time-specific understandings of politics: (i) the one implicit in McWilliam's definition, which has its origins in the nineteenth-century nation state; (ii) the meaning ascribed to the word in sixteenth-century Germany; and (iii) the current understanding of politics. In order to explain how politics is defined in this work, it is therefore necessary to consider briefly the historical development of the very term "politics" and how the language of the sources differs from the analytical language that will be employed.

In a funeral sermon composed upon the death of Anna of Saxony (1585), the Saxon superintendent Zacharias Fröschel praised the electress's father, Christian III of Denmark, for the "political order" (*Politische Ordnung*) he had introduced in his kingdom.<sup>57</sup> Fröschel identified this "political order" with reference to the regulations/legislation (*Policey*) issued by the king in an effort to ensure the protection of his subjects against abuse and injustice (*Gewalt* and *Unrecht*). In the passage the expression "political order" is used in keeping with the Christian-Aristotelian tradition, thereby implying a contrast between "the good" political rule and "the bad" despotic rule, and referring to matters within the territory.<sup>58</sup> Fröschel's emphasis on justice (*Gerechtigkeit*) can be understood as a particular Lutheran view of "political order". This, however, should not be taken to imply that Lutheran territories were more just than Catholic principalities; the notion of justice simply had a more prominent presence in the Lutheran teachings on secular authority.<sup>59</sup> Fröschel also implies that the good political order of the territory resulted from intentionally implemented principles, rules, and/or laws. In all of these respects, Fröschel's usage of the term "political" corresponds well to the ways in which the word was generally used in the German-speaking territories of the sixteenth-century.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Sternberger (1981), pp. 465 and 479.

<sup>57</sup> Zacharias Fröschel's funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony, printed as the thirteenth sermon in *Sechs und Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 266.

<sup>58</sup> See.

<sup>59</sup> Sellin (1978), pp. 807-808.

<sup>60</sup> For parallel examples see Volker Sellin's article "Politik" in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (1978), vol. 4, pp. 807-830; Sternberger (1981), pp. 465-473; Franz-Ludwig Knemeyer's article "Polizei" in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon*

However, during Fröschel's lifetime the meanings that were ascribed to the word *politics* gained a new dimension. The added dimension of *politics* had its origins in the writings of Machiavelli and especially in the wider European reception of *The Prince*. According to Machiavelli, *The Prince* was a treaty on the so-called "arte dello stato", not on politics. In simple terms, "arte dello stato" refers to the technique of acquiring and maintaining power and/or authority. However, in the European discussion of Machiavelli's writings, the two terms (politics and "arte dello stato") gradually conflated and the acquisition and preservation of power/authority came to be treated as an integral part of politics.<sup>61</sup> In the German-speaking territories of Europe, this dimension was incorporated very gradually and is not fully discernable until the mid-seventeenth century. But by then, politics could refer to both the Christian-Aristotelian and the Machiavellian tradition, also in the German language.<sup>62</sup>

The current understanding of politics is based on both of these two strands of meaning and both are immediately visible in the nineteenth-century conception of politics. However, the traditional emphasis on the development of the state (constitutional, administrative, and legal history) and its survival against other powers (foreign policy and military history) has been challenged and, as McWilliam rightly states, politics and political history gradually – and in spite of resistance – came to incorporate the study of power at different levels of society. The re-definition (and implicit expansion) of political history is related to various developments within both the political sciences and history, and thereby also to the ways in which the definition of politics has been transformed in the modern/post-modern societies of the Western world. Outlining the meanings of the word politics in the early 1980s, Dolf Sternberger thus argued that although politics generally remains confined to the public sphere, political actions ("politisches Handeln") are not necessarily public actions. But he nevertheless maintained that the Aristotelian dichotomy of public and private spheres (*polis* and *oikos*) has remained intact.<sup>63</sup> While this statement ignores one of the fundamental thoughts of feminism, that "the personal is political",<sup>64</sup> it also suggests a degree of constancy or, at least, linearity of development and most early modern historians would react against

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zur *politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (1978), vol. 4, pp. 875-884; and the contributions to the anthology *Gute Policey als Politik im 16. Jahrhundert* (2003).

<sup>61</sup> Sternberger (1981), pp. 473-475.

<sup>62</sup> Sellin (1978), pp. 822-823.

<sup>63</sup> Sternberger (1981), pp. 477-479.

<sup>64</sup> MacKinnon (1991), particularly pp. 119-120.

this with skepticism – particularly when marriage, family and friendship explicitly are situation in the private, non-political sphere.

Early modern historians have consistently challenged the distinction between a public and private sphere, not least by documenting the political dimensions of the household, of religion, and, naturally, of the gender order.<sup>65</sup> In light of these historiographical developments, it is remarkable that the gendering of politics or the gendered experiences of politics in a more narrow definition of politics has largely remained unexamined. This continued gap can in part be explained by the sustained dominance of a nineteenth-century view of a male-governed, political and public sphere and its implicit counterpart: a secondary and private sphere to which women were confined. While this tradition has contributed to an exaggerated politicization of male affairs and a corresponding de-politicization of female domains and activities,<sup>66</sup> a second explanation that has its roots in gender history and the prevailing views of power in this field of historical scholarship must also be considered before a working definition of politics for this analysis can be proposed.

#### **Gender history, court history, political history: Formal and informal power**

As McWilliam summarized, political history has been shaped by the study of the state and its institutions. Consequently, it has also been dominated by a focus on the institutionalized forms of power that can be identified through the processes of decision-making and/or documented in state papers. On the contrary, gender history has sought to bring attention to informal power and most contributions have therefore conceptualized power very differently. Drawing on Michel Foucault, Joan W. Scott suggested that gender historians view power “as dispersed constellations of unequal relationships”.<sup>67</sup>

The increased focus on “informal” power has proved immensely important for the study of gender and politics in early modern Europe but, when it is employed in the study of

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<sup>65</sup> Regarding the household see for example Roper (1989); van Dülmen (1990); Harrington (1995); Dürr (1995). Regarding religion and religiosity, see Harrington (1995); Wunder, Zöttlein, and Hoffmann (1997). See also Barbara Harris’s insightful discussion of gender and politics in early Tudor England (Harris (1990)).

<sup>66</sup> A striking example of this can be found in Werner Paravicini’s discussion of everyday life at the medieval and early modern courts. In this discussion, he touches briefly on the roles played by women at the courts, but is too quick to define “the political court” as a “Männergesellschaft”. The gender-related questions he identifies are organized prostitution, the role of the *maitresses*, and the cultural patronage of Italian Renaissance princesses. Politics and gender remained two separate and unrelated categories, see Paravicini’s introduction to *Alltag bei Hofe* (Paravicini (1995), pp. 9-30, here pp. 20-21 and 26-27). It should be added, though, that in Paravicini’s later anthology *Das Frauenzimmer* (co-edited with Jan Hirschbiegel, (2000)), the interrelationship between gender and politics is considered at greater length, albeit still without permitting the dominant view of politics as decision-making to be challenged.

<sup>67</sup> Scott (1986), p. 1067. See also Joseph Rouse’s detailed discussion of Foucault’s understanding of power, Rouse (1994), pp. 92-114, particularly, pp. 104-113.

high-ranking women, it can lead to misleading simplifications. In recent studies, the female consort has been compared to both the court favorite and the *maitresse* and attention has been centered on the consorts' access to the ruler and the inherent possibilities for influencing him. Katrin Keller's conclusion that the relationship between sixteenth-century rulers and consorts constituted the focal point of the consorts' power implicitly equates early modern politics with decision-making.<sup>68</sup> The same assumption lies beneath Ute Daniel's comparison between the consort, the favorite, and the *maitresse* at the Hanoverian Baroque Court.<sup>69</sup> Regardless of the numerous merits of the studies by Keller and Daniel, the notion of informal power – introduced as a means with which the political participation of women (among other groups of society) could be rendered visible – confirms the implicitly gendered view of politics as the “matters” that had to pass through the ruling prince and his councilors. The dichotomy of formal and informal power persists even in Barbara Harris's impressive work on aristocratic women in early modern England. Yet, while continuing to employ the terminology, Harris implicitly reveals its limitation when she refers to the “substantial de facto authority” that was exercised by women and to the “regional political roles” these women performed.<sup>70</sup>

One of the few analyses of the consort's position that has circumvented this problem is Peter Wilson's brief comparison of the consort and *maitresse* at the court of Württemberg in the eighteenth century. Wilson sets out to examine “the interplay between the agency of personal character and the structure of Imperial politics”,<sup>71</sup> and shows how Duchess Johanne Elisabeth of Württemberg (1680-1757) responded to her husband's bigamous marriage to Christina Wilhelmina von Grävenitz (1686-1744). The comparison of Eberhard Ludwig's two wives enables Wilson to specify the differences between the consort who held an office *with defined rights and duties* (my emphasis) and the mistress whose power depended exclusively on the duke's personal favor. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Wilson departs from Heide Wunder's extensive research. Already in the early 1990s, she summarized the status of women in early modern Germany in the following words: “That women were by no means excluded from political authority, and were not dependent on

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<sup>68</sup> Keller (2000), p. 280, she uses the term “Angelpunkt”.

<sup>69</sup> Daniel (1997). Leonhard Horowski presents a related argument in his article titled, “Das Erbe des Favoriten. Minister, Mätressen und Günstlinge am Hof Ludwigs XIV” (Horowski (2004), pp. 77-125).

<sup>70</sup> Harris (2002), pp. 5-6 and 205-209.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson (2004), p. 221. See also Sybille Oßwald-Bargende's excellent study of the Countess of Grävenitz and the Württemberg court, Oßwald-Bargende (2000), which also has provided significant inspiration for Wilson.

“informal” power (“women’s power”) in this sphere, is attested by female rulers and regents born to rule, as well as by wives who shared in the authority of the house”.<sup>72</sup>

Rather than distinguishing between formal and informal power, the figurational approach advocated by the “father” of court history Norbert Elias implies a more constructive conception of power. Elias views the power of individuals to be constantly fluctuating and resulting from the position of an individual within a figuration, combined with the concrete instruments of power that an individual had access to as well as the individual’s manipulation of these instruments within the constraints of his/her dependences as inherent in the social figuration.<sup>73</sup> Although Peter Wilson does not make explicit use of Elias’s conception of power, his view of the consort’s office as consisting of *defined rights and duties* highlights the importance of concrete resources of power and, when Wilson shows how the consort attempted to employ her dynastic network in the power struggles within the territory,<sup>74</sup> the territory and dynasty are implicitly viewed as interconnected figurations within which the female consort must be situated. Whereas the consort, as the highest-ranking female member, held and exercised power within the court, her dynastic network enabled her to mobilize various resources that could be employed in the defense of her position in the court and the territory.<sup>75</sup> Pauline Stafford highlighted a similar point in her discussion of the composite sources that constituted a queen’s (female consort’s) power in medieval England. She also addressed the constantly changing power of individuals, but emphasized that, in contrast to most other member of a power elite, the queen had not simply the *ability* but also the *right* to participate in matters pertaining to the rule of a territory.<sup>76</sup>

### **The territory, the dynasty, the court, and the female consort**

If the early modern territories and dynasties can be viewed as configurations that were interconnected by the ruling couples, this has important implications for the ways in which early modern politics should be studied. When the traditional political history (of the state) has excluded considerations of the consorts’ political role, it results not only from the previously discussed distinction between formal and informal power, but also from the related difference between the nineteenth-century conception of the nation state that shaped

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<sup>72</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), p. 202.

<sup>73</sup> Elias (1969/1983) pp. 139-140 and his discussion of power in the essay “Game Models” (Elias (1970/1998), pp. 113-138).

<sup>74</sup> Wilson (2004), pp. 231-234.

<sup>75</sup> It should be added that Oswald-Bargende (2000) makes explicit use of Elias’s approach and that Wilson (2004) in part relies upon Oswald-Bargende’s findings.

<sup>76</sup> Stafford (1997a), pp. 10-13.



the field of (political) history and the early modern reality within which the consorts' political role can be understood.

The sixteenth-century texts generally described the female consort as a *Landesmutter* (or the Latin version *Mater Patriae*).<sup>77</sup> The German expression *Landesmutter* has been in use for more than five centuries. However, because the understanding of "Land" (territory or state) has changed fundamentally during this period, the meaning of the term *Landesmutter* also has been transformed and its meaning can only be articulated in relation to a specific historical context.<sup>78</sup>

Richard Bonney's conception of the European dynastic states can serve as a point of departure for these considerations. Bonney characterizes the European monarchies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as,

[D]ynastic conglomerations acquired through inheritance, either from father to son or from another relative who produced no direct male heir of his own; through marriage alliances; or ... from accidental fortunes of war.<sup>79</sup>

Although they were not monarchies, the German principalities shared the main traits of Bonney's characterization: they were dynastic conglomerations whose preservation and status depended on the presence of an heir, marriage alliances, and inheritance rules.<sup>80</sup> However, while Bonney emphasizes that these dynastic conglomerations essentially were united through one person, Paula Sutter Fichtner's observation that the territorial princes considered their lands to be "collective familial possessions" must also be considered. According to Sutter Fichtner, this sense of ownership is particularly important because the absence of general primogeniture in the Holy Roman Empire meant that the territorial units

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<sup>77</sup> See for example the funeral sermon by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 2; the sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 112; and the sermon by Johann Wintzern, printed as the twelfth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 234.

<sup>78</sup> Drawing upon an impressive range of sources and traditions, Paul Münch has outlined the development of the term *Landesvater* or *pater patriae* in the political theory of the early modern period. Münch's analysis of "Die 'Obrigkeit im Vaterstand'", however, is confined to the ideological developments and gender remains a given implicit, see Münch (1982), pp. 15-40.

<sup>79</sup> Bonney (1991), pp. 524-525. See also the contributions to *Der dynastische Fürstenstaat* ed. by Johannes Kunisch (1982).

<sup>80</sup> The inheritance rules and practices of the ruling dynasties of early modern Europe have been discussed from a range of perspectives in the contributions to *Der dynastische Fürstenstaat* ed. by Johannes Kunisch (1982). The importance of marriage alliances is demonstrated in Sutter Fichtner (1976). These subjects will be discussed at greater length in chapter 4.

were highly unstable. Although a territory could be divided, it usually remained within the same greater dynasty, and territories once divided could be re-joined by later generations.<sup>81</sup>

With the exception of Denmark, where the king was elected by the Council of the Realm and no divisions of the territory were accepted,<sup>82</sup> the two territories that figure most prominently in this analysis (Saxony and the Palatinate) fit into this pattern. In the majority of the ruling houses of the German-speaking lands, partible inheritance remained prevalent until the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>83</sup> The princes enjoyed the right to divide their holdings among all male offsprings – with the exception of those parts defined as imperial fief and the offices connected with them, which were to pass undivided to the eldest son. However, by the sixteenth century the protection of the imperial fiefs was rarely observed and princes demonstratively commingled imperial fiefs and other possessions in order to preserve or extend their liberties and, at least in the Protestant territories, because the principles of partible inheritance were more compatible with the dynastic strategies and confessional convictions of the rulers.<sup>84</sup>

As the land divisions increased in number during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries other strategies directed towards a consolidation of possessions and status developed. One of these was an increasingly narrower definition of lineage, meaning that the family became defined in terms of the male line of descent.<sup>85</sup> Among the princely dynasties a second practice gained increased prevalence, namely the favoring of one son over his brothers through testaments.

The inheritance practices of the princely dynasties are recorded in the testaments (“fatherly dispositions”) and in the so-called *Hausgesetze* or *Hauspolizei* (“rules of the house”) of the respective families.<sup>86</sup> The very titles given to these documents reveal that although attempts were made to consolidate the territorial possessions, the dynasty remained the central collective. In this sense, the early modern dynasties were often more stable political units than the territories and this is significant for the understanding of the

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<sup>81</sup> Sutter Fichtner (1989), pp. 19-23, quote from p. 22.

<sup>82</sup> In the capacity as Duke of Schleswig, the Danish king was – theoretically – his own vassal. As Duke of Holstein, he held a fief in the Holy Roman Empire and was a vassal of the Holy Roman Emperor. Yet in both duchies, the king could (with the approval of the nobility in the duchies) divide the territory between his sons, see Venge (1980), pp. 331-339; Gamrath and Ladewig Petersen (1980), pp. 386-390.

<sup>83</sup> See the contributions to *Der dynastische Fürstenstaat* ed. by Johannes Kunisch (1982); and Sutter Fichtner (1989).

<sup>84</sup> Sutter Fichtner (1989), pp. 7-14 and 61-85.

<sup>85</sup> Hurwich (1993), pp. 699-718, here pp. 699-700; Hansert (1997), pp. 99-116.

<sup>86</sup> Sutter Fichtner (1989), pp. 7-33; and the contributions by Heinz Mohnhaupt, Jürgen Weitzel, Johannes Kunisch, and Winfried Schulze in *Der dynastische Fürstenstaat* ed. by Johannes Kunisch (1982).

consort's position. While she was the highest ranking female member of the collective that was comprised by the territorial possessions of her and her husband, it was in her capacity as a member of two other social and political collectives: her own dynasty and that of her husband, that she was able to hold the position as *Landesmutter*. This meant that the (political) interests of these two collectives (the consort's natal dynasty and the dynasty she married into) had to be negotiated with those of the territory. Hence, in order to develop an adequate definition of early modern politics, dynasties as well as territories must be considered.

In the vast majority of studies of the interrelations between inheritance rules and state-formation processes, the dynasty is conceptualized as a narrow, agnatic succession line of rulers. More recent studies have addressed the limitations of this conception and sought alternative definitions that can help disclose the inner workings of a large family and the families' relations to their territories. In his comprehensive study of the late medieval House of Wettin, Jörg Rogge concludes that by the beginning of the sixteenth century the House of Wettin had developed the characteristics of a "transpersonal institution". He conceptualizes this transpersonal institution (that is, the dynasty) as an association/network of individuals who were tied together by shared norms and legal principles that defined the rights and duties of each member (a *Normengemeinschaft* and a *Rechtsverband*).<sup>87</sup> Because the norms and principles that united the dynasty originated in the past and because its future depended upon heirs, the dynasty encompassed not only the living members of the family but also their ancestors and unborn heirs.<sup>88</sup> While Rogge's definition draws attention to the complex social phenomena of a dynasty as an institutional entity within which the behavior and communication was regulated with a view to safeguarding the interests of the collective rather than those of the individuals, it fails – as he also recognized – to integrate gender as a category of analysis.<sup>89</sup>

A more gender-inclusive definition of the early modern dynasties has been proposed by Heide Wunder. Analyzing the etymologically related terms *Geschlechter* and *Geschlecht* (lineages and gender/genders and lineage), she suggests that the dynasty should be conceptualized as a "network of gendered and related individuals" (*Geschlechterverband*).

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<sup>87</sup> Rogge (2002b), especially his concluding discussion, chapter 10 titled "Die Wettiner als Rechtsverband und Normengemeinschaft", pp. 315-377.

<sup>88</sup> Rogge, (2002b) pp. 364-365.

<sup>89</sup> Rogge (2002b) pp. 350-352. In an almost contemporary essay entitled "Nur verkaufte Töchter", Rogge seeks to compensate for this shortcoming, though without altering the working definition of a dynasty (Rogge (2002a)).

This networks consists of all living relatives, agnates as well as cognates, who collectively share the responsibility for the dynasty's (biological as well as political) reproduction. In this network, the wife of the primogenitor played a particularly important role because, although she was an "outsider", the legitimate biological reproduction (and hence the political reproduction) of the "house" depended on her.<sup>90</sup>

When Wunder refers to the wife of a primogenitor as an outsider, it confirms Rogge's definition of the dynasty as a collective that was joined by shared norms and within which each member held defined rights and duties. In other words, when a new wife arrived she was assigned a position within a new collective. However, if the traditional definition of a dynasty as an agnatic lineage is to be overcome, the woman's new position in her natal dynasty upon her marriage cannot be overlooked. Although she was legally transferred from one dynasty to another, she did not cease to be a daughter, a sister, and an aunt to the members of her natal dynasty. Rather, she became a member of two different "norm communities" which in turn were joined by her, and she ideally had to develop a double dynastic affiliation as well as a sense of responsibility for the territorial possessions of her new dynasty within which she already was or was likely to become the *Landesmutter*.

Although the dynastic interests often prevailed over the measures that were necessary for the continued cohesion of the dynasties' territorial possessions, the two are of course intrinsically linked and any attempt to separate the early modern "state" from the early modern "dynasty" for other than analytical purposes risks to mirror the distinction between public (state) interests and private (dynastic) interests.

A second overlap between the political institutions/units of the early modern society, that is, between the "court" and the "territory", has to be considered before the role of the female consort can be specified. Above, the word "house" has already been employed as a synonym to dynasty and this word reveals some of the intricate connections between the dynasty, the court, and the territory. *Haus* was (together with *Stamm* and *Geschlecht*) the term employed to denote the dynasty in early modern German and, as its counterparts in numerous languages, *Haus* can refer to a dynasty as well as to a dwelling, thereby revealing the close, but also complex, relationship between dynasty, household/court, and territory.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Wunder (2002a), pp. 17-18.

<sup>91</sup> Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995), pp. 1-46; Gaunt (2001), pp. 259-260.

The demarcation of the medieval and early modern court is at best difficult and it has been the subject of numerous discussions.<sup>92</sup> Describing the imperial court of the Holy Roman Empire around 1500, Peter Moraw writes,

It was most clearly defined in terms of personnel: the court was a group whose members were united by close personal ties. It was least well defined in spatial terms, and was never confined to one location. The court's major and important function was to serve as the patriarchal and patrimonial household of the sovereign. Personal service for the sovereign and duty to the state went hand in hand; government and household administration formed a single system.<sup>93</sup>

This description also rings true for the electoral court in Saxony and the royal court in Denmark during the sixteenth century. Even though the rulers of these two territories during the first half of the sixteenth century made considerable investments in what later became the territories' *Residenzstädte*, the increased orientation towards one location developed only gradually.<sup>94</sup> Anna of Saxony never referred to her and her husband's "court". The closest expressions are *Hoflager* or *gewöhnliche/wesentliche Hoflager*, with which she described their residence in Dresden.<sup>95</sup> In the correspondence *Lager* also is used in the expression *Feldlager* (a temporary military camp) and the term *Hoflager* thus underlines how the view of the court as an itinerant institution continued to prevail linguistically in the sixteenth century.<sup>96</sup>

Anna's brother, Frederik II of Denmark spent remarkably little time in Copenhagen although the administration (the chancelleries) already were based there: during the nine years 1571-1579 he spent a total of only four and a half months in Copenhagen, and during

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<sup>92</sup> See for example Asch (1991); Evans (1991); Duindam (2003), particularly his first chapter, pp. 3-46. The anthology *Principes. Dynastien und Höfe im späten Mittelalter* (2002) provides valuable contributions to this discussion, see particularly the contributions by Matthias Müller on architectural structures (Müller (2002)) and Cordula Nolte's article on the margraves of Brandenburg in the fifteenth century (Nolte (2002)). Finally, the contributions by Aloys Winterling (Winterling (2004)) and Rainer A. Müller (Müller (2004), here p. 158) in *Hof und Theorie* (2004) also address the questions.

<sup>93</sup> Moraw (1991), p. 106.

<sup>94</sup> Much too often historians maintain that the ruling dynasties established permanent residences already by 1500, see for example Stievermann (1991), pp. 157-172 (especially pp. 157-158), where he without further discussion or comparisons argues that the rulers of Bavaria, Württemberg, and the Palatinate had permanent residences by 1500. However, as Brigitte Streich has demonstrated, the move towards a permanent residence was gradual and not necessarily linear (Streich (1989)).

<sup>95</sup> The expressions "gewöhnliche hoflager", "wesentlich hoflager", or simply "hoflager" are used in Anna's letters. See for example Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden 10 June 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 56 a; Anna to her grandmother, Catharina of Saxony-Lauenburg, Dresden 9 June 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 32 b – 33 a; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, 1 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 88 a; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg 19 May 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 115 a – b; and Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, 15 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 49 a – b; Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Frauenstein 4 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 161 a. See also Streich (1989), pp. 1-2.

<sup>96</sup> Streich (1989), pp. 1-2; *DIFB*, vol. 12, columns 63-67.

the last nine years of his reign (1580-1588) only two and a half months.<sup>97</sup> The situation in Saxony was slightly different. Between the early 1550s and Anna's death in 1585, she (and August) spent between four and seven months per year in Dresden.<sup>98</sup> Even so, Anna's itineraries are breathtaking and it is rare to find her in Dresden for more than a couple of months at a time. This is to say that although Dresden had become the usual (*gewöhnliche*) seat of the princely household, the difference between usual and permanent cannot be exaggerated.

The unstable location of the court and the ruler and consort's personal presence throughout their territory highlight how difficult it is to distinguish between the local and the central administration of sixteenth-century Saxony. Although the significant administrative reforms, particularly with regard to the administration of the electoral fiefs (*Kammergüter*), which took place in Saxony during the reign of August, can be and has been taken as expressions of increased centralization,<sup>99</sup> the continuance of reforms over the entire course of his reign underlines the fluidity of boundaries between the princely household and the territory at large as well as the ones between the household (as a dwelling) and the (both local and central) administration.

In the early 1990s, Volker Bauer presented a typology of the early modern courts in the Empire. One of the five ideal types he defines is described as the *hausväterliche Hof*, that is, the "housefatherly court". According to Bauer, the "housefatherly courts" had their origin in the sixteenth century and were characterized by a less ritualized everyday life and a lower emphasis on etiquette than "the ceremonial courts".<sup>100</sup> Within the field of court history, these "housefatherly courts" have received much less attention than the "ceremonial courts" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Considerations about court culture instantly evoke references to Versailles, Alcázar, and the Hofburg in Vienna where spectacular forms of representations were staged. However, these elaborate residences constituted the frameworks for a form of court life that was radically different from the everyday life lived by a *Landesmutter* of sixteenth-century Germany or Denmark. As emphasized by Karin Plodeck, the organizational structure of the courts gradually became part of the general etiquette at the German courts during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. In the sixteenth century this

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<sup>97</sup> Jensen (1978), pp. 14-17.

<sup>98</sup> These figures are developed on the basis of the date lines in Anna's letter-books, DrHSA Kop. 356 a and DrHSA Kop. 509-527.

<sup>99</sup> See Keller (2002), pp. 136-138, for a brief summary of the Saxon reforms. In Denmark, Anna's brother Frederik II initiated similar reforms (see Erslev (1879), the standard work that continues to shape the Danish historiography).

<sup>100</sup> Bauer (1993), pp. 66-70.

was not the case. The courts underwent frequent changes in order to accommodate the shifting needs of rulers, dynasties and territories. No defined job descriptions were available for the court servants whose offices depended as much on the individual who was employed as on the title of the office.<sup>101</sup>

The model of government that was associated with the *Hausväterliche* court grew from Lutheran ideals of the proper household regime (*Hausregiment*) as expressed in the widely disseminated house manuals (*Hausväterliteratur*). This genre emphasized modesty and Christian morals as the prime virtues of the *Hausvater* and *Hausmutter* who were expected to act as role models for and protectors of their children/subjects.<sup>102</sup> Because the household is conceptualized throughout the normative house manuals as “*das ganze Haus*” (“the whole house” that comprises the married couple, children as well as a range of employees/servants<sup>103</sup>), this ideal could – with minor modifications – be applied to the “domain states” of the sixteenth century.<sup>104</sup> The analogies between the household government and the government of a territory permeated the political literature in early modern Germany,<sup>105</sup> and the “house” (or household) was employed to invoke an image of the desired order at any level of society.<sup>106</sup> Finally, the complex structure of the Holy Roman Empire meant that the analogy between the princely household and the territory was arguably more appropriate in relation to the German principalities than any other territories in early modern Europe. As imperial fiefs, the territories can indeed be conceived as extended and highly complex, households of the princes within the greater Empire.

When the entire territory is conceptualized as a household and when personal service to the ruler went hand in hand with duties to the “state”, it indicates that the *Landesmutter*’s position within the territory was comparable to the *Hausmutter*’s position in the household. Numerous studies have demonstrated that a mistress of the house could exercise extensive

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<sup>101</sup> Plodeck (1971), pp. 5-6; Arenfeldt (1999), pp. 331-332.

<sup>102</sup> Bauer, (1993), pp. 66-70; Münch (1982); and the recent analysis by Müller (2004).

<sup>103</sup> On the notion of “the whole house”, see especially Otto Brunner’s essay “Das ‘ganze Haus’ und die alteuropäische Ökonomik” in Brunner (1968a), pp. 103-127. Both Claudia Optiz (Optiz (1994)) and Valentin Groebner (Groebner (1995)) have discussed the idea critically. In conjunction with the court/the princely household, the ideas have been discussed in Opitz (1997) and Müller (2004). For more general discussions of the early modern household and the relationships between the individual members, see Ozment (1983); Roper (1989); van Dülmen (1990); Dürr (1995), pp. 54-141.

<sup>104</sup> Müller (2004), pp. 145-163, here particularly pp. 156-157; and Münch (1982). Regarding the domain state, see Erling Ladewig Petersen (Ladewig Petersen (1974/1975)).

<sup>105</sup> Müller (2004), pp. 145-163.

<sup>106</sup> This point is stressed by Jancke (1998).

authority,<sup>107</sup> and the analogy between the house and the territory thus suggests that the female consort held comparable authority throughout the territory.

In light of the nature of the early modern dynastic state, the characteristics of the “housefatherly court” as well as the fluid boundaries between the court and the administration of the territory, it would not be productive to confine an analysis of the consort’s position and its political significance to only one of these units. Recalling McWilliam’s definition of political history as the history of the state and its institutions, the political history (even in its most narrow definition) of early modern Germany must be the history of the ruling dynasties and their territories including the institutions that facilitate the government.

The new territorial churches in the Protestant territories were institutions of prime importance for the inner-territorial developments of the principalities and must be considered in relation to a political history of the sixteenth century. In the words of Heinz Schilling, “The interpenetration of religion and society made the formation of confessional churches a political and social fact”.<sup>108</sup> The church and its teachings served as a crucial ideological impetus for the legislation of the sixteenth century and as an important institution with which the new confession-specific regulations could be communicated and administered throughout the territory. In this respect, the new alliance between church and state benefited both parts in the short term, though mostly the state in the longer term.<sup>109</sup>

However, as the Protestant princes became heads of the new territorially defined churches, the position of both rulers and consorts was altered. Luise Schorn-Schütte has argued that the wife of a Protestant pastor should be viewed as a church servant (*Kirchendienerin*) and a “Mother of the Church” (*Kirchenmutter*).<sup>110</sup> However, it may be more accurate to characterize the wives of the pastors as “mothers of the parishes” and limit the role as a “mother of the church” to the female consort. By way of her husbands’ status, a female consort was – as the wives of the pastors<sup>111</sup> – expected to show a special commitment both to the church as an institution and its teachings and, as demonstrated by both Jill Bepler

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<sup>107</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 63-84, 94-97, and 191-193, provides a concise overview of the authority of the *Hausmüttern* of different social groups.

<sup>108</sup> Schilling (1995a), p. 655.

<sup>109</sup> Schilling (1995a), pp. 655 and 656-659. See also the influential contributions to the confessionalization debate: Reinhard (1977); Schilling (1988); the comprehensive review article by Thomas Kaufmann, Kaufmann (1996); Kaufmann’s introduction to the volume *Interkonfessionalität – Transkonfessionalität – binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität* (2003); and finally, the ongoing debates on *H-german, confessionalization*: [http://www.h-net.org/~german/discuss/Confessionalization/Confess\\_index.htm](http://www.h-net.org/~german/discuss/Confessionalization/Confess_index.htm)

<sup>110</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1991), p. 153; Schorn-Schütte (1996a), pp. 288-330.

<sup>111</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1991), pp. 132 and 146-149, quote from pp. 148-149.



and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, the public display of fear of God was one of the consort's foremost duties.<sup>112</sup> Consequently, confession was of crucial importance when princely marriages were arranged and, during the second half of the sixteenth century, bi-confessional marriages between Protestants and Catholics were highly unusual.<sup>113</sup> Given the wide-ranging and political implications of the reorganization of the church within the Protestant territories, these aspects of the consort's office must of course be included in an analysis of her political role.

Consequently, an analysis of the political role of the consort needs to consider both the dynasty and the territory, including the church. If the consort's position is examined in relation to only one of these collectives, the analysis risks missing the crucially important dynamics – and tensions – that existed between them. It must be examined how and when a female consort could employ the resources she held by way of her dynastic affiliations in her position as *Landes-*, and *Kirchenmutter* and vice-versa. Even if the early modern territories, dynasties, and the new churches were changing institutions (and thus difficult to define both conceptually and empirically) and intrinsically joined, it is necessary to distinguish analytically between the three. Nevertheless, the adjective “dynastic” that will be used throughout the analysis also denotes “political”. Likewise, the confessional developments will be considered political developments, though the specific political dimensions of both dynastic and confessional questions will of course be specified in the analysis.

### **Luther's conception of three domains of life as an analytical tool**

When the legitimation of the political order of the early modern society was discussed above, a brief reference was made to the partial challenge Luther's teachings represented to the conception of the estate-based society. Although the abolition of the clergy as a separate estate with political representation was the only change that became manifest in the political order of the Protestant societies, Luther's ideas of the three domains of life: *ecclesia* (the church), *politia* (the commonwealth), and *oeconomia* (the household), challenged the Christian-Aristotelian idea of the functionally defined estates (*Stände*) as the

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<sup>112</sup> Bepler (2002a); Bepler (2002b); Watanabe-O'Kelly (2004), p. 252.

<sup>113</sup> Schilling (1995a), p. 668, writes “the European noble houses ... retained their ties across confessional lines”. While the seventeenth century shows several examples of bi-confessional marriages within the ruling dynasties, this is not the case during the second half of the sixteenth century. The importance of confession in princely marriages is discussed in chapters 4 and 9.

pillars of society.<sup>114</sup> Whereas the Christian-Aristotelian tradition considered the three estates to be clearly separate, Luther argued that, in accordance with God's will, every human being has a place in all of the three domains of life.<sup>115</sup> In her discussion of the Lutheran conception of society, Luise Schorn-Schütte stressed that the two sets of ideas (the Christian-Aristotelian idea of the estate-based society and the Lutheran conception of the three domains of life) co-existed as competing models with which the social order could be interpreted during the sixteenth-century. However, in their capacity as interpretative models, the same ideas contributed to the shaping of the reality within which they were construed, and Schorn-Schütte urges historians to take this dimension into account.<sup>116</sup> This is what will be attempted here, when a modified version of Luther's understanding of the three domains of life are used as a frame with which the analysis is structured. First, however, a brief introduction to Luther's social teachings is pertinent.

The first question that requires clarification relates to defining a "domain of life" denotes? Focusing on Luther's insistence that all individuals belong to all three domains, Thomas Brady proposes that the domains of life should to be viewed as different "modes of social relationships",<sup>117</sup> and Mark Edwards has argued that the domains also represented different modes of authority.<sup>118</sup> When Edwards argues that the orders represent unlike modes of authority, he is referring to the difference between the *ecclesia* on the one side and the two "secular domains" (*politia* and *oeconomia*) on the other. One of the characteristic traits of the Lutheran understanding of the domains of life is the previously mentioned analogy established between the *oeconomia* and *politia*, particularly with regard to patriarchal authority (as implicit in the comparison between the *Haus-* and *Landesvater*). In spite of the attempts to connect the three patriarchal figures *Gottesvater*, *Landesvater*, and *Hausvater*, the authority within the Church remained distinct from the two secular domains.<sup>119</sup> The relationship between the *ecclesia* and the two other domains of life was complicated by Luther's teachings on the Two Kingdoms that at once competed with and

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<sup>114</sup> Although some historians refer to the Luther's "three domains of life" (*Lebensbereiche*) as "estates" (*Stände*), I consciously refrain from this usage. The terminology "three domains of life" are here used consistently to avoid confusion with the Christian-Aristotelian inspired conception of the functionally defined estates. For a discussion of Luther's the choice of words, see Schwarz (1984), pp. 78-79; Maurer (1970), pp. 1-9; Elton (1985), pp. 217-218; Edwards (1985), p. 221.

<sup>115</sup> "... jeder Mensch ist nach Gottes Willen in die drei Lebensbereiche der *ecclesia*, *oeconomia* und *politia* ... eingewiesen ...", Schwarz (1984), pp. 78-79

<sup>116</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1998), particularly pp. 457-460.

<sup>117</sup> Brady (1985), p. 203.

<sup>118</sup> Edwards (1985), p. 221.

<sup>119</sup> See for example Brady (1985), pp. 205-207; Harrington (1995), pp. 38-47.

supplemented his teachings on the three domains of life.<sup>120</sup> Explaining the difference between the *ecclesia* and the other two domains of life, Brady quotes Luther's description of the church as, at once, a spiritual and a temporal entity: the first is defined as the eternal, spiritual Christianity and the latter as an earthly, outward Christianity. While Christ is the sole authority in the spiritual church, the rule over the temporal church remained ambiguous and left the relationship between the *ecclesia* and the other two estates "disputed and indeterminate".<sup>121</sup> The authority over the temporary church therefore became the subject of far-reaching disputes<sup>122</sup>. However, in both Saxony and Denmark, the prince was granted extensive authority over the new territorial church,<sup>123</sup> and theologians often presented the female consort as *Landesmutter*, *Kirchenmutter*, and *Hausmutter*, thereby extending the social analogy between the household and the territory to the church.<sup>124</sup>

The simultaneous presence of all individuals in all three domains highlights the mutual integration of the three and, as stressed by Wilhelm Maurer, although the domains cannot be separated from each other, but they must be distinguished.<sup>125</sup> This emphasis on the incorporation and dependencies between the three domains constitutes the main divergence from the Christian-Aristotelian idea of the functionally defined estates.

The "model" of the three domains of life offers several advantages to a study of the female consort and the political role(s) she played in sixteenth-century Germany. First of all its inherent focus on social relationships and modes of relationships diverts attention from the female consort "as such" and forces attention to be paid to the relations that defined her position. This highlights the inherent relational nature of both rank and gender as discussed above and it also echoes a key element in Pierre Bourdieu's so-called "relational thinking". As relational phenomena, rank and gender cannot be reduced to properties that are attached to individuals, but gain significance only within social relations.<sup>126</sup> This emphasis on relationality fits well not only with the categories of gender

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<sup>120</sup> Brady (1985), the very title of Brady's essay "Luther and Society. Two Kingdoms or Three Estates?" reveals this tension, see also his discussion, pp. 205-207 for his discussion of the *ecclesia*. See also Sommer (1999).

<sup>121</sup> Brady (1985), p. 206; Sommer (1999), pp. 35-43.

<sup>122</sup> Sommer (1999), here especially pp. 35-43

<sup>123</sup> Skarsuane (1991); Keen (1991)

<sup>124</sup> See the analysis in chapter 3.

<sup>125</sup> Maurer (1970), p. 119.

<sup>126</sup> See the discussion of gender and rank earlier in this chapter and David Schwartz' discussion of Bourdieu's idea of a "relational method" in Schwartz (1997), pp. 61-64; Loïc Wacquant's discussion "The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology", in Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), pp. 2-59, here pp. 15-19; and Bourdieu's own formulation in Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), pp. 224-235.

and rank, but also with the letters that are employed as sources in this analysis. As will be elaborated in chapter 2, the letters reflect social interaction and social relationships.

Secondly, the insistence on the simultaneity of multiple social relationships that is implicit in the Lutheran conception of the three domains of life and each individual's belonging within the three domains corresponds to the multiplicity of roles within which the female consort always found herself: some defined by her dynastic relations, and some that resulted from her position within the territory at large or particular institutions within the territory (the church and/or the narrowly defined household). The simultaneity of roles points toward the continual negotiations an individual must conduct between the different social roles he or she assumes. These negotiations, as well as Luther's insistence on the mutual integration of the three domains, suggest that resources from one domain (the individual's relative position within a domain) can be transferred to other domains and thus have implications for the position that he or she could take/be ascribed. Again a parallel to Bourdieu's analytical concepts can be drawn. Next to the commonly used term "field", which Bourdieu applies to various sections of society that can be defined by the different forms of (symbolic) capital that are desired and hence contested in a society, he defines "the field of power" that has the status of a meta-field. Any individual's position within this meta-field will depend upon his or her relative position within other fields.<sup>127</sup> Hence, if the three domains of life (the household, the commonwealth, and the church) are viewed as fields, the position of the female consort within the early modern society at large would depend upon her relative position within each of the three domains of life.

However, if the Lutheran conception the three domains of life were to be applied consistently in the analysis, it would imply that the female consort had to be situated within each of the three domains: the house, the church, and the commonwealth. Thomas Brady hinted at this approach when, in very concrete terms, he explained that the Lutheran idea of the three domains of life implied that, "[a] female child may become a maid in service, wife to a husband, mother to children, mistress to her household, though not, I think, councilor or pastor".<sup>128</sup> In this passage, Brady discretely touched upon tension between the early modern gender order and the social order. According to his conclusion, a woman could hold a range of positions within the household, but she could only be a "common" member of the church and the commonwealth. This clearly was not the case for the female consort

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<sup>127</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), pp. 16-18 and 113-115; Schwartz (1997), pp. 136-140.

<sup>128</sup> Brady (1985), pp. 203-204.

and the example thereby suggests that this conception of the early modern society is particularly well suited to examine the relative structuring force of gender and rank.

However, as discussed in the first part of this chapter, the primary collectives within which the consort's position gains political significance were the dynasty and the territory, and the princely household cannot be separated fully from the wider territory. While the dynasty and the territory can be viewed as representing different modes of relationships, they do not correspond to the three domains of life as defined by Luther. In order to retain the focus on the consort's political role in the early modern dynastic state, the analysis therefore demands that subtle modifications of Luther's demarcation of the three domains be made.

### **Structure of the analysis**

Having outlined the working definitions of gender, rank, and politics for this analysis, the last part of this chapter will outline the structure of the work and explain how the different chapters are related.

The goal is to examine the ways in which the position of princely women was at once shaped by gender- and rank-specific norms and to specify the political significance the women and the people in their surroundings acknowledged this position to have. The women's views of their office will be approached through their thoughts and everyday practices as reflected in the thousands of letters sent to or by the Saxon electress. However, the letters do not imply easy or direct access to personal views. First of all, the letters rarely contain explicit reflections concerning the consorts' position. Secondly, because early modern letters generally were written to comply with detailed rhetorical prescriptions, the letters reflect conventions as much as subjectivity (see chapter 2). In order to distinguish between the two dimensions, it is therefore necessary to examine the women's management and views of their office in relation to the ways in which it was defined in the Protestant political theology of the sixteenth century. Hence, after an extensive discussion of the letters, the context within which they were produced, and the ways in which they will be employed in the analysis (chapter 2), a selection of normative texts will be examined in order to present "the ideal consort" of a sixteenth-century Protestant territory (chapter 3).

The texts examined in chapter 3 were all composed by theologians and implicitly define the consort's position in relation to the gender order and the political order. This material reveals how the ideological authorities sought to reconcile the tension between the

two competing hierarchies that shaped the consort's position. The analysis of the normative sources facilitates an awareness of the prevailing expectations of a consort and serves as a basis for examining the women's own views and actions in the subsequent chapters. Outlining some of the questions that can successfully be approached through a study of the everyday life at the court, Werner Paravicini has highlighted the importance of examining the divide between norms and lived reality.<sup>129</sup> Although the focus here is on the princely women (*not* on the court), the relationship between norms and reality is central to this analysis, not simply because it is of interest to examine the relationship between prescriptions and lived life, but because it can help disclose how the views and experiences of early modern politics were gendered.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the consort's position within the *house*. However, as discussed above, *house* meant both household and dynasty, and although this ambiguity cannot be found in Luther's term *oeconomia*, the focus of these two chapters is on the consort's position within and between two dynasties (chapter 4) and on her duty to deliver an heir (chapter 5). However, as all individuals had a place within the early modern household, they also belonged to a group of relatives. This modification of Luther's teachings on the three domains of life thus retains the two important aspects of simultaneity and relationality as discussed above.

In chapters 6 and 7, the consort's position within the *politia* is addressed. In chapter 6, the political significance of the consort's medical care for the Saxon population is examined and, in chapter 7, her role as legal and financial intercessor is subject to analysis. Although the focus of these two chapters is on the territory (that is, Saxony), the complex structure of the Holy Roman Empire and the extensive overlaps between the territory and the household prohibits a direct equation of *politia* to the principality. In some cases it is necessary to consider the greater Empire and, in others, the territory clearly appears as the greater household of the prince. Hence, as the normative texts, these chapters will also draw analogies between the *politia* and the *oeconomia*. Aside from the fact that the household and the territory were difficult to distinguish, a more pragmatic factor contributes to the decision to not examine the consort's position within the narrowly defined household in a separate section. The letters that serve as the principal source material were produced as a result of distance. Consequently, it is rare to find letters that were exchanged between the electress

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<sup>129</sup> Paravicini (1995), pp. 9-30, here p. 30.

and the people in her immediate vicinity. In the daily management of the household, verbal communication prevailed and the exchanges escape the sources explored here.<sup>130</sup>

Finally, chapters 8 and 9 are devoted to the consort's relationship to the church. In chapter 8 her role as *Kirchenmutter*, that is, her relationship to the Saxon church (the temporal church) is examined. Chapter 9 focuses on the consort's personal beliefs (that is, her relationship to the spiritual church as defined above) and the analysis discloses the significant political dimensions of the consort's personal beliefs.

Naturally, the analyses of the consort's position within each of the three domains (the dynasty, the territory/house, and the church) as well as in relation to the two different dimensions of the church cannot be as rigorously divided as this brief overview may suggest. In contrast, the consort's position was also shaped by the overlaps and intricate connections between the different domains and, in the conclusion, the women's ability to transfer resources and/or power from one domain to the others will be discussed.

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<sup>130</sup> Important insights into the electress's role as mistress of the house will doubtlessly be generated by Heide Inhetveen and Ursula Schlude's ongoing research project on Anna of Saxony as an agricultural pioneer. See the outline of their research in Schlude and Inhetveen (2003-2004), pp. 423-429.





## Chapter 2

### The Correspondence of Anna of Saxony

The main body of sources that will be used in this analysis is composed of Anna, Electress of Saxony's vast correspondence that has been preserved in the *Sächsische Hauptstaatsarchiv* in Dresden. In 1865 Karl von Weber, the director of the Dresden archives, estimated that more than 11,000 letters written by Anna and well over 22,000 letter addressed to her had survived in the Saxon archives. More recently, Katrin Keller reduced these estimates to a total of 16,000 letters: 8,000 outgoing letters and approximately the same number of incoming letters addressed to Anna.<sup>131</sup> While this appears to be a more accurate assessment, the electress's correspondence is extensive. In this analysis, the vast material in Saxony will be supplemented with the much smaller collection of letters (approximately 240 letters sent by Anna) that has been preserved in Copenhagen.

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of this vast correspondence, which is a monumental historical source that offers unique insights into the gendered experience of the dynastic-state in early modern Germany. After a brief introduction to the transmission of the letters, a quantitative overview of the correspondence and its composition according to gender and rank is presented. Subsequently, a typology of the different letters is presented, and the various forms of social relationships that are reflected in the correspondence are addressed in relation to the typology. The chapter also addresses the problems that emerge when the letters are employed as sources to the experiences and reflections of the princely women. In order to clarify what the letters can reveal about the consort's perception of politics and the political dimensions of her role, one must consider how a letter was prepared, what purpose it served, the particular circumstances under which it was brought to its addressee, and the significance of the highly formalized language that characterizes the letters.

#### The preserved correspondence

The vast majority of the letters that were sent by Anna are only preserved as drafts. However, thousands of draft letters are bound in nineteen folio volumes, usually referred to as *Kopialbücher* (hereafter called letter-books), containing an average of approximately

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<sup>131</sup> Keller (2004), p. 212.

220 pages of letters that were sent “in the name of the Electress of Saxony”.<sup>132</sup> Each letter-book is chronologically ordered but, from the mid-1570s to Anna’s death in 1585, two letter-books run parallel at any given time. The parallel letter-books have identical titles and no systematic differences in their content can be detected.<sup>133</sup> In addition to these nineteen letter-books, four other folio volumes related to the agricultural production at selected electoral estates contain numerous letters to and from the electress,<sup>134</sup> and the drafts for approximately 120 letters sent by Anna during the years 1569-1570 are bound in one of August’s letter-books.<sup>135</sup> One can also find letters that were prepared/sent by Anna amongst the correspondence received by her mother-in-law,<sup>136</sup> her son Christian, and her daughter-in-law Sophie.<sup>137</sup> Finally, some of the topically organized files in the Saxon archives contain letters to and from the electress.<sup>138</sup>

The letters that were sent to Anna are bound in 70 volumes of 250-300 pages each, catalogued as *Handschriften*. These volumes contain both letters that were penned by professional scribes and letters that were handwritten by their senders. Between one-quarter and one-third of the letters were autographed; however, because some of the electress’s correspondents almost always sent autograph letters and others never did, these figures may be misleading and the significance of autographing letter must be assessed in each individual case (this will be discussed further in the second half of this chapter).

The majority of the received letters are organized according to senders or to territories of senders. A smaller part is collected in volumes of “princely letters”, “noble letters” or a combination of letters by commoners and nobles. In each volume the letters are bound in a rough chronological order. The letters received from married couples are usually bound together. Hence, the letters Anna’s daughter Elisabeth sent to her mother are collected in two volumes titled “Count Palatine Johann Casimir’s Letters to the Electress of Saxony, my Gracious Lady, from Anno 1569-1575” and “Letters from Count Palatine

<sup>132</sup> “... der Churfürstin zu Sachsen Namen”, see DrHSA Kop. 509-527.

<sup>133</sup> DrHSA, Kop. 518-519, Kop. 520-521, and 522-523, which overlap in pairs as listed here.

<sup>134</sup> DrHSA Kop. 356 b – e.

<sup>135</sup> DrHSA Kop. 356 a, fol. 418 a – 479 a (original page no. 1 a – 60 a)

<sup>136</sup> These are preserved in DrHSA Loc. 8498/6.

<sup>137</sup> The letters sent to Christian and Sophie can be found in DrHSA Loc. 8539/8.

<sup>138</sup> See for example DrHSA Loc. 8679/9 “Der Churfürstin Annen Hoff- und Haushaltungs-sachen bel. ao. 1578”; DrHSA Loc. 9970/26 “Prinzeßin Elisabeth, Pfaltzgraff Johan Casimirs Tochter Absterben bel. 1580 item b. dessen todtgebohren Tochter 1585 item dessen todtgebohrnen Kindts 1584”; DrHSA Loc. 9976/4 “Schriften betreffende die Verenderung der Religion in der Pfaltz, so durch Pfaltzgraff Johann Casimirn fůrgenommen worden. Anno 1584-1585”; and DrHSA Loc. 9977/30 “Heiratss-Handlung zwůschenn Pfaltzgrauen Johan Casimirn ze Vnd Fralein Elisabeth geborne Hertzogin zu Saxen ze belangende. a. d. J. 1568-1570”.

Johann Casimir's and his Princely Gracious Wife's Letters to the Electress of Saxony 1574-1585".<sup>139</sup> The first volume contains 181 letters, but less than half were sent from Elisabeth to Anna. In addition to Elisabeth and Anna, nine other correspondents can be identified as senders and/or recipients of the letters, the most frequent contributors being Johann Casimir and Elisabeth; Elisabeth's parents, Anna and August; Johann Casimir's father, Friedrich III and his second wife Amalie.<sup>140</sup> While the title of this volume provides a somewhat limited impression of its actual content, it does indicate that the letters were bound in this particular order while Anna was still alive. The person who wrote the title referred to Anna as "my gracious Lady", a phrase that recurs in her letter-books.<sup>141</sup> The writer was clearly a secretary working in direct contact with Anna. Although the second volume does not appear to have been bound while Anna was alive,<sup>142</sup> the original order of the letters appears to have survived and this is significant. The occasional presence of drafts for letters from Anna to Elisabeth or Johann Casimir in both volumes suggests that the order of the two volumes resulted from the daily practices that developed around the routines of receiving and writing/dictating letters. On 7 January 1572 Anna thus dictated a reply to the letter she had received from Johann Casimir a few days earlier and on 25 October 1577 she prepared a reply to the letter Elisabeth had sent her at the beginning of the month. The drafts for these letters are bound together with the received letters.<sup>143</sup> Had a professional secretary or archivist been at work, the replies are likely to have been transferred and bound as part of the letter-books.

The titles of the two volumes of received letters point to the common practice of binding the letters from a married couple together. Generally, the titles refer only or mainly to the husband – sometimes with the added phrase "... and his Gracious Wife".<sup>144</sup> Although

<sup>139</sup> DrHSA Loc. 8532/4 "Pfaltzgraffen Johann Casimir Schreiben an die Churfürstin zu Sachsen meine gnädigste Frau, von Anno 1569-75"; and DrHSA Loc. 8535/2 "Pfalzgraf Johann Casimirs und S. Fl. Gndl. Gemahls Schreiben an die Churfürstin zu Sachsen 1574-1585",

<sup>140</sup> DrHSA Loc. 8532/4 and the analysis in Arenfeldt (2004).

<sup>141</sup> "... meine gnädigste Frau ...", see DrHSA Loc. 8532/4. For examples in Anna's letter books, see DrHSA, Kop. 356 a, fol. 450 (original pagination, fol. 32), and DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 3 a.

<sup>142</sup> The last letter was received in Dresden on 14 September 1585, that is less than three weeks before she died (see Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 29 Aug. 1585, received Dresden 14 Sep. 1585, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 269 a), and the title does not present her as "my gracious Lady".

<sup>143</sup> Johann Casimir, Count Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 26 Dec. 1571, and Anna to Johann Casimir, Dresden 7 Jan. 1572, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 141 c – 141 d. Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, without date (early Oct. 1577), p. 125 a – b; and Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 25 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 126 a – 128 a.

<sup>144</sup> "... und seiner gnädigste[n] Frau". The practice is reflected throughout the "Handschriften", see for example, DrHSA Loc. 8510/5, "Schreiben so an Churfürst Augusten zu Sachsen und Sr. Fürstl. Gnd. Gemahl Herr Wilhelm, Prinz zu Uranien und Sr. Fürstl. Gndl. Gemahl Frau Anna, gebohr. Herzogin zu Sachsen ...

a fairly successful effort was made to keep Anna's correspondence separate from her husband's, this practice at times spilled into the cataloguing of the incoming letters. Several letters to or from August are included in the two volumes labeled as letters to Anna.<sup>145</sup> During the mid-1550s, the overlaps between the couple's archive can even be found in the letter-books.<sup>146</sup>

The material preserved in Saxony covers period between 1554 and Anna's death in 1585. The earliest of the received letters is dated 1554,<sup>147</sup> and the earliest draft for an outgoing letter is from 1556.<sup>148</sup> However, the large the majority of letters were received or sent during the period 1560-1585. It is regrettable that this material leaves the first years of Anna's life in Saxony undocumented. Several factors are likely to have contributed to this pattern of preservation. Between January 1549 and the summer of 1553 Anna and August had their residence in Weissenfels.<sup>149</sup> In July 1553, August inherited the Electoral dignity from his brother Moritz and became ruler of the entire Albertine territories of Saxony, upon which Anna and August's main residence was transferred from Weissenfels to Dresden.<sup>150</sup> Hence, the correspondence that is preserved in Dresden begins only after Anna had become electress, and the density of the transmitted material increases gradually during the latter half of the 1550s. A similar growth can be observed in August's "personal" letter-books and in the outgoing correspondence catalogued according to specific domains of the Saxon territorial administration during the late 1550s.<sup>151</sup> In 1556 a new *Kanzleiordnung*, stipulating the administrative organization of the chancellery and the territory, was implemented in Saxony and it is doubtlessly due to the practices prescribed in this that the

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1562-1570", and DrHSA Loc. 8536/4 "Braunschweig, Herzog Julien und S. Fürstl. Gndl. Gemahlin Schreiben an die Churfürstin zu Sachsen ao: 1576-1585".

<sup>145</sup> See for example DrHSA Loc. 8535/2 which, according to its title, contains letters from Elisabeth and Johann Casimir of the Palatinate to Anna. However, letters from Elisabeth to August can be found on pp. 51, 95, 122, 251, 254. One letter from Elisabeth to Anna (dated Gernersheim 31 Oct. 1570) is bound with Johann Casimir and Elisabeth's letters to August in DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 38 a.

<sup>146</sup> See for example the following letter from August that are bound in Anna's letter-book, DrHSA Kop. 509. August to Hans (the Elder) of Schleswig-Holstein-Hadersleben, Dresden 4 Oct. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509. fol. 6 a; August to Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark, Lochau 17 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 18 a - b; and August to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 19 April 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 39 b - 40 a.

<sup>147</sup> The earliest of the preserved letters received by Anna seems to be an autograph letter from Elisabeth, Countess of Henneberg ("Elisabeth of Braunschweig-Calenberg"), dated "Mitwoch nach Judika" (14 March) 1554, see DrHSA Loc. 8528/1, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden 13 April 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 1-2.

<sup>149</sup> August informed his father-in-law that he and Anna now had moved to Weissenfels in order to set up their household there, August to Christian III of Denmark, Weissenfels 24 Jan. 1549, RA, TKUA pk. 40-3

<sup>150</sup> Between 1554 and 1559 Anna spent most of her time in Dresden (between seven and ten months of each year), see the datelines in DrHSA, Kop. 509.

<sup>151</sup> See the development of letter-book as it appears in the 1951 Register (*Findbuch*) to the letter-books (Kopiale I. 2) in DrHSA, particularly Kop. 192-501.

preserved material increased so considerably during the late 1550s and early 1560s.<sup>152</sup> However, from the mid-1560s, Anna (and/or her secretaries) maintained a meticulous order of her correspondence.<sup>153</sup>

The correlation between the *Kanzleiordnung* and the preservation of Anna's correspondence as well as the parallel development of her and August's correspondence underline the previously discussed difficulties associated with a separation of the court as household and as administrative institution (chapter 1). It also suggests that the correspondence and particularly its preservation is a direct function of Anna's rank as electress and her position as a female consort. August is renowned for his administrative reforms of Saxony and it seems reasonable to view the exceptional preservation and order of Anna's correspondence as a result of his or, perhaps rather, the electoral couple's efforts to improve the government of the territory. The numerous overlaps and intersections between Anna's and August's archives illustrate well Heide Wunder's observations that life and work in the early modern society was family-based. As the many other "office-holding couples", ruling couples collaborated and many of their responsibilities were shared between them.<sup>154</sup> As Charles Noel rightly states in his recent article on the female consorts in early modern Spain, governing a territory was a "family business".<sup>155</sup>

The preserved drafts for Anna's outgoing letters were all penned by secretaries and most of the letter-books have reliable indexes that also were compiled by electress's secretaries. In the Saxon archive only three short notes from Anna's hand survive. All three are undated, addressed to August and catalogued in his correspondence.<sup>156</sup> In contrast, the incoming letters (*Handschriften*) contain both letters penned by secretaries and numerous letters that were penned by the senders themselves. The tables of contents were added to these volumes in the nineteenth century.<sup>157</sup>

Whereas both paper and ink in Anna's letter-books are of relatively consistent quality, one can find great variations among the letters she received. The ink varies from a pit black to shades of light brown, variations that only partly can be explained by fading

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<sup>152</sup> Keller (2002), pp. 133-136

<sup>153</sup> DrHSA Kop. 515 differs from the remainder: it carries the title "Allerley gemeine concepta in der Churfürstin namen, 1569-1580", does not have an index, and the content is very mixed.

<sup>154</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 63-84 and 98-100; Wunder (1997b), pp. 34-35; Bepler (2002a), pp. 138-141.

<sup>155</sup> Noel (2004), p. 155.

<sup>156</sup> DrHSA Loc. 8520/3, pp. 8 a, 9 a, and 10 a.

<sup>157</sup> The handwriting of the later indexes resembles Karl von Weber's hand, the author of the first biography of Anna (von Weber (1865)). His hand is identified on DrHSA "Extracte auf Quartblätter, Abtheil: XVI. No. 1133b, Personalia der Regenten etc. von Churf. August an," III a.

and also must be attributed to the varying qualities that were available and to individual preferences. The majority of letters are written on folio sheets of heavy paper, though the quality of the paper varies as much as the ink. When the folio sheets were used for letters, they were usually folded once thereby defining four pages.<sup>158</sup> Very few letters exceed four pages and most are limited to between one-half and two pages. However, as the handwriting varies and the expressiveness of language escapes quantification, these figures give only a poor indication of the material. Needless to say, the importance of an individual letter is entirely dependent upon the purpose for which it is used as a source.

In the letters Anna received, a generous left margin is usually left empty. In her letter books the left margin is even larger and has often been used for corrections and/or additions to the main text. Whereas the letters Anna received rarely contain corrections, the numerous corrections and additions to the drafts in the electress's letter-books allow the current reader an impression of the process of preparing a letter and, at times, the corrections may indicate that a particular subject or passage had to be addressed with particular care and precision.

A second remarkable quality of the preserved correspondence of the Saxon electress is that it often, though not always, gives the historian the ability to examine the reaction and response to particular letters. Discussing the implications of communication via letters in early modern Italy, Xenia von Tippelskirch stresses that a letter gains meaning from two different processes: its preparation and its reception.<sup>159</sup> Consequently, when the letters are employed as sources, they must be examined in relation to both processes. In other words, it must be considered if the letter was received as it was intended and if it fulfilled its purpose. While it is always dubious to ascribe intentions to a text, the reply to a given letter reveals how this was read by its intended recipient and, in this respect, the extant correspondence provides a foundation with which the communicative functions of the letters – including both successes and failures – can be examined.

In spite of the impressive volume of the electress's correspondence that has been preserved in Dresden, this body of sources suffers from two significant shortcomings: the lack of material from Anna's early years in Saxony, and the scarcity of autograph letters that may reveal if and how the letters that were penned by secretaries differ from the autograph letters she sent. However, both of these problems can be remedied by the much

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<sup>158</sup> This corresponds closely to what Steinhausen (1889), p. 137 described as the norm.

<sup>159</sup> Von Tippelskirch (2004), p. 74. A similar point is made, though less explicitly, in Steedman (1999), pp. 111-133.

more sparse material that is preserved in *Rigsarkivet* (The State Archives) in Copenhagen. Approximately 240 letters from Anna to her parents and to her eldest brother and his wife, dated between 1549 and 1585, are preserved in Denmark. Around a quarter of these are autograph letters written between 1549 and 1567.<sup>160</sup> Although the number of autograph letters that are preserved from Anna's hand is limited, they provide a basis on which one can assess the differences between autograph letters and letters penned by secretaries. Some of the non-autograph letters Anna sent to her relatives in Denmark are preserved twice: the sent letter in the Danish archives and the draft in a letter-book in Saxony. This double transmission allows the sent letters to be compared to the drafts and these comparisons reveal that the content of a draft – with the exception of a few abbreviated words – corresponds exactly to the letter that was sent in almost all cases.<sup>161</sup>

A future biographer of the Saxon electress can doubtlessly find letters from her in several other German archives.<sup>162</sup> However, the material that is preserved in Dresden and Copenhagen is *more* than sufficient for an in-depth analysis of the ways in which Anna viewed and managed her position as consort. Moreover, by combining the electress's outgoing and incoming letters, the examples from her letters are naturally contextualized by those from other consorts.

### **Quantitative overview of the correspondence**

In a recent article, Katrin Keller provided a concise overview of the electress's correspondence with various princes, consorts, and employees.<sup>163</sup> As an appendix to this analysis, Keller provided a list of the fifty-six addressees who are most frequently present in the correspondence of the year 1580 and her analysis centers on Anna's exchanges with

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<sup>160</sup> RA TKUA pk. 40-10.

<sup>161</sup> See for example Anna to Christian III of Denmark, [Dresden 13] April 1556, RA TKUA pk. 40-10 (the draft for the letter can be found in DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 1 a – 2 a); Anna to Frederik II of Denmark 7 June 1568, RA TKUA pk. 40-10 (draft in DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 64 a – 65 a); and Anna to Frederik II 3 Aug. 1585, RA TKUA pk. 40-10 (draft in DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 176 b – 178 a).

<sup>162</sup> The Niedersächsische Hauptstaatsarchiv in Hanover and the Staatsarchiv in Wolfenbüttel have been consulted. The collection in Hanover does not contain letters from the Saxon electress. In contrast, the *Staatsarchiv* in Wolfenbüttel includes several letters sent by Anna (primarily to her sister-in-law Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg), though none of them are autograph, and the drafts for the preserved letters all seem to be included in the electress's letter-books preserved in Dresden. The same is the case for the letters addressed to various members of the Danish nobility that are preserved in the in the manuscript collection in the Royal Library, Copenhagen. Katrin Keller has located one letter from Brigitta Trautson to Anna of Saxony in the manuscript collection of the *Sächsische Landes- und Universitätsbibliothek*, see Keller (2003), p. 366. Yet, it is also highly likely that the archives from the rulers of Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Hessen, Hohenlohe, and Bavaria, to mention but a few, contain letters from the Saxon electress.

<sup>163</sup> Keller (2004).

a fraction of these fifty-six individuals.<sup>164</sup> However, these individuals make up less than half (approximately 40%) of the persons Anna sent letters to during the particular year and they constitute less than 10% of the several hundred addressees that can be identified among the greater correspondence. While Keller's analysis touches upon several important aspects of the electress's correspondence, it does not offer the reader an impression of just how composite and far-reaching this material is and it does not document the many changes one can observe in Anna's network over the course of the thirty years covered by the correspondence. In this section, a quantitative overview of the correspondence will be presented. Particular attention is paid to the relative presence of men and women, to the most frequently present correspondents, and to a few other structural aspects revealed by a detailed registration of the material.

The sheer volume of the electress's correspondence necessitates a very selective but carefully considered approach. In order to provide an overview of the composition of the correspondence, the following presentation draws upon a registration of approximately 5,500 of the letters that were drafted in the name of the Saxon electress.<sup>165</sup> Because Anna rarely sent a letter without already having received one from the addressee or receiving one from the addressee in the near future, one can use her outgoing letters as a point of departure for an analysis of the composition of the entire correspondence. A detailed analysis of Anna's correspondence with her daughter and son-in-law, Elisabeth and Johann Casimir of the Palatinate, revealed a remarkable concordance between the number of letters Anna received and sent to these two correspondents.<sup>166</sup> Hence, in spite of the lacuna in Anna's outgoing letters, the letter-books do seem to provide an accurate impression of the development and composition of the greater correspondence.

It must also be stressed that because the figures presented below were developed on the basis of a "mere" 5,500 outgoing letters, they reveal only the relative presence of the different correspondents within this part of the material. While a detailed registration of the

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<sup>164</sup> Keller (2004), pp. 229-230.

<sup>165</sup> These are DrHSA Kop. 509-527 which span the period from 1556 to 1585. The quantification of the letters is complicated by the fact that two or more letters from the same sender to the same addressee sometimes were sent together, or a smaller note (*Cedula/Zeddel*) often was sent with a more extensive letter. As a rule, the smaller notes that were sent with longer letters are not included in the figures below, though if two complete letters were sent together, they are counted separately. But needless to say, this principle will always depend upon a degree of interpretation. The letter-books marked "Forwergssachen" (DrHSA Kop. 356 b - e) are not included and, as the majority of the letters in these volumes were administrators of the electoral fiefs and higher-ranking employees in the "central administration" of Saxony, these addressees may be slightly underrepresented in the figures below.

<sup>166</sup> Arenfeldt (2004), pp. 59-62.



entire correspondence might seem desirable, it would be exceedingly time-consuming and, because “new” letters can be discovered in some many different parts of the Saxon (and presumably also in other German) archives, a complete registration is not a realistic goal. Moreover, a comprehensive index would not resolve the uncertainties pertaining to representativity, simply because one is unable to account for the numerous letters that have been lost.

#### *Gendered distribution of the addressees*

More than 640 different addressees can be identified in the electress’s letter-books: approximately 370 men and 280 women. However, almost 70% of the letters were sent to women (3,756 letters), and slightly less than 30% to men (1,712).<sup>167</sup> Two main factors explain this distribution. First of all, Anna frequently sent commands/requests to administrators and councilors within both Saxony and other territories and these were – of course – all men. But the electress had only passing contact with the majority of these and no more than a single letter to many of them has survived. The second factor can be found among the letters addressed to princes and consorts. Anna sent letters to hundreds of princes and consorts, though, as a rule, the princely women received many more letters than their husbands. Hence, fifteen letters addressed to Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg (1513-1573) are preserved but only six to her husband Joachim II of Brandenburg (1515-1571), and more than one hundred letters (dated 1573-1585) addressed to Katharina, Margravine of Brandenburg (1549-1602) have been preserved, whereas the letter-books only contain seventeen letters (dated 1566-1585) to her husband Joachim Friedrich (1546-1608). Even Wilhelm IV of Hessen-Kassel (1532-1592), who Katrin Keller emphasized as one of the few men with whom Anna maintained an unusually close and long-lasting correspondence,<sup>168</sup> appears as the addressee of only thirty-five of the indexed letters. These thirty-five letters were sent over the course of twenty-four years, implying that Wilhelm on average received 1.6 letters from Anna per year. In comparison, the letter-books contain eighty-eight letters (dated 1567-1581) addressed to Wilhelm’s wife Sabina (1549-1581) and this equals an annual average of almost six letters. With the exception of the letters Anna sent to two of her brothers (Frederik and Hans) and their wives, this pattern is consistent. The quantitative overview of Anna’s outgoing letters shows that the

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<sup>167</sup> Although the names/identity of several addressees remain unknown, their sex can usually be determined from the content of the letters.

<sup>168</sup> Keller (2004), p. 216.

“quantitative gendering” of the correspondence is even stronger than suggested by Keller.<sup>169</sup>

#### *Composition of the correspondence*

The Saxon electress sent letters to men and women from almost all ranks of society: the Holy Roman Emperor and the Empress; rulers and consorts throughout Europe; members of the imperial, the Saxon, the Danish, the Austrian,<sup>170</sup> and the Bohemian nobility; lawyers/councilors, theologians and physicians, countless male and female employees within the electoral household, town councils and other local authorities within Saxony and its neighboring territories, but also – albeit more rarely – the “common” men and women from Saxony. The vast majority of letters were sent to the ruling couples of the Protestant territories within the Holy Roman Empire. Among the outgoing letters from 1568, 66% were addressed to ruling princes, their wives, mothers, or children (this figure includes the members of the imperial nobility).<sup>171</sup> However, the quantification of Anna’s outgoing letters reveal that the intensity of individual relationships varied greatly.

The German territories that figure most prominently are Mecklenburg-Güstrow, the Palatinate, Ernestine Saxony, and the various parts of Brandenburg, Braunschweig, and Schwesvig-Holstein. In addition, there are numerous letters addressed to Anna’s relatives in Denmark. The intricate family connections between the Protestant dynasties make a distinction between relatives and “friends” very complicated and the Saxon electress could claim some family connection with the members of the ruling dynasties in all of the territories listed above. Nevertheless, she did correspond more frequently with her closest relatives; her mother Queen Dorothea of Denmark; her brother Frederik II of Denmark and his wife Sophie; her eldest daughter Elisabeth, and her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle. All are among the ten addressees who appear most frequently in the indexed letters.

One single addressee stands out. Almost 6% (approximately 330 letters) of all of the indexed letters were addressed to Anna’s aunt Elisabeth, Duchess of Mecklenburg (1524-1586). Elisabeth was a younger half-sister of Anna’s father Christian III of Denmark. The correspondence between Anna and Elisabeth span the entire thirty years that are

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<sup>169</sup> Keller (2004).

<sup>170</sup> Keller (2003) provides a detailed analysis of Anna’s correspondence with the Austrian noblewoman Brigitta Trautson (1510/15-1576).

<sup>171</sup> DrHSA Kop. 513. See also Keller (2004), pp. 217-218 for a similar observation.

documented, but it is likely to have been initiated even before Anna came to Saxony in 1548. During the thirty years from 1556 to 1585 Anna sent an annual average of eleven letters to Elisabeth. In comparison, the preserved letter-books contain an annual average of eight letters to both Anna's mother Dorothea (127 letters preserved from the period 1556-1571) and her eldest daughter Elisabeth (136 preserved letters from the period 1570-1585). While the preserved letters to her daughter seem to make up the majority of the letters Anna actually did send to her daughter, it is clear that numerous letters from Anna to her mother have been lost.<sup>172</sup>

The addressee to whom the second highest numbers of letters have been preserved is Anna's eldest brother Frederik II of Denmark: more than 200 letters (or 3.7% of the indexed letters) were sent to Frederik between 1556 and 1585. Upon his marriage to Sophie of Mecklenburg (1557-1631, the daughter of Elisabeth of Mecklenburg) in 1572, she too enters the correspondence and the drafts for more than 100 letters (dated 1572-1585) from Anna to Sophie are preserved. This means that after Frederik had married, Anna sent more frequent letter to her sister-in-law than to her brother: an annual average of 7.4 letters to Sophie in contrast to 6.9 to Frederik. In comparison to these numbers, Anna's contact with her other brothers(-) and sisters(-in-law) was much more limited: fifty-seven letters (dated 1556-1585) to Hans (the Younger) of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg and thirty-three (dated 1569-1585) to his wife Elisabeth, born Duchess of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen (1550-1586) can be found among the indexed letters. However, only the drafts for sixteen letters (dated 1556-1582) addressed to Anna's brother Magnus (1540-1583) can be found in her letter-books and the electress does not seem to have sent a single letter to the Russian princess Marija Vladimirovna (-1597), whom he married in 1573. The correspondence between Anna and her younger sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle was relatively large: almost 170 letters (dated 1556-1585) or an annual average of almost six letters are preserved in the letter books. Nevertheless, Anna never sent more than one letter per year to Dorothea's husband Duke Wilhelm: only twenty-two drafted letters from the electress to him can be found in the letter-books.

Regrettably, the indexed letters do not cover more than the last three years of the life of Anna's father Christian III (1503-1559) and only four letters to him can be identified

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<sup>172</sup> This is revealed in several letters from Dorothea of Denmark to Anna (see DrHSA Loc. 8501/5 and DrHSA Loc. 8533/5) when she thanks her daughter for letters that cannot be found in the electress's letter-books. However, the preserved letters from August to Dorothea (RA TKUA pk. 40-3) also point to losses, as does the numerous letters from Anna to her father as documented by the content of RA TKUA pk. 40-10.

among the indexed material. However, the material that is preserved in Denmark shows that they were in frequent contact and that Anna often sent autograph letters to her father.<sup>173</sup>

In conjunction with the blood relatives Anna corresponded with, her two uncles Adolf of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp (1526-1586) and Hans (the Elder) of Schleswig-Holstein-Hadersleben (1521-1580) must be mentioned. The electress had less contact with Adolf and his wife Christine (1543-1604) than with Hans, who remained unmarried. While the contact with Hans can be documented from the beginning of Anna's letter-books (1556) and continued until his death in 1580, Anna does not appear to have been in contact with Adolf and Christine until the late-1560s. Yet, she did exchange letters with both of them – albeit rarely more than one a year – until her death.

The electress's contacts with the relatives of her mother were much more limited. Anna's grandfather Magnus, Duke of Saxony-Lauenburg had died five years before the marriage between Anna and August took place. Her grandmother Katharina (1488-1563, born of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel) was still alive and the drafts for ten letters (dated 1556-1562) are preserved in the electress's letter-books. Anna also exchanged letters with her mother's three sisters: the drafts for five letters to Sophie of Oldenburg (-1571) can be found; nine letters to Klara of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Gifhorn (1518-1576) are preserved; and thirteen addressed to Ursula of Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1520-1577/78) have survived. But no letters for any of her mother's brothers-in-law can be found. It is also remarkable that only one letter from Anna to her mother's only brother Franz (1510-1581), who inherited the duchy of Saxony-Lauenburg after their father, is preserved in the letter-books. This limited communication with him is even more conspicuous because he married August's sister Sibylla (1515-1592). Yet, Anna did not correspond frequently with this sister-in-law either; at the very most, one can identify eight letters addressed to her.<sup>174</sup>

The mention of Sibylla shifts attention to Anna's in-laws and, compared to her frequent correspondence with her natal kin, the electress's communication with her relatives by marriage was less frequent. The one exception is her correspondence with August's sister Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg (1518-1575). At least eighty-eight letters to Sidonia are preserved in the indexed letter-books, though Anna does not appear to have sent a single letter to Sidonia's husband Erich (1528-1584). In comparison, thirty-six addressed to August's other sister Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach (1516-1591) can be

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<sup>173</sup> RA TKUA, pk. 40-10.

<sup>174</sup> It remains unclear if all of these eight were addressed to Sibylla or if some may have been addressed to Sibylla's daughter-in-law Margaretha, born of Pommern-Wolgast (1547-1619).

identified. As Emilia was already widowed by the time of Anna's arrival in Saxony, the electress never knew her husband Georg (1584-1543).

Anna's mother-in-law Catharina (1487-1561, born of Mecklenburg-Schwerin) is only sparsely represented in the indexed letters: only six drafted letters (dated 1557-1560) to her can be identified. However, additional letters that are preserved among Catharina's incoming letters reveal that the contact was considerably more frequent than what is suggested by the letters in Anna's earliest letter-book.<sup>175</sup>

Next to Anna's relatives, three *Reichsgräfinnen* (imperial countesses) figure especially frequently as addressees of her outgoing letters: Dorothea of Mansfeld-Eisleben (1493-1578), Anna of Hohenlohe-Neustein (1522-1594); and Agnes of Solms-Laubach (c. 1505-1588). The correspondence with Dorothea of Mansfeld began shortly after Anna's arrival in Saxony and lasted until the countess's death in 1578; eighty-eight letters, or on average four per year, can be found among the indexed letters. The contact to both Anna of Hohenlohe and Agnes of Solms appear to have developed through the Countess of Mansfeld. Anna of Hohenlohe (born Solms-Laubach) was married to a brother of Dorothea of Mansfeld and Agnes of Solms was married to an older brother of the Countess of Hohenlohe, Friedrich Magnus of Solms-Laubach (1537-1561). The correspondence between Anna and both the Countess of Hohenlohe and the Countess of Solms can be documented from the 1550s and continued until Anna's death in 1585. Seventy-one letters (an annual average of 2.5 letters) to Agnes of Solms are preserved, and a remarkable 141 letters (on average 4.7 letters per year) to Anna of Hohenlohe can be found among the indexed letters.

### *Individuals and groups*

The exchanges between Anna and the three imperial countesses bring attention to a noteworthy pattern among the addressees of the electress's letters. Among both Anna's relatives and the members of other high-ranking families who appear as addressees, one can define "clusters" of closely related addressees. Two cases suffice to demonstrate the point. As mentioned above, Anna corresponded regularly, though not particularly frequently, with her sister-in-law Emilia. However, the electress was also in contact with Emilia's daughters and daughters-in-law. Emilia had three daughters (Sophie (1535-1587), Barbara (1536-1587), Dorothea Katharina (1538-1604)) and one son (Georg Friedrich

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<sup>175</sup> See DrHSA Loc. 8498/6 and DrHSA Kop. 172.

(1539-1603)). Sophie married Heinrich of Schlesien-Liegnitz (1539-1588), Barbara remained unmarried, and Dorothea Katharina married Heinrich, Burggrave of Meissen (1533-1568). Georg Friedrich was married twice, first to Elisabeth (1540-1578, born of Brandenburg-Küstrin) and subsequently to Anna's niece Sophie (1563-1639, born of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle). With the exception of the unmarried Barbara, Anna's letter-books contain letters to all of the other children and most of their spouses. Thirty letters to Sophie are preserved and a few letters to her husband can also be identified among the indexed letters. Approximately twenty-five letters to Dorothea Katharina are preserved in the nineteen letter-books. Anna does not appear to have corresponded with Dorothea Katharina's husband, though she did send a couple of letters to his widowed mother Margarethe (-1573). Finally, one can find more than twenty letters to Georg Friedrich's first wife Elisabeth and more than fifty to his second wife Sophie, though only five letters to Georg Friedrich are preserved.

One finds a similar "cluster" among Anna's correspondents in Bavaria. The electress maintained remarkably few long-term exchanges with Catholic princesses, though the Bavarian ducal couple constituted a partial exception. Although the Saxon electress never established as close a relationship to Anna of Bavaria as to her Protestant "colleagues", the two consorts nevertheless maintained a twenty-three-year-long correspondence. The exchanges with the Bavarian Duchess also brought the electress into contact with the duchess's closest relatives. Approximately thirty letters (or an annual average of 1.3) from the electress to the Bavarian duchess are bound in the indexed letter-books. Four letters addressed to Anna's husband Albrecht (1528-1579) can be found, seven to Albrecht's widowed mother Jakobäe (1507-1580), three to Anna and Albrecht's son and daughter-in-law Wilhelm (1548-1626) and Renata (1544-1602), as well as three to their daughter Maximiliana Maria (1522-1614).

One finds similar clusters among other groups of the addressees: Hans and Margaretha von Ponikau as well as their daughter Katharina and son-in-law Thilo von Trota are represented; the Danish nobleman Peder Oxe (1520-1575), his wife Mette Rosenkrantz (c. 1533-1588), and his sister Inger, the court mistress at the Danish court; and, next to the letters Anna exchanged with the Austrian noblewoman Brigitta Trautson,<sup>176</sup> she also sent letters to her husband and their son and daughter-in-law. Several

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<sup>176</sup> Keller (2003), while Keller identifies the closest relatives of Brigitta Trautson, she does not consider Anna's contact with them.

members of the Saxon noble families Schleinitz, Wolfersdorf, and Schönberg (not to be mistaken with the Lords of Schönburg, with whom Anna also had close contact) can be identified among the addressees of the indexed letters.

However, the most complex clusters of addressees can be found among Anna's closest natal kin (her parents, siblings, aunts, and uncles) and, after 1570, around Anna's eldest daughter Elisabeth who married to the Palatinate.<sup>177</sup> As I have argued in a detailed analysis of the correspondence between Anna and Elisabeth, the presence of these clusters underline that the prevalent conception of a correspondence as an isolated exchange between two individuals is misleading – at least in the context of the correspondence of the Saxon electress.<sup>178</sup> Although the vast majority of letters have only one sender and one addressee, several participants have to be granted access into the exchanges and this is particularly clear when the composition of the carefully bound volumes of letters received by Anna are examined. Although the incoming letters usually are labeled as containing letters from a certain prince *as well as* letters from his wife, they often contain the letters not only from the married couple, that obviously was considered a unit, but also from their relatives and/or servants. As mentioned above, the letters Anna received from Elisabeth are bound together not only with the letters from Johann Casimir; one finds approximately fifteen other senders all of whom were either Elisabeth's relatives through marriage or servants within her household.<sup>179</sup> Likewise, the incoming letters from Anna's mother are bound with letters from the electress's younger brothers and several servants in her mother's household.<sup>180</sup> Hence, Anna considered her mother and daughter *not* as isolated individuals but as social beings who existed in the context of kin and various members of their households and all letters were written the context of numerous co-existing relationships that shaped the two parties who were tied by the individual letter.<sup>181</sup>

In the introduction to this chapter, the notion of the princely couple as an office-holding couple (or *Arbeitspaar*) was mentioned. The same interdependence between the activities of other married couples can also be observed among the employees within the

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<sup>177</sup> Examining the networks of English aristocratic networks, Barbara Harris detects a similar dominance of close kin, see Harris (2004), especially pp. 36-39.

<sup>178</sup> Arenfeldt (2004), p. 62.

<sup>179</sup> See DrHSA Loc. 8532/4 and Loc. 8535/2, and the detailed account of the volumes' content in Arenfeldt (2004).

<sup>180</sup> DrHSA Loc. 8501/5 and Loc. 8533/5.

<sup>181</sup> As discussed in Arenfeldt (2004), this echoes the fundamental premise in Norbert Elias's insistence on a figurational approach, see Elias (1939/1994), pp. 314-316; Elias (1987/1998). For critical considerations of Elias's insistence on the pronounced interdependencies, see Rojek (1986), pp. 584-596; van Krieken (1998), pp. 55-65; Duindam (1995), p. 27.

electoral household who are represented in the electress's correspondence. Anna corresponded with both husbands and wives of numerous such *Arbeitspaare*: the House Marshall Hans Auerswalden and his wife Elisabeth; the apothecary Johann Neefen and his wife Appolonia; the court master Abraham Thumbschirn who was responsible for the management of several electoral fiefs and his wife;<sup>182</sup> and the so-called *Zehnter* (the official who was responsible for collecting tithes<sup>183</sup>) Georg Unwirt and his wife Catharina in St. Annaberg. Although the wives in all of these cases received fewer letters from Anna than their husbands, their presence show that when a male office-holder was married, his wife also became a part of the greater electoral household and provided services to the electress.

Examining Anna's correspondence, it seems that the absence of some correspondents is as significant as the relative presence of others. Consequently, the most conspicuous absences have to be addressed. The electress's letter-books do not contain a single letter to her husband and, with the exception of three small notes preserved in his archive, there is no trace of a written communication between the two. Similarly, the material does not include letters to any of the electress's children until they approached adulthood. Finally, the (noble) women who served in her household tend to appear only when Anna was traveling or after they had married and thus left the electress's immediate vicinity.<sup>184</sup> This group of individuals can also be viewed as a "cluster" that is united by the fact that they had daily interactions with the electress. Hence, as one of the prime purposes of letters was to bridge distance, Anna's communication with the people in her most immediate vicinity are only reflected indirectly in the correspondence, namely in her references to these people in letters that were sent to more distant – that is geographically – relatives and friends. This observation brings attention to the fact that one must be careful not to employ only quantitative measures of the correspondence when the electress's is situated in relation to family, friends and subjects.

Given the vast extent and complex composition of the electress's correspondence, the conclusions of this brief quantitative overview can only be cursory. Nevertheless, some very clear patterns emerge: the largest part of Anna's correspondence was exchanged with

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<sup>182</sup> Regarding Anna's correspondence with Thumbschirn, see John (1997). Her contact to Thumbschirn's wife is documented in DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 170 a – 171 b.

<sup>183</sup> *DWB*, vol. 31, column 465

<sup>184</sup> The example of the Danish noblewoman Anne Skram (-1593, daughter of Elsebethe Krabbe and Peder Skram) and Anna's court mistress for her children Catharina Klein reflect this pattern very clearly and letters were only sent when the electress was separated from them. Regarding Skram, see DrHSA Kop. 512-516, 518, 523, 525, and 527, which all contain letters addressed to her. Regarding Klein, see DrHSA Kop. 513-515, 517-526, which all contain numerous letters addressed to her.



other princely women from the Protestant territories of Germany and with her relatives in Denmark. The addressees who are most frequently present in her outgoing letters dated between 1556 and 1585 were her aunt Elisabeth of Mecklenburg; her brother Frederik II of Denmark; Anna, Countess of Hohenlohe-Neustein; Anna's daughter Elisabeth, Countess Palatine; Anna's mother Dorothea of Denmark; and Anna's sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle. The overview also shows that when the electress corresponded with princely and noble women over an extended period of time, this also brought her into contact with the closest relative of this particular addressee. The numerous letters Anna sent to various employees/servants within the electoral household and the Saxon administration (central and local alike) show that her interactions transgressed the boundaries of a narrowly defined household. The electress's correspondence also demonstrate that the household, as well as the administrative units throughout Saxony, were frequently managed by married couples and that both spouses generally had some contact with the *Landesmutter*.

The composition of Anna's correspondence offers some tentative clues about the main constituents of the electress's self-understanding. The much greater presence of women than men reveals how powerful the category of gender was in the structuring of the social reality. Secondly, the overwhelming dominance of Protestants point to the importance of confession in the same respect. Thirdly, the frequent communication and lasting contacts with relatives suggests that the two dynasties to which she belonged were prime units of identification.

### **A typology of letters**

In *De conscribendis epistolis* Erasmus highlights the "almost infinite variations" one can find within the epistolary genre,<sup>185</sup> and the extraordinary correspondence of the Saxon electress certainly confirms his observation. The letters sent or received by Anna vary from

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<sup>185</sup> See J. K. Soward's "Introduction" to *Collected works of Erasmus*, vol. 25: *Literary and Educational Writings*, vol. 3 (Soward (1985), pp. iv-lix) and Erasmus' own introduction to *De conscribendis epistolis* (Erasmus (1522/1985)), pp. 2-9). Although a copy *De conscribendis epistolis* is listed in the 1574 inventory of the Electoral library (SLUB, Bibl.-Arch. I, Ba Vol. 20 (1574). Nr. 19, entry no. 1267, fol. 187) Anna's very moderate command of Latin would not have allowed her to read it. However, because the impact of the work exceeded its actual readership and it came to shape numerous other letter-writing manuals of the early modern period, she doubtlessly was familiar with some of the key principles advocated by Erasmus, see Alison Truelove's discussion of the transmission of conventions relating to letter writing through the very practice of corresponding (with particular focus on women in fifteenth-century England) in Truelove (2001), pp. 42-58.

brief commands for a service or material sent by her to an employee or a Saxon subject to long and emotional letters exchanged with her mother, her eldest daughter or close friends.

In spite of initial hesitation to present general rules about the epistolary genre, Erasmus did offer a typology that – in accordance with humanist teachings ideals – was developed on the basis of the rhetorical characteristics of letters. Erasmus defined four main classes of letters (persuasive, encomiastic, judicial and familiar letters) and divided these into no less than forty-two sub-groups.<sup>186</sup> Even if one can re-find traits of the different rhetorical examples presented by Erasmus in the letters sent by and to Anna, these features reveal little about the content of the letters. In order to provide the reader with an impression of this, the alternative typology that is presented below takes the content and purpose of a letter as well as the relationship between the sender and the addressee into account. Nevertheless, and as Roger Chartier has stressed in his extensive work on early modern and modern letters and letter writing, any typology of this genre is bound to entail crude simplifications.<sup>187</sup> The one presented here is intended as nothing more than a heuristic tool that provides the reader with a first impression of the range of letters sent and received by the electress and, as it will appear throughout the analysis, many letters were of multivalent nature.

(1) A large part of the correspondence is made up of Anna's *requests and instructions* to court servants, employees at the electoral fiefs or in other institutions of the local administration in Saxony, and/or to subjects who were in a position to provide a specific product or service. Here the initiative for contact came from Anna but at times her requests were answered by formal reports or by letters seeking to clarify details. The requests most frequently regarded the recruitment of suitable servants or the deliveries of foodstuff or other products for the electoral household. Several examples of these letters will be provided and discussed in chapter 6.

(2) A second group of letters can be characterized as *intercessions and supplications*. In these Anna is asked to intercede or intercedes on behalf of relatives, friends, clients,<sup>188</sup> servants and subjects. The intercessions were generally sent upon the receipt of a request (a supplication or an intercession): letters from subjects, friends, or relatives who ask for help

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<sup>186</sup> Erasmus (1522/1985), pp. 71-73.

<sup>187</sup> Chartier (1991/1997), pp. 17-18.

<sup>188</sup> The term "clients" is not unproblematic. However, in the following it is used to describe "friends" of non-princely rank, whereas her contacts to individuals of princely rank (with whom she was not related) simply are referred to as friends. For this distinction see Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984), pp. 43-49; Lind (1996); Reinhard (1998).

either for themselves or on behalf of one of his/hers own clients, and most often in economic or legal matters. Both supplications and intercessions were phrased in the most polite form, often stressing the sender's close links to Anna and presenting the solicitation in subtle wording. A request could be aimed directly at Anna or the sender may asked the electress to intercede by her husband or other authorities (most frequently local authorities in Saxony or neighboring rulers) on his or her behalf. The duty to intercede constituted a core of the consort's office (see chapter 3 and 7) and the form and content of the supplications and intercessions will be discussed in relation to Anna's role as intercessor in chapter 7. It should be added, though, that one finds numerous overlaps between the correspondents who are represented in this category of letters and those of other genres. Because most supplications were presented by people who already had some contact with the electress the supplicant may be an employee or a relative with whom Anna also exchanged other types of letters.

(3) The third group of letters can be identified as *formal greetings*. On the occasion of New Year, greetings were exchanged with numerous acquaintances, friends and relatives. Other formal greetings can be found in the congratulatory notes that were sent when relatives or friends celebrated the birth of a child/heir (see chapter 5) or a marriage. Correspondingly, letters of condolences were sent to relatives or friends who lost members of their immediate family, and compassion and wishes for expedient recovery were expressed in cases of illness – sometimes accompanied by health remedies and lengthy instructions as how to use these (see chapter 6). The formal greetings usually elicited *Dankbriefe* (“thank-you letters”) and they, as well as the prevalent *Grüssbriefleine* (“greeting letters” usually expressing the wish that the addressee and his/her relatives are well), may also be characterized as formal greetings. The addressees within this category of letters could be anyone from an immediate relative to a distant acquaintance.

(4) A fourth category of letters can be described as parts of *continual correspondences with friends and clients*. Anna exchanged letters with approximately 200 princely and noble women. However, with the exception of twenty-thirty women, the correspondences were sporadic and the letters exchanged with the majority were rather formalized greetings. In contrast to the formal greetings, the continual correspondences often contain long and rather personal letters that may touch upon confidential subjects and thus imply a degree of trust. Anna's life-long exchanges with the Countess of Mansfeld and the Countess of Hohenlohe are examples of this category of letters. However, not all

continual exchanges implied as high a degree of trust as these. A less intimate relationship existed between the electress and the Austrian noblewoman Brigitta Trautson. As demonstrated by Katrin Keller, the two women maintained a regular correspondence between 1563 and 1576 in which they exchanged information about their immediate families (health, family events, and career developments), exchanged information/news that were relevant to the imperial court in Vienna, exchanged knowledge and ingredients related to health remedies and gardening, and exchanged gifts and favors.<sup>189</sup> A very similar correspondence is preserved between the electress and Anna of Bavaria.

(5) The fifth and final category of the collections consists of *familiar letters* in its broadest sense. These span from personal, emotional, and autograph letters to texts dominated by formulaic reconfirmations dynastic loyalty and affinity. As confession was a decisive factor shaping the princely marriages throughout Northern Europe during the latter half of the sixteenth-century, these familiar letters were exchanged exclusively with princely men and women within the Protestant territories of Europe.

While the letters in all five categories usually follow the outline that was prescribed in letter-writing manuals (*salutatio – exordium – narratio – petitio – conclusio*)<sup>190</sup> one also finds differences. The divergences from the five-part letter are most frequent in those that were exchanged with close friends and clients and in the familiar letters because these often touched upon several (rather than just one or two) subjects and therefore took on more complex structures. The most frequently recurring subjects in these longer and more complex letters include the following: wishes for and notifications of good health among the immediate family of the addressee and the sender; requests for foodstuff, particular objects (especially clothing and jewelry) or favors; practical questions related the household management including the recruitment of qualified servants/employees; travels plans and arrangements of personal meetings; more or less elaborate discussions of potential marriage arrangements and exchanges of news about common friends or relatives; recipes for health remedies; and observations on political, military, and religious developments. Finally, religious considerations about life – often accompanied by references to the Holy Scriptures – are present in almost every letter as are assurances of the sender's friendship and loyalty towards the addressee and his/her relatives. It is also

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<sup>189</sup> Keller (2003), pp. 367 and 371-379.

<sup>190</sup> See for example the instructions in Fabian Franck's widely circulated manuals, here from *Ein Cantzley und Tuelbüchlin* (1531), pp. Av(1)-B(2), and Abraham Saur's *Penus Notariorum* (1538), pp. 28-32.

among these two types of letters (and occasionally the *Grüssbriefe* and *Dankbriefe*) that one finds the few autograph letters that have been preserved from Anna.

Although letters from all five groups will be used in the analysis, the letters that were exchanged between Anna, her closest friends and clients as well as the familiar letters will figure most prominently.

### **From the “outside” to the “inside” dimensions of social reality**

Discussing the medieval letter-writing manuals, Alain Boureau has pointed out that epistolary techniques can serve as social instruments. The authors of the manuals (and that is true also for the early modern manuals) outlined complex social classifications that reflected the view of society as a complex and changing hierarchy.<sup>191</sup> Although the keen awareness of rank within the early modern societies established a hierarchy that is easily definable, both superior and inferior have a space to maneuver within this hierarchy. In addition, the seemingly clear hierarchy defined by rank is complicated by familial relation, age, and gender, which structured parallel or competing hierarchies. However, even when a hierarchical relationship is reinforced by several categories, as for example between Anna and a younger female servant, the relationship was founded on a degree of reciprocity and interdependence and this meant that it was dynamic and could change. The authorities' duties to protect and provide for their servants and subjects enabled even the inferior party to negotiate support and appeal to the grace of the authority.<sup>192</sup> Likewise, family relations and patron-client relations were founded on a wide range of interactions and exchanges and underwent continual transformation (this will be demonstrated throughout the analysis).

The quantitative overview of the correspondence allows Anna's complex network to be mapped from the “outside”. Yet, the frequent overlaps between the addressees who are represented within the five types of letters outlined above reveal the wide span of social relationships. Kin was not simply kin: a family relation could consist of no more than the annual New Year letters Anna sent to her uncle Adolph of Schleswig-Holstein and her brother Magnus but, at the same time, it could be expressed in monthly letters and continual efforts to arrange personal meetings, as seen in Anna's correspondence with her daughter Elisabeth, her aunt in Mecklenburg, and – perhaps to a slightly lesser degree – her brother Frederik in Denmark. Similarly, the electress's friendships and/or patron-client

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<sup>191</sup> Boureau (1991/1997), pp. 38-41; see also Bastl (2004), pp. 98-99.

<sup>192</sup> For empirical substantiation of this argument see chapter 3 and chapter 7.

relationships ranged from the frequent and confidential exchanges with Dorothea of Mansfeld and Anna of Hohenlohe to the regular but much less common correspondence with Hedwig of Brandenburg (1513-1571), the abbesses at Quedlinburg and Weissenfels, as well as several Danish and Saxon noblewomen.

As individual relationships differed from each other, the developments and changes of particular social relationships are reflected in the content of the letters.<sup>193</sup> But the letters not only document these developments, they also can be viewed as expressions of social acts that can bring about change. As Caroline Steedman has argued, a letter has the power to alter social relationships.<sup>194</sup> Pointing to this at once communicative and performative aspect of letters, she insisted on the particular status of letters within the wider category of autobiography or ego-documents (defined as texts/sources that provide an impression of the self-understanding, thoughts, and emotions of an individual<sup>195</sup>). Because most of the relationships that are reflected in the correspondence existed as much (or more) in writing as in personal meetings, the letters and their implicit positioning of sender and recipient not only reflected, but also constituted, significant dimensions of these relationships.

Most – though not all – of Anna’s letters fit into the category of ego-documents. However, letters also differ from other autobiographical texts because letter-writing demands that the writer/sender thinks in terms of another person”.<sup>196</sup> In this respect, letters are produced in a dialogic situation, though they do not constitute dialogues in the conventional sense of the word because they are produced in absence and as a result of the absence of the addressee.<sup>197</sup> The solitary dimension of a letter’s production (or, at least, of the production of some letters) has led scholars to conclude that while the letter performed a communicative function, it also entailed a psychological process during which “a construction, fashioning or staging of the self took place”.<sup>198</sup> Consequently, letters must be considered both as testimonies to the senders’ subjective understanding of him-/herself within a social reality that also was perceived subjectively *and* as reflections and remnants of social interactions.

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<sup>193</sup> See for example the development in the relationship between Anna and her daughter Elisabeth as discussed in Arenfeldt (2004). Aspects of this will be addressed in chapter 9.

<sup>194</sup> Steedman (1999), pp. 118-119, particularly footnote 34; Fouquet (2002), pp. 173-174 and 191.

<sup>195</sup> See for example Schulze (1996), pp. 13-15; Dekker (2002), pp. 7-20; and Benigna von Krusenstjern’s more probing discussion in von Krusenstjern (1994), pp. 462-471.

<sup>196</sup> Steedman (1999), p. 111.

<sup>197</sup> Gomes (2004), p. 18 and 34-35.

<sup>198</sup> Steedman (1999), p. 118. See also MacArthur (1990), p. 119.

The distinction between the two ways in which the letters can be used corresponds to the continual discussion of the relationship between a subjectively experienced and an objectified social reality. Rather than contrasting the two, Pierre Bourdieu insisted that they constitute two dimensions of the same reality. Neither individuals nor collectives exist without the other and neither can be appreciated without the inclusion of reflections on the other and on the relationship between the two. Only when the social world is considered to be “something that social agents have to [...] construct, individually and especially collectively”<sup>199</sup> can the dynamics between a subjectively experienced and an objectified social reality be addressed. This implies that the ways in which Anna could define her own position and ascribe roles to addressees reflect her views/understanding of the social world as it is constructed through exchanges with the greater social context.<sup>200</sup>

Whereas Bourdieu himself places the emphasis on the objectified social reality (viewing it from the outside), the following analysis of the consorts’ perceptions of their position and its political significance will privilege the subjective dimension of the letters. However, because this social reality and the princely women’s position within it resulted from the varied social relationships reflected in the correspondence, the women’s subjective experiences can – as often stressed in the discussions of microhistory<sup>201</sup> and ego-documents as historical sources<sup>202</sup> – only be rendered meaningful when contextualized by those same relations and the norms that guided the interactions.

Although the letters (or most of them) can be viewed as ego-documents and, because the correspondence will be used as sources to specify the ways in which the princely women viewed their position, it must be stressed that the letters do not offer easy or direct access to the women’s thoughts and emotions. On the contrary, letter writing was guided by strong conventions and although the letters were sent by and/or to the women, it can often be difficult to find the voice of the sender among the formalized texts. With a view to clarifying the relationship between the letters’ reproduction of norms and the

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<sup>199</sup> Quoted from Wacquant’s interview with Bourdieu, see Wacquant (1989), p. 44.

<sup>200</sup> See Hans Medick’s considerations of “ethnological ways of knowing” in Medick (1987) for a similar argument.

<sup>201</sup> See for example Edward Muir’s introduction to *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (1991), pp. vii-xxviii; van Dülmen (2001), pp. 52-55; Levi (2001/2004), pp. 97-119, particularly his discussion of contextualization and of individualizing versus generalizing knowledge, pp. 110-113. Yet, the most concise formulation can be found in Medick (1987), pp. 76-78.

<sup>202</sup> See the thoughtful discussions and analyses by Gabriele Jancke, especially Jancke (2002) in which she convincingly situates the three bodies of early modern autobiographical writings within their social contexts. Winfried Schulze touches upon similar aspects in his introduction to *Ego-Dokumente. Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte* (1996), particularly pp.

women's own thoughts/words, the remainder of this chapter discusses how a letter was prepared, the different purposes the letters served, and the formalized language that prevails in these texts.

### **The preparation of a letter and the significance of autograph letters**

The interest in the women's own views and the extraordinary volume of Anna's correspondence combined with the fact that only few autograph letters survive, pose an important question concerning the degree to which Anna – and other princely women – were involved in the preparation of their letters.

As a general rule, autograph letters were appreciated more or, perhaps rather, for different reasons, than the letters penned by scribes. Historians too tend to place greater value on autograph letters and view these as more authentic expressions of the writers' thoughts and emotions.<sup>203</sup> While Anna and her correspondents did distinguish between the autograph and non-autograph letters and attributed greater (or different) values to the autograph letter, there are several reasons to believe that the differences between the two forms were less pronounced than is often assumed.

When Anna received an autograph letter, she consistently referred to it as such in her replies thereby emphasizing her appreciation, “we have received the letter you wrote to us with your own hand on 19 February”, she began a letter to Anna of Hohenlohe in March 1584,<sup>204</sup> and this phrase recurs in countless letters.<sup>205</sup> However, because so many of the letters Anna exchanged with her correspondents were penned by secretaries, the material also contains plenty of examples that reveal why an autograph letter was desirable and when it was excusable to use a scribe.

The electress frequently excused the fact that a letter was penned by a secretary with a reference to the difficulties she had writing. “Your Beloved know that we write badly and slowly”, she wrote to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg.<sup>206</sup> Numerous other letters to both relatives

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<sup>203</sup> See for example Steinhausen (1889), pp. 149-150; Klettke-Mengel (1976) in which she focuses exclusively on the autograph letters; Nolte (2000a); Nolte (2000b); Daybell (2001b), pp. 59-76.

<sup>204</sup> “... Wir haben Euer schreiben so Ir den 19 Februarj mit aigenen hand an vns gethan ... empfangen ...”, Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Dresden 6 March 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 16 b – 17 a.

<sup>205</sup> See for example: Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Weidenhain 7 July 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 3 a – b; Anna to Anna of Orange, DrHSA Torgau 14 Jan. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 7 b – 8 a; and Anna to Johann Casimir of the Palatinate, Annaburg 5 Dec. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 249 a – b.

<sup>206</sup> “... E.L. ... wissen das wir einen bosen vnd langsamen schreiben geben ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 3 Sep. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 111 a – 112 a.



and friends contained similar explanations.<sup>207</sup> When Anna received autograph letters, the writers often referred to their letters or (hand-)writing in very deprecatory terms (usually as *bös*, that is, bad or rude).<sup>208</sup> The Countess Palatine Elisabeth (born of Hessen, married to Ludwig, and thus a sister-in-law of Anna's daughter Elisabeth) used a particularly striking phrase, "Your Beloved will understand my letter better than I have written it",<sup>209</sup> thereby underlining that she herself was dissatisfied with the wording and thus indicating that writing did not come easily. Yet, as James Daybell has stressed in his work on letters written by sixteenth-century noblewomen in England, these self-deprecatory comments should not always be accepted at face value and may reflect the epistolary convention of false modesty.<sup>210</sup> The many autograph letters Anna received and those she sent to her father and her brother show that the electress and the vast majority of her female correspondents were capable of writing well. Consequently, the usage of scribes was prompted by other factors.

Among the acceptable justifications the electress employed one finds sorrows and worries, health problems, travels, and advanced pregnancies or lying-ins,<sup>211</sup> and she was

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<sup>207</sup> See Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 19 April 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 39 a – b (and the enclosed "Zeddel", fol. 40 a – b); and Anna to Sophie of Schlesien-Liegnitz, Dresden 19 May 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 57 b – 58 a.

<sup>208</sup> See for example the letters from Anna's daughter Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to her mother, without date, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, p. 168 a; Kaiserslautern 8 Feb. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 33 a; and Heidelberg 26 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 111 a.

<sup>209</sup> "... el wolle ... mein schreiben ... besser verstehen als ich es geschriebn habe ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine (born of Hessen and sister-in-law to Anna's daughter Elisabeth), Amberg 7 July 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, p. 135 a. The exact same phrase recurs in Elisabeth's letter to the electress, Amberg 26 April 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, p. 181 a.

<sup>210</sup> Daybell (2001b), p. 62.

<sup>211</sup> Regarding sorrows and worries as an explanation for now writing herself see Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 8 Dec. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 66 a – 67 a (the sorrows/worries Anna referred to were caused by the death of her son Alexander two months earlier and by the ongoing war between Denmark and Sweden); Anna to Frederik II, Goldbach 22 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 194 b – 195 b. Regarding health problems as an explanation for not writing herself, see Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Pfaffenrode 13 July 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 32 b – 33 a; Anna to the court mistress at the Imperial court Sophia of Toledo, Dresden 9 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 1 a – b; and Anna to Hedwig of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Dresden 7 Sep. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 193 – 195 a. Regarding travels as an explanation, see Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Munich 20 May 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 115 b – 116 b; and Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Heidelberg 7 June, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 152 a – 153 a. Similarly, Anna explained to her mother that special arrangements had been made to ensure that the letters which arrived in Saxony during Anna and August's temporary residence in Frankfurt a. M. during the Electoral Diet of 1562 were forwarded to them, see Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Torgau 23 Sep. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 55 a – 57 a. In her letter to Dorothea Susanna, Lochau 26 Aug. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 137 a – b, Anna apologized for the delay in sending the requested "Zuckerwerke" (sugar sculptures) and explained that since her return from Augsburg she had been travelling almost uninterruptedly with August. The references to advanced pregnancies or lying-ins as an explanation for not sending an autograph letter can for example be found in: Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden 12 June 1555, RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 1st folder; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 7 Sep. 1555, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder; Anna to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Dresden 10 Jan. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 1 a – b; and Anna to Frederik II

prepared to excuse that her correspondents did not send her autograph letters for similar reasons. When Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar apologized that she had not written herself due to health problems, Anna instantly accepted the explanation and wished her a speedy recovery.<sup>212</sup> Frederik II of Denmark used the tense political and military situation in Denmark in 1566 as a justification for not being able to pen his own letters.<sup>213</sup> When Anna's son-in-law Johann Casimir of the Palatinate was visiting the Royal court in London in 1578, he explained to Anna that contrary to his intention and common practice he had "not been able to put the feather to paper this time" because he was "continually surrounded by the company of English Lords".<sup>214</sup> In previous years, Johann Casimir also had sent non-autograph letters to his mother-in-law on several occasions, though he always apologized profusely and explained the reasons: that he was consumed by important negotiations about a peace agreement with France,<sup>215</sup> or that his time was devoted to important matters that needed to be discussed with his brother.<sup>216</sup> Anna's daughter (and Johann Casimir's wife) Elisabeth sent almost exclusively autograph letters to both her parents and seems to have penned letters almost regardless of her physical situation. In February and March 1578, she apologized to her parents that her writing was untidy and that she had held up a messenger longer than appropriate but explained that it was due to the difficulties she had writing because of her advanced pregnancy.<sup>217</sup> And during her long and seemingly life-threatening illness in 1581, her letters became sparse.<sup>218</sup> In Elisabeth's case it seems as if she preferred not to send a letter rather than sending one that had been penned by a scribe.

While Anna generally accepted her correspondents' apologies for not sending autograph letters, there were instances in which she asked her closest relatives for an autograph note. In 1557 the plea was sent to her father, "heartily beloved father, I hope to God that Your Grace now are well and healthy and [I] beg Your Grace to write me just a

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of Denmark, Dresden 18 Nov. 1568, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder. See also Daybell (2001b), pp. 62-64 for a discussion of the acceptable apologies for using a scribe or secretary.

<sup>212</sup> Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 12 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 48 b – 49 a.

<sup>213</sup> This Appears from Anna's reply to Frederik II of Denmark, Augsburg 26 April 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 113 a – b.

<sup>214</sup> "... wir ... stundlichen mit grosser gesellschaft vonn Engellandichen herren vmbgeben also das wir dismal, nit ... die feder selbstn Angebracht haben können ...", Johann Casimir of the Palatinate to Anna, London 27 Jan. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 163 a.

<sup>215</sup> Johann Casimir to Anna, military camp in France 31 July 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 92 a – b.

<sup>216</sup> Johann Casimir to Anna, Heidelberg 20 Jan. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 132 a – 133 a.

<sup>217</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 9 Feb. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 135 a – b; and Elisabeth to August, Kaiserslautern 11 March 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 136 a.

<sup>218</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 21 Oct. 1581, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 225 a – b.

small note with Your Grace's own hand".<sup>219</sup> The king did as his daughter requested<sup>220</sup> and, although Anna does not establish the clear connection between her father's health and her wish for an autograph note from him, the composition of the note suggests that the autograph note should serve as a tangible proof of his improved health.<sup>221</sup>

A few years later, the electress expressed a similar wish to receive an autograph note from her brother Frederik, though for a different reason,

[B]ecause we last wrote to Your Royal Dignity with our own hand, we beg [You] sisterly that Your Royal Dignity in return will write to us – if not an entire letter than at least a couple of lines – with Your own hand. [This would let] us feel that our sisterly, loyal inclination towards Your Royal Dignity is not completely overlooked.<sup>222</sup>

In this case, the autograph letter was desired as an expression of the special favor with which Frederik considered his sister. The autograph letter Anna had sent was an expression of her affection for her brother and, as any other favor or gift, she expected this (both the emotions and the handwriting that symbolized it) to be reciprocated.

These two examples also reveal that it was common to send a shorter autograph note together with a longer letter that was penned by a secretary and this pattern can be found throughout Anna's exchanges with her most frequent correspondents of princely rank.<sup>223</sup> Yet, it also could happen that an autograph letter was accompanied by a smaller note that had been penned a secretary.<sup>224</sup> In some cases, the autograph notes/letters were prompted by the sensitive nature of a particular subject. When Anna was unable to write an autograph letter to Frederik in Denmark due to her advanced pregnancy, she assured him that she would compensate for this once she had recovered from the impending delivery,

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<sup>219</sup> "... hertz lieber her vatter ich hoff zu gott eg werden nun frisch vnd gesund sein ... vnd bitt eg woldenn mir nun ein kleynes zettelein mit eg eigenhandt schreiben ...". Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Kempnitz 16 Sep. 1556, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

<sup>220</sup> See the autograph note from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, that was sent with the longer letter dated 17 Nov. 1556, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder (the draft for the same letter is preserved in DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 20 a).

<sup>221</sup> Daybell (2001b), p. 71, presents a similar argument.

<sup>222</sup> "... weil wir Euer kon Würd nehmals ... mitt eigenen handen geschrieben, So bitten wir Schwesterlich ... Euer Kon Würde wolle vnß doch hinwiederumb ... wo nicht einen gantzen brieff doch nur ein Par Zeilen mitt egen handen zuschreiben[,] Daraus wir spuren können das vnser Schwesterlich trew gemüth gegen Euer Kon Wurde nicht gar vorgeblich sei ...", Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 16 Dec. 1563, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>223</sup> This pattern is particularly pronounced in the letters Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar sent to Anna, see DrHSA Loc. 8531/4, letters dated Helthburg 16 Sep. 1568 (pp. 56 a – b), Aldenburg 20 Dec. 1568 (pp. 65 a – b), Coburg 6 Oct. 1569 (pp. 94 a – 95 a), Weimar 2 Jan. 1570 (pp. 108 a – b), and Weimar 5 March 1577 (pp. 212 a – b).

<sup>224</sup> See for example Anna to Christian III of Denmark, without date [May 1558], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

but this meant that a certain confidential subject could not be addressed until then.<sup>225</sup> Likewise, she added in a letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, “Your Beloved will see what other confidential [information] he sent to us in the autograph note that is enclosed with our letter”.<sup>226</sup> A similar practice can be observed in the letters to Dorothea of Denmark.<sup>227</sup>

However, as Cordula Nolte has pointed out in her analysis of the family correspondence of the Hohenzollern, the choice of writing or dictating a letter also depended on rank and status defined by gender and age;<sup>228</sup> this can also be observed in Anna’s correspondence.<sup>229</sup> Consequently, one cannot simply equate autograph letters with confidential letters and letters written by secretaries as “common” letters that may be read by more people and/or treated with less care.<sup>230</sup> On the contrary, as the following example demonstrates, a letter written by a secretary could be more confidential than an autograph letter. Writing to the Danish court mistress Inger Oxe, Anna complained that she had difficulties reading Oxe’s handwriting. The electress instructed the court mistress to use a trusted secretary when she had to send confidential information because, as Anna explained, she could read the letters herself and would not be forced to show it to others in order to decipher its content.<sup>231</sup> In this case the letters penned by a secretary, *not* the autograph letters, would contain confidential information and, contrary the warnings by Erasmus that privacy was lost when secretaries were employed,<sup>232</sup> it is clear that the transmission of certain information through a secretary did not necessarily imply censoring. This will be confirmed by several examples throughout the analysis when Anna

<sup>225</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 15 Jan. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 3 a – 4 a.

<sup>226</sup> “... Was er sonst vertraulich an vns gelangt das haben EL aus bejligenden vnserm schreiben mit aigen handen zuerschen ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 13 June 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 38 a. See also the reference to another confidential matter that was addressed in enclosed “Zeddel” with Anna’s letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 1 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 127 b – 128 a.

<sup>227</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 26 Dec. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 115 a – b, “... Was Ich E.g sonst dismals haben wollenn zuerkennen geben, das wirdet sie aus meinem aigen hantschreiben mütterlich vorstehen ...”; and Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Torgau 23 Jan. 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 73 a – 74 a.

<sup>228</sup> Nolte (2000b), pp. 708-709.

<sup>229</sup> Younger relatives generally sent autograph letters to Anna or apologized if they did not (see the above-mentioned examples of Elisabeth and Johann Casimir of the Palatinate). Similarly, the autograph letters that are preserved from Anna were all sent to her father or to her brother Frederik after he had become king and thus the head of her natal dynasty, see RA TKUA pk. 40-10.

<sup>230</sup> Several examples reveal that numerous letters were read not only by the addressee but also by their spouses and possibly by other relatives and confidants. See for example the following passage in Anna’s letter to Frederik II of Denmark, Schweinitz 1 July 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 102 a – b, “... wir haben aber aus E Ko M schreibenn so sie an vnsern F hertzliebste H vnd gemahel gethan volgend auch von andern mit hertlicher freude erfahren ...”. Likewise, Anna explained to her daughter Elisabeth that her husband Johann Casimir could read Anna’s the “common” (*gemeine*) letters, but that Elisabeth had to burn the secret letters Anna also would send, see Arenfeldt (2004). See also Rosemary O’Day’s comments concerning more readers of a letter in O’Day (2001), p. 129.

<sup>231</sup> Anna to Inger Oxe, Annaburg 18 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 32 b.

<sup>232</sup> See for example Daybell (2001b), pp. 67-68

expressed emotions, addressed conflicts, and provided medical advice that required intimate details of her daughter's body to be described in letters penned by secretaries.

It also must be remembered that the multimediality of the early modern communication went beyond the seemingly neat distinction between autograph letters and letters penned by secretaries; written and oral forms of communication intersected and interacted in connection with the transmission of letters.<sup>233</sup> Numerous subjects could not be entrusted to the paper in any form. In 1562, Anna informed the Danish noblewoman Margrethe Valkendorf, who was serving at the household of Anna's sister in Celle, that she urgently needed to speak to her. The subject could not be trusted to "the feather across land" and Anna would instead make arrangements for Margrethe to come to Saxony.<sup>234</sup> In other instances, the messengers carried not only the letters but also verbal messages that were validated by the content of the letter. Writing to Frederik II of Denmark, Anna explained,

[A]s you will understand from our messenger Hans Frentzeln, we have instructed him to convey some information verbally to Your Royal Majesty [and we ask] You Royal Majesty to give credence to his account.<sup>235</sup>

Another rather remarkable practice raises more fundamental questions about the presumed difference between an autograph letter and one that was penned by a secretary. In a couple of instances, the electress's letter-books contain the drafts for smaller notes, which clearly were penned by secretaries but with the added designation "Note with own hand". One example is from a long letter Anna sent to Katharina of Brandenburg (1549-1602, born of Brandenburg-Küstrin) in 1584. The letter-book contains the draft for a two-page-long letter, which is followed by two brief notes also drafted by the secretary. One of these is designated "Note" and the other "Note with own hand". This seems to imply that the

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<sup>233</sup> See James Daybell's introduction to *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (Daybell (2001a), p. 5), and Gomes (2004), pp. 15-19 and 33-34 for a concise discussion of this. For more extensive discussions see the influential work by Walter Ong and Jack Goody; particularly Ong (1983) and Goody (1987).

<sup>234</sup> "... fed vber land ...", Anna to Margrethe Valckendorf, Lichtenwald 20 June 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 35 a - 35 b.

<sup>235</sup> "... wir [haben] ... dem both Hans Frentzeln befohlen E Ko M von vnserwegen etzliche muntliche anzaigung zu thun, Wie sie von ime vornehmenn werden welcher seiner anzaigung vnd bericht Ewer Ko M wohl glauben zu... mogen", Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 28 Oct. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 107 a - b. The structure of the phrase has been changed slightly in the translation. See also Anna to Anna of Orange, Torgau 15 April 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 21 a - 22 a, in which the electress thanks her niece for a letter and for the "mundtlich bericht" she has received via the Countess of Mansfeld.

secretary drafted it and then Anna copied it and sent it as an autograph note.<sup>236</sup> A letter that was prepared for the mother of Katharina of Brandenburg also demands attention in this context. Her name was also Katharina<sup>237</sup> and she appears to have received a full autograph letter, though the draft had been penned by a secretary. In this case the draft for a longer letter from the electress to the margravine was also followed by a smaller note, but this note was labeled "Enclosed note which has not been rewritten with own hand".<sup>238</sup> This small note suggests that Anna re-wrote the actual letter and sent it as an autograph letter, a hypothesis that gains support from the fact that Anna was replying to an autograph letter she had received from the margravine.<sup>239</sup>

Although these examples indicate the differentiation between autograph and non-autograph letters is less clear-cut than usually assumed, the autograph letters that have been preserved from Anna to her parents and brother nevertheless show some recurring traits that distinguish them from the non-autograph letters and are therefore worthy of attention.<sup>240</sup> First of all, the autograph letters tend to be shorter than the once penned by secretaries. The longest of the autograph letters that have been preserved from Anna was sent to her brother Frederik in 1566 and comprised a little more than 500 words.<sup>241</sup> Most autograph letters were considerably shorter (between 100 and 200 words)<sup>242</sup>, whereas the electress's non-autograph letters to close relatives generally comprised at least 300-400 words and, at times, more than 1,500 words.<sup>243</sup> Ingeborg Klettke-Mengel has pointed out that Elisabeth of Braunschweig-Calenberg often sent autograph letters that were twelve to fourteen pages<sup>244</sup> and, when compared with the letters Anna sent and received, this scale seems highly unusual.

A second, and arguably more important, difference between Anna's autograph and non-autograph letters relates to the greetings that were used. The difference between the greetings is most pronounced in Anna's letters to her brother Frederik. In the autograph

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<sup>236</sup> "Zeddel" / "Zeddel mit eigenen Händen", Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg, Dresden 26 Sep. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 98 a – 99 a. The "Zeddel mit eigenen Händen" is on fol. 99 a.

<sup>237</sup> Katharina, Margravine of Brandenburg-Küstrin (1518-1574, born of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel.

<sup>238</sup> "Eingelegter Zeddel, so nicht mit eigen Händen vmbgeschriebenn worden", Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Dresden 2 Feb. 1569, DrHSA Loc. 8531/3, pp. 29-30.

<sup>239</sup> Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin to Anna, Küstrin 21 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Loc. 8531/3, pp. 28-29.

<sup>240</sup> The following observations are based on the content of RA TKUA, pk. 40-10.

<sup>241</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 18 July 1566, RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>242</sup> See the autograph letters preserved in RA TKUA, pk. 40-10.

<sup>243</sup> The letter Anna sent her mother Dorothea of Denmark, dated Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 117 a – 120 a, is one of the most extensive letters that has been preserved and consists of more than 1500 words.

<sup>244</sup> Klettke-Mengel (1976), p. 17.

letters Anna generally addressed him as “heartily beloved brother” and used the informal personal pronoun “du”.<sup>245</sup> However, in the letters that were penned by scribes, Frederik appears as “Dear beloved brother”, “heartily beloved lord and brother”, and “heartily beloved lord, brother and friend”. In addition, the personal pronoun “du” was consistently replaced with either “Your Royal Majesty”.<sup>246</sup> The contrast between Anna’s autograph letters to her father and those which were penned by a secretary is not as marked. She addressed her father as “heartily beloved father” and used “Your Grace” in place of “you” in her autograph letters.<sup>247</sup> In the letters penned by secretaries, Christian III sometimes appears as “Gracious King” and sometimes as “Gracious heartily beloved father”, but he is also addressed as “Your Grace”.<sup>248</sup> Even if the material defines narrow limits for the comparisons that can be made between autograph and non-autograph letters, these examples suggest that the electress was slightly less formal in her autograph letters.

Regardless of the grey zones that characterized the spectrum between autograph and non-autograph letters, Anna’s frequent apologies for not sending handwritten letters as well as her numerous references to smaller autograph notes reveal that, although numerous, the letters that are preserved in the letter-books constitute only a portion of the letters she sent and that at least some addressees also received handwritten notes.

The frequent usage of secretaries meant that the electress was almost continually surrounded by at least one secretary. There are also examples of the first half of a letter having been written by one hand and the second by another, and of drafts being written by one hand and later additions/corrections added by another.<sup>249</sup> Although one finds drafted

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<sup>245</sup> “... Hertz lieber bruder ...”, see for example Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Lochau 30 Nov. 1558, RA TKUA, pk. 40-10 2nd folder; Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, without place 31 Jan. 1559, RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 2nd folder; and Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 18 July 1566, RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>246</sup> See for example Anna to Frederik (II, before the death of Christian III), Lochau 17 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 18 b – 19 a; Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 4 Feb. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 92 b – 93 a (first letter after Christian III’s death); Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Annaburg 18 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 30 b – 31 a; and Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 3 Aug. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 176 b – 178 a (the last letter Anna sent to Frederik II before she died).

<sup>247</sup> See for example Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden 2 Jan. 1555, RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 1st folder; Anna to Christian III, Dresden 19 May [1556?], RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 1st folder; and Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Frankfurt a. M. 14 March 1558, RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

<sup>248</sup> “Gracious King” is a somewhat inadequate translation of “Durchleuchtiger konig”, the phrase one finds in some of Anna’s non-autograph letters to Christian. See for example Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden 3 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 10 a – b; Dresden 10 June 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 56 a – b; and Lieberswerda 20 July 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 73 a – 74 a.

<sup>249</sup> See for example the letter from Anna to Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Dresden 10 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 12 a – 14 a; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Torgau 5 Aug. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 181 b – 182 b (penned by one secretary and corrected by another); Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Schweinitz 16 Oct. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 58 c; Anna to unidentified addressee (a princely woman,

letters that have been penned by more than one secretary, most of the electress's letters were penned by either Hans Jenitz or Johannes Appenfelder. These two secretaries had almost unlimited access to the electoral couple.<sup>250</sup> Appenfelder entered the service of the electress later and although he is referred to as "her" secretary, she continued to prefer that Hans Jenitz – who also was responsible for August's correspondence<sup>251</sup> – prepare her letters. In the late-1570s she requested his presence and assistance because "nobody can prepare our letters and replies according to our liking as well as you".<sup>252</sup>

The electress's praise of Jenitz testifies to her appreciation of his work, but it also suggests that the secretaries often drafted the letters more or less independently. While the electress may have provided general instructions, she may not have dictated all of the letters that were sent in her name. Discussing the correspondence of the Saxon Keeper of the Treasury (*Kammermeister*) Hans Harrer, Georg Müller proposed that Harrer only drafted the letters when they were of particular importance and that he relied on the assistance of scribes and secretaries for the larger part of his correspondence,<sup>253</sup> and James Daybell has presented a similar hypothesis in his analysis of letter-writing by English noblewomen.<sup>254</sup> There is reason to believe that this also is true for the electress's correspondence: in one of the hundreds of letters to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Anna apologizes for the delay of her reply and explained, "although we instructed our scribe to answer Your Beloved's first letter, [it has not been done] because the courier who brought it here never gave it to him".<sup>255</sup> Yet, although Anna may have delegated the preparation of her letters, her request for Jenitz also demonstrates that the electress wanted the letters to comply with her preferences and that she recognized the importance of language and its conventions.<sup>256</sup> The frequent corrections that appear in the margins of Anna's letter-books

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perhaps Sidonia), Sitzeroda 12 Nov. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 68 a; and Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Sitzeroda 16 Nov. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 69 a.

<sup>250</sup> See the observations in Müller (1893) and Müller (1894), here p. 70.

<sup>251</sup> Hasse (2000), pp. 271-278.

<sup>252</sup> "... uns niemand die Briefe und Antworten nach unserem Gefallen besser stellen un machen kann als Du ...", Anna to Hans Jenitz, 25 Feb. 1578, DrHSA Kop. 307, fol. 82; see also Müller (1983); Ohnsorge (1940), p. 177; von Weber (1865), p. 25.

<sup>253</sup> Müller (1894), pp. 69-70.

<sup>254</sup> Daybell (2001b), pp. 64-67. See also Fouquet (2002), pp. 171-198, who discusses the "ars dictaminis" in the context of princely correspondences.

<sup>255</sup> "... wie wohl wir vnsern Schreiber befohlen gehabt EL auff ir erstes schreiben zubeantworten, So hat sich doch der both so dasselbig anher bracht bej ime nie angeben ...", Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 77 b – 78 b.

<sup>256</sup> See for example Peter Burke's introduction to *The social history of language* (Burke (1987), pp. 1-20) where he discusses language as a "social institution" and Bourdieu's essay "The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language" in Bourdieu (1991), pp. 43-65.



suggest that she did read, correct, and approve all of the letters that were sent in her name.<sup>257</sup> At times, the electress's additions/corrections were so extensive that they were added as separate "post scriptae" or written on separate sheets and enclosed as "notes",<sup>258</sup> though the extensive "post scriptae" may also reflect a desire (on Anna's or her secretary's part) to preserve the conventional five-part structure of the letters while addressing more than one subject in the letter.

### Purposes of letters

A letter was always written for a purpose, be that a tangible request for a particular object/service or the less obvious, but very important, purpose of presenting a greeting to the addressee and his/her relatives. While the intentions inherent in the letters with specific requests are clear, the exact function and significance of the countless *Grüßbriefe* deserve attention. In order to address this, the ways in which the letters were brought from sender to recipient must also be considered.

It was not unusual that Anna began a letter to a relative or close friend with the statement that she had nothing particular to write<sup>259</sup> and that the letter was sent simply because a chance to have a letter brought to the addressee had presented itself.<sup>260</sup> Sending

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<sup>257</sup> Anna's letter to Elisabeth von Reinstein, Abbess of Quedlinburg, Dresden 24 May 1583, DrHSA Kop. 524, fol. 130 a – 131 a (original page no. 43 a – 44 a), is particularly rich in additions and corrections. The first part of the letter regards the recruitment of a court mistress and Anna expresses her views on the candidates suggested by the abbess. In the second part of the letter, Anna provides a detailed account of the "Tischteppich" (a table cloth) the Abbess has promised to have made for the electress. In the third and final paragraph Anna assures Elisabeth von Reinstein that she has interceded by August in order to find a solution for the debts the Abbess owed the Counts of Mansfeld. Hence, the discussed subjects were all matters that demanded the electress's direct involvement and the numerous (though generally minor corrections: for example, should Abbess come to Dresden immediately or wait until notified by Anna; and should the tablecloth be made with silk or not) can be viewed as the results of her feedback on the first drafted letter. A second example of a thoroughly corrected letter is Anna to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Dresden 13 April 1582, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 26 b – 27 b. In this letter Anna advises her sister how to deal with her husband's melancholic state ("betrubten Zustand!").

<sup>258</sup> See for example the extensive paragraph concerning the cancellation of a planned meeting with Sabina and Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel that was added to Anna's letter to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Augsburg 17 July 1582, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 45 a – 46 a; a similarly long paragraph in which Anna recommends her "Salz- und Rauchmeister" to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Glücksburg 18 Sep. 1582, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 58 b – 59 b. An unusually extensive (more than a full page, fol. 60 a – b) "Zettel" was also sent with the same letter. This constitutes almost a letter in its own right: Anna expresses thanks for a second letter from Elisabeth that just had been delivered. She replies to the duchess's inquiries concerning various health remedies that were particularly suited for children, and expresses the hope that Elisabeth will help convince the Danish noblewoman Anna Hardenberg to undertake the journey to Saxony. Steinhausen (1889), p. 138 noted that this practice of enclosing smaller notes was derived from the correspondence practices in the chancellery.

<sup>259</sup> See for example Anna to her niece Anna of Orange, Dresden 14 May 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 28 b – 29 a, "... wir [wissen] ... EL nit sondlich zuschreiben ..." and Anna to Anna of Bavaria, without date [between 18 June and 5 July 1565], DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 29 b – 30 a.

<sup>260</sup> See for example Anna to Christian III, Dresden 3 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 10 a – b.

and receiving letters was not without complications. Letters could be considerably delayed or even disappear and these problems were usually were attributed to the negligence of a courier or to bad weather conditions.<sup>261</sup> The relative unpredictability of the letters' arrival meant that Anna at times received several from a correspondent within a few days. Hence in 1565, she sent a very extensive letter to Frederik II of Denmark thanking him for the *three* letters she recently had received from him.<sup>262</sup>

The exchange of letters demanded considerable resources and, according to Esther-Beate Körber, only territorial rulers and wealthy merchants could afford the maintenance of far-reaching networks by way of messengers and couriers in early modern Europe.<sup>263</sup> But, although the princes and their consorts conducted far-reaching correspondences, this did not imply that the communication across considerable geographical distances was taken for granted. Although the institutionalization of the postal service had roots in the late-sixteenth century and particularly in the networks of various princes, Wolfgang Behringer's comprehensive study underlines that the so-called communication revolution must be situated in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Until the more permanent postal infrastructure was established, time and space could only be overcome by significant economic investments and conditioned the communication of all members of society.<sup>264</sup>

During August's rule of Saxony, the electorate developed one of the most extensive communication networks both within and beyond Saxony and the Elector was personally involved in the various attempts to improve the infrastructure within the Empire.<sup>265</sup> Even so, most letters could not be entrusted to anyone and a well-known and trusted courier required both money and time.

Most letters were sent by messengers/couriers (*Boten*) who were in the permanent service a prince. However, as a result of the expenses, many letters were also brought by other servants or acquaintances who happened to be traveling to or through the locations where relatives and friends resided.<sup>266</sup> Finally, complex circuits of communications

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<sup>261</sup> The delay of letters is mentioned in Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 17 Nov. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 114 a – 115 a; and Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, "Dondstag nach Judica" [mid-March] 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 376 a – 378 b. Regarding the influence of the weather see Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Naumburg 5 Feb. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 156 a - b; and regarding a lost letter see Anna to Ursula of Mecklenburg, Schweinitz 12 July 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 66 a – b.

<sup>262</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 29 Jan. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 6 b – 7 a.

<sup>263</sup> Körber (1997).

<sup>264</sup> Behringer (2003), pp. 643-688.

<sup>265</sup> Behringer (2003), pp. 127-176; Schäfer (1879); Müller (1894), p. 74-76.

<sup>266</sup> See for example Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 11 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 48 a – b, "... wir bedancken vnß F das E.L. vnß mit Iren schreiben bej dieser zufelligen botschaft freundlich besucht

developed parallel to this direct transmission of a letters: Anna often served as mediator of letters exchanged between the people she corresponded with. In 1559 she forwarded two letters to Dorothea of Mansfeld and explained that, “the two enclosed letters addressed to you have come to us from Berlin”.<sup>267</sup> Similarly, Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg sometimes sent the letters to her mother to Anna and asked that she please forward them to the widowed duchess,<sup>268</sup> and Anna’s grandmother Katharina of Saxony-Lauenburg sometimes used Anna as a conduit for the transmission of her letters.<sup>269</sup>

The expensive and complicated process of delivering a letter helps explain why Anna and her correspondents rarely let a chance to send a greeting to friends and relatives go by – even if they did not have specific news for the addressee. A small note in one of Anna’s letter-books summarizes the intention of such greetings,

On 18 June, before the Electress departed from Dresden, her Princely Grace sent Duke Heinrich of Braunschweig[-Wolfenbüttel] a large glass of *aqua vita* and a friendly letter in which she asked that His Princely Grace remain the steadfast and good friend of Her Princely Grace’s husband and [of her] brother.<sup>270</sup>

This brief passage reveals several important aspects of the practice of corresponding. First of all, it is clear that that central purpose of this (and similar letters) was to (re-)confirm and thus maintain loyalty. Yet, Anna does not do that simply for herself and is also linking her relatives to the addressee. In this note the electress appears as the provider of the *aqua vita* (which was intended to provide strength and longevity to the recipient, thereby expression her care for him) *and* as the one who has a brother and a husband who both desire the duke’s friendship. In other words, she is employing her particular position as a member of two dynasties to reinforce the ties between them.

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haben ...”; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Torgau 26 Nov. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 63 a – b, in which Anna explains that this letter was to be delivered by the Danish delegate Caspar Paslich (-1597), who was on his way from Saxony to Denmark.

<sup>267</sup> “... Beiligenden zweij schreiben [an euch haltend] seind vns von Berlin zu kommen ...”, Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 3 Feb. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 91 b – 92 b.

<sup>268</sup> See Anna’s letter to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Schwarzenberg 20 April 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 97 a – b.

<sup>269</sup> This appears from Anna’s letter to her mother-in-law Catharina of Saxony, Dresden 17 Sep. 1560, DrHSA Kop 509, fol. 144 a – b. See also the examples provided by Steinhausen (1889), pp. 135-136.

<sup>270</sup> “... denn 18. Junij Ehe dan die Churfürstin ... von Dresden vorruckt Haben Ire F.G. Hertzogen Heinrich zu Braunschwig Ein gross glass mitt Aqua Vitæ neben einem freundtlichenn schreiben darinnen diese ... bitte ... , das Sein F.G. Irer F.Gn Herr Gemahels vnd auch Bruders bestendiger gutter freundt seinn vnd bleiben wolte”, note by secretary (presumably Hans Jenitz), June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 29 a. Heinrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1489-1568) was a brother of Anna’s mother’s mother.

A few years later, Anna expressed her gratitude for a recently received letter to Margaretha of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen-Herzberg (1518-1567). In this brief reply, the electress acknowledged that the duchess's letter had been sent with the same purpose,

We understand from Your Beloved, and cordially accept with gratitude, that Your Beloved visits us with Your letter in order to maintain and enhance the friendship between us.<sup>271</sup>

Both this letter and the note concerning Anna's letter to Duke Heinrich suggest that it was the act of sending the letter that mattered. This also appears in the electress's numerous New Year greetings: in 1577, she sent the very same New Year letter was sent to at least twelve addressees (relatives, friends, clients, and servants).<sup>272</sup>

When a *Grüßsbrief*, a New Year letter, a letter of condolences, or related genres of letters were sent, the norms prescribed exactly what the letter was supposed contain and it seems that there were few expectations of originality. This, however, does not in any way imply that the letters were insignificant but only that their significance lies in the act of sending the letter and must be assessed in the context of the relationship that existed between sender and addressee.

It has already been stressed that reciprocity is a key factor for understanding the social relationships that are reflected in Anna's correspondence. However, the letters also reveal that this reciprocity was expected on numerous levels. Above it was demonstrated that Anna asked her brother to send her an autograph note in return for the letter she had penned to him. In the same way, the sender of a letter expected the very act of having sent the letter to be reciprocated and receiving a letter implied a duty to send a reply.<sup>273</sup> If a letter did not elicit the desired and expected reply, it potentially endangered the continuance of the particular relationship. It seems that Anna only considered herself in a position to reprimand her very closest and youngest female relatives for not writing and, even then, her admonishment had to be phrased very carefully. When Anna and August's niece Anna (the daughter of Agnes and Moritz of Saxony) married Wilhelm of Orange and left Saxony in 1561, the electress immediately initiated a correspondence with her. However, less than a year after her departure, there were signs of negligence in the young princess's

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<sup>271</sup> "... Wir verstehen von EL[,] ... [und] nehmen auch zu freundtlichenn danck an, das EL vnß zu erhaltung vnd mehrung vnser beiderseits freuntschaft mit Irem schreiben freundtlich ersuchen ...", Anna to Margaretha of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen-Herzberg, Dresden 9 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 264 a – b.

<sup>272</sup> DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 3 a – b. See also the draft for a second New Year letter addressed to seven different addressees, Dresden [no day given] Jan. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 112 a.

<sup>273</sup> See Daybell (2001b), pp. 69-70 for a similar argument.

communication with her aunt. When August received a letter from Wilhelm of Orange, Anna confronted her niece with the fact that she had not used the same courier to bring a letter to her. Although the electress expressed her readiness to attribute this mistake to the possibility that the niece had not known about the courier, or that the courier had been sent in such haste that she had no time to write, she nevertheless stressed that it could be taken as a sign that the young princess had forgotten about her aunt or, equally troublesome, that she simply did not want to write to her. Consequently, Anna expected to receive a letter from her niece at the very first chance.<sup>274</sup> The young princess took note of her aunt's admonition and a few weeks later Anna thanked her niece for the three letters that had arrived from her during a very short time.<sup>275</sup> After Anna's own daughter Elisabeth married and moved to the Palatinate, the electress also sent very direct requests for letters to Elisabeth.<sup>276</sup>

The electress faced other difficulties when more distant relatives or friends did not maintain the regular correspondence or follow the unwritten rules of reciprocating a letter. This is revealed in an exchange with her sister-in-law Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach. On 9 September 1565 Anna replied to the letter she recently had received from her sister-in-law Emilia. One month later (8 October) Anna's eldest son died and a few days later the condolences began arriving in Dresden.<sup>277</sup> When Emilia only expressed her compassion to August and asked that he convey her condolences to Anna, the electress did not know how or whether to respond. In the reply that was prepared to Emilia, Anna expressed her gratitude for the compassion and explained her sorrows, but below the drafted letter, a secretary added, "Note. The Electress vacillated sending this letter because the Margravine had not written herself".<sup>278</sup> Hence, Anna hesitated to send the letter to Emilia because it was not "her turn" and the margravine's failure to express her sympathy directly to Anna made her question their relationship.

The examples discussed in this section have been selected with a view to disclosing the purposes of the – seemingly – most insignificant letters and the fundamental mechanism

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<sup>274</sup> Anna to Anna of Orange, Crottendorf 20 July 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 43 a.

<sup>275</sup> Anna to Anna of Orange, Frankfurt a. M. 23 Nov. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 64 b – 65 a.

<sup>276</sup> See for example Anna to Elisabeth, Schellenberg 7 Jan. 1571, Kop. 514, fol. 194 b – 195 b.

<sup>277</sup> The first appears to have been from Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar; already on 12 Oct. 1565 Anna thanked her for the compassion she had expressed, Anna to Dorothea Susanna, Dresden 12 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 48 b - 49 a.

<sup>278</sup> "No[ita] diss schreiben hat die Churfürstin ausgehen zulassen bedenck getrag weil die Marggreuin selbst nichts geschribenn", Anna to Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Torgau 26 Nov. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 62 a – b.

of reciprocity that structured the correspondence. Returning then to the five-part typology presented above, the electress frequent requests and instructions to servants and employees, as well as the many intercessions, can be viewed as deriving from the electress's elevated position in both the household and the territory and as expressions of her efforts to fulfill the more tangible responsibilities she had as *Haus-* and *Landesmutter*. The purposes of the other three types of letters are perhaps best conceptualized as expressions of the ways in which social relationships were maintained and practiced in order to retain their value. As Natalie Zemon Davis has stressed in her discussion of the early modern self, "to be" was to belong – that is, to be part of groups.<sup>279</sup> Both Davis and numerous other scholars have stressed that in early modern Europe, it was particularly the belonging to family and kin that had this ability to empower individuals.<sup>280</sup> However, as demonstrated by Pierre Bourdieu, no group – not even a family – is a given, and the individual's belonging has to be actively and continuously reconfirmed. This is primarily done by continual exchanges that (re-)confirm the existence of a group and the obligations inherent in the role(s) ascribed to the individuals within the group.<sup>281</sup> In this respect, the continual exchange of letters was a practice that contributed significantly to the maintenance of social bonds. Bourdieu emphasized that the exchanges consisted of favors and objects, but he also mentions language, particularly the social and emotional reciprocity implied in language. Departing from these observations on the potential usages of language, the next section addresses the roles played by the often very formalized language that characterizes the electress's correspondence.

### **Ritualized language**

All of the letters Anna sent and almost all of the letters she received were written in German. German was the language she had grown up with and, although she clearly knew some Danish, her command of it waned during her life in Saxony. In 1561 she expressed her appreciation of the letters she received in Danish from her sister's court mistress, "because there is no other Danish writing that we read and understand better than yours".<sup>282</sup> However, twenty years later, the electress asked the Danish noblewoman Anna Hardenberg

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<sup>279</sup> Davis (1986), pp. 53-63.

<sup>280</sup> This has been brilliantly demonstrated by Sabean (1987). See also David Gaunt's essay "Thin Lines or Thick Blue Blood" (Gaunt (2001), pp. 257-287).

<sup>281</sup> Bourdieu (1972/1977); Bourdieu (1983).

<sup>282</sup> "... deine brieue seint vns ... angenehm das wir keine andere denische schrifft besser lesen vnd vorstehen können als deine ...", Anna to Margrethe Valkendorf, Berlin 18 Dec. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 206 a – b.

to write to her in German, “because we almost have forgotten the Danish language [and therefore] must spend a long time on your letters before we understand them properly”.<sup>283</sup>

Due to the overwhelming dominance of the German language throughout Anna’s correspondence, the following observations focus exclusively on the German letters. In these letters, one recognizes several the traits that were described by Ingeborg Klettke-Mengel in her detailed analysis of the language that was used in the correspondence of Elisabeth of Braunschweig-Calenberg and Albrecht of Prussia: the very individual and changing orthography that often seems to reflect dialects, the frequent blends of high- and low-German, and the stylistic traits that suggest an influence of the contemporary theological literature.<sup>284</sup>

In contrast to the letters penned by secretaries, several of the autograph letters sent to or by Anna are characterized by a either partial or complete lack of punctuation. Some letters do not contain one single period or comma. In these texts, the sentences and the rhythm of the text are created by repetitions of specific expressions, most frequently a formal address of the recipient. Hence, in one (albeit relatively long) letter from Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna the phrase “most heartily beloved mother” (*hertzallerlibeste frawmutter*) is repeated thirteen times.<sup>285</sup> The same phrase recurs numerous times in all of Elisabeth’s letters and, while underlining the relationship between her and her mother, it also was Elisabeth’s way of defining sentences.<sup>286</sup>

Elisabeth’s younger brother Christian, the later Elector of Saxony, used a similar phrase only in the first sentence of his autograph letters. The letters he sent to August before 1578 were written in Latin, but the ones to his mother in German. Regardless of which language he wrote in, the sentences are defined by punctuation, although no

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<sup>283</sup> “... weill vns d denische sprache fast aus gefall das wir eine gutte Zeit Zubring müssen ehe dan wir deine briue recht verstehen können ...”, Anna to Anna Hardenberg, Dresden 27 June 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 46 a.

<sup>284</sup> Klettke-Mengel (1976), pp. 17-18. The influences of dialects appear most clearly when the autograph letters of spouses are compared: Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel wrote “hochgeporne” and “erpotten” whereas his wife Sabina (born in Württemberg) wrote “hochgeborne” and “erbotten”; Wilhelm also used “ai” where Sabina used “ei” or “ey”: he wrote “ainikaitt”, “angezaigt”, “baiden” and she wrote, “gesundheyt”, “zeit” and “hey!” (see the letters in DrHSA Loc. 8529/2, pp. 13 and 33). In the letters written by Anna’s daughter, Elisabeth and her husband Johann Casimir, one can find similar differences. She wrote “drew” and “dagen”, he generally “treu” and “tagen”; she wrote “bitten” and he “pitten”, she wrote “bergen”, he “pergen”; she wrote “vernomen” or “vernum(m)en” and he “vnomen”, “vnohmen” or “vnhomen” (examples can be found in DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 7, 10, 101, 108, 132, 138, 140, 141 and 152).

<sup>285</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 9 Feb. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 135 a – b.

<sup>286</sup> See for example Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 4 Jan. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 243 a – b, in which the phrase is used ten times. In the letters to August the phrase *hertzallerlibeste herrvater* appears with an equal frequency, see DrHSA Loc. 8514/4.

systematic distinction between commas and periods can be found.<sup>287</sup> Only a few autograph letters from Christian's wife Sophie to Anna have been preserved. However, as in Elisabeth's letters, the expression "hertzlibeste fraw Mutter" usually indicates that a new sentence is to begin.<sup>288</sup>

While the partial punctuation appears to be gendered, it does not imply that the language employed by the women is closer to the spoken language and provides access to a gendered spontaneity as some scholars have argued.<sup>289</sup> In one instance Klettke-Mengel compared parts of Elisabeth of Braunschweig's letters to sermons<sup>290</sup> and, although she does not explore these links further and instead stressed the alleged oral traits of the language, the parallel to the sermons seems more accurate. By way of this comparison, the language is associated to a particular style that perhaps best can be described by the rather maladroit expression: "a written, spoken language". Analyzing the relationship between speech and writing in the Lutheran tradition, Jan Lindhardt has argued that Luther's writings and the ensuing Lutheran literature in general was decisively shaped by the ideals of orality that characterized the rhetorical traditions of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>291</sup> The large majority of the literature listed in the inventory of Anna's library consisted of devotional texts written by Luther and his followers and similar observations have been made in studies of other Lutheran princesses and noblewomen.<sup>292</sup> It therefore seems reasonable to consider the women's writing in this context and *not* as spontaneous expressions.

This interpretation gains credence when the language of the letters is considered in relation to the prevailing views of rituals. Defining the core traits of ritual behavior, Edward Muir writes that, "The repetition of gestures and formulaic statement is, of course,

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<sup>287</sup> See DrHSA Loc. 8516/3 and Loc. 8538/1; the first volume contains the early letters written to August in Latin and German to the father, as well as a number of letters to Anna, which all are in German. In the latter volume all letters are in German from Christian and his wife Sophie (1568-1622, born of Brandenburg) to Anna or August.

<sup>288</sup> Sophie of Saxony to Anna, Annaburg 27 June 1583, DrHSA Loc. 8538/1, p. 1; Dresden 5 Aug. 1583, DrHSA Loc. 8538/1, p. 7; and Dresden 30 Aug. 1583, DrHSA Loc. 8538/1, p. 10.

<sup>289</sup> See especially Bastl (2004), pp. 102-105. Similar, but more restrained, conclusions were drawn by Klettke-Mengel (1976), pp. 18 and 28, who referred to Steinhausen (1889), p. 121.

<sup>290</sup> Klettke-Mengel (1976), p. 19

<sup>291</sup> Lindhardt (1989), pp. 118-121. See also James Daybell's introduction to *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (Daybell (2001a), p. 6), for a similar observation of the humanist influence on the English letter-writing manuals.

<sup>292</sup> Regarding Anna's library, see Hasse (2000), pp. 260-270. For analyses other libraries/reading of devotional literature among princely and noble women see Klettke-Mengel (1986), pp. 82-89; Nickus Moore (1991), pp. 291-315; Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 81-109; Bepler (2001), pp. 47-62.



one of the attributes that distinguishes ritual from more spontaneous behavior”.<sup>293</sup> Hence, the very same traits that have been interpreted as oral vestiges and expressions of spontaneity (the frequent usages of formulae and repetitions) suddenly appear to represent the opposite and to be the result of meticulously acquired skills. In other words, it appears as a *ritualized language*.

This notion of ritualized language has significant implications. Most importantly perhaps, a ritualized language is inevitably shared among a group; if not, it simply does not serve its communicative purpose. However, the particular way of using the language is also confined to a specific group and it thereby sets this group apart from others.<sup>294</sup> Hence, as argued by Jörg Rogge, shared discourses (and, as he demonstrates in his study of the House of Wettin, the particular discourses that develop within a dynasty and its network) thereby have the power to generate and maintain collectives.<sup>295</sup>

The more specific purposes of formulae – or ritualized language – only can be revealed in an analysis of individual examples and this will be considered throughout the ensuing chapters. However, some introductory observations are pertinent in order to demonstrate how the ritualized language that is employed in the electress’s correspondence can enable the language to serve several purposes simultaneously. As summarized by Edward Muir, a ritual is at once a model (that presents standards) and a mirror (that presents “the world as it is understood to be”).<sup>296</sup> And this also, holds true for the ritualized language in Anna’s letters. The observations will center on two points: (i) the ritualized language’s ability to prescribe by way of describing; and (ii) the usages of kinship terminology and the purposes of this practice.

Writing to her eighteen-year-old son Christian, Anna thanked him for his recent letter and wrote “Your Beloved does well and pleases us when You write to us often”.<sup>297</sup> With this phrase, the electress both praised her son for having written frequently and instructed him to do so in the future. By pointing out that it is “right” and appreciated, she stresses his duty and her expectations. A related example can be found in a letter Anna sent to Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, the fiancé of her daughter Dorothea, during the

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<sup>293</sup> Muir (1997), p. 230.

<sup>294</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu’s essay “The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language”, in Bourdieu (1991), particularly pp. 62-65, for a discussion of linguistic competence as a means of distinction.

<sup>295</sup> Rogge (2002b), pp. 354-377.

<sup>296</sup> Muir (1997), pp. 2-6; here Muir is relying on the work of the anthropologist Don Handelman. See particularly Handelman (1990).

<sup>297</sup> “... thun Di. Recht vnd vnß zu ... gutten gefallen, das sie [vns] zum offtern ... schreiben ...”, Anna to Christian, Duke of Saxony, Salza 26 March 1578, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 202 b (original page no. 36 b).

preparations for his and Dorothea's wedding. The preparations for the wedding had been difficult and it had proved to be a particular challenge to agree on a date that would allow all of the invited relatives to attend. Having addressed these questions, Anna closed the letter with the following phrase, "If Your Beloved can do anything else to further the desired outcome, *we have no doubt* that You will not fail to do so" [my emphasis].<sup>298</sup> When she articulated her confidence in Heinrich Julius's readiness to do anything within his powers to finalize the arrangements, she implicitly told him to make sure to do just that. This prescriptive usage of the expression, "without doubt/we do not doubt" is even clearer in the condolences Anna sent to the Danish noblewoman Birgitte Gøye upon the death of her husband Herluf Trolle. Expressing her compassion with the widow, Anna continued,

Because the Almighty desired it like this and [because] it doubtlessly was done to further the salvation of [your late husband], *we do not doubt* that you willingly and patiently will commend this to God and mourn in accordance with Christian moderation [my emphasis].<sup>299</sup>

Here Anna consoles Birgitte that her husband's death was an expression of God's will and she admonishes her to be a good Christian and keep her mourning under control.

The force of the expression "without doubt" and the authority it implied is underlined by the fact that Anna never used it in the letters she sent to her parents. Towards them she could only present a plea (*eine Bitte*).<sup>300</sup> The pleas to her parents were generally presented as "daughterly pleas", thereby emphasizing her willing submission to their authority and appealing to her parents' duty to protect her.<sup>301</sup> Yet, Anna did use the formula "we do not doubt ..." frequently in her correspondence with her brother Frederik II and continued to do so after he was the head of her dynasty.<sup>302</sup> As it was discussed in relation to the less formal language she used in the autograph letters to him, this continual usage of the phrase

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<sup>298</sup> "... Do ... El zu solchen ende weitter was guttes werde thun konnen[,] zweiffeln wir gar nich Sie werd an Ihr disfals nichts vnter lassen ...", Anna to Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Annaburg 13 July 1585 DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 174 a.

<sup>299</sup> "... Weill es aber dem Almechtige als gefallenn vnd sond zweifel zu befurderung seiner schlenng seligkait geschehen, *So zweiffeln wir nicht* du werdest solchs dem getrewen lieben Goth mit gedult gehorsamblich anheim stellen auch in deiner traurigkaiet ... Christliche masse halten ..." [my emphasis], Anna to Birgitte Goje, Schwarzenberg 31 Aug. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 41 b.

<sup>300</sup> See the numerous letters (both autograph and those penned by secretaries) to Christian III of Denmark in RA TKUA, pk. 40-10, 1st-2nd folder. The majority of the letters to Dorothea are preserved in DrHSA Kop. 509-515. In these she occasionally use the more careful phrasing.

<sup>301</sup> This will be discussed at greater length in chapter 4. See also Alison Wall's discussion of "deference and defiance in women's letters of the Thynne family" in Wall (2001), pp. 77-93.

<sup>302</sup> See for example Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 28 July 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 104 a - b; and Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Schweinitz 1 July 1559, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder (other examples are discussed in chapter 4).

“we do not doubt” – and its implied authority – disclose the complex interaction of the categories that structured their relationship: although he was a man and the head of her natal dynasty, she nevertheless continued to be his elder sister.

Anna’s usage of the particular formula “we do not doubt” is intrinsically connected to the way in which she positions herself vis-à-vis the addressee.<sup>303</sup> This act of positioning oneself by way of language becomes even more pronounced when the usages and functions of kinship terms, or perhaps more accurately, the broader “relationship terms”, are examined.<sup>304</sup>

The electress’s correspondence is inundated with kinship terms. At this point, attention is limited to a few basic traits that serve to demonstrate the fundamental functions that were performed by this ritualized dimension of the language. The very first sentence of (almost) all the letters that were drafted in Anna’s name specified her relationship to the addressee in accordance with the letter-writing manuals. For example, if the letter was addressed to a theologians, it began with “Dignified and high-learned”,<sup>305</sup> if it was addressed to a noble servant it began “Honorable, dear, [and] worthy”,<sup>306</sup> and if addressed to a commoner the first phrase was “Dear [and] worthy”.<sup>307</sup>

However, when the letters were addressed to relatives, this first sentence provided further details: Anna often addressed her brother Frederik II of Denmark as “Dear, most heartily beloved Lord [and] brother and friend”,<sup>308</sup> Elisabeth of Mecklenburg was greeted

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<sup>303</sup> Regarding the act of positioning oneself (and thus the addressee), see Wall (2001), pp. 77-93, and Lynne Magnusson’s linguistic analysis of Elizabethan Women’s suitors’ letters, Magnusson (2004), pp. 51-66.

<sup>304</sup> See Jones (1990), p. 3 for brief reference to the term “relationship terms” and its implications. For more general reflections on kinship terms, see Lévi-Strauss (1958/1963), pp. 31-54; Jones (1990), pp. 1-13; Gaunt (2001), pp. 261-263; Duranti (2004).

<sup>305</sup> “Wirdiger vnd Hochgelernter ...”, see for example Anna to Hieronymus Weller, Senftenberg 9 Oct. 1566, Kop. 512, fol. 145 a – b; Anna to Nicolai Selnecker, Mühlberg 18 Sep. 1575, Kop. 518, fol. 91 b – 92 a, and Anna to Paul Vogel, 8 July 1581; DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 136 a (original page no. 44 a).

<sup>306</sup> “Erbar(e) liebe(r) besonder(e) ...”, see for example Anna to Agnes Löser, Dresden 9 Jan. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 93 a (original page no. 3 a); Anna to Elisabeth Morenholt, court mistress in Celle, Dresden 24 May 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 37 – 38 a;

<sup>307</sup> “Liebe(r) besonder(e) ...”, see for example Anna to the administrator of the school in Pforta, Dresden 10 Feb. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 106 b (original page no. 14 b); Anna to various local administrators (*Ambtsverwaltern*), Dresden 13 Feb. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 107 a – b (original page no. 15 a – b)

<sup>308</sup> “Freundtlicher hertzViel geliebter her Bruder vnd Geuatter”, Anna to Frederik II, Mühlberg 21 Feb. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 108 b – 109 b (original page no. 16 b – 17 a), other examples in DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 10 b – 11 a; DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 61 a – 62 b; and DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 9 a – b. The term “Gevatter” represents difficulties, which will be addressed below, see the very extensive discussion the expression in *DWB*, vol. 6, column 4640-4680.

as “Dear, beloved aunt, sister, and friend”,<sup>309</sup> and Anna’s daughter Elisabeth as “Dear, heartily beloved daughter”.<sup>310</sup>

But the specification of relationships is not limited to the *salutatio* of the letters. Throughout Anna’s letters, August never appears as anything but “our heartily beloved lord and husband” and Anna refers to the husbands of her female relatives in a similar ways; she is delighted to hear that her cousin Dorothea of Braunschweig-Herzberg (1531-1595) and her “beloved lord and husband” are well.<sup>311</sup> Writing to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Hans (the Elder) of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg is described as, “the highborn prince, Your Beloved’s dear brother and our beloved cousin Hans the Elder, Duke of Holstein”.<sup>312</sup> When she referred to her sister-in-law in a letter to Martin Pfinzing in Nuremberg, she wrote, “the highborn princess our beloved relative, sister and kin Emilia, born Duchess of Saxony”.<sup>313</sup> And referring to her aunt Elisabeth of Mecklenburg in a letter to the administrator of Güstrow, the duchess appeared as “the highborn princess our beloved aunt, sister and kin, Elisabeth born of the Royal house of Denmark, Duchess in Mecklenburg”.<sup>314</sup>

Earlier it was mentioned that Anna’s daughter Elisabeth repeated the phrase “most heartily beloved mother” thirteen times in one letter and, although this is a rather extreme case, it shows how the writer through the repeated act of relating oneself to the addressee positions both herself and the addressee in clearly defined social roles. Similarly, Anna’s detailed presentations of other relatives in the examples referred above, allowed her to situate herself and the other individuals within the complex dynastic figuration. This way,

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<sup>309</sup> “Freundtliche I. Muhme Schwest vnd Geuatter”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 25 May 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 123 b – 124 b (original page no. 31 b – 32 b). Again the translation of “Gevatter” represents difficulties, as does the term “Muhme” (see Grimm, vol. 12, fol. 2644-2647). Both will be discussed below.

<sup>310</sup> “Freundtliche liebe tochter”. Sometimes the phrase “vnd Geuatter” was added at the end of the first sentence and sometimes “liebe” was replaced with “hertzieliebe”. See for example Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Torgau 28 May 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 178 b – 179 a (original page no. 26 b – 27 a); Annaburg 28 Feb. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 18 b – 19 a; Dresden 16 April 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 89 a – b.

<sup>311</sup> The references to August as “vnsrer hertzieliebster Herr Gemahel” and to the husbands of female relatives as “dselben geliebten herr vnd Gemahel” are endless, see for example Anna to Dorothea of Braunschweig-Herzberg, Annaburg 17 Sep. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 55 a – 56 a; Anna to Sophie of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Glücksburg 20 Sep. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 56 b – 57 a; and Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg, Colditz 17 Nov. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 69 b – 70 a.

the same expression in letters to female Examples

<sup>312</sup> “... der Hochgeborner Furst Irer F Lieben Bruder vnd vnsrer geliebten vetter herr Johansen des Eltern herzogen zu Holstein ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 24 Oct. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 64 b – 65 b.

<sup>313</sup> “... die hochgeborne furstin vnsrer fl ... schwester vnd gevatter fraw Emilia geborne hertzogin zu Saxen etc”, Anna to Martin Pfinzing, Dresden 11 March 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 122 b.

<sup>314</sup> “... die hochgeborne Furstin v F I. Muhme Schwester vnd gefatter fraw Elisabeth geborn aus Kö. Stam In Denemarck Hertzogin zu Meckelbkg etc”, Anna to the Administrator (*Ambtmann*) in Güstrow, Annaburg 15 June 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 70 a – b.

the belonging to others (individuals and groups) is emphasized and at the same time, the complex structures of dynastic and social relations are at once being organized. In addition, the rank-specific forms of address and the frequent references to the rank of other individuals who are mentioned in the letters constituted implicit reconfirmations of the existing social order.

In the letters to and from Anna, one also sees that distant relatives or close friends often were brought closer by language by referring to all relatives and close friends as *Muhme* (feminine), *Oheim* (masculine) or *Gevatter(-in)*. Among the countless addressees who Anna refers to as *Muhme*, one finds: Sabina of Hessen-Kassel (1532-1592, born of Württemberg), Elisabeth Anna of Brandenburg (1563-1607, born of Anhalt), and Anna of Bavaria.<sup>315</sup> In all three cases, the kinship between the electress and the addressee was, at best, very remote. Yet, the electress also used *Muhme* to refer to her very closest relatives (her aunt Elisabeth of Mecklenburg and her sister-in-law Sophie of Denmark). She did not, however, use it to her sister Dorothea or to her daughter Elisabeth. The electress's usage of *Oheim* (or sometimes *Ohm*) spanned equally wide: she used it to address the husband of her father's sister Ulrich of Mecklenburg, her mother's brother Franz of Saxony-Lauenburg,<sup>316</sup> Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel,<sup>317</sup> with whom she was distantly related through her maternal grandmother, as well as several others.

Until the thirteenth century *Muhme* was generally used to refer only to "mother's sister" and *Oheim* designated "mother's brother".<sup>318</sup> However, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the usages of both terms change and became increasingly common titles also for paternal relatives and affines. According to William Jervis Jones, the members of the ruling dynasties of the fifteenth century used *Muhme* to denote a an increasingly broader range of relationships ("mother's mother", "mother's brother's daughter", "sister's daughter", "mother's mother's sister's daughter", "brother's daughter", "mother's sister's daughter", "father's brother's daughter", "father's father's sister"). Gradually, *Muhme* simply came to mean "female relative".<sup>319</sup> The semantic development of

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<sup>315</sup> Anna to Anna of Bavaria, Dresden 31 Dec. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 206 a – b (original page no. 54 a – b). The Duchess of Bavaria appears to be the only Catholic addressee to whom Anna used this term.

<sup>316</sup> See for example Anna to Franz of Saxony-Lauenburg, Annaburg 10 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 5 a – b.

<sup>317</sup> See for example Anna to Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Annaburg 23 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 10 a – 11 b.

<sup>318</sup> Even in the few cases when it was used differently, it always denoted maternal relatives, see Jones (1990), pp. 27-42

<sup>319</sup> Jones (1990), pp. 131-139, especially the examples listed on p. 135.

*Oheim* shows similar traits, although the meaning “mother’s brother” remained dominant.<sup>320</sup> However, Anna’s correspondence reveals that neither *Muhme* nor *Oheim* necessarily implied biological kinship. In fact, her sister’s daughter was addressed *not* as *Muhme* but as “daughter”.<sup>321</sup> It thus seems that *Muhme* in her writing often designated a more remote or even symbolic kinship and that it was employed in the same way as “brother”, “sister”, “daughter” and “son” were used between ruling princes and their consorts.<sup>322</sup>

The term *Gevatter(-in)* was used even more frequently than *Muhme* and *Oheim* and, even if it appears to have been used very consciously, no clear pattern can be detected in its application. In the draft letter from Anna to Eleonora of Anhalt (1552-1618), the first sentence was, “Dear beloved *Muhme* and daughter”, but during the revisions of the letter, *Gevatter* was added.<sup>323</sup> In a letter addressed to Anna’s sister’s daughter Sophie of Brandenburg-Ansbach (1563-1639), the phrase “Sister and *Gevatter*” was replaced with “daughter”.<sup>324</sup> These two corrections reveal the significance of the term and the rigor with which it appears to have been applied.

According to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s *Deutsches Wörterbuch* “*Gevatter(-in)*” has three main denotations: (i) the biological kinship that is expressed by the Latin terms *compater* (shared father/male ancestor) or *commatrem* (shared mother/female ancestor), and (ii) the kinship conferred by “godparenthood”. This latter form includes a bond not only between the godparents and the godchild but also between the biological parents of the child and the godparents. However, during the early modern period, the term also came to be used in the reference to (iii) neighborly friendship and/or simply friendship and, throughout the sixteenth century, the three denotations were used concurrently.<sup>325</sup>

The address to Eleonora of Anhalt shows that Anna not only used it to denote biological kinship (she and Anna were not related), though the electress did use it in reference to a number of close relatives: her brother Hans and his first wife Elisabeth,<sup>326</sup> her

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<sup>320</sup> Jones (1990), pp. 149-162.

<sup>321</sup> Anna to Sophia of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Annaburg 31 March 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 182 b – 183 b.

<sup>322</sup> See the usages throughout the correspondence and Grimm, vol. 2, column 417-421 (*Bruder*) and vol. 15, column 2594-2604 (*Schwester*).

<sup>323</sup> “Freundliche liebe muhme vnd tochter”, Anna to Eleonora of Anhalt, Mühlberg 4 Aug. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 69 a – b.

<sup>324</sup> Anna to Sophia of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Annaburg 31 March 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 182 b – 183 b.

<sup>325</sup> Grimm, vol. 15, column 2594-2604.

<sup>326</sup> Anna to Hans (the Younger) of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg, Annaburg 23 May 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 33 a – b; Weidenhain 6 Aug. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 56 a – 57 a; and Anna to Elisabeth of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg, Weidenhain 6 Aug. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 57 a – b.

sister Dorothea and her husband Wilhelm,<sup>327</sup> as well as Elisabeth and Ulrich of Mecklenburg.<sup>328</sup> Yet, she did not use it in the letters to her brother Magnus,<sup>329</sup> and only sometimes in the letters to her brother Frederik and his wife Sophie.<sup>330</sup> The fact that she did not use it consistently in the letters to Sophie is significant because she was Anna and August's goddaughter,<sup>331</sup> and it thus demonstrates that term was not used consistently to denote godparenthood either. It is also clear that Anna did not use *Gevatter(-in)* exclusively for her blood relatives. The term appears in the letters to August's sister's daughter Sidonia of Schlesien-Teschen,<sup>332</sup> but not in the formulae with which she addressed Dorothea of Braunschweig-Herzberg (born Saxony-Lauenburg (1531-1595), and a daughter of Anna's mother's brother), who is addressed as "*Muhme* and daughter".<sup>333</sup> Consequently, the only common significance of the variety of usages could be the broader term "friend". This, however, does by no means imply that it was used inadvertently.

Although the exact significance of the discussed terms: *Muhme*, *Oheim*, and *Gevatter(-in)* is not established, this brief discussion suffices to show that the terms and their ritualized usages could be employed to bring people closer. When the proximity increased, so did the implicit expectations of and commitment to loyalty and/or support. The anthropologist Bojka Milicic observed a similar pattern in the usage of kinship terms in her fieldwork and, because the references to either biological or symbolic kinship were more frequent when favors were requested, she interpreted this as a way in which the obligations inherent in kinship were emphasized.<sup>334</sup> While this instrumental usage of the kinship terms cannot be detected in Anna's correspondence, the kinship terminology could stress the "sincerity" of the close ties between her and her correspondents and thereby reinforce the same ties.

<sup>327</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Annaburg 26 June 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 44 b – 45 a; Weidenhain 6 Aug. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 58 b – 59 a; and Anna to Wilhelm of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Weidenhain 6 Aug. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 57 b – 58 b; Dresden 2 Jan. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 124 a.

<sup>328</sup> Anna to Ulrich of Mecklenburg, Annaburg 22 June 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 42 b – 44 b; and Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Annaburg 21 July 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 54 a – 55 a; Weidenhain 12 Aug. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 61 a – 63 a.

<sup>329</sup> Anna to Magnus of Livonia, Annaburg 20 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 1 a – 2 a.

<sup>330</sup> See for example: Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Annaburg 23 May 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 32 a – b; and Anna to Sophie of Denmark, Annaburg 30 Sep. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 333 a – b (original page no. 167 a – b)

<sup>331</sup> This appears from the letter from Anna to Sophie of Denmark, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 22 a – 23 a.

<sup>332</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Schlesien-Teschen, Annaburg 27 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 194 b;

<sup>333</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Braunschweig-Herzberg, Annaburg 23 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 9 a; Glücksburg 13 Sep. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 188 b – 189 a (original page no. 36 b – 37 a); and Annaburg 15 April 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 290 a – 291 a (original page no. 124 a – 125 a).

<sup>334</sup> Milicic (1998), pp. 20-21.

In the context of Anna's network, proximity and a sense of belonging was expressed and experienced not only through the ritualized language but also through the very exchanges of letters. The paper and the written words bound the individuals and groups together and emphasized their mutual obligations towards each other.<sup>335</sup> In his discussion of family correspondences, Roger Chartier wrote that these letters,

form a network that places the particular existence of each individual and his or her closest relations within the solidarities of a 'kinship front'. The exchange of letters criss-crossing between family members is a prime means of safeguarding links that distance places in jeopardy. The regular and obligatory letter demonstrates to everyone on each occasion the existence of a community that is constantly given form in the request for services, the reciprocal errands, whether of a material or sentimental kind.<sup>336</sup>

In this paragraph, Chartier summarizes that which is expressed by the ritualized usage of kinship terms in the correspondence of the Saxon electress. The same "criss-crossing between family members" and close friends is also reflected in the structural characteristics of the correspondence: the "clusters" of related addressees reveal just how dense the communication with certain interrelated individuals (primarily kin) could be.

Chartier's summary also highlights the reciprocity that characterized the relationships and he points to the very concrete and material ways in which this reciprocity became manifest. As already pointed out, reciprocity was evident in the very exchange of letters: a letter elicited a reply and an autograph letter legitimated the request to receive one. The reciprocity can be discerned even in the usage of kinship terms and this points to a second purpose of the ritualized "relationship terms". In his discussion of early modern political rituals, Edward Muir pointed out that "political rituals and ritualized politics tend to camouflage tensions, especially by representing more political harmony than may actually exist".<sup>337</sup> With this observation in mind, the kinship terms and the associated terms of endearment in Anna's correspondence can be viewed as representing greater dynastic harmony than actually existed and any breach of the norms implied that a potential disharmony may be disclosed. After Anna's daughter Elisabeth had married Johann Casimir of the Palatinate, the electress referred to him as her "son" and he addressed her as "mother". However, as the marriage began to deteriorate and tensions developed between

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<sup>335</sup> Zarri (2004), p. 45 touches upon the importance of this aspect: the words, and particularly the autograph text, compensated for the absence of the sender.

<sup>336</sup> Chartier (1991/1997), pp. 19-20.

<sup>337</sup> Muir (1997), pp. 230.



several of the involved parties, Johann Casimir once made the “mistake” of addressing Anna as “Gracious Lady” rather than the usual and expected, “gracious and heartily beloved mother”.<sup>338</sup> This did not go unnoticed and Anna replied, “we do not know how to understand that Your Beloved do not consider us worthy of any other name but Gracious Lady in Your [last] letter”.<sup>339</sup> From then on Johann Casimir did not fail to address her as “mother” and this practice endured until Anna’s death and in spite of the recurring conflicts in the marriage and between Johann Casimir and his parents-in-law.<sup>340</sup> When these forms of address were in place, the roles were clear and the associated obligations and privileges were implicitly defined. This, of course, did not imply that the unwritten rules were always respected, but it did mean that if the form of address changed, then the prescriptions for their behavior were challenged. In this respect, the ritualized usage of kinship terms at once functions as model and mirror.

The usage of the ritualized language underlines the conclusion that the significance of a letter was to a far extent the act of sending the letter. Early modern correspondents were acutely aware of the usage of “ready-made” phrases or even letters,<sup>341</sup> but this did not detract from the significance attributed to the correspondence. It was the act of preparing the letter, choosing between the available phrases, (perhaps) transmitting information and requesting or accommodating a request that mattered. In the careful selection of formulae, the sender could fine-tune the tone of a letter and this was done in consideration of the particular relationship that existed between sender and addressee.

Nevertheless, the prevalence of formulae represents difficulties. Because letters demanded restraint and because the usage of formulae was one of the most efficient ways of obtaining that, it can be difficult to disclose the subjective voice of the letter-writer/-sender. As Rosemary O’Day points out in her discussion of sixteenth-century letters from

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<sup>338</sup> According to Anna’s reply, Johann Casimir had addressed her as “Gnedigste fraw” (Anna to Johann Casimir of the Palatinate, Annaburg 3 March 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 20 b – 21 b). In both the previous and subsequent letters, the Count Palatine addressed her as “gnedigste (vnd hertz geliebte) fraw mutter”, see for example Johann Casimir to Anna, Kaiserslautern 20 May 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 195 a – b, and Heidelberg 4 May 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 10 a.

<sup>339</sup> “... [wir] wissen nicht wie wir vorstehen sollen, das EL vns inn solche Ihres schreiben keines anderenn namens würdigett als Gnedigste fraw ...”, Anna to Johann Casimir of the Palatinate, Annaburg 3 March 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 20 b – 21 b. Regrettably the letter Johann Casimir has sent Anna has not been preserved.

<sup>340</sup> Regarding the development of the marriage see Arenfeldt (2004) and chapter 9. Johann Casimir’s last to Anna was dated Heidelberg 2 March 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 245 a – 246 a, and in this she appears as “... freundliche libe fraue Muhm Mutter vnnnd geuatterin ...” and “... freundliche libe frau mutter ...”.

<sup>341</sup> The sheer frequency of formulae and the instructions in the letter-writing manuals reveal this. For an analysis of concrete examples, see Xenia von Tippelskirch’s fascinating analysis of early modern love-letters (Von Tippelskirch (2004), p. 86).

England, “the historian is faced with the almost insuperable difficulty of determining where convention ends and individual differences begin”.<sup>342</sup> However, as Anna’s reactions to Johann Casimir’s more distant form of address reveal, the recipients immediately took note of this. Hence, the letters and the formulaic language must be read with an awareness of the subtle variations. Because Anna’s correspondence is so comprehensive and coherent, this awareness can be developed through careful comparisons of subtle differences of formulae and also by viewing the individual letters in the context of the continual exchanges between sender and addressee. Consequently, a letter must be considered as both a text in its own right and as a fragment of a greater exchange. However, as stressed above, the high presence of “clusters” among the addressees (that is, individuals who were closely related to each other) imply that it often is insufficient to consider only the exchanges between two individuals. Rather, the social context in which they were embedded must also be taken into account; in other words, one must consider several simultaneously existing relationships and the analysis must therefore move between considerations of the objectified social reality and the subjectively experienced reality.<sup>343</sup>

However, because the letters are employed as sources to access the ways in which Anna and other female consorts viewed their position and its political implications, it does not suffice to consider conventions and subjectivity on the linguistic level. The interplay between the prevailing norms and the women’s own views must also be considered in relation to the ideas and actions that are described or reflected in the letters. In order to provide a basis on which this dimension of the letters can be interpreted, it is therefore necessary to examine how the position of the female consort was defined in the normative discourses of the sixteenth century. A brief analysis of selected normative literature can provide an impression of the ideals a female consort’s was expected to aspire to, and thereby facilitate an increased awareness of the women’s own reflections upon their position. This is the goal of the next chapter.

Before closing, five points should be reiterated. First of all, it is clear that a considerable part of the electress’s correspondence can be viewed as a direct function of her roles as *Haus-* and *Landesmutter*, as for example in the many letters that relate to practical matters

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<sup>342</sup> O’Day (2001), p. 130. See also Fouquet (2002), p. 173 for a similar observation, though he ascribed greater “authenticity” to the emotions expressed in letters than O’Day (see Fouquet (2002), p. 191).

<sup>343</sup> Alison Wall has demonstrated the importance of this form of contextualization in her work on the letters exchanged between the members of the English noble family Thynne, see Wall (2001), pp. 84-89. See also Arenfeldt (2004).

related to the management of the greater electoral household and a large body of supplications/intercessions. Secondly, the impressive scale of the electress's correspondence should not lead one to forget that many letters have been lost. In spite of the density of this material, it is nevertheless marked by lacunae that prohibit the satisfactory exploration of certain questions. The gaps are particularly great until the mid-1550s (that is, from Anna's early years in Saxony). Thirdly, the varying degrees to which Anna and her female correspondents participated in the preparations of the letters, be they autograph letters or letters penned by a scribe, must be recognized and considered in the individual cases. Fourthly, the considerations of the formal greetings and the ritualized language reveal that even these seemingly empty letters and phrases were significant to the social relationships they were produced within. Consequently, both the *Grüssbriefe* and the highly formulaic expressions have to be considered when letters are used as sources. Finally, it should be stressed that the sheer volume of the electress's correspondence means that only a fraction of the letters and the social relationships they reflect can be included in the analysis.



## Chapter 3

### The Ideal Consort

The goal of this chapter is to examine how the office of the female consort was defined in the Lutheran political-theological discourses of the sixteenth century. An awareness of the responsibilities and attributes of this “ideal consort” is a necessary foundation for an appreciation of ways in which the women’s own views of their position and its political significance was expressed in the thousands of letters that were sent to or by the Saxon electress. As Renate Dürr stresses in her insightful discussion of the relationship between normative sources and the social reality, norms and ideals have a significant impact upon the ways in which an individual interprets the surrounding world and his/her place within it. Moreover, by shaping the individuals’ understanding of the world around them, the same norms condition the ways in which individuals and groups shape the surrounding reality.<sup>344</sup> In the ensuing chapters (chapters 4-9), the female consorts’ views of their position and the degree to which the religious prescriptions influenced their views and actions will be examined. However, in order to do so, the prevailing norms and expectations first have to be specified, and this is the aim of this chapter.

#### The ideological horizon of a Lutheran consort

Although it is clear that the theological prescriptions co-existed with norms and traditions that developed over centuries within the ruling dynasties,<sup>345</sup> the latter half of the sixteenth century was dominated by an increased emphasis on confession-specific norms and conceptions of society. This was arguably most pronounced in the German-speaking territories where competition between the two main confessions (Catholicism and various forms of Protestantism) unfolded in close proximity to each other.

The increased confessional awareness is mirrored in the libraries that were developed by the electoral couple in Saxony. By the 1570s the electoral couple of Saxony possessed an extensive collection of books. In 1574 an inventory of the “Elector’s library” in Annaburg was compiled and lists more than 2,400 titles.<sup>346</sup> Next to this collection, Anna

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<sup>344</sup> Dürr (1998). Schorn-Schütte presents a similar argument in her discussion of Luther’s teachings on the three domains of life (see Schorn-Schütte (1998)).

<sup>345</sup> See the reference to *Hausgesetze* within the dynasties and the dynasty as a “Rechtsverband” in chapter 1.

<sup>346</sup> Hasse (2000), pp. 242-245. See also Watanabe-O’Kelley (2002), pp. 84-88. The inventory is preserved in SLUB and registered as Bibl.-Arch.I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19.

had a personal library (also in Annaburg) and when an inventory of its contents was done three years after her death it included approximately 500 titles.<sup>347</sup> The distinction between the elector's library and the electress's personal library is a first indication that the books in Anna's collection reflected her personal interests and, as demonstrated by Hans-Peter Hasse, the composition of the collection supports this claim.<sup>348</sup>

The inventory of Anna's personal library offers an impression of the range of devotional and didactic literature in which a consort could seek instructions and advice. In a tentative analysis of the composition and development of the electress's library, Hasse classifies two-thirds of the books as theological and devotional texts (bibles, sermons, prayer books, catechisms, extracts from the scriptures, church history et cetera). Luther's writings alone constituted about 10% of the entire collection. Next to the devotional literature the collection included numerous works on medicine and apothecarial knowledge (*Arzneibücher, Kräuterbücher, Herbarien*). Other genres included gardening books, cook books, emblem books, and historical works.<sup>349</sup> The composition of the electress's library corresponds closely to the book collections of her contemporary (noble) women,<sup>350</sup> and it seems reasonable to assume that it reflects a shared ideological horizon of high-ranking Protestant women within the German-speaking territories.<sup>351</sup> It was in the context of the norms and values that were expressed in these works that Anna and her fellow consorts lived and formed their own views of the social world and their position within the gender order and the political order. While this may appear to be a rather daring conclusion, the women's engagements with the printed word are confirmed by several examples.

In one of the funeral sermons that was held upon the death of Anna, the court chaplain Martin Mirus (1532-93) praised the electress for her diligent reading of the Bible and devotional texts, "Her Electoral Grace read daily in the Bible and other good books,

<sup>347</sup> SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62. The date of the inventory appears on the last page of the manuscript.

<sup>348</sup> Hasse (2000), pp. 260-270. This however, does *not* imply that the electress did not use the books that were listed in the larger library of August. By entry no. 1672 "Ordnung für die Hebammen oder Wehemütter der Stat Franckfurt am Mayen durch Adam Lönicer 1573" the following note was added "hat Meine gndst fraw empfangen den 26 Juny 1577 zur Annaburg", see SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 72 b. In addition, her reading of books which were not listed in the inventories can be documented by the content of her letters, see for example her exchange with Hieronymus Weller in 1566 (Anna to Hieronymus Weller, Senftenberg 9 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 145 a – b) concerning his *Tröstliche außlegung des III. LXXVII. vnd CXXXVII. Psalmen* (1566) that was published with a dedication to Anna. Yet, this title is not listed in any of the inventories.

<sup>349</sup> SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62. See Hasse (2000), pp. 262-270, for a summary of the theological genres represented by the titles listed in the inventory.

<sup>350</sup> Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 103-109; Niekus Moore (1987); and Niekus Moore's introduction to the facsimile edition of Conrad Porta's *Jungfrawenspiegel* (1580/1990).

<sup>351</sup> For a similar argument in relation to library inventories as sources see Raabe (1982).

and on the travels, her Electoral Grace always brought with her a chest with the best and worthiest books".<sup>352</sup> As always, the content of the early modern funeral sermons must be read with reservations (see discussion below). Already the *Sachsenspiegel*, the comprehensive medieval law code from Saxony, defined the reading of devotional literature as a characteristic female virtue,<sup>353</sup> and Mirus's statement could simply be a projection of this conventional ideal onto the deceased electress. However, there are generous testimonies in Anna's letters which confirm that her books were more than items for a collector. She and her closest female relatives and noble friends were active readers and exchanged books frequently. In April 1557 Anna received an unidentified book from her mother-in-law and she replied that she would read it diligently,<sup>354</sup> and a few months later Anna sent three copies of the Augsburg Confession to her sister-in-law Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg.<sup>355</sup> In the early 1560s, the electress provided her mother with literature on health remedies,<sup>356</sup> and after her eldest daughter Elisabeth had married and left Saxony for the Zwinglian/Calvinist Palatinate in 1570, Anna often sent her Lutheran books, which Elisabeth assured that that she would read with attentiveness.<sup>357</sup> Finally, Anna sent Martin Luther's large and small catechisms as a present to the young Anna Maria of Brandenburg on Epiphany in 1580.<sup>358</sup> Similar practices have been amply demonstrated in relation to other princely and noble women within early modern Germany and Denmark.<sup>359</sup>

In both the library inventory and the references throughout the letters two genres dominate: recipe books for health remedies and, above all, devotional literature. Next to the considerable collections of books, the princely women had direct exchanges with various theologians who authored, and frequently dedicated, books to female consorts. Johannes Luther has meticulously documented the extensive contact between Dorothea of Denmark and Johann Bugenhagen and Georg Maior, respectively, during the 1540s,<sup>360</sup> and Anna's

<sup>352</sup> "... jr Churf. Gn. ... [haben] in der Bibel vnd andern guten Büchern teglich gelesen / wie denn ihr Churf. Gn. Auch auff der Reyse stets in einer Laden die besten vnd nützen Bücher mit sich gefüret ... ", funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 60.

<sup>353</sup> Gottschalk (2003), p. 41.

<sup>354</sup> Anna to her mother-in-law Catharina of Saxony, Dresden 21 April 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 40 b.

<sup>355</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 22 July 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 46 a.

<sup>356</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Torgau 23 April 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 24 a.

<sup>357</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 9 Feb. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 134 a –135 a. Similar passages can be found in Elisabeth's letters to her mother dated Heidelberg 8 Aug. and Heidelberg 2 Nov. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 253 a – b and 256 a.

<sup>358</sup> Anna to Anna Maria of Brandenburg, Dresden 1 Dec. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 121 a – b. The identity of the addressee appears from the lists of gamble debts on fol. 117.

<sup>359</sup> See for example Pleticha (1983), pp. 35-37; Pirozynski (1992), pp. 141-233; Ilsoe (1999), pp. 498-524.

<sup>360</sup> J. Luther (1920), pp. 26-34.

patronage of (and thus contact with) several theologians will be discussed in chapter 8. The close personal ties between the princely women and the authors of the devotional and didactic treatises can be exemplified by Johannes Freder's *Loff und Unschuld der Frauen*. The author published this work with a dedication to Dorothea of Denmark in 1543. In 1569 Andreas Hondorff (1530-1572), pastor in Droyssig in Thuringia, re-issued the text in High German and dedicated this version to Anna.<sup>361</sup> Several of the devotional treatises listed in the electress's library were published with a dedication to either her or her closest relatives, and Anna's instruction to Nikolaus Selnecker in 1562 that he needed the approval of her and August's advisors before his recently completed work could be published with a dedication to her, suggests that the published dedication implied the patron's endorsement of the norms that were expressed in the works.<sup>362</sup>

Even if the princesses's literacy and literary/theological interests are beyond doubt, it remains unclear if and *how* a particular title was read. The question of appropriation is especially relevant because Anna's library also contained works by authors who were considered adversely in Saxony.<sup>363</sup> The presence of works by the Danish theologian Niels Hemmingsen (1513-1600) and the Palatinian Court Chaplain Johann Willing (1523-1572) in Anna's library show the importance of careful consideration of individual titles.<sup>364</sup> Willing represented the reformed (*Zwinglyan*) stance, which Anna despised (see chapters 8 and 9) and, during the 1570s, Hemmingsen came under close scrutiny, particularly in Saxony, when he was accused of promoting Calvinists teachings.<sup>365</sup> Even if the few titles Anna owned by these two authors represented their most neutral writings (as Hasse stresses), the examples serve as a reminder of the fact that the views expressed in the extensive range of books owned by the electress cannot be projected onto her. One must leave room for disagreements between an author and the reader. In an analysis of the

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<sup>361</sup> Freder (1543) and Freder (1569). Two copies of the later edition are listed in the inventory (1574) of the "Elector's library", see SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574), Nr. 19, fol. 16, titles no. 1186 and 968. Yet, it does not appear in the inventory of Anna's personal library. For a detailed analysis of this work, see Schnell (1998b), pp. 303-309 and Bausen (2002).

<sup>362</sup> See the example discussed in chapter 8: Anna instructs Selnecker to have a text approved by her and August's councilors and/or theologians before it is published with a dedication to her.

<sup>363</sup> See Roger Chartier's discussion of the term appropriation. The term accentuates the "plural uses and diverse readings which are not aimed at or inscribed in the text", Chartier (1988), pp. 1-16.

<sup>364</sup> Title nos. 179 (Willing) and no. 231 and 394 (Hemmingsen) in SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62.

<sup>365</sup> Hasse (2000), pp. 268-269. Regarding the critique of Hemmingsen, see Hasse (2000), pp. 365-373 and the analysis in Lockhart (2004), pp. 143-201.



political role of the female consort, this is imperative not least because all of the printed texts in the electress's library were composed by men.<sup>366</sup>

*Didactic, devotional, and normative literature for the female consort*

In order to define the attributes of an "ideal consort" a few normative texts that deal specifically with the position of the consort and/or high-ranking women have been selected for a more in-depth analysis. The texts that figure most prominently are: (i) the official description of the joint coronation of Dorothea and Christian III of Denmark in 1537; and (ii) the numerous funeral sermons that were held for Anna upon her death in 1585. Occasionally, the analysis also draws upon the content of the most widely circulated house and marriage manuals that were listed in Anna's library, as well as a distinctly gendered *Speculum regale* written by the Protestant theologian Joachim Magdeburg (1525-after 1587) and published with a dedication to Heilwig of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Harburg (1535-1616) on the occasion of her wedding in 1563.<sup>367</sup> The selected texts contain striking similarities to the widely circulated household and marriage manuals. Yet, they also have a distinct character. Whereas the house and marriage manuals could legitimately focus on the *oeconomia* and the gender order within this smaller unit or the marriage as an institution, the authors of the texts examined here were compelled to address the relative positions of man and woman, ruler and consort, in all of the three domains of life: *oeconomia*, *ecclesia*, and *politia*.

Before the content of these texts is addressed, their relevancy to this analysis and/or connection to Anna of Saxony and her network of other Protestant consorts demand attention. In contrast to all of the other texts that will be employed in this analysis, there is no direct link between Joachim Magdeburg's *Vom rechten Adel der Fürstinnen* (*On the True Nobility of Princesses*) and the Saxon electress; neither this nor other titles by Magdeburg can be found in of the inventories of the Saxon libraries, and the Saxon electress did not correspond with the duchess to whom it was dedicated. When Magdeburg's work is included in spite of this, it is due to the rarity with which one finds a *speculum regale* that is as explicitly gendered as this. Magdeburg presents twenty virtues all women should aspire to, and nine virtues that were particularly desirable in princely women, thereby highlighting some of the ways in which rank shaped gender in the

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<sup>366</sup> In contrast to the printed books, some of the manuscripts listed in the inventory were composed by women: see chapter 6 for a discussion of concrete examples.

<sup>367</sup> Magdeburg (1563).

sixteenth-century Protestant society. It must be added that although Magdeburg published several treatises in support of Matthias Flacius Illyricus,<sup>368</sup> this particular work appears unrelated to the dogmatic disputes concerning Illyricus's writings. As the widespread house and marriage manuals, Magdeburg relies primarily on Jesus Syrach and St. Paul when he presents the twenty virtues that were sought-after in all women.<sup>369</sup> However, when he presented the rank-specific virtues of princely women, the biblical examples are derived from the Book of Esther and the Book of Judith, supplemented with references to other high-ranking women mentioned in the Scripture (for example Deborah (Judges 4:1-23), the unnamed wife of Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:19), and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13)<sup>370</sup>). As it will be shown below, both the authors of the funeral sermons and Johann Bugenhagen employed similar sources when defining the office of the female consort.

Upon the death of the Anna in 1585 several funeral sermons and memorial services were held throughout Saxony. The sermons that were composed by the most prominent theologians were printed individually shortly afterwards, but a few years later (after August also had passed away), the Leipzig-based printer Johann Beyer (1551-1596) took the initiative to publish a compilation of all the funeral/memorial sermons that had been held for both August and Anna.<sup>371</sup> The result was the first early modern collection of funeral sermons, the comprehensive volume (1160 pages) titled *Sechs und Vierzig Leichpredigten ... bey den Begrebnüssen und trawrigen Begengnüssen des Durchlauchtigsten Hochgebornen Fürsten ... Augusti Hertzogen zu Sachsen ... und der Durchlauchtigsten Hochgebornen Fürstin ... Anna Gebornen aus Königlichem Stam Dennemarck, weyland Hertzogin zu Sachsen* that was dedicated to three of Anna and August's children: Christian, Elisabeth, and Anna. In addition to the twenty-nine sermons that had been held upon

<sup>368</sup> As a result of his support for Flacius Illyricus, Joachim Magdeburg's career was rather unstable: after studies in Wittenberg he served for several years in various parts of Lüneburg. His service there was interrupted by temporary posts in Thuringia and Hungary, and by a longer appointment in Hamburg during the 1550s, see the brief biography of Magdeburg in *BBKL* vol. 5, column 552-554.

<sup>369</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. B(2)-B5(7). For comparable texts that also draw upon Syrach and St. Paul, see for example Spangenberg (1553) and Karant-Nunn's analysis of Johannes Mathesius's writings on women, marriage, and the household (Karant-Nunn (1992)).

<sup>370</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. C(2), C3(1), C4(1)-(2), C5(3)-(4).

<sup>371</sup> See the prologue ("Vorrede") to *Sechs und Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. ij(a)-iij(d). Regarding Johann Beyer see Josef Benzing (1982), p. 282. Not all of the sixteen sermons are funeral sermons in the most narrow definition of the term: only four of the sermons for Anna (by the court chaplains Martin Mirus and Georg Listhenius) were held during the religious services associated with her funeral. The other sermons were composed for memorial services throughout Saxony. However, in keeping with Rudolf Lenz's broader definition (that funeral sermons are comprised of the totality of the literary production created on the occasion of the funeral of (prominent) individuals), they will simply be referred to as funeral sermons in the following, see Lenz (1975), pp. 36-37.

August's death and the sixteen sermons held for Anna, the volume contains a sermon for their granddaughter Anna Sabina who died as an infant in March 1586.

The significance of the early modern funeral sermons as historical sources has been the subject of extensive discussions. There is agreement that the biographical information provided in the sermons should be read with skepticism, but that the genre offers a generous impression of gender- and status-specific norms and ideals.<sup>372</sup> The sermons were widely circulated and are frequently regarded as both devotional and didactic literature,<sup>373</sup> hence, as the sermons that were composed for Anna describe her virtues, they simultaneously prescribe the virtues of a consort.

The sixteen funeral sermons for Anna were held during the five weeks following her death on 1 October 1585. The first sermon, composed by Nikolaus Selnecker's (1530-1592), is followed by three sermons composed by the court chaplain Martin Mirus (1532-1593) and one by his colleague at the court Georg Lysthenius (1532-1591). The sixth text was composed by Polycarp Leyser (1552-1610) who served as *General Superintendent* in Wittenberg until 1586. Adam Roth, the Superintendent in Merseburg, wrote the subsequent two sermons, and the following seven were composed by different Saxon superintendents and were held at memorial services in the various towns of the territory between 6 and 31 October. The last text was authored by the pastor in Colditz, Adam Hermann, and was held in the chapel of Colditz Castle on 31 October in the presence of August and the Elector of Brandenburg. The content of the later sermons suggest that their authors relied, at least in part, on the information provided in the sermons by the court chaplains and Selnecker. However, because the genre was characterized by common form and topoi, it is difficult to determine if similarities should be explained by established conventions or commonly known anecdotes rather than by an actual dependency between the texts. Yet, one of the superintendents (Zacharias Fröschel in Weißensee) made explicit reference to Selnecker's sermon, though his sermon also contains information that indicates that he had access to other sources.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> See the contributions to *Leichenpredigten als Quelle historischer Wissenschaften*, vol. 1-3 (Cologne, 1975, 1979 and 1984). With regard to gender-specific norms see Wunder (1984); Bepler (1991); Bepler (2002a); Bepler (2002b); Holst (1999).

<sup>373</sup> Zeller (1975); Bepler (1991); Bepler (2002a); Bepler (2002b).

<sup>374</sup> "Es meldet der Herr Doctor Selnecker in der Leichpredigt / die er den 7. Octobris zu Leipzig gethan ...", Zacharias Fröschel's funeral sermon for Anna, printed as the thirteenth sermon in *Sechs und Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 271. The "new" information Fröschel provides is (i) details about Anna's generosity towards the Saxon clergy (pp. 270-271), and (ii) details about political achievements of Anna's father (pp. 265-266).

The sermons offer an impression of the virtues the theological authorities in Anna's immediate surroundings considered desirable in a female consort. Several of the authors had known the electress personally for numerous years and had served as her spiritual advisors: Nikolaus Selnecker served in the electoral household during the 1560s and remained in contact with the electress throughout her life (see chapter 8); Martin Mirus and Georg Listhenius both served as Anna's court chaplains during the last two decades of her life, and the electress's correspondence also shows that she communicated with Johann Habermann.<sup>375</sup> The (close) contact that can be documented between Anna and several of the authors suggests that Anna would have been aware of – and conceivably shared – the ideals that were expressed in the sermons. It also can be assumed that the sermons were approved either by August or, after his death, by Christian (I) of Saxony.

When the funeral sermons are analyzed in conjunction with the account of the 1537 coronation in Denmark, two additional strengths for the purpose of this analysis are revealed. Firstly, the time period that is defined by the combination of the funeral sermons (1585) and the coronation (1537) almost corresponds to Anna's life. Secondly, the two (groups of) texts define the geographical focal points of Anna's life: Denmark and Saxony.

But what, then, is the particular relevance of the 1537 coronation. Next to the fact that the main figures of the ceremony, Dorothea and Christian III of Denmark, were Anna's parents, there are several aspects that make this text a well-suited point of departure for an analysis of "the ideal consort" as defined by the Lutheran theologians. First of all, it was the first Lutheran coronation and anointment to take place in Europe. The coronation marked the end of the succession war that had ravaged Denmark between 1534 and 1536 and the ceremony was an ideal occasion for a powerful and public manifestation of the religious-political outcome of the same conflict: the Lutheran Reformation of the church and the related reorganization of the state and society.<sup>376</sup> Secondly, because king and queen were invested in the same ceremony, the gender specificity of their offices was expressed with great clarity in texts as well as symbols. Extensive research has been done on both medieval and early modern coronation and anointment ceremonies, though gender is usually granted little or no relevance in the available studies.<sup>377</sup> However, Martin

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<sup>375</sup> Anna to Johann Habermann, Annaburg 24 Dec. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 253 a – 254 b.

<sup>376</sup> Schwarz Lausten (1987), pp. 27-29; Hoffmann (1983), p. 61; Olden-Jorgensen (2001), pp. 89-90.

<sup>377</sup> See for example the contributions to *Herrscherweihe und Königskrönung im früenezeitlichen Europa*, ed. by Heinz Duchhardt (1983), not one of the eight contributions address the relationship between gender and authority. The 1537 coronation in Denmark has been addressed in numerous publications, though in most analyses it is not even mentioned that the ceremony also entailed the coronation of a queen. See for example

Kintzinger and Amalie Föbel's recent usages of joint coronations and anointments in their studies of medieval queenship have revealed the rich potential of this particular genre,<sup>378</sup> and their contributions constitute an important inducement to reproach the well-known coronations of the subsequent centuries with an explicit gender perspective.

Finally, the official account of the ceremony was widely known by the Lutheran rulers of the Empire. The coronation ceremony was prepared and performed by the renowned reformer Johann Bugenhagen (1485-1558). Bugenhagen was a professor in Wittenberg and author of several German church ordinances. He also authored the Danish Church Ordinance, was responsible for the reorganization of the university in Copenhagen, and remained in close contact with the ruling couple in Denmark until his death.<sup>379</sup> The strong, theological connection between Denmark and the Protestant territories in Germany is only one among several factors that suggest that the image of the female consort presented in the 1537 coronation had immediate relevance to the German princesses. Already during the 1530s, confession came to play an important role in dynastic marriages and the frequency of inter-marriage between the Protestant dynasties in Germany and the House of Oldenburg was extraordinarily high: during the sixteenth century, the queens of Denmark were all recruited from the Protestant territories of the Empire. Similarly, all but one of the daughters of the Danish-Norwegian monarchs between 1530 and 1600 married Protestant princes in the German-speaking territories.<sup>380</sup> The close dynastic ties at once expressed and reinforced the common confessional orientation.<sup>381</sup>

As a reflection of the close ideological parallels between the Protestant territories, the account of the 1537 coronation appeared not as an individual publication but as the fifteenth chapter of the first book in Georg Lauterbeck's widely disseminated *Regentbuch* (first published in 1556). Lauterbeck's handbook in governance was one of the most widely circulated books of its genre during the sixteenth century and it is also listed in the

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the three most recent contributions: Schwarz Lausten (1987), particularly pp. 27-31; Hoffmann (1983); and Olden-Jørgensen (2001). None of the three scholars pay more than passing attention to the fact that Dorothea also was crowned. The older accounts of the 1537 do mention the coronation of Dorothea as part of the ceremony, but without addressing its implications for the queen's political role, see Hasso (1936-1938); *Aktstykker vedkommende Kong Christain den Tredies og Dronning Dorotheas Kroning i Vor Frue Kirke* (1831); *Die Krönung König Christians III. von Dänemark und seiner Gemahlin Dorothea durch Johannes Bugenhagen* (1832).

<sup>378</sup> Kintzinger (2000), pp. 377-398 and Föbel (2000), pp. 17-49.

<sup>379</sup> See Schwarz Lausten (1987), pp. 17-108 and J. Luther (1920). The most recent biography of Bugenhagen is Leder (2002).

<sup>380</sup> The exception is the niece of the Saxon electress, Anne (1574-1619), who married James VI of Scotland in 1600.

<sup>381</sup> See Wade (1996) and Wade (2003) regarding the common cultural horizon.

inventories of both Anna's personal library and the elector's library.<sup>382</sup> Even if the Danish consort who appears in the account was a *queen* consort, whereas the consorts in the Protestant territories of Germany "only" were electresses, duchesses, or countesses, Lauterbeck's inclusion of Bugenhagen's text suggest that the confessional parallels weighed stronger than the differences in rank. Even contemporaries recognized commonalities between the offices of female consorts of different rank. Luther repeatedly used the expression "kings and princes"<sup>383</sup> (which of course would correspond to "queens and princesses") and Joachim Magdeburg used the phrase, "Empresses, Queens, Princesses, Countesses, and the wives of other Lords",<sup>384</sup> to define the group of women he was addressing in his mirror-of-princesses.

Nevertheless, there were also disparities between the position of the Danish Lutheran queen and that of a Lutheran female consort in a German principality, and the most conspicuous of these is highlighted by the very genre of the text: of all the Lutheran rulers in Europe, only the Scandinavian kings were crowned and anointed.<sup>385</sup> The territorial princes of the Holy Roman Empire received their fiefs from the emperor (and not in a church ceremony) and while these ceremonies remained unaffected by the Reformation, the investment of the Danish king had to be transformed to correspond to the teachings of the new church. Yet, this very same Lutheran transformation of the ritual reduced the differences between the roles of the royal couple in Denmark and the ruling couples in the Protestant territories of Germany.

Although the pre-Reformation coronations and anointments of the Danish monarchs were modeled after the ordination of clerics,<sup>386</sup> it is widely acknowledged that the sanctity attributed to the Scandinavian rulers already before the Reformation was limited in comparison to their French, British, and Spanish counterparts.<sup>387</sup> This limited sanctity was reduced further (or arguably eliminated) as a result of the Reformation. The religious

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<sup>382</sup> The chapter is titled "Von den Königen / vnd jrem Ampt / Auch von Krönung vnd Salbung der Könige", fol. XXIII-XLIII, in Georg Lauterbeck's *Regentenbuch* (1556). In the following I will be referring to the official account of the coronation as printed in the 1572 edition of the *Regentenbuch*, referenced as Lauterbeck (1572). Lauterbeck's work is listed as volume no. 31 in the inventory of Anna's library, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62. The year of publication is not listed in the inventory and it cannot be determine which of the numerous editions it may have been. For an in-depth analysis of Lauterbeck's *Regentenbuch* see Philipp (1996).

<sup>383</sup> Sommer (1999).

<sup>384</sup> "... Keiserinnen / Königinnen / Fürstinnen / Greffinnen / vnd anderer Herrn Gemahl ...", Magdeburg (1563), pp. C2(2), C4(1)-(2) and C5(3)-(4).

<sup>385</sup> While England – of course – was Protestant, it was not Lutheran.

<sup>386</sup> Schwarz Lausten (1987), pp. 27-28.

<sup>387</sup> Nyberg (1995-1996) and Monod (1999), p. 42. Regarding France and England, see Bloch (1924/1973).

movements of the sixteenth century posed a threat to the sacral powers claimed by and ascribed to monarch because the rejection of physical holiness included a dismissal of the conception that the royal body was invested with sacral power. In this respect, Paul Kléber Monod has argued, Protestantism opened the possibility of “a radical demystification of human authority”.<sup>388</sup>

This redefinition of authority was a principal questions among the reformers. Luther addressed the subject in several texts, most explicitly in his treaty *On Secular Authority* (*Von Weltlicher Oberkeit*, published in 1523), but also in his interpretations of the 82nd, 101<sup>st</sup>, and 127th Psalms.<sup>389</sup> At the core of these texts is the relationship between the two kingdoms or regiments: God’s authority and his heavenly regiment versus the secular authorities and the government of the temporary world. Although there was continual disagreement about how far the authority of a territorial ruler extended in relation to the church, there was no disputing that all secular authorities were selected by God.<sup>390</sup> Yet, although God appointed all secular rulers, he did not grant them sacred powers. Their power was derived from physical might and force. Physical power and authority were intrinsically linked in the Lutheran teachings on authority; thus, Luther used *Gewalt* (force) and *Oberkeit* (authority) as almost interchangeable terms: in 1522 he used the *Gewalt* in the central passage on power/authority in Romans 13.1-3, “for there is no *force* but from God” (my emphasis), but twenty years later (1544) he chose the term *Oberkeit* (authority) for the same passage.<sup>391</sup> It was on the premise of this view of authority that the Danish coronation ceremony in 1537 had to be performed and, although the ceremony as a whole bore close resemblance to its Catholic predecessors,<sup>392</sup> its inherent understanding of authority was carefully modified to correspond to Luther’s teachings.

The Danish church historian Martin Schwarz Lausten has pointed out that the official account of the ceremony reveals that Johann Bugenhagen more than once felt obliged to

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<sup>388</sup> Monod (1999), pp. 42-51. Hoffmann (1983) insists that the Scandinavian rulers remained tied to the transcendental sphere (p. 61), though he does not address the implications of this. See also Otto Brunner’s more general discussion of the legal implications of the “Gottesgnadentum”, Brunner (1968b).

<sup>389</sup> See Sommer (1999), pp. 11-53, for a more comprehensive discussion of the relationship between the texts. The interpretation of the 82nd Psalm regards the relationship between the “weltliche Obrigkeit und geistliche Ordnung”; the interpretation of the 101st Psalm regards the relationship between the two Kingdoms or Regiments, and Luther’s interpretation of the 127th Psalm is generally viewed as a *Speculum Regale*. The relationship between the two regiments in the Danish Church Ordinance has been discussed by Skarsaune (1991).

<sup>390</sup> The literature on the subject is vast: see the excellent contributions by Wolfgang Sommer (Sommer (1988) and Sommer (1999)).

<sup>391</sup> Höpfl’s introduction to *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit* (1523/1991), pp. xiv-xvi; xxxii-xxxiii; xxxv-xxxviii, quote from p. xxxii.

<sup>392</sup> Hoffmann (1983), p. 61.

defend his own and the Church's participation in a ritual that, according to the Lutheran teachings, ought to be a secular event.<sup>393</sup> However, the tension between the new teachings and the continuation of the (partly religious) ritual was alleviated by some important revisions of the medieval ceremonies. Most conspicuously, the language was changed from Latin to German and Danish.<sup>394</sup> Secondly, Bugenhagen appeared not as "Coronator" but simply as "Ordinator", thereby emphasizing that legitimate authority was conferred *directly* from God and not mediated by the clergy,<sup>395</sup> and the scriptural references were adjusted in keeping with the Protestant view of secular authority and the two regiments.<sup>396</sup> Thirdly, the coronation oaths that were sworn by king and the queen were revised to be consistent with the new view of their offices.<sup>397</sup> Finally, the focal point of the ceremony was shifted from the religious anointment to the secular act of crowning the rulers.<sup>398</sup> In contrast to the medieval coronations and anointments where the gender specificity of the king and queen's offices was expressed by differences in their anointments,<sup>399</sup> Christian and Dorothea were anointed in the exact same manner. King- and queenship was here defined by the relative distribution of the regalia and the accompanying explanations of the royal insignia during the "secular" coronation.

### **The ideal consort according to the Lutheran theologians**

The analysis of "the ideal consort" begins with a brief summary of the ways in which king- and queenship were defined in the 1537 coronation. Subsequently, the prescriptions in this text are compared to the content of the funeral sermons and Magdeburg's mirror-of-princesses in a thematically structured account of the theological authorities' definition of the consort's office. This is followed by a discussion of the ways in which the theologians attempted to resolve the tension between the women high rank and their alleged and gender-specific deficiencies.

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<sup>393</sup> Schwarz Lausten (1987), pp. 29-30. The same point is reiterated by Olden-Jorgensen (2001), pp. 90-91 and 93-94.

<sup>394</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXVI; and Hoffman (1983), p. 66.

<sup>395</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXVI a; Schwarz Lausten (1987) pp. 30-31; Hoffmann (1983), pp. 66; Olden-Jorgensen (2001), pp. 92-93.

<sup>396</sup> Schwarz Lausten (1987), pp. 27-31.

<sup>397</sup> Hoffmann (1983), pp. 65-68; and Skarsaune (1991).

<sup>398</sup> Hoffmann (1983), pp. 63-67; and Schwarz Lausten (1987), pp. 27-31.

<sup>399</sup> Kintzinger (2000).



*The distribution of regalia in the 1537 coronation*

When Dorothea and Christian were crowned in 1537, they both received a crown and a scepter. However, only Christian was given the orb and the sword. Explaining the significance of the regalia, Bugenhagen presented the crown as the prime symbol of rule because it had given name to the ceremony. Towards the end of the ceremony, he offered a detailed interpretation of the crown in which the royal couple was jointly reminded that Isaiah had instructed Zion to “carry” his people as the bride wears her ornaments. In like manner, Christian and Dorothea should consider their subjects as ornaments and as a garb of honor. The crown – as an ornament – thus symbolized their territories and subjects. Bugenhagen elaborated four characteristics of the crown(s): its shape and fit; the pure gold; its precious stones; and its opening towards heaven. The shape of the crowns and the fit around the head of king and queen referred to the dependency between the rulers, their territories, and their subjects, because only in cooperation could they achieve prosperity. The pure gold of which the crown was made signified the obedience and righteousness that were to flourish under its rule. The precious stones attached in the crown symbolized the faithful supporters of the king: the councilors, advisors, and all the estates of the kingdom. Bugenhagen explained that as some gems are more precious than others, so certain estates are worthier than others. Nonetheless, they are all fixed in the crown because the crown (the secular authorities) needs them as they need the crown. Finally, the crown’s opening towards heaven served to remind everyone that above this worldly kingdom is the heavenly kingdom of God. From there the Almighty God rules over the entire world, the worldly kingdom, and the secular rulers. If king and queen ensured that God’s word was honored through their secular rule, they could rest assured that God would bless their worldly kingdom with peace and prosperity.<sup>400</sup>

While this interpretation of the crown emphasized the joint rule of king and queen, the instructions Bugenhagen presented to Christian and Dorothea when they had received their crowns earlier in the ceremony were highly gender-specific. Christian was admonished to rule in correspondence with God’s word and his subjects were reminded of their duty to show obedience to their ruler. Dorothea, on the other hand, was reminded of the virtues embodied by canonized and biblical queens.<sup>401</sup> Just as these women, Dorothea

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<sup>400</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), this interpretation of the crown appears on fol. XXXVI a – XXXVIII b.

<sup>401</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXIX b.

should be a loyal supporter of the poor and she should strive to promote peace and mercy. She was also admonished to govern her household with Christian discipline in order to ensure that it was attractive for the noblemen of the kingdom to marry the women who had served the queen.<sup>402</sup>

Similarly gendered directives accompanied the two scepters. Christian's scepter represented "the teaching and the law one is to obey within the kingdom". Naturally, the laws of the kingdom were to serve the law of God and should be derived from the Gospel.<sup>403</sup> Hence, the king was made a secular guardian of God's law and was reminded of the importance of enforcing it with consequence and fairness. In contrast, Dorothea was given the scepter because she should "help and promote the service of God and anything that advances peace, honor, order, good government, and serves the subjects".<sup>404</sup> While Christian's scepter was explicitly linked to the law and its enforcement, Dorothea's reminded her to serve God and her subjects in the broadest sense. In this context, it is worth noting that by the subsequent coronation of a Danish queen (the coronation of Queen Sophie in 1572), the queen was no longer given a scepter.<sup>405</sup>

The orb and the sword made the gendered differences between Christian and Dorothea's offices all the more conspicuous. The significance of the orb was explained by reference to its shape. Because it was shaped as the vault of heaven it symbolized Christian's entire kingdom and his rule over it: as God holds the world in his hand, Christian was instructed to keep the kingdom in his hand. The orb referred to all his duties as they had been described in relation to the other insignia: authority, protection, dignity, justice, and peace both within his lands and in relation to neighboring territories and rulers. Finally, the orb permitted Bugenhagen to reiterate the Lutheran teachings on the two kingdoms, when he explained that the cross on the orb symbolized God's rule over all secular authorities.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXV a – XXXVI a.

<sup>403</sup> "... die lere ... vnd das Recht / da man sich im Königreich nach richten sol ...", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXIII a. See also Müller (2004), pp. 148-151 on the desired influence of the Ten Commandments on the territorial government in Germany during the sixteenth century.

<sup>404</sup> "... helffe vnd förderlich sey / zu dem was zu Gottesdienst / darneben was zum friede / Ehre / Zucht / guten Regiment / vnd besserung des Adels / Bürgern vnd Bawren / jung vnd Alt / Reich vnd Arm / dienet", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXVI a.

<sup>405</sup> See the account of Sophie's coronation by Reravius (1574), pp. Lv(3)-Nv(4); and *Kong Frederik den Andens Kronings og Salvings Akt ... samt Ceremoniellet for Dronning Sophies Kroning og Salving* (1869), pp. 22-32.

<sup>406</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXIII b.

Christian received the Sword of the Realm at the very beginning of the ceremony and, as it was placed in his hand, Bugenhagen emphasized that when the sword was employed justly, Christian could rely upon God's support.<sup>407</sup> It was only to be used against the wicked and disobedient and should serve as protection for the just and obedient.<sup>408</sup> In place of the sword, Dorothea was presented with the most remarkable and explicitly gendered instructions of the entire ceremony,

Your Grace is not given the sword because Your Grace shall help to conduct the government of grace[. But] this cannot be a hindrance to justice. Women are overcome by friendship and [they] can do much by begging, scolding, crying and other means, at times they can even wheedle the sword from their Lord's hand. It is one thing to intercede, this we permit because it belongs to the government of grace ... but Your Grace shall let such grace shine not only on the noble and great lords but also on the needy people.<sup>409</sup>

As a woman, Dorothea was inevitably considered susceptible to manipulation and thereby unfit to administrate the sword. However, through gender-specific means (scolding and crying), she could and should serve the "government of grace" (*Gnadenregiment*). The consort's willingness to intercede on behalf of rich and poor was an integral part of this ideal – as long as it did not infringe upon true justice. While Bugenhagen admonished Dorothea not to abuse this right, he also stressed that her duty to intercede and promote grace if the king was about to act against the word of God, "because men can sometimes do too much, [and] a steadfast and God-fearing women can do much good against this".<sup>410</sup>

To recognize fully the implications of Bugenhagen's explanation, the significance of the sword within the Lutheran teachings must be reiterated. Almost every paragraph of Luther's treatise *On Secular Authority* contains a reference to the sword. It appears as synonym of law and justice, of physical force and of secular authority. In the words of Harro Höpfl, the sword became "the symbol, emblem and substance of secular

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<sup>407</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXIII.

<sup>408</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXIII a – b. The sword reappeared at the very end of the ceremony when Christian proclaimed – with the sword in his right hand – that it was his duty to serve the Gospel, the sword, and his subjects (fol. XXXVIII a).

<sup>409</sup> "... E.G. [wird] das Schwerdt nicht gegeben / darumb / das E.G. das Gnadenregiment helffe führen / das doch dardurch das Gerichte nicht werde verhindert / denn Frawen werden durch Freundschaft vberlauffen / vnd können durch bitten / vermanen / weinen / vnd ander vntersetzen viel außrichten / Vnd zu zeiten / damit das Schwerd jrem Herrn aus der hand nemen. Ist eine sache das man für bitten mag / das lassen wir geschehen / vnd kan wol gehören ins Gnadenregiment ... so lasse E.G. solche Gnade scheinen / nicht allein Edlen vnd grossen Herren / sondern auch armen Leuten ...", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXV b.

<sup>410</sup> "... Denn Herren können zu zeiten wol zu viel thun / da wider kan eine beständige Frawe / die Gott fürchtet / viel guts thun ...", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXV b.

authority".<sup>411</sup> While the king was given this ultimate symbol of authority, the female consort was instructed to represent grace and compassion and this should above all be done through her willingness to intercede, which she in turn had to administer with the utmost respect for justice. The way in which the practice of intercessions was specified as a central aspect of the consort's duties in this legally binding ceremony suggests that her role as appeal institution was viewed as an integral part of the early modern legal system and this highlights the anachronistic character of the common distinction between formal and informal power.

The distribution of regalia and Bugenhagen's associated explanations defined the queen's office as secondary to that of her husband. In parts of the ceremony, Dorothea does appear as little more than an attachment to her husband. This hierarchy is most unequivocally expressed in Bugenhagen's explanation of why Dorothea was crowned,

[I]t is God-given and appropriate that when Your Lord [the king] is crowned, his Grace's wedded spouse shall also receive such honor [or rank] and have it confirmed in front of God. This is the order of God that man and wife shall be one body and [that] their honor [or rank] and name shall remain inseparable. Even if the offices shall not and cannot be alike.<sup>412</sup>

Here Dorothea's coronation and anointment are explained by reference to her marriage: the queen's status was derived from her husband. As husband and wife they constituted one body and should therefore share the same rank. Their offices, however, differed from each other as those of husband and wife. The roles of Dorothea and Christian as husband and wife were echoed when they later in the ceremony emerged as parents of their subjects.<sup>413</sup> The familiar analogies between kings and queens as (foster) parents of their subjects situated both ruler and consort in clearly gendered roles: father and mother, and it evoked the theologically and legally defined hierarchy in which a woman by definition was the

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<sup>411</sup> Martin Luther *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit* (1523), quote from Höpfl's introduction to the English translation in *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority* (1991), p. xvi.

<sup>412</sup> "... [V]nd ist Göttlich vnd billich / weil jr ewern Herrn sehet krönen / das auch seiner gnaden Ehelichem Gemahl / solche Ehre gegeben / vnd hie für Gott werde bestetigt / Vnd das ist Gottes Ordnunge / Mann vnd Weib / das ist ein Leib / so soll auch Ehre vnd Namen vngescheiden sein. Wiewol die Ampte nicht sollen oder können alle eins sein ...", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXIX b and 1 Cor. 6:16-17.

<sup>413</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXI a - b. Again, a parallel can be found in the 1572 coronation when Frederik II and Sophie were ascribed the roles as foster parents for their subjects, see Reravius (1574), pp. Mv(1) and Isaiah 49:23. Bugenhagen applied a scriptural passage that (in Luther's bible translation (Biblia (1545)) only concerns the relationship between kings and the church, "... Könige sollen deine Pfleger / vnd jre Fürsten deine Seugammen sein ...". This reference should not be mistaken with the earlier verse (Isaiah 49:15) in which God is portrayed as the mother of all Christians, a passage that was used later in the 1537 coronation, see Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXIII b. See Münch (1982) and Müller (2004) for a more general discussion of this topos (that is, 'Obrigkeit im Vaterstand').

subject of a man.<sup>414</sup> Viewed in the context of this hierarchy, Dorothea's part in secular authority is more remarkable than the divergences between her and her husband's offices. She was repeatedly admonished to acknowledge the power/authority and dignity God invested in her, and to manage her office with great care because God had also selected her as a Christian authority in the temporal world.

Given the observed inequalities of the offices of king and queen, it may be tempting to disregard the authority of the female consort. However, the account of coronation reveals also that the queen indeed held authority and was expected to fulfill certain, relatively specific functions. The simple fact that Dorothea was both crowned and anointed (that her elevated status was sanctioned by both the council and God) reveals that she was considered as an actual authority. The kingdom was consistently referred to as *their* realm and, correspondingly, the actual coronation of both king and queen (when the crown was placed on their heads) was performed by representatives of the Council of the Realm: in a highly symbolic act, the councilors held the crowns jointly and placed it on the heads of their elected king and queen.<sup>415</sup> Most importantly, however, both king and queen swore the coronation oath and although Christian's oath was longer than Dorothea's, both contained the same four points: (i) the acknowledgement of God as the source of their powers as secular authorities (both Dorothea and Christian referred to God as their *Lehenherr*, that is as the Lord who enfeoffs them with one part of his greater realm); (ii) a promise to protect and promote the true teaching of the Gospel with everything that this entailed of faithful clergy and good schools; (iii) an assurance to respect the Council of the Realm; and (iv) a promise to govern peacefully and in consideration of all subjects as well as the almighty God.<sup>416</sup> Even though Dorothea was a married woman (thus under the legal guardianship of her husband), she too had to swear this binding oath. As the king, God had chosen her to administer – together with her husband – these territories in accordance with his word, and even the Council of the Realm wanted the assurance that both king and queen would respect their rights within the government of the kingdom. In this central part of the ceremony, there was no doubt about the queen's status and responsibilities.

The tension that can be detected between Bugenhagen's attempt to curb the office of the consort and her simultaneous investment with God-given authority reflects the friction between gender and rank as socially structuring forces that emerged when a woman was

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<sup>414</sup> Koch (1997), pp. 73-93 and Wunder (1998a), pp. 57-78.

<sup>415</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXV b – XXXVI a.

<sup>416</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), Christian's oath is printed on fol. XXVIII b - XXIX a, and Dorothea's on fol. XXX a.

invested with authority. The alleged gender-specific weaknesses of the female consort excluded her from participation in certain domains of government, but her appointment for the office as consort was an expression of God's will.

*A mother of the house, the church, and the territory*

While Bugenhagen's interpretation of the gems in the crowns (equating them to the hierarchical ordered estates of the Kingdom) reflects the Christian-Aristotelian conception of an estate-based society, the duties of the ruling couple can all be defined in relation to the three domains of life as defined by Luther (the *ecclesia*, the *oeconomia*, and the *politia*). The most concrete specifications of the office the female consort regarded endowments in support of the church and clergy to ensure the maintenance of the true meaning of God's word. The same Christian morals, which the clergy should promote throughout the territory, should of course be maintained in the consort's household and here Dorothea – as the mistress of the house – was responsible. In relation to the government of the territory and the enforcement of the law, the consort should be a guardian of peace, mercy, clemency, and Christian government. When appropriate she should be willing to intercede by her husband (and other authorities entrusted with the enforcement of the law) on behalf of all the subjects within her and her husband's territories.

The same tripartite division of the consort's duties and the associated virtues she should cultivate recurs throughout the funeral sermons and in Joachim Magdeburg's mirror-of-princesses. In the funeral sermons, Anna is repeatedly referred to as a *Hausmutter*, *Kirchenmutter*, and *Landesmutter*;<sup>417</sup> and Magdeburg defines the ten virtues a high-ranking woman should possess in relation to the church and the subjects of the territory,<sup>418</sup> while the twenty virtues all women should aspire towards were defined in relation to roles of a mistress of the house and the members of an extended household.<sup>419</sup> However, because the three domains were mutually integrated and because of the frequent analogies between the three forms of the consort's motherhood in the funeral sermons

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<sup>417</sup> See for example the funeral sermon by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 2-3; sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 112; the sermon by Johann Wintzern, printed as the twelfth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 234; and the sermon by Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 264, 267 and 271.

<sup>418</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. B5(8)- C5(5)

<sup>419</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. B2(2)-B5(7)

(within the house, the church, and the territory), it is often difficult to situate a particular duty and/or virtue in only one domain.

In the sermons, Anna's office is often referred to as her vocation (*Beruf*), though the theologians use this word to refer to anything from her role as wife and mother to her position as *Landesmutter*.<sup>420</sup> Luther's extended usage of the term *Beruf* that traditionally referred only to the monastic calling was an essential part of his teachings on societal order, according to which God had called each individual to his or her position in society.<sup>421</sup> In concordance with this altered significance of the term and the related doctrines of the two kingdoms (and/or regiments) and three domains of society, the court chaplain Martin Mirus thus differentiated between Anna's faith and her vocation. The faith is conceptualized as her relationship to God, his word, and the sacraments (especially the Eucharist), and the consort's faith constitutes the foundation on which she can manage her vocation that is defined as a series of interpersonal relationships: to her husband, to their children, to her and her husband's servants and employees, to the church and its clergy, and to the Saxon subjects at large.<sup>422</sup>

The consort's position vis-à-vis the Saxon subjects and the Saxon church distinguished her role in society from other early modern women. Her position and relative authority within the household was unproblematic and – according to the Lutheran prescriptions – the ideal place for a woman. This helps explain why the authors of the funeral sermons emphasized this and used her role within the household as a point of departure. Whereas Dorothea's role as *Hausmutter* is touched on only in passing in the coronation, the funeral sermons center on this domain. As summarized by Jill Bepler, the authors construe Anna as the perfect *Hausmutter* as defined in the contemporary house and marriage manuals: her motherly care for the members of her household (including her husband, children and servants) combined with her Christian virtues of modesty and piety made her an example to all women.<sup>423</sup>

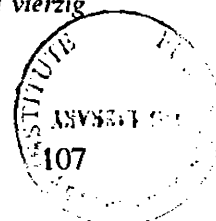
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<sup>420</sup> Funeral sermon for Anna of Saxony by Martin Mirus, printed as the third sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 35. Mirus provides a longer account of "Beruf" at the beginning of the sermon, p. 24. See also the funeral sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588) p. 123.

<sup>421</sup> See Werner Conze's discussion of "Beruf", in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1 (1978), pp. 490-507 and Thomas A. Brady's summary in Brady (1985), pp. 203-204.

<sup>422</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the third sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 35-38.

<sup>423</sup> Bepler (2002a), p. 140.



Even if the content of the funeral sermons focus on the household, their prescriptions did not only have relevance for this domain of life. Because of the ways in which the household (and its integral institution of marriage) was used to invoke images of any well-ordered social unit, and because of the frequent analogies between the house, the church, and the territory, the sermons' accounts of the consort's role as mistress of the house deserve attention.

The funeral sermons praised the deceased electress for her faithfulness, loyalty, humility, and submissiveness towards her husband.<sup>424</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker emphasized that Anna had lived in the holy estate of marriage as a turtledove and that she spent almost every night together with August.<sup>425</sup> In conjunction with the accounts of her marriage several sermons establish a link between these moral qualities of the electress and her dress. Hence, Mirus lauded Anna her having maintaining the traditional German dress rather than adapting the (implicitly Catholic) "Italian, Spanish, or other foreign pattern" and for only wearing jewelry to honor her husband.<sup>426</sup> Likewise, the official account of the 1537 coronation recounted in detail that Dorothea prior to receiving the crown was dressed *not* as a queen but as a *princess*,<sup>427</sup> and Bugenhagen made reference to Esther who only wore her crown to honor the king.<sup>428</sup> Throughout the early modern house and marriage manuals, the importance of dressing in accordance with one's rank was highlighted, and it was repeatedly asserted that the true adornments of a woman were her Christian virtues.<sup>429</sup>

All of the funeral sermons called attention to the numerous children Anna had borne.<sup>430</sup> Adam Roth even established between Anna's numerous pregnancies and her

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<sup>424</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the third sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 35

<sup>425</sup> See the funeral sermon for Anna by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 9. Similar/related comments appear in the funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 64; the sermon by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 293; and finally, Anna as an example to all married women in the sermon by Martin Reinhardt, printed as the eleventh sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 231.

<sup>426</sup> "... vnd kein Welsch / Spanisch oder ander frembde Muster angenommen ...", funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 60 and especially p. 66. See also the sermon by Martin Reinhardt, printed as the eleventh sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 232.

<sup>427</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXIX a.

<sup>428</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXIX b.

<sup>429</sup> See for example the detailed instructions in Spangenberg (1553), pp. Hv(4)-(6) and Magdeburg (1563), pp. B5(6)-(7) and C5(3)-(5). See also Karant-Nunn (1992), p. 131. The rank-specific rights to wear certain fabrics, patterns of dress and of jewelry were codified in the widespread sumptuary laws.

<sup>430</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 68; sermon by Martin Reinhardt, printed as the eleventh sermon in the second part



death, "Regarding the death of our gracious electress and *Landesmutter*, we can say that her strength was exhausted because she brought many young lords and ladies to the world".<sup>431</sup> But not only childbearing had taken its toll on the electress. The losses she had suffered by the death of several children had brought her great grief. Hence, Polycarp Leyser who returned to these bereavements several times during his sermon: Anna had brought "nine sons to this world" but with the exception of Duke Christian, she had lost them all. The grief had been particularly deep because some of the deceased children had been relatively grown up (*erzogen*) by the time of their death, though as a good Christian, the electress had endured these tests as a true Christian and had remained strong in her belief.<sup>432</sup> In these passages, the theologians emphasized the importance of a woman's role as mother and alluded to the biblical association between the original sin and the pains of childbearing (Gen. 3:16).

As a mother to her living children the electress was lauded for the Christian education she had given them. Sons and daughters alike had been instructed to pray diligently,<sup>433</sup> and she had ensured that all her children knew the entire Psalms by heart. According to Mirus, the daughters were well versed in the Bible and knew in which book and chapter any given saying belonged.<sup>434</sup> Several of the theologians praised Anna's parents for the way they had educated her and established a direct, causal relation between the Christian discipline Anna had been taught by her parents and the way in which she had raised her children.<sup>435</sup>

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of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 218; and the sermon by Zacharias Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 269.

<sup>431</sup> "... Was nu den Tödtlichen Abgang vnserer gnedigsten Churfürstin vnd Landesmutter anlangt / können [wir] ... sagen ... das sie ... durch abmattung der kreffte in solche schwachheit geraten / denn sie ... viel Junger Herrlein vnd Frewlein zur welt gebracht..." , funeral sermon by Adam Roth, printed as the seventh sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 158-159. A similar link is made in the sermon by Martin Reinhardt, printed as the eleventh sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 232.

<sup>432</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 68; sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 123-124 and 131; and the sermon by Johann Habermann, printed as the ninth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 195.

<sup>433</sup> Funeral sermon for Anna by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 10

<sup>434</sup> Funeral sermon for Anna by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 66. Zacharias Fröschel added that both son and daughter learnt the catechism and all the Psalms by heart and that they had to read, "... die Bibel vnd Schrifften Lutheri mit allem fleis vnd zu gewissen stunden ...", see the sermon by Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 269.

<sup>435</sup> See for example the funeral sermon for Anna by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 10; the sermon by Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 59; the sermon by Johann Wintzern,

As Bugenhagen stressed that Dorothea should govern her household in a way that made it desirable for the noblemen to marry the (noble) women who had served her, the funeral sermons stressed that Anna had maintained an impressive discipline in her household. Mirus described her *Frauenzimmer* as “a true convent of maidens, full of virtue and piety”.<sup>436</sup> The sermon by Georg Raut’s reveals some of the implications of this characteristic by stressing that Anna did not tolerate idleness and that her daughters as well as the noble maidens were to say their prayers with profound devotion early and late, and before and after each meal.<sup>437</sup>

Towards all other members of the household, the electress had behaved with great care and consideration, and none of the servants were left with unmet needs.<sup>438</sup> She had been “a skilful and industrious housekeeper”, who was attentive to both the potential perils and benefits of the house. Under her governance, the electoral household had been managed in accordance with the position and honor (*Ehre*) of Anna and August.<sup>439</sup> In his sermon, Georg Raut summarized the electress’s virtues as *Hausmutter* in a remarkable comparison to a burgher’s wife, “She was such an assiduous, dedicated [and] diligent mistress of the house that a common burgher’s wife hardly would be able to compare”.<sup>440</sup> Naturally, this comparison should not be read as an offence. Rather, by emphasizing these gender-specific virtues, the electress was construed as an ideal to all women regardless of rank; in the words of Martin Mirus, the deceased electress had been a “a true mirror of all female virtues and a blossom of the female gender”.<sup>441</sup>

The virtues that are emphasized in conjunction with Anna’s role as *Hausmutter* correspond closely to the comprehensive list Magdeburg presented to *all* women: a woman

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printed as the twelfth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 254-255. The most detailed account of Anna’s father is provided in Zacharias Fröschel’s sermon, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 265-266.

<sup>436</sup> “... ein recht Jungfrauen Kloster ... voll Thugende vnd Gottseligkeit ...”, funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 66; see also the sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 112.

<sup>437</sup> Funeral sermon by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 293.

<sup>438</sup> See the funeral sermons by Martin Mirus, printed as the third and fourth sermons in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 36 and 67.

<sup>439</sup> “... eine kluge vnd fleissige Haußhalterin ...”, funeral sermons by Martin Mirus, printed as the third and fourth sermons in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 36 and 67.

<sup>440</sup> “... So ist sie auch solche eine embsige / sorgfeltige / fleissige Haußmutter gewesen / das es jhr kaum eines gemeinen Bürgers Weib wird nachthun ...”, funeral sermon by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 293.

<sup>441</sup> “... Speculum Virtutum matronalium & flos fæminæi sexus ...”, funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 60 and 64-65.

should be upright (*fromm*) and God-fearing;<sup>442</sup> rely on God when faced with difficulties; pray to God for help; thank him humbly; be an obedient wife and a good assistant to her husband; teach her children and servants fear of God by encouraging the good and punishing the bad; be industrious and contribute to the means of the house; be friendly and loving, especially towards her husband; be sensible, modest and reliable; show compassion, mercy and generosity towards the needy; maintain the honor and virtue of the house; be polite and decent with good manners; be chaste (faithful to her husband); be quiet and trustworthy (that is not listen to or contribute to gossip); be restrained with regard to food and, particularly, drink; and patiently carry the cross God gave her. Finally, the ideal woman would dress in accordance to her rank and wealth.<sup>443</sup> The very same virtues can be found throughout the Lutheran teachings on the household and marriage: in Luther's writings on marriage,<sup>444</sup> in Johann Spangenberg's widely circulated marriage manual,<sup>445</sup> and, as shown by Susan Karant-Nunn, in the sermons of Johannes Mathesius.<sup>446</sup>

The very same virtues served as a basis of the consort's role as *Kirchenmutter*. However, in order to elaborate on her duties towards the church, it is necessary to examine briefly how the theologians described and assessed the religiosity of the "ideal consort". Without the foundation of unyielding faith, a consort could not be mother of the church (nor a mother of the territory). Hence, the authors of the funeral sermons stressed that Anna's pious heart and true love of God's word were fundamental qualities,<sup>447</sup> and Joachim Magdeburg wrote that the prime virtue of a high-ranking women ought to be her will to strive against all potential obstacles to hear and learn the true word of God. According to Martin Mirus, Anna had fulfilled this duty and he emphasized the electress's profound respect for both the clergy and God's word. Particular attention was paid to the humility and gratefulness with which she always received the Eucharist.<sup>448</sup> Yet, the authors also explained that the very same virtues had to be employed in the service of the (Saxon) church and God's true word. Hence, when Polycarp Leyser emphasized the electress's devotion to God's word, he stressed that she had not simply been a "listener" but also a

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<sup>442</sup> Regarding this translation of "fromm", see Wunder (1998b), pp. 307-332.

<sup>443</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. B2-B5(7).

<sup>444</sup> See extracts from Luther's writings on marriage and the family in *Luther on Women*, ed. by Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003), pp. 89-136.

<sup>445</sup> Spangenberg (1553), pp. Dv(3)-(4).

<sup>446</sup> Karant-Nunn (1992), p. 131.

<sup>447</sup> Funeral sermon for Anna by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 8-9.

<sup>448</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 62.

“doer” of God’s word; she embodied his words through her actions and thereby constituted an ideal example to all Christians.<sup>449</sup>

The beliefs and religious practices of the female consort had implications that went well beyond her personal salvation.<sup>450</sup> During the seventeenth century, the funeral sermons sometimes construed the consort as a “pillar of prayer”<sup>451</sup> and, corresponding to this later metaphor, Anna’s mastery of praying (*Betkunst*) is described in detail in several of the funeral sermons that were composed upon her death. Mirus explain that the act of praying has to be studied carefully in order to be performed rightly but that Anna had done so, and Hermann characterizes Anna as a “righteous and mighty ‘prayer’ess”, who employed these virtues to the benefit of the territories and the subjects.<sup>452</sup> A similar point is made by Magdeburg when he instructs the high-ranking women to pray from their hearts that God will help to preserve the true understanding of his word: whenever the territory or the subjects were in need, she should – like Esther and Judith – call upon God for his support. However, when God blessed her, her household, her territory or her subjects with good fortunes, she also was obliged to thank him and to admonish her subjects to do the same. Adhering to these principles and making sure that the subjects did the same, was part of her responsibilities.<sup>453</sup>

The importance of the consort’s prayers is disclosed by the extensive might the theologians ascribed to prayers in other contemporary texts. As demonstrated by Hans-Peter Hasse, Selnecker established a direct correlation between the (Crypto-Calvinist) threat against the Saxon church during the 1570s and the population’s incompetence in prayer.<sup>454</sup> Consequently, when he, in the funeral sermon for Anna, wrote the electress “often lay on her knees for a long time and called upon God in intense prayer” to call for his help against the threat of distorted teachings that threatened to take hold in Saxony,<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> “... So sind auch jhr Churf. Gn. Nicht allein ein Hörerin / Sondern auch eine Thäterin des Worts gewesen ...”, funeral sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 122; and the sermon by Johann Wintzern, printed as the twelfth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 254-255.

<sup>450</sup> Wunder, Zöttlein, and Hoffmann (1997), pp. 75-99.

<sup>451</sup> Bepler (2002b) and Watanabe-O’Kelly (2004).

<sup>452</sup> “... rechtschaffene vnd mechtige Beterin ...”, funeral sermon by Adam Hermann, printed as the fifteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 312-313. See also Polycarp Leyser’s sermon, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 121-122; and Caspar Starck’s sermon, printed as the tenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 215

<sup>453</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. C2(2)-C3(2) and C4(2)-C5(2).

<sup>454</sup> Hasse (1995), p. 109.

<sup>455</sup> ... Wenn sie gehöret von Irrthmub [Irrthumb] vnd newen Practikem / so in diesen Landen vnd anderßwo einreissen wollen / ... Ist oft auff jhren Knien gelegen ei=ne lange zeit / vnnd hat Gott angeruffen mit

he is praising her for an *active* defense of the true word of God. Selnecker was not the only theologian who referred to Anna's support for the true word of God during the "crisis of the Saxon Philippism" in the 1570s.<sup>456</sup> 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]". He 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 all had been steadfast patrons of the church, alerted their husbands/brother to the 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. She had begged August to act and continued to fight the threat with him until the God's word and the unity of the church was secured by the Book of Concord.<sup>457</sup>

Corresponding to the double nature of the church (see chapter 1), the consort's role as *Kirchenmutter* was not limited to the spiritual dimension but also entailed a material aspect. Magdeburg stressed that a high-ranking woman should support the constructions of God's temples and contribute to the maintenance of the true practices and services within the church.<sup>458</sup> Bugenhagen reminded Dorothea of similar duties when she received the scepter, and the same duties/virtues were highlighted throughout the funeral sermons that were held for Anna. Hence, Mirus, Fröschel, Raut, and Hermann all explained that as a true patron of the Saxon church the electress had supported the clergy both in the church and in the schools/universities, and that 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.<sup>459</sup>

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jnnigen Gebet ...", funeral sermon for Anna by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 8-9.

<sup>456</sup> The confessional developments in Saxony during the 1570s will be discussed at length in chapter 9.

<sup>457</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 56 and 61-62; see also Polycarp Leyser's sermon, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 121-122; and Johann Habermann's sermon, printed as the ninth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 193.

<sup>458</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. C(2)-C2(1).

<sup>459</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 62; see also the sermon by Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 270-271; by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 283-284 and 290; and the sermon by Adam Hermann, printed as the fifteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 313.

While Bugenhagen paraphrased Isaiah 49:23 when he presented the king and queen as the (foster) parents of their lands, Mirus and Raut summarized Anna's duties in relation to the church with a rephrasing of the same passage: "Queens shall be the care-takers of the church".<sup>460</sup> It is noteworthy that the texts gender this passage stronger than Luther, who presented kings as caretakers of the church and princes as wet-nurses in his translation of the Bible.<sup>461</sup> However, the image of a wet-nurse and the reference to the consort's "motherly heart"<sup>462</sup> for the church served to highlight the consorts' kindness and generosity towards the church (or, in Bugenhagen's text, towards the territory and the subjects).

The responsibilities the consort faced in relation to the protection of the servants within the household and the church reoccur in the responsibilities she is assigned in relation to the subjects and the territory at large. However, two specific instructions stand out: in the coronation, Bugenhagen instructed Dorothea to be (i) a loyal supporter of the needy and (ii) a promoter of a government of grace. These two points are elaborated both in the funeral sermons' praise of the Saxon electress and in Magdeburg's instructions to women of high rank.

According to Joachim Magdeburg, a consort should identify with the needs of her people and, with God's help, do whatever she could to make sure that their needs were met.<sup>463</sup> The funeral sermons provide additional details about the commendable ways in which a consort should care for her subject, when Anna is praised for her care of the needy and those who suffered illness.<sup>464</sup> Mirus, Leyser, and Fröschel all praised Anna's apothecary and the generosity with which she shared both remedies and her knowledge of them. Describing Anna's apothecarial undertakings and care for the frail, Mirus compared her to St. Elisabeth and explained that – in spite of being the daughter of a king – the virtuous electress had not hesitated to "personally visit and care for the needy and ill" and that she often provided personal advice and assistance to women in childbed.<sup>465</sup> In this

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<sup>460</sup> "... Königinnen sollen der Kirchen Pfliegerin sein ...", funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 62. And, "... Die Könige werden deine Pflieger / vnd die Fürstinne deine Erhehrerin sein ...", funeral sermon by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 283 and 291.

<sup>461</sup> "... Vnd die Könige sollen deine Pflieger / vnd jre Fürsten deine Seugammen sein ...", Luther's Bible translation (1545), p. 1245.

<sup>462</sup> Funeral sermon by Adam Roth, printed as the seventh sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 159-160.

<sup>463</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. C2(2)-C3(2) and C4(2)-C5(2)

<sup>464</sup> Funeral sermon by Adam Roth, printed as the seventh sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 160.

<sup>465</sup> "... arme vnd Krancke Leute ... besucht / vnd jhrer gewartet habe ...", funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 67; see also the

way, Mirus could evoke the electress's Christian love for others and her generosity while also bringing attention to her humility: the fact that her Christian, female virtues prevailed over the privileges she could claim on the basis of her rank.

One of the most concrete, but also delicate, duties of the consort that was specified in all of the examined texts regards her willingness to intercede and her ability to administer this duty in a way that complied with the just implementation of the law. Anna of Saxony was lauded for her continual willingness to intercede on behalf of her and her husband's subjects throughout the funeral sermons. However, the Saxon theologians also reiterated the importance of never forgiving murderers and adulterers,<sup>466</sup> and stressed that Anna never had shown mercy for these vices.<sup>467</sup> Selnecker used a noteworthy strategy to stress this point. He referred to a conversation between Anna and her mother,

I remember how her mother, the virtuous Queen of Denmark once said, 'My lord [and husband] accepts that one pleads for poor sinners. However, for murderers, who intentionally has committed a murder, and for adulterers he will accept no plea'. Then the virtuous electress said, 'This I have often heard from my lord [and] father and I will abide by it and will never come to my lord [and husband] with a plea for such.' Though for others, who have faltered out of weakness, she [Anna] never refused to intercede.<sup>468</sup>

Obviously, it is not the voice of Dorothea and Anna that is audible here. Rather, as stressed by Helmut Puff, it is the typified voice of a woman – in this case of an ideal consort – that

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sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 113; the sermon by Caspar Starck, printed as the tenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 214-215; and the sermon by Zacharias Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 270. The biography of Elisabeth of Thuringia/St. Elisabeth (1207-1231) is remarkably well researched and has recently been subject to new interpretations that consider gender and power explicitly. See Klanicay (2000), pp. 202-203 and 209-243; and Elpers (2003), pp. 1-2 and 330-335.

<sup>466</sup> Derived from the Ten Commandments, this view permeated the early modern treatises. See for example Melancthon's *Loci Communes*, the section titled "On Actual Sins". Anna had Hieronymus Rauscher's edition of the *Loci Communes* (1563) in her library: listed as volume no. 292 in the inventory SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62. In this edition the relevant passage "Von würrcklichen sünden" can be found on, pp. 23-24.

<sup>467</sup> See for example the funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 65; the sermon by Johann Wintzern, printed as the twelfth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 255; and the sermon by Zacharias Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 271

<sup>468</sup> "... Ich gedencke / wie jre Fraw Mutter / die from=me Königin in Dennemarck / etc. ... eins sagte : Mein Herr kund wol leiden / das man für arme Sünder bete / Aber für Mörder ... / die aus vorsatz einen Todt=schlag begangen / vnnd vor Ehebrecher liede er keine Vorbit. Da sagt die frome Churfürstin: Das habe ich offit gehört von meinem Herrn Vater / vnd wils auch thun / vnnd wil zu mei=nem Herrn nimmer kommen / das ich vor solche bitten sollte. Sonst für andere / so aus schwacheit gestrauchelt / hat sie vor=zubitten sich niemahls gewegert ...", funeral sermon for Anna by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 10.

serves to add authority to the message of the author's own text.<sup>469</sup> Yet, in this case, Selnecker's imagined dialogue captures not one but three voices (Dorothea, Christian and Anna) and they all help him to reinforce two points: that murderers and adulterers never can be forgiven and that the female consort should be wary of abusing her right and duty to intercede.

The theological texts show a remarkable resemblance in their instructions to/praise of the female consorts. This mother of the house, the church, and the territory, were to personify the ideal Lutheran woman. Her elevated rank obliged her to be an example to all Christians and particularly to all Christian women. As Bugenhagen stated when the crown had been placed on Dorothea's head, "May God give his grace that Your Majesty will be an honor to all women, a solace, a joy, and a crown of these kingdoms".<sup>470</sup> Being the good example was part of the consort's office. The funeral sermons' focus on the electress's role as *Hausmutter* and her patient embrace of God's will in both life and death,<sup>471</sup> helped the authors emphasize this as well as the equality of all humans vis-à-vis God. However, throughout the examined texts one can also detect the tension between the consort's rank and her gender.

#### *Irreconcilable forces? Rank and gender in the normative texts*

Even if the authors of the funeral sermons that were held for Anna of Saxony consistently attempted to play down her rank and emphasize her Christian virtues, they could not escape the fact that they were writing about the highest-ranking woman in Saxony. They all express great grief about the loss of their *Landesmutter*, whose death is represented as a great loss to the worldly government (*Weltliche Regiment*) of Saxony,<sup>472</sup> and several sermons make explicit reference to the deceased electress as an *Obrigkeit* (a person in

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<sup>469</sup> Puff (2001), pp. 317-326.

<sup>470</sup> "... Gott gebe ... gnade / das ewer Maiestat sey ein ehre aller Frawen / ein trost / freude / vnd ein kron dieser Königreichen ... Amen", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXVI a.

<sup>471</sup> This is particularly clear in the funeral sermon by Zacharias Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 272 when he reminds the parishioners that all are equal in death, "... Er sey Keyser oder König / Churfürst oder Fürst / Herr oder Fraw / Gelert oder vngelert / Edel oder vnedel / Bürger oder Bawer / Bischoff oder Bader ...". The same equality vis-à-vis God also appears in the sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the second sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 36; and in the sermon by Georg Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 293-294. See also Bepler (2002a).

<sup>472</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 73; sermon by Adam Roth, printed as the seventh sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 138-139; sermon by Martin Reinhardt, printed as the eleventh sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 230-231.



authority).<sup>473</sup> At the very beginning of the funeral sermon Polycarp Leyser composed for Anna of Saxony, he explained that in the same way as the death of a *Hausmutter* effects all members of a household, so the death of the *Landesmutter* had implications for all Saxon subjects.<sup>474</sup> However, while Leyser in this paragraph equals the territory to the household and thus presents the deceased electress as an authority within this collective, he subsequently introduces a distinction between the *politia* and the *oeconomia* and maintains that it was God's will that women only govern in the house.<sup>475</sup> As this example reveals and as pointed out in conjunction with the 1537 coronation above, the theologians who attempted to describe an ideal consort and her duties were faced with one recurring difficulty: how could the tension between her elevated rank and her inferior nature as a woman be reconciled?

Throughout the normative texts, the female consorts are attributed both rank- and gender-specific traits. However, when the theologians emphasized Anna's faith and her laudable behavior within a narrowly defined house, her rank-specific virtues could (at least partially) be toned down, thereby allowing her Christian and gender-specific virtues to dominate. This was particularly conspicuous when Georg Raut made the aforementioned comparison between Anna and a burgher wife. The very same focus is revealed by the title of Magdeburg's *On the True Nobility of Princesses*; this *true* nobility was not defined by their rank but by their Christian virtues.

While this strategy worked to liberate the consort's virtues from her rank, the gender-specific deficiencies a *female* consort "inevitably" suffered from were not erased by references to her rank: even the finest traits and the discipline, decency, and chastity Anna was said to have embodied did not enable her to escape the characteristic imperfections of her sex. Bugenhagen explicated the weaknesses of women in the instructions he presented to Dorothea in place of the swords and when Martin Mirus wanted to emphasize that the electress vis-à-vis God was equal to all other human beings, he wrote that she "also had had

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<sup>473</sup> See for example funeral sermon for Anna by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 8-9; and the funeral sermon by Mirus, printed as the second sermon in the second part of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 16. Selnecker and Mirus both use the metaphor between the three and the secular authority from 1 Samuel 25 and thereby highlight Anna's status as a secular authority (*Obrigkeit*).

<sup>474</sup> Funeral sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 114. See also the sermon by Johann Wintzer, printed as the twelfth sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 234-235.

<sup>475</sup> Funeral sermon by Polycarp Leyser, printed as the sixth sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 123.

her weaknesses and been a sinner, [that] she at times had been moved too easily”.<sup>476</sup> Rather than simply writing that she, as all other human beings, had been a sinner, he presented her weaknesses as something gender-specific. Even Fröschel’s praise, that Anna had embodied “Royal and Princely virtues”, loses its significance for an understanding of rank, when he specifies the same virtues to be her faith and Christian morals.<sup>477</sup> It should be added though, that the prince also was attributed weaknesses, as for example in Bugenhagen’s statement that “men sometimes can do too much”. Clearly, in these versions of the Lutheran political theology, the *body politic* of the secular authorities did not counteract the weaknesses of their *body natural*, as Kantorowicz observed in the writings of the Tudor jurists.<sup>478</sup>

But even if the theologians to a far extent diverted attention away from the women’s rank, they were faced with the arduous task of defining the consort’s position in relation to both the church and the territory. In an attempt to counter the difficulties posed by the women’s high rank and “inferior” sex, the theologians employed two tools: (i) the shifting meanings ascribed to the “house”; and (ii) the references to biblical and canonized queens/female consorts. The efficacy and implications of these two tools deserve attention.

The shifting meanings that were ascribed to the house appear from the contrast between Leyser’s introduction and his later distinction between the *politia* and the *oeconomia*. In other passages from the sermons, Anna’s household is confined even further and consists only of her *Frawenzimmer*.<sup>479</sup> However, when Anna time and again appears as *Hausmutter*, *Kirchenmutter*, and *Landesmutter* the authors establish analogies between all three units and use the good order of the house to invoke an image of the well-ordered church and territory. The same analogy between the territory and the household is apparent in the coronation when Bugenhagen referred to the king and queen as the (foster) parents of their subjects. Because women could hold extensive and legitimate authority within the household, this strategy could resolve some of the tension between gender and rank, not least because they also brought attention to the gendering of the offices of king and queen –

<sup>476</sup> “... sie ... auch jhre Schwachheit gehabt / vnd eine Sünderin gewesen / hat sich bißweilen leichtlich bewegen lassen ...”, funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the second sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 36. A similar account can be found in the sermon by George Raut, printed as the fourteenth sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 292.

<sup>477</sup> “... Königlichen vnd Fürstlichen Thugenden ...”, funeral sermon by Zacharias Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 267.

<sup>478</sup> Quoting the “Plowden’s report”, Kantorowicz writes, “His [the king’s] Body Politic ... takes away the Imbecility of his Body natural ...”. Kantorowicz (1957/1997), pp. 9-10. See also Monod’s examination of the challenges to this notion throughout Europe, 1589-1610, in the chapter titled “The Sickness of the Royal Body”, Monod (1999), pp. 33-80, regarding Protestantism especially, pp. 47-51.

<sup>479</sup> See for example Lauterbeck (1572), p. XXXV b.

thereby underlining that the wife and mother of course was subject the husband and father and that the two were expected to fulfill different but complementary duties. This is most clearly expressed when Bugenhagen referred to Genesis and explained that it was God's will that, "man and wife shall be one body, and likewise their rank (dignity) and name shall be inseparable. Even if the offices shall not and cannot be alike".<sup>480</sup>

However, the same analogies between the house, the church, and the territory implicitly ascribed extensive authority to the female consort within the church and the territory. In his *Speculum coniugale et politicum*, Selnecker wrote, "God crafted the rod and gave it in the hands of *parents*, as he gave the sword to the secular authorities" (my emphasis).<sup>481</sup> However, king and queen did not hold the sword jointly. In contrast, Dorothea was told that her innate and gender-specific weaknesses made her unfit to administer this part of the government. Hence, the very same analogy between the house and the territory that served to legitimize the consort's position within the *politia* amplified her political role to a degree that was unacceptable to the theological authorities who therefore resorted to the overt articulation of the alleged weaknesses of women and an explicit restriction of her office.

The analogy between the house and the church represented a different problem. As mentioned in chapter 1, the Lutheran theologians struggled to define the extent of a secular ruler's authority over of the church and this complicated the analogy that they at times sought to establish between the *ecclesia* and the two "secular" domains of life. However, in spite of this, the female consort was repeatedly presented as a *Kirchenmutter*. As her husband, the consort was subject to God's ultimate authority, but both she and her husband were responsible for the dissemination and preservation of God's true word as well as their subjects' adherence to Christian morals. The mutual integration of the *ecclesia* and the *politia* implied that the consort should fulfill this duty by being a role model, supporting the church, and interceding when appropriate, whereas only the king – as Bugenhagen stipulated it – was expected to implement God's word in the law. However, because the female consorts throughout the normative literature also were reminded of their duty to

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<sup>480</sup> "... Mann vnd Weib / das ist ein Leib / so soll auch Ehre vnd Namen vngeschei=den sein. Wiewol die Ampte nicht sollen oder können ... eins sein ...", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXIX b (Genesis 2:24). See also and Luther's sermon on Genesis (1527) in *Luther on Women*, ed. by Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003), here pp. 16-19; Luther's sermon on the estate of marriage (1519), in *Luther on Women* (2003), here pp. 89-92.

<sup>481</sup> "... Gott hat die Ruthe geschaffen und sie den Eltern in die Hende gegeben, wie Er das Schwert der Obrigkeit ...", quoted from Schorn-Schütte (1991), p. 120. See also Selnecker (1600), p. 88 b.

interfere if their husbands were acting against the will of God, the limits of their responsibilities within both the *ecclesia* and the *politia* are difficult to define.

When the theologians instructed the consorts to interfere if their husbands' actions contradicted God's word, they always used the example of biblical women and/or canonized queens to demonstrate their point and this brings us to the second tool with which the theologians' tried to define the unusual position of a female consort. Before the implications of this rhetorical technique can be addressed, a brief overview of the appearances of these praiseworthy women in the examined texts is pertinent.

When Joachim Magdeburg defined a high-ranking woman's duty to intervene if her husband was about to do something "wrong" (un-Christian), he wrote,

[A]nd if her husband, [the] king, prince or lord, out of ignorance, weakness or otherwise, is about to act against the will of God by mistakenly accusing innocent people, then the Christian, virtuous queen or princess has to admonish her lord [and husband] against it. As the wife of [Pontius] Pilate in Jerusalem ... who admonished her lord [and husband] that he should not sentence the innocent Christ to death.<sup>482</sup>

The fact that Magdeburg kept this point separate from the consort's duty to intercede by her husband and other authorities on behalf of her subjects,<sup>483</sup> underlines that this instruction above all was about the adherence to God's word and her duty to interfere if her husband digressed from the Christian principles of government.

Bugenhagen also emphasized how several biblical women had shown great courage when defending God's word, though she emphasized Deborah, Abigail and Esther,

[O]ne reads in the Holy Scripture about the heavenly acts of some high[-born] women. About Deborah one reads that she governed the people in peace for forty years and released them of their enemies and re-established the word of the dear God, which the Godless had distorted [Judges 4]. Likewise one reads about the pious and wise lady Abigail that she deflected David's wrath when he wanted to kill the defiant young men and Nabel [1 Samuel 25]. Likewise [one reads] about the great Queen Esther that she prayed to God, 'Lord you know that I consider my crown to be filth, but that I carry it to honor the king and the kingdom, don't condemn us for our sins, but

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<sup>482</sup> "... vnd so jr gemahel König / Fürst oder Herr aus vnwissenheit / aus schwachheit / oder sonsten sich wider Christum / oder vn=schuldige Leut vergreifen wolt / so sol die Christliche tugendreiche Königin oder Fürstin / jren Herrn ... darwider vermanen / Wie die Hausfraw Pilati / ... zu Hieru=salem / ... welche jren Herrn ... ver=manet / das er ... de[n] vn=schuldigen Christo / nicht ... / zum tode ver=urteilte [solt] ...", Magdeburg (1563), pp. C4(1)-(2).

<sup>483</sup> Magdeburg presents the consort's duty to intercede as the sixth virtue and her duty to intervene against her husband's potential un-Christian acts as the seventh virtue, see Magdeburg (1563), pp. C3(2)-C4(2).

save my people'. Then the blessed queen went to the frightful king endangering her life and saved her people from death [Esther 3-7].<sup>484</sup>

To Bugenhagen, these three women were united by their courageous and successful defense of God's word. But although his summary of their deeds is brief and selective, it does reveal that the three women were "exceptional"; in other words, that they had transgressed the boundaries within which the appropriate female behavior usually was defined. Deborah governed her people (hence, she was not a consort) and she released them of their enemies (she led an army), Abigail spoke her mind against David, and Esther entered Ahasuerus's quarters without his permission. While Bugenhagen's reference to Deborah is the least expected of the three, attention first has to be paid to the other two, more similar examples because they echo Magdeburg's reference to the wife of Pontius Pilate.

Abigail and Esther's challenges to their husbands' authority were acceptable because both women were motivated by a wish to defend God's true word. As Magdeburg referred to the wife of Pontius Pilate, Bugenhagen used Abigail and Esther to present the wife as the (moral) teacher of her husband. This topos was firmly established in the theological writings on marriage already before the Reformation, but it was continued in the Lutheran marriage sermons/manuals.<sup>485</sup> However, in this particular context (the role of the female consort and Luther's teachings on secular authority) the examples gain an added dimension. Esther and Abigail's actions can, both in Bugenhagen's account and in the Scripture, be read as examples of the true understanding of the hierarchical relationship between God's rule and the secular authorities (the two kingdoms). Hence, when Bugenhagen presented these stories he was at once defining the consort's obligation to defend the word of God, the limits of her husband's authority vis-à-vis God's word, and thereby the correct, hierarchical relationship between the two kingdoms.<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> "... Man list in der heiligen Schrift / von etlichen hohen Frawen / grosse Göttliche thaten / ... Von Tebora lieset man / ... / das sie das Volck Israel regieret habe / vierzig Jar lang / in gutem friede / erlöset sie von jren Feinden / vnd richtet wider auff bey dem Volck / das liebe Gottes Wort / welchs die ... Gottlosen hatten verworffen / ... Item / man list ... von den Gottse=ligen vnd weisen Frawen / Abigail / ... / das sie den König Daudi abwendete / von seinem zorn / da er wolt er=schlagen / den trozenden Junckern vnd ... Nabel. Item von der grossen Königin Hester / da sie also betet zu Gott / HErr du weist / das ich meine Kron für dir achte / wie ein Vnflat / Aber dem König vnd Königreich / trage ich sie zun ehren / erzürme nicht vber vn=ser Sünden / vnd errette mein Volck / ... Da gab sich die heilige Kōnigin für dem grimmigen Könige / in fahr jres ... Lebens / vnd erlösete jr Volck vom Todte ...", Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXIX b.

<sup>485</sup> Schnell (1998b), pp. 268-274.

<sup>486</sup> This question touches upon the complex and much-disputed subject of the Lutheran theologians view of the "Widerstandsrecht". Neither Luther nor Bugenhagen taught unlimited obedience to the secular authorities. Already in 1529, Bugenhagen had reminded Johann of Saxony that if the emperor unrightfully meddled with religious affairs, the princes should resist with force. Likewise, in Luther's treaty *On Secular Authority* it was

Esther reappears both in the funeral sermons and in Joachim Magdeburg's mirror-of-princesses. As pointed out by Pauline Stafford, commentaries on Esther had flourished and been read by queens since (at least) the ninth century,<sup>487</sup> and these examples show that Lutheran theologians continued to favor her as a role model when they addressed the duties of a female consort. However, even within the few texts that here have been examined, the range in which Esther appears is remarkable: Bugenhagen emphasized her courageous defense of God's will and her people, Martin Mirus highlighted her modesty and her generous patronage of the church,<sup>488</sup> and Joachim Magdeburg used Esther as an example of several virtues: he praised her as the ideal intercessor, he instructed high-ranking women to have their subjects include her in their prayer as Esther had done, and he evoked both Esther and Judith to emphasize the high-ranking women's duty to rely upon God for the support of their people.<sup>489</sup>

Abigail was also employed for different purposes: Bugenhagen praised Abigail for softening David's anger, whereas Mirus mentioned this quality as only one among several praiseworthy attributes. Comparing Anna to Abigail, he highlighted the two women's good government of the household, their generosity towards the servants, their willingness to intercede, and the humility with which they performed all of these duties.<sup>490</sup> It has already been shown that Bugenhagen also instructed Dorothea to govern her house well, though in conjunction with this, he used St. Elisabeth of Thuringia – rather than Abigail – as the model, and he specified Elisabeth's modesty, the Christian discipline in her *Frawenzimmer*, and her generosity towards the disadvantaged as her prime virtues.<sup>491</sup> Yet, when St. Elisabeth appears in the funeral sermons, it is with specific reference to Anna's apothecarial undertakings and her distribution of remedies and recipes.

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as much the limits as the extent of a prince's power that were defined, and Bugenhagen's instructions to Christian and Dorothea in the 1537 coronation reflect the same. However, the role of the female consort has not been addressed in the literature on the subject. In the introduction to the Book of Judith, Martin Luther drew parallels between this figure and the right to resistance. Although Judith there is viewed as a symbol of the people of Israel, she is often presented as a role-model for women in the contemporary literature (though only once in the texts that here have been examined) and it would be interesting to examine these intersections and thus the consort's responsibility in relation to the right of resistance in a future analysis. The right to resistance has recently been the subject of renewed debates, see the contributions to *Widerstandsrecht in der frühen Neuzeit* (2001).

<sup>487</sup> Stafford (1997a), pp. 17-18.

<sup>488</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the second sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 27 and 36.

<sup>489</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. C2(2), C4(1), C5(4)-(5).

<sup>490</sup> Funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the second sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), p. 36.

<sup>491</sup> Lauterbeck (1572), fol. XXXV.

The different ways in which these role models were reveal their considerable malleability, hence their strength as role models, and this suggests that next to their established status as laudable Christian women, it was above all their rank and role as the wives of male rulers that made the theologians select these particular women.

However, in contrast to Esther, Abigail and St. Elisabeth, the prophetess Deborah, who appears both in the coronation and in Magdeburg's treatise, was *not* a female consort. Joachim Magdeburg refers to Deborah in conjunction with Judith and explains that both women freed their people of tyranny. However, Magdeburg's focus is not on their acts but on the ways in which they humbly praised and thanked God for having helped them.<sup>492</sup> Bugenhagen's account of Deborah is more detailed, though he too omits any direct references to her status as a judge and military commander. In the Scripture (Judges 4-5) Deborah is lauded for her rule of Israel and extensive attention is paid to the achievements as a military commander and to her role as a judge. Hence, Deborah commanded the sword (understood both as physical force and as the law), the key attribute of a ruler that explicitly was withheld from Dorothea in 1537.

Deborah's status as ruler helps explain why her example experienced a true revival in Elizabethan England,<sup>493</sup> but it also brings attention to the difficulties the theologian's faced when they employed Deborah as a role model to the female consort. Even though Bugenhagen and Magdeburg made highly selective references to Deborah's biography and only sought to emphasize her humility and devotion to God's word, their references – particularly Bugenhagen's mention of her forty-year rule – entailed the same "risk" of amplifying the consort's authority as the one that could be observed in the analogies between the *Haus-* and *Landesmutter*. An explicit reference to her status as a prophetess underlined the exceptional legitimation of her actions, though – in relation to the "real" and Lutheran consorts – it also could be taken to suggest that they, as God's selected authorities, also could claim a particular status.

The theologians' references to the biblical and canonized queens/consorts were highly selective and correspond closely to the content of the Lutheran "Hofkritik" (critique or the court/"anti-court writing") with its recurring emphasis on the dangers of idleness and deceit that risked corrupting the true Christian virtues.<sup>494</sup> This is underlined when Anna's

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<sup>492</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. C2(2)-C3(2).

<sup>493</sup> McLaren (2003) and Thompson (1992), pp. 48-53 and pp. 180-186.

<sup>494</sup> For an introduction to Luther's "Hofkritik" see Sommer (1999), pp. 46-52 and the comprehensive study by Helmuth Kiesel (Kiesel (1979)).

Christian virtues appear as something surprising and something she retained/developed *in spite of* her rank.<sup>495</sup> However, in order to communicate this message, the rank of the “real” female consorts that were mentioned in these texts also had to be highlighted. For this purpose, the narratives of the biblical and canonized queens were – when their deeds were referred selectively – a useful tool. Abigail, Esther and St. Elisabeth were particularly powerful examples because they had managed to serve God and made their husband’s serve God with only minor and acceptable deviations from the female virtues of submissiveness and humility. Deborah, on the other hand, appears as a less suitable role model.

The tension between gender and rank is unmistakable throughout the normative sources that here have been examined. To the Lutheran theologians, a woman’s authority ought to be confined to the household, though when the household of the ruling couple could be viewed as the entire territory and as encompassing the church, the range of the consort’s authority inevitably transgressed the boundaries that usually defined the responsibilities of women.

#### **The *Landesmutter* in the socio-political order**

The definitions of the consort’s office show a remarkable consistency throughout the texts that have been examined in this chapter. She was positioned as a mother and caretaker of the territory and its population with particular emphasis on her responsibility to support the church and further the dissemination of and adherence to God’s word. Next to her duty to serve as an example to all subjects by embodying the virtues of a Christian woman, the texts specified her duty to yield material support to the church/clergy, assistances the needy and frail, and her obligation to serve as intercessor on behalf of all subjects within the territory.

The content of the 1537 coronation in Denmark highlights that the consort indeed was viewed as an authority, that is, as a political figure. Hence, when the funeral sermons and Magdeburg stress the consorts responsibility to protect the subjects and further the word of God as well as the Christian moral, it is crucial to remember that the duty to protect was an integral part of holding authority. Correspondingly, in the hierarchies of the early modern world, the female consorts were subject only to the authority of God and their husbands.

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<sup>495</sup> See the example of Anna serving the needy and ill in spite of her rank mentioned above.



The marked continuity from the content of the coronation description to the funeral sermons suggests a high degree of consensus concerning the consort's duties among the theological authorities. The similarities can be viewed as a result of the fact that the texts had their common origins in Lutheran teachings on authority and the widespread house and marriage manuals that developed from the late 1520s.<sup>496</sup> Nevertheless, the striking similarities combined with the, at times extensive, references to Anna's parents in the funeral sermons could indicate that some of the theologians had access to the coronation description when they prepared their sermons.<sup>497</sup>

The Lutheran teachings on the three domains of life at once facilitated and complicated the theologians' task of defining the consort's office. The insistence of every individual's presence in each of the domains, the mutual incorporation of the orders, and the reciprocal mirroring of the *oeconomia* and *politia* brought about particular difficulties when an analogy was established between the *Haus-* and *Landesmutter*. The leap from household to territory amplified the consort's authority and proved problematic to (at least) some of the theologians who therefore specified that the consort's authority was confined to the house. As pointed out above, Bugenhagen's coronation also reflects aspects of the Christian-Aristotelian conception of the hierarchical and estate-based society, and this model of society placed a greater emphasis on consort's rank than the funeral sermons with their more consequent adherence to the Lutheran conception of the three domains of life. Nevertheless, the repeated usage of the terms *Landesmutter* and *Kirchenmutter* reveals that the consorts were conferred specific responsibilities in relation to both the church and the *politia*. In addition, the frequent parallels to the biblical and canonized female consorts (rather than to other biblical role models) highlighted her particular status and brought attention to the Christian virtues that were desired in her management of this position.

In chapter 1, Luise Schorn-Schütte's conclusions concerning the particular position of the wives of the Protestant clergy within the Lutheran society – especially in relation to the church – were mentioned briefly. According to Schorn-Schütte, the pastor's wife was a “companion and co-ruler” (“Gefährtin und Mitregentin”) in the parsonage.<sup>498</sup> The early

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<sup>496</sup> Frühsorge (1978); Ozment (1983); Frühsorge (1984); Schorn-Schütte (1998); Müller (2004).

<sup>497</sup> Particularly the detailed account of Christian III's rule provided in the funeral sermon by Zacharias Fröschel, printed as the thirteenth sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 265-266, suggests the usage of other sources in the preparations of the funeral sermons in 1585.

<sup>498</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1991) p. 153; Schorn-Schütte (1996a), pp. 288-330; Schorn-Schütte (1996b), pp. 94-104, here pp. 95-97; Dilcher (1996), pp. 55-72, here pp. 59-61.

modern notion of the wife as a companion is well known<sup>499</sup> though, in the context of this analysis, the term “co-ruler” is more significant. Was the female consort a co-ruler of her husband’s territory?

The coronation oath of Dorothea as well as the favored terms *Landesmutter* and *Kirchemutter* suggests that the question can be answered affirmatively. However, the fact that she was not given part of the sword – contrary to the mistress of the house who, according to Selnecker, held the rod jointly with her husband – combined with Polycarp Leyser’s explicit statement that the domain of a woman was the house and not the *politia*, indicates that she was not a co-ruler. Yet, there is no doubt that she was a co-ruler (albeit inferior to her husband) of the princely household and, because of the fluid boundaries of this particular household and the resulting overlaps between the princely household, the central administration, and the territory at large, this status spilled into the *politia*. Moreover, and as Schorn-Schütte also observes in relation to the parsonage,<sup>500</sup> the princely household should be an example to all others. This implied that all aspects of the household (the marriage, the education of children and servants, and the maintenance of Christian discipline and industriousness among all members) had to be conducted in exemplary ways,<sup>501</sup> as also emphasized by the content of the examined texts. However, although the parsonage and the princely household should serve these “outwardly” purposes, the theologians also insisted that all women were firmly rooted in the *oeconomia*: she had to be “häuslich” if the honor of the house were to be preserved.<sup>502</sup> Consequently, the Lutheran theologians agreed, as Bugenhagen explained, that it was by way of their husbands’ particular status in either or both the *politia* and *ecclesia* that the female consorts (and the pastors’ wives) held particular responsibilities in these domains.

Even though the prescriptions to the female consorts are remarkably consistent in the examined texts, it must be remembered that the Lutheran teachings co-existed with a range of practices that supplemented and, at times, contradicted this set of ideas. For both men and women, blood (decent) remained the crucial precondition for obtaining the positions of authority that here have been discussed. With the exception of a few, passing references to Anna’s parents, her status as member of a royal dynasty, and prayers for the “House of

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<sup>499</sup> Schnell (1998a), pp. 119-170.

<sup>500</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1991), p. 132.

<sup>501</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1991), p. 132. See also Jancke (1998), pp. 145-155.

<sup>502</sup> Regarding noble women and “häuslichkeit” see Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 186-190. See also the extract from Luther’s “Tischreden” in *Luther on Women*, ed. by Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003), p. 63

Saxony" (the House of Wettin) in the funeral sermon,<sup>503</sup> the dynasty is surprisingly absent in the texts surveyed. In contrast, the composition of Anna's correspondence shows that her relatives constituted the core of her extensive network, and this striking difference is a forceful reminder of the need to examine not only the normative texts and the "ideal consort", but also the lived lives of the "real" female consorts as it will be done in the remainder of this study.

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<sup>503</sup> The prayer is printed in the funeral sermon by Martin Mirus, printed as the fourth sermon in the second half of *Sechs vnd vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 71-72.



## Chapter 4

### Mediating Resources: The Consort's Double Dynastic Affiliation

Princely women lived their married lives within and between two dynasties. The double dynastic affiliation of princely women is clearly visible in the correspondence of Anna of Saxony. References to both the natal and conjugal dynasties consistently appear in the letters of Anna and her female correspondents when their names are written. The Saxon electress was, "Anna, born of the Royal House of Denmark, Duchess and Electress of Saxony"; her mother was "Dorothea, by God's Grace Queen of Denmark[-]Norway, born of Saxony"; and her daughter was, "Elisabeth, born Duchess of Saxony, Countess Palatine".<sup>504</sup> The content of these "names" is significant. As Heide Wunder has argued on the basis of similar references to both natal and marital families in the early modern funeral sermons that were held for patrician and noble women, the double reference shows that women did not identify themselves only in relation to their husbands.<sup>505</sup> Examining the position of the female consort between and as part of two dynasties, the goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that the signatures of the female consorts should be read as literal expressions of "who" the women understood themselves to be and that the consorts and their relatives considered their position to entail particular responsibilities.

The dominant traits of Anna of Saxony as a historical subject – like numerous other female consorts – were formed by nineteenth-century biographies, which emphasize the consort's role as a mother of the emerging nation-state<sup>506</sup> and which continue to influence modern historiography. In these state-centered narratives, the consort's continued bonds to her natal dynasty were peripheral if not outright troubling and, when they are mentioned, they are often referred to with disapproval.<sup>507</sup> The impact of the nation-centered biographies is detectable even in the most recent research. Outlining an agenda for future research on princely women in late medieval and early modern Germany, Jörg Rogge thus

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<sup>504</sup> "Anna Geborne aus Koniglich Stam Zu Dennemareck, Hertzogin vnd Churfurstin zu Sachßen", Anna to Frederik II, Dresden 3 May 1570, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder; "Dorothea von gotts gnaden Kongin Zu Dennemark Norwegen ... Geborne Zu Sachssen ...", Dorothea to Anna, Kolding 20 Aug. 1569, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 65 a – b; "Elisabeth ... geboren hertzogin Zur Sachsen Pfaltzgrefin ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 26 July 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 86 a – b. However, similar formulae recur throughout the correspondence of Anna of Saxony.

<sup>505</sup> Wunder (1984) and Wunder (1992).

<sup>506</sup> In the case of Anna of Saxony see von Weber (1865) and Sturmhoefel (1906). The more general tendency has been analyzed by Schulte (1998).

<sup>507</sup> This is clearly visible in the biographies of Anna's eldest daughter Elisabeth, Countess Palatine. See especially Kluckhohn (1874), but also von Bezold (1879) and Press (1970), pp. 268-269.

argued that new analyses should center on the consort's relationship to her husband and her children.<sup>508</sup> In spite of Rogge's thoughtful considerations of the subjectivity and agency of princely women, the definition of this research desideratum fails to acknowledge the dynamic inherent in the consort's gender-specific position within and between two dynasties. As Stanley Chojnacki suggests, a strong sense of lineage does not necessarily imply a narrow sense of kinship. In his work on fifteenth-century Venice, Chojnacki demonstrated that even in societies with strong patrilineal traits, the unilineal principle of descent is complemented by a bilateral kinship orientation.<sup>509</sup> Furthermore, he argued that the more flexible kinship orientation of women was an important constituent of late medieval and early modern Venetian society.<sup>510</sup>

Focusing on bilateral kinship orientation emphasizes that while an agnatic lineage may have structured the legally defined inheritance practices, it comprises only part of the social reality. The agnatic lineage is anything but a self-contained collective and if an analysis centers on *one* dynasty and the internal communication within this dynasty, the consort's status as an "outsider" in her new family is likely to be overstated. In a recent analysis, Cordula Nolte thus argued that a woman remained a stranger in her new dynasty throughout her married life.<sup>511</sup> However, as it will be demonstrated here, the consort's double dynastic affiliation could also considerably empower the women and a married woman could position herself as a member of both dynasties.

The institution of marriage and the prevailing patrilocality of early modern Germany shaped a woman's gender-specific position within her natal and conjugal dynasties. Marriage was an institution of profound religious significance,<sup>512</sup> but it also was a prerequisite for the legitimate transmission of property, titles, and power from one generation to the next. Both noble and princely families developed sophisticated marriage strategies that aimed at preserving or enhancing the current status of the lineage. Although

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<sup>508</sup> Rogge (2002a). In keeping with this "program", the contributions to the anthology he published last year *Fürstin und Fürst* (2004) focus (almost) exclusively on the consort's position within her "new" dynasty.

<sup>509</sup> Chojnacki (1985), p. 243.

<sup>510</sup> Chojnacki (1974), p. 174-203, especially p. 180. A similar point has recently been stressed by Barbara Harris with regard to the strong and lasting bonds that existed between female relatives among the English nobility (Harris (2004), pp. 21-50).

<sup>511</sup> Nolte (1998); Walsh (1991); Spieß (1997). Walsh and Spieß both consider the women's status as outsiders among their marital kin as well as their unfamiliarity with the culture and language of the territory/household in which they arrived. See also the more general considerations of the wife as "foreign woman" in late medieval literature and law by Doris Ruhe (Ruhe (1997), pp. 37-51).

<sup>512</sup> See Harrington (1995); for considerations of the religious significance of marriage among Protestant princes, see Sutter Fichtner (1989), pp. 40-42 and 46-47.

these strategies have received ample scholarly attention,<sup>513</sup> the high-ranking women are often portrayed as passive objects of politically motivated marriage strategies. Recently, Clarissa Campbell Orr stressed that queens were chosen for their “dynastic capital” when marriages were concluded with a view to cementing or creating new political alliances.<sup>514</sup> However, in both this observation and in Campell Orr’s subsequent conclusion that, “Female dynastic capital is a [...] crucial ingredient in the rise or decline of a dynasty”,<sup>515</sup> this capital remains something abstract and women’s active usage of their “dynastic capital” is not specified.

Examining the marriages within the royal family of Aragon during the late medieval period, Roger Sablonier points out that the queens could represent status, dowry, fertility, and various – though unspecified – “political advantages”. Although he refrains from considerations of women’s active contributions to the desired positive convergence of exchange, he does suggest that it was the same “convergence of exchanges” between the involved families that defined the emotional success or failure of a princely marriage,<sup>516</sup> thereby highlighting the interrelationship between material and emotional interests and the social and emotional dimensions of a marriage (alliance). Similarly, David Sabean has stressed a marriage alliance was intended to create a set of social relationships which “would structure and make possible a lifetime of fruitful exchanges”.<sup>517</sup>

This implies that a marriage must *not* be viewed as a completed transaction, but as a first step towards stronger social, emotional, economic/material, and political ties between two dynasties. However, if a marriage strategy were to yield the desired and mutual benefits, the ties between the two families had to be actively developed and, by way of her double dynastic affiliation, the female consort could contribute significantly to the intended rapprochement.<sup>518</sup> Departing from these observations, this chapter examines how the female consorts *lived and performed* the marriage strategies by mediating multiple and two-way exchanges between natal and marital kin. Analyzing the letters that were exchanged

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<sup>513</sup> See for example Spieß (1993); Braun (1996); Hurwich (1998); Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 119-186; Essegern (2003); Sutter Fichtner (1976).

<sup>514</sup> Clarissa Campbell Orr’s introduction to *Queenship in Europe* (2004), p. 12.

<sup>515</sup> Clarissa Campbell Orr’s introduction to *Queenship in Europe* (2004), p. 14.

<sup>516</sup> Sablonier (1984), p. 217. This emphasis on the symbolic importance of the consort’s dynastic capital (rather than her active usage of it) also dominates Oresko (2004).

<sup>517</sup> Sabean (1990), pp. 418-419. See also Lévi-Strauss’s more general discussion of marriage and marriage alliances in Lévi-Strauss (1949/1969), pp. 52-68 and 478-481.

<sup>518</sup> See the similar argument concerning the significance of female networks for turning the political potential of a marriage into reality in Barbara Harris’s analysis of English aristocratic women (Harris (2004), particularly pp. 43-44).

between Anna of Saxony and her closest relatives allow the responsibilities that she identified for herself in relation to her two dynasties to be outlined and it reveals how the female consort contributed actively and consciously to the exchanges between the two families.

The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part Anna of Saxony's efforts to mobilize her father's support to secure the status of her husband will be examined, and it will be shown how her position in Saxony subsequently granted her the means to provide important support for her brother Frederik, who inherited the Danish throne in 1559. In the second part of the chapter, Anna's involvement in the arrangements of her brothers' marriages is examined. The analysis is here focused on the electress's efforts to find a suitable wife for Frederik and for her youngest brother Hans.

In the concluding discussion the concept of "dynastic capital" will be considered in light of the concrete examples presented in the chapter. Whereas the existing literature leaves this form of capital rather abstract, the aim is here to specify what "dynastic capital" consisted of, how the individual consort could employ it, and how this form of capital shaped the consort's position within her two dynasties.

#### **The female consort as an active conduit of exchange**

Anna and August's wedding was celebrated with a lavish festival in Torgau on 7 October 1548. The marriage has generally been viewed as an expression of Moritz of Saxony and Christian III of Denmark's wish to strengthen the ties between the Protestant territories without endangering their relations to the emperor.<sup>519</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, Moritz had demonstrated his loyalty towards the emperor by supporting him rather than the other Protestant princes during the last phase of the Schmalkaldic War. In return for this allegiance, Charles V rewarded the duke by transferring the electoral title (and the associated territories) from the Ernestine Wettins to Moritz's Albertine branch of the dynasty. The relationship between Christian III and Charles V was slightly more tenuous. As the brother-in-law of Christian II, who was ousted from the Danish throne during the civil war of the 1530s, the emperor hesitated to recognize Christian III as the legitimate ruler of Denmark. After considerable Danish efforts, an agreement was finally reached during the 1544 Diet in Speyer. Charles V promised to abstain from any involvement in a potential war between the Christian III and the deposed Christian II, thereby implicitly (but

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<sup>519</sup> Fröbe (1912), pp. 9-13; Bäuml (1990), pp. 19-21; Frandsen (2001), pp. 289-290.



not explicitly) acknowledging Christian III's status as king.<sup>520</sup> Hence, Anna and August's wedding marked a new and desirable alliance for the heads of two Protestant dynasties that had both profited from recent rapprochements towards Charles V, but whose current status also was best secured by a continued friendship with the emperor.

For Anna and August, the consequences of the wedding were more immediate and the celebrations marked the beginning of their adult lives. Four months after the wedding August informed his father-in-law that he and Anna now had moved to Weissenfels in order to set up their household.<sup>521</sup> Weissenfels remained their base until 1553 when Moritz was killed in battle and August became elector. But by the time Anna became Electress of Saxony, she was already an experienced mediator between her two dynasties.

Danish and Saxon historians alike have emphasized both Christian III's support for August in the early 1550s and August's generous assistance to his brother-in-law Frederik II during the 1560s. However, Anna is surprisingly absent in the existing accounts,<sup>522</sup> and the goal here is to examine her participation in these exchanges. The selected examples span Anna's first twenty-five years in Saxony, from 1548 to 1572, and have been selected with a view to revealing some of the changes that can be observed in the electress's relationships to and roles within her two dynasties before and after the death of her father in 1559.

The analysis departs from Anna's participation in the exchanges between her two dynasties. However, because the references that can be found in Anna's correspondence often appear fragmented, the significance of her participation can only be revealed when these brief references are situated within a broader context and, as a result, the account includes considerations of the relationships between August and Anna's relatives in Denmark and more general summaries of the political developments in Saxony and Denmark.

#### *Daughter and father: Anna and Christian III of Denmark*

As the younger son of Duke Heinrich of Saxony, August inherited only a modest part of his father's territory. However, with Moritz's territorial gains in 1547 and August's recognition

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<sup>520</sup> Regarding Christian III and Charles V's agreement in 1544, see Frøbe (1912), pp. 10-11; Frandsen (2001), pp. 286-287; Lockhart (2004), pp. 19-21.

<sup>521</sup> August of Saxony to Christian III of Denmark, Weissenfels 24 Jan. 1549, RA TKUA pk. 40-3.

<sup>522</sup> Frøbe (1912); Colding (1939); Jensen (1982); and Frandsen (2001), pp. 290-292. Even Paul Douglas Lockhart's recent and very detailed analysis Frederik II and the Protestant Cause includes only passing references to Anna, see Lockhart (2004).

as his brother's legitimate heir, August – with the support of his mother – strove to enlarge his possessions.<sup>523</sup> Shortly after Anna and August had moved to Weissenfels, August and Moritz initiated the negotiations concerning the former's share of the inheritance and, as the talks carried on and caused tension between the two, it also became an economic burden for August. When Anna visited Denmark in February 1550, Christian III inquired about the financial situation of August and a few months after her return to Saxony, she wrote to her father,

[W]hen Your Grace asked me if my lord [and husband] was burdened with debts, I could only tell you what I knew then, but I understand that my lord's debts have increased as a result of the disagreements between his beloved's brother and my lord. Because I, after God, have no one but Your Grace and my lord to rely on, and because Your Grace can help my lord out of all dangers and difficulties and help him gain lands and subjects, I beg Your Grace most kindly Your Grace will not reject the plea from my lord.<sup>524</sup>

As the last sentence of this passage reveals, this letter was sent together with a plea from August who asked his father-in-law to provide him with financial assistance. Christian issued the desired loan and, having expressed her profound gratitude, Anna ensured him that she had been reluctant to burden him with this request, yet, “my lord and I have no consolation except for Your Grace”.<sup>525</sup> Although Anna stressed that she was hesitant to draw upon her father, she repeatedly turned to him for support during the following years.

In 1552 she sent a letter to Christian and asked that he please reassure August of his fatherly and loyal support. In return, Anna explained, “my beloved lord would risk not only lands and people, but all possessions and blood for Your Grace, if necessary”.<sup>526</sup> At first sight this request may appear rather trivial. However, in contrast to Anna's plea that

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<sup>523</sup> Keller (2002), p. 133; and the autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Weissenfels “freitags in den pfingsten anno etc im ljte” [22 May 1551], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

<sup>524</sup> “... dieweil e g mich ... gefraget ob meinn herr mit schulden beladen were so habe ich e g damals nicht anders berichten kunnen dan ich gewuste[,] ich befinde aber ... das meinn herr durch die vneinikeit so zussenn s l bruder vnd meinen herren gewessen etwas im schulde gewachsen[,] dieweil dan ich mich nest gotte zu nimantz dan zu e g vnd meinem herrn mer guttes vorthroste vnd e g dadurch meinem herren ... aus allen vnrat vnd beschwerungk auch zu landt vnd leutenn helffen konten[,] so ist an e g mein gantz freuntlich bitte e g wollen meinem heren die bitte nicht abschlahen ...”, autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Weissenfels sonnabents nach dem ostern anno etc L [12 April 1550], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

<sup>525</sup> “... meinn her vnd ich haben keinem trost dan zu e g alleine ...”, autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Weissenfels [3 - 16] May 1550, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

<sup>526</sup> “... des gleichen wirt meyn l h bey e g nicht alleyne lanndt vnd leute sondern guth vnd blut zu setzen do es e g vonnoten ...”, autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden “donnstages nach dem heiligen ostern anno etc” [21 April 1552], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

her father grant August financial assistance in 1550, this request was sent without August's knowledge and Anna begged Christian not to reveal it to him, "Heartily beloved father, Your Grace will keep it to yourself [that I have asked]".<sup>527</sup> Regrettably, Anna did not explain why her request had to remain secret, but both the confidentiality of the plea and the stress Anna placed on August's loyalty towards Christian suggest that this was a matter of considerable importance. In order to disclose the reasons, it is necessary to consider the simultaneous developments of the relationship between Moritz, August, and Christian.

Having forsaken his fellow Protestants in favor of the emperor in 1547, Moritz changed his stance three years later. In 1550 he formed a defense alliance with several other Protestant princes who had growing fears of a confessionally motivated offensive from the emperor. In spite of concerted efforts, Moritz and his new allies failed to obtain Christian III's support for their new alliance and the king repeatedly stated his unwillingness to do anything that could be viewed as a breach of the agreement he had concluded with Charles V in 1544.<sup>528</sup> But the Saxon elector developed increasingly closer ties with other Protestant rulers and his previous loyalty towards the emperor was transformed to hostility. Only four weeks before Anna sent the secret plea to her father, August had informed the Danish king that Moritz and his allies were planning to invade Austria and demand the release of Philipp of Hessen (Moritz's father-in-law), who had been imprisoned by the emperor since the end of the Schmalkaldic War in 1547.<sup>529</sup>

According to Walter Fröbe, August was deeply involved in Moritz's plan and agreed with his brother's ambitious challenge to the emperor. However, when the two brothers had met with the Saxon estates and August had declared his willingness to serve as governor of Saxony during Moritz's absence, he also emphasized that he would remain neutral in the conflict. The same impartiality was stressed in August's letter to Christian as well as in the notifications he sent to the emperor. Fröbe considered August's neutrality as nothing but a pretense that was intended to protect the Saxon territory if the conflict grew larger and part of a sophisticated scheme (developed primarily by Moritz) aimed at tricking the skeptical Danish king to support Moritz and his Protestant allies.<sup>530</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> "... hertzielieber her fater ... e g wollenn es bey sich bleiben lassen ...", small autograph note enclosed with the autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden "donnstages nach dem heiligen ostem anno etc" [21 April 1552]. RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

<sup>528</sup> Fröbe (1912), pp. 13-20.

<sup>529</sup> Fröbe (1912), pp. 13-20; Schilling (1994), pp. 227-239

<sup>530</sup> Fröbe (1912), pp. 13-20.

However, rather than accepting Fröbel's insistence on the concurrence between the two brothers, one may view August's neutrality as an expression of the difficulties he faced when caught between his brother's offensive policies and the cautious position of his father-in-law. August was indebted to his father-in-law who loyally had supported him during the negotiations between August and Moritz and, although Moritz had refused to accommodate August's demands for a greater share of the territory, August nevertheless owed his elder brother obedience.

When Christian received August's message that an attack on Austria was imminent, he did not offer his support. He even declined to accommodate August's request for a meeting because this inevitably would be known throughout the Empire and could raise doubts about Christian's position in the conflict. Instead the Danish king offered to serve as mediator between the Protestant alliance and the emperor. This proposal, however, was not welcomed and August begged his father-in-law to at least issue a declaration of his support in case Saxony was attacked.<sup>531</sup>

Anna's secret letter to Christian was sent on the very same day as August's plea for a written declaration of support from his father-in-law,<sup>532</sup> and the timing suggests that she knew exactly what August wrote and why. However, when she asked Christian to show his "fatherly and loyal heart" towards August, she avoided an explicit reference to a potential attack of Saxony. Instead she asked only that Christian should let August know that he could rely upon the king in case "something should happen to him".<sup>533</sup> Nevertheless, by ensuring her father that August was prepared to sacrifice himself and all of his possessions for Christian, she made her expectation that Christian would do the same for her husband known. Anna's plea testifies to her recognition of August's difficulties, and her readiness to act behind the back of August suggests that her identification with his situation was both independent and assertive. The secret and independent action she took to mobilize her father also shows that she acknowledged the power inherent in her dynastic network and that she – independently of August – sought to employ it to the benefit of her husband. As her previous requests to her father, this letter also elicited the desired reply. As Anna had requested, Christian promised that he would behave like a father towards August.

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<sup>531</sup> Fröbe (1912), pp. 19-20.

<sup>532</sup> The date of August's letter appears from Fröbe (1912), p. 19, footnote 2.

<sup>533</sup> Anna used the very broad expression "anstoßen", in case, "... ihme etwas anstossen wurde ...", autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden "donnstages nach dem heiligen ostem anno etc" [21 April 1552], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

However, because he did not specify what this entailed,<sup>534</sup> the negotiations between Christian and August continued until the victory of the Protestant forces and a peace was agreed with the Treaty of Passau in August 1552.<sup>535</sup>

The following year, August's dependence on his father-in-law and the importance of Anna's mediation increased. During the summer of 1553 Anna and August spent several months with the royal couple in Denmark. Meanwhile, Moritz was again at war,<sup>536</sup> and, in mid-July, August received the news that his brother had been killed. With his brother's death, August inherited not only the electoral title but also a rather perilous political situation. As a result of Moritz's repeated military campaigns, he had accumulated considerable debts and, at the time of his death, his former ally Margrave Albrecht Alcibiades of Brandenburg-Kulmbach was ready to invade Saxony. In addition, and in spite of August's status as the recognized heir to the electoral dignity, the Ernestine Wettins viewed the succession and August's precarious position as a welcomed chance to reclaim the title and territories they had lost in 1547. In these circumstances, Anna and August became thoroughly dependent on the support and advice from Christian III. Throughout the fall of 1553, Fröbe suggests, the Saxon negotiations with other German princes were shaped more by the Danish king and his delegates than by the new elector.<sup>537</sup>

However, Christian's assistance did not (or, not only) – as Fröbe maintains – result from the king's determination to bring Electoral Saxony back to a position that favored his interests in the Empire. Shortly after their departure from Denmark in July 1553, Anna wrote to her father,

[H]eartily beloved lord [and] father, as Your Grace knows well what a difficult position my lord [and husband] is in, I beg Your Grace not to abandon my lord now, and [I] beg once more as my heartily beloved father, Your Grace will not forsake Your Grace's son and daughter, because Your Grace can help in a way that ensures that my lord secured for his entire life.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Fröbe (1912), p. 19, footnote 3.

<sup>535</sup> Fröbe (1912), pp. 19-20; and Keller (2002), p. 132.

<sup>536</sup> Schilling (1994), p. 239; and the biography of Albrecht Alcibiades in *ADB*, vol. 1, pp. 252-257.

<sup>537</sup> Fröbe (1912), pp. 22-27.

<sup>538</sup> "... hertz lieber her vatter[,] ... [ich ] bit ... e g wollen meinem herren itzunder nicht lassen den e g ... wol weiß wie schwerlich mein her ist ingesessen[,] ... vnd bitte noch als mein hertz lieber her vatter[,] e g wollen e g son vnd dochter nicht lassen den e g itzundt hofffen kan damit meinem herm sein lebe lanck gehollffen sein magd ...", autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, without date [late summer/early fall 1553], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

As Anna explains, the situation was serious. If the electoral dignity was lost to the Ernestine cousins, it would have consequences for the rest of her and August's life. If, on the other hand, Christian helped them now, his help would have equally lasting effects. The wording of her letter is remarkable and shows how she could shift her own position in the current situation within only a couple of sentences. Although she clearly associates with August's difficulties and asks her father for help, she nevertheless presents the current difficulties and needs as August's, *not* as her and August's collective need in the first sentence of the quoted passage. Yet, in the following sentence, she includes herself and asks her father not to forsake her and August. This shift can be viewed as an expression of Anna's position between and as part of the two families. While the first sentence highlights her role as mediator, the second – as well as her repeated usage of the words father, son, and daughter – emphasizes her simultaneous “belonging” to Christian and to August. By including herself, she intensified the plea and appealed to the king's “fatherly” duty to protect his needy children.

The king fulfilled the pleas from Saxony: he granted August a loan of 50,000 Thalers and sent three delegates to assist him in the necessary negotiations with the Albrecht Alcibiades, the Ernestine neighbors, and the emperor.<sup>539</sup> In December 1553 an agreement was reached with Albrecht Alcibiades, and the dispute between Johann Friedrich and August was settled in February 1554. Thanks to the extensive assistance from Christian, Anna and August's position as elector and electress as well as their territories were secured.<sup>540</sup>

The sources do not reveal to what degree Christian's support was given as a result of Anna's appeals, though her letter leaves no doubt about the importance she attributed to her appeal. The example also provides yet another testimony to Anna's detailed knowledge about the political developments and her active participation in the inner-dynastic negotiations for support. In this respect, the complications that accompanied August's succession granted Anna and her parents, particularly her father, ample opportunity to demonstrate the value of her dynastic network. Although the correspondence only allow a fragmented impression of Anna's mediations between August and her relatives in Denmark during the first eight years of her marriage, it does reveal both her independent interventions and her inclusion into the concerns and decisions of her husband. When the

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<sup>539</sup> Frandsen (2001), pp. 291-292; and Fröbe (1912), pp. 22-27.

<sup>540</sup> Frandsen (2001), pp. 291-292.

couple sent parallel requests for help to her father (as in 1550), it is a clear indication that both she and August considered her involvement significant.

Once Anna and August's status in Saxony had been secured, they were gradually able to repay both the symbolic and financial debts they had incurred as a result of Christian's support. The electoral couple visited Anna's parents in the summer of 1555,<sup>541</sup> and in 1557 they spent more than two months in Denmark. When they left Denmark in October 1557 two of Anna's brothers, Frederik and Magnus, and her uncle Hans (the Elder) of Schleswig-Holstein, accompanied the electoral couple to Dresden.<sup>542</sup> Hans the Elder stayed in Saxony only for a short time, but Frederik remained in Saxony/Germany until April 1558, and Magnus spent the next two years with his sister and brother-in-law.<sup>543</sup>

Anna and August's responsibility for her younger brothers signaled her parents' profound trust in their daughter and son-in-law, but the brothers' extended stay also allowed Anna and August to reciprocate some of the favors they had received from the royal couple. By hosting the two brothers, Anna and August contributed to their education as future princes. At the time, Electoral Saxony was by far the most important Protestant territory of the Empire and the young princes could gain a valuable introduction to the political and cultural practices within the Holy Roman Empire in which they were expected to inherit the position as Dukes of Holstein. Frederik's and Magnus's stays also represented an opportunity to revive their relationships to their elder and more experienced sister, who had left Denmark when they were still children, and to form a bond with their brother-in-law. This way, the kinship ties – and the associated expectations for a mutually beneficial alliance – that were established by Anna and August's marriage were reinforced and perpetuated to the next generation of the Oldenburg dynasty.

However, only a few days after Frederik and Magnus had arrived in Saxony, their father requested Frederik's immediate return to Denmark. Although Christian explained that Frederik's presence – as the elected heir to the kingdom – was necessitated by his own

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<sup>541</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden 1 and 2 (or 3) Jan. 1555; and the letter from Anna to Christian [not autograph], Dresden 12 June 1555, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 1st folder.

<sup>542</sup> Dorothea also accompanied her daughter and son-in-law, though not all the way to Saxony. The details of her trip remain unclear, see Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Rendsburg 23 Oct. 1557, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder. Regarding the brothers and the uncle, see Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 13 Dec. 1557, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

<sup>543</sup> Frederik's return to Denmark appears from Anna's letter to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 18 April 1558, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder. Magnus returned to Denmark when Anna and August travelled to attend the coronation of Frederik II in 1559 (see Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Brandenburg 8 Aug. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 104 b – 105 a). Frederik's and Magnus's stays in Saxony are also mentioned in Lockhart (2004), pp. 35-36 and von Weber (1865), p. 124.

poor health, the king's instructions were met with firm resistance. Anna replied that August would consider it an affront if Frederik had to leave without having seen August's territories and that it would be both difficult and dangerous for Frederik to undertake the long journey back during the winter. Finally, Anna explained that she and August wanted Frederik to accompany them to upcoming Diet of the Electors (*Kurfürstentag*). In order to reduce the expenses and potential dangers associated with this important event, August and the Elector of Brandenburg had already appealed to the emperor that the planned Diet be postponed a few weeks and moved from Ulm to Frankfurt am Main. Given the numerous princes who were expected to appear, it would be most beneficial for Frederik to be present and establish valuable contacts. Hence, if Christian would permit only one of the sons to attend, this should be Frederik, Anna stressed.<sup>544</sup>

In spite of the many reasons Anna put forward when she argued that Frederik should remain in Saxony, the king insisted on his son's return. Yet, Anna still did not take no for an answer and reiterated the outlined arguments while emphasizing that Frederik's attendance at the Diet was in the best interest of the king, Frederik, and the kingdom. If the trip represented any danger to their reputation or to Frederik's life, she and August never would have suggested it, Anna assured her father.<sup>545</sup> At the end of January, Christian finally gave in and Anna immediately replied that, "Your Grace can place his complete trust in me, that I will take and keep his beloved [Frederik] and Duke Magnus under [my] sisterly authority".<sup>546</sup> The promised was kept and in mid-April 1558 Frederik returned safely to Denmark.<sup>547</sup>

Without disputing the sincerity of Anna's support for Frederik and her sense of duty towards her blood relatives, it should not be overlooked that Frederik's presence also benefited Anna and August. In one of the letters to Christian, Anna mentioned that Frederik's presence at the Diet would honor August.<sup>548</sup> The ample attention that was paid to the composition of the entourages of the various princes in the documents produced

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<sup>544</sup> Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 13 Dec. 1557, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

<sup>545</sup> Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 18 Jan. 1558, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

<sup>546</sup> "... E:G: [mogen sich] ... genntzlich Zu mir versehen, das Ich S: L: [Frederik] Auch ... herzog Magnußen ... Im Schwesterlichen ... beuelch nehmen vnnd haltenn wolle ...", Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 26 Jan. 1558, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder. See also the letter from August of Saxony to Christian III of Denmark, Dresden 27 Jan. 1558, RA TKUA pk. 40-5 in which August assured the king that Frederik will be in his protection.

<sup>547</sup> Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 18 April 1558, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

<sup>548</sup> Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 17 Jan. 1558, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.



during and after the Diet, shows just how accurate this was.<sup>549</sup> The presence of the future king of Denmark brought attention to the dynastic network of the electoral couple, a network that was forged by their marriage and that she actively maintained – also by insisting on Frederik’s participation in the Diet vis-à-vis their father.

Anna’s readiness to challenge her father’s wishes was doubtlessly motivated by the interests of both of her dynasties. Although her objections to Christian were carefully phrased, they nevertheless constituted a direct challenge to her father’s wishes. She was able to justify her objections against her father by stressing that it resulted from her concerns about Frederik and Christian’s best interests. By focusing on their interests and the potential enhancement of their reputation, she also emphasized her continued affinity to them and expressed her willingness to employ her position in the Empire to the benefit of her natal dynasty. When Anna explained how Frederik’s attendance would serve the interest of the dynasty, she used the experience she had gained during her first decade in Saxony to argue the case, and her ability to convince the king indicates that he acknowledged both the value of his daughter’s experience and her continued belonging to “his” dynasty.

The example also shows how an elder and married sister could enlarge the “world” of her younger brothers. Through her position as female consort in another territory, Anna was able to enhance the education of her brothers – thereby benefiting the future of “her” dynasty. In extension of this, it is significant that Anna’s age and/or experience, her status as a married – and, hence, an adult – woman, as well as her position within the Empire structured the relationships to her brothers. In one passage, Anna assured Christian that she would instruct Magnus in fear of God and princely virtues as if he were her own child<sup>550</sup> and, as demonstrated above, she considered herself to possess “sisterly authority” over both Frederik and Magnus. In this respect, Frederik and Magnus’s stay in Saxony marked a change in her relationship to her natal kin. In her early letters to Christian, she had emphasized her role as daughter, but here she appears as the adult daughter, the responsible sister, and an experienced consort.

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<sup>549</sup> See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten. Reichsversammlungen 1556-1662. Der Kurfürstentag zu Frankfurt 1558 und der Reichstag zu Augsburg 1559*, ed. by Leeb (1999), pp. 156-162. The attention paid to prominent relatives is even more pronounced in the “Reichstags-Chronik” from the Diet in Augsburg 1566, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten. Reichsversammlungen 1556-1662. Der Reichstag zu Augsburg 1566*, ed. by Lanzinner and Heil (2002), document no. 465, pp. 1483-1502.

<sup>550</sup> Anna to Christian III of Denmark [not autograph], Dresden 13 Dec. 1557, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

*Sister and brother: Anna and Frederik II of Denmark*

When Christian III died and Frederik became king in January 1559 the value of the strengthened bond between Frederik and the electoral couple gained increased political relevance. Frederik's reliance on his sister and brother-in-law is visible already in the first letters they exchanges after Christian's death, when the young king expressed his concerns and asked for their advice.<sup>551</sup> While Christian had provided substantial support for his daughter and son-in-law, the new head of Anna's dynasty was her younger brother, who she and August recently had introduced to the Empire. Although Frederik could claim authority as the head of the House of Oldenburg, the relationship between Anna and Frederik nevertheless continued to be shaped by the hierarchies that were defined by age and experience. The king's dependence on his sister (and brother-in-law) grew particularly strong during his seven-year-long war against Sweden (1563-1570). However, before this is examined at greater length, an exchange between Anna and Frederik from the spring of 1559 deserves attention, because it reveals that Anna – in spite of Frederik's recent accession – continued to mobilize her relatives to the benefit of her new dynasty.

Only weeks after the death of Christian III, August and Anna had valid concerns that the Ernestine Wettins were again preparing an attempt to reclaim the electoral title. When Anna heard rumors that Johann Friedrich II was soliciting support from the French king, she asked Frederik for help. She wanted to warn the French king against any involvement in the internal matters of the Empire and she asked Frederik to communicate this to the French ambassador in Denmark.<sup>552</sup> Having presented this request to her brother, Anna continued, "when you write to my lord, I beg you that you will present [the subject] in a way that does not give my lord reason to believe that I have written to you [about it]".<sup>553</sup> Approximately four weeks after Anna had sent this secret request, Frederik informed August that he had explained to the French ambassador that the good relations France

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<sup>551</sup> See for example the two letters (one autograph and one penned by a secretary) from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 31 Jan. 1559, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder; Anna to Frederik II [not autograph], Dresden 4 Feb. 1559, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder (draft preserved in Kop. 509, fol. 92 b – 93 a); Frederik II of Denmark to August of Saxony, Odense 19 Feb. 1559, in *Frederik II's egenhændige breve*, p. 10.

<sup>552</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, without date [end of Jan. 1559], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder. See also Fröbe (1912), pp. 60-62.

<sup>553</sup> "... wan du meiner herren ... schreiben wierst bitt ich du wollest dasselbig also stellenn damit mein herr nicht gedancken daraus fassen wurde als hett ich dier geschreiben ...", autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, without date [end of Jan. 1559], RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 2nd folder.

sought to develop with Denmark were irreconcilable with a friendship between France and Ernestine Saxony.<sup>554</sup>

Anna's request to Frederik is noteworthy not simply because the electress intervenes directly, independently, and successfully in European politics at large. The request to Frederik also constitutes a second example in which Anna turns to one of her closest relatives for assistance without August's knowledge. This was only possible when a high degree of trust existed between her and Frederik and it implies that she expected him to agree with her action or, at least, to be bound by a greater loyalty towards her than August. At the same time, however, her action was clearly motivated by a fervent defense of her husband's (and her own) status and territory. The success with which the electress here made use of her brother and his position shows that while her dynastic network represented a resource to August, it also granted her an ability to shape parts of Saxony's policies in the Empire without relying on or even consulting her husband.

A few years later, the exchanges between Anna's two dynasties turned to the benefit of her natal dynasty. As Anna had actively had promoted the interests of her husband vis-à-vis her father in the late 1540s and early 1550s, she now became Frederik's loyal representative in Saxony. During the early 1560s tensions between Denmark and Sweden grew and in 1563 Denmark and Lübeck declared war on Sweden.<sup>555</sup> Throughout the preceding two years Anna, August, and the Danish dowager queen had argued firmly against the war and had made great efforts to facilitate a mediation between the two powers.<sup>556</sup> Nonetheless, Frederik and (some of) his councilors remained convinced of their ability to defeat the Swedish enemy in a brief military operation that could be completed before the winter.<sup>557</sup> This assessment was proved very wrong and the war dragged on until 1570.

The war represented vast expenses for both Denmark and Sweden. Frede P. Jensen has estimated that Frederik's foreign debts amounted to approximately 900,000 Thalers after less than two years of warfare (spring 1565), and most of this amount was due to be repaid in the fall of 1565. In spite of his objections to Frederik's war, August had continued to serve the king's interest within the Empire,<sup>558</sup> and he had been one of his most

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<sup>554</sup> Frederik II of Denmark to August of Saxony, Odense 19 Feb. 1559, quoted in Fröbe (1912), p. 62.

<sup>555</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 34-85; Frandsen (2001), pp. 308-317.

<sup>556</sup> Colding (1939), pp. 497-506; Fröbe (1912), pp. 69-97.

<sup>557</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 63-73.

<sup>558</sup> See Fröbe (1912), pp. 69-136 for a detailed account of August's persistent defense of Frederik's interest within the Empire throughout the war.

generous lenders. By the spring of 1565 Frederik thus owed August more than 150,000 Thalers.<sup>559</sup> However, in order to continue the war Frederik needed more money and was forced to seek extensions of the impending repayments. August granted the king a one-year extension of a loan of 100,000 Thalers, but he needed the remaining 60,000 Thalers to be repaid by the agreed term in September 1565. Even this demand exceeded Frederik's abilities and August renegotiated a new repayment. However, the elector's abilities to provide financial support for Frederik were waning and the king was unable to raise funds from other sources.<sup>560</sup>

Faced with increasing financial pressures, Frederik turned to Anna and begged her for help. Having reiterated her admonishment that Frederik ought to seek peace, Anna offered him a loan of 14,000 Thalers. She lamented the fact that she was unable to offer more than this "modest sum" (*geringen summa*), but explained that it had demanded great efforts to raise even this amount. If he was interested, he should proceed to make arrangements for its transfer.<sup>561</sup> According to the electress's letter, this loan was given from *her* to her brother and in her subsequent letter to Frederik, she elaborated,

The 14,000 Thalers is placed under our hand and responsibility and are to be repaid by Michaelmas [15]67. And because his beloved [August] guarantees for the amount as if he himself had granted it, Your Royal Majesty must issue the collateral to his beloved as usual. In the meantime we will employ all of our sisterly, loyal efforts to attain that the same 14,000 Thalers can be granted to Your Royal Majesty for another year.<sup>562</sup>

Because August appears as warrantor of the loan, it is easy to overlook the importance of Anna's role in this transaction. As a married woman, the electress was the legal subject of her husband.<sup>563</sup> Nevertheless, the 14,000 Thalers was "under her hand" and had been raised

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<sup>559</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 131-133.

<sup>560</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 131-133 and 200-203. For further details regarding Frederik's economic difficulties see also Jensen (1982), pp. 57, 85-88, 126-127, and 280-282.

<sup>561</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Torgau 22 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 50 a – 51 b; and Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 8 Dec. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 66 a – b (both of the sent letters are preserved in RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder).

<sup>562</sup> "... Solche 14000 R seint ... zu vnsern hand vnd vorwarung hinterlegt vnd sollenn auff Michaelis ... 67 widerumb bezalt ... [.] Vnd weill sein Lieb [August] sich darfur als ob es derselben selbst furgesetzt haben vorschreiben mussenn[,] So werden E Ko W die gegen vorsicherung auff SL wohl gewonlich weise zurichten ...[,] Konnen wir dan mitler zeit erlangen das solche 14000 R E Ko W noch ein Jar lenger ... gestundet werden, Soll an vnsern schwesterlichen getrewen moglichen vleis nichts erwinden ...", Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 19 Dec. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 68 b – 70 a.

<sup>563</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1996b), pp. 97-101; Dilcher (1996), pp. 55-72, especially pp. 62-64; Kuehn (2001). Although Kuehn focuses his analysis on early modern Italian cities, his observations on the status of women as legal persons have relevance also to the German case.

by her efforts. Consequently, and as Anna wrote, her brother should issue the guarantee to August *as if* he had issued the loan to Frederik, thereby implying that he had not. Corresponding to her status as lender, the electress took responsibility for the transfer of the money from Saxony to Denmark. Upon *her* instructions, the Saxon Keeper of the Treasury Hans Harrer had assured *her* that the Lübeck merchant Michel Rehebein would bring the money safely from Leipzig to Lübeck when he returned home from the annual New Year market in Leipzig.<sup>564</sup>

The exchanges show that both Frederik and Anna considered her fully capable of issuing a loan and, although August was warrantor, the example testifies to Anna's (relative) economic independence and her willingness to employ her financial resources to the benefit of her brother. Analyzing the relationships between brothers and sisters among the Margraves of Mantua and their German relatives in the fifteenth century, Ebba Severidt concluded that these relations were characterized by a "direct access" to the property/resources of the other.<sup>565</sup> While Anna's loan to Frederik is significant, the efforts she made to ensure that it would be repaid suggest that his access to her resources nevertheless was conditional. This, however, may in part have resulted from Anna's legally defined dependence on August. By providing Frederik with the loan but requiring August's approval and warranty, Anna was caught between her brother and her husband. Nevertheless, the example shows that the early modern legal reality that was – almost – devoid of women by no means was the only "reality" and that this could be relativized by other factors.

If August, by way of the legal reality and the limits it defined for a married woman's autonomous actions, played a role in Anna's relationship to her brother, the dynastic structures meant that she had a direct impact on the relationship between August and Frederik and this became increasingly clear during the late 1560s. By 1568 Frederik's economic situation had deteriorated further and his continued inability to repay the long overdue debts to August gave rise to recurring and increasingly difficult negotiations. Between 1568 and 1571, Anna repeatedly acted as mediator in these talks.

In the summer of 1568 Frederik sent his Lord Stewart (*Kammerer*) Hans Spiegel to Saxony to inquire about yet another extension of a loan. Although this request was presented to the elector, Anna also replied – and not only to her brother. In addition to

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<sup>564</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 19 Dec. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 68 b – 70 a.

<sup>565</sup> Severidt (2002), pp. 136-147.

writing to the king, she addressed the Royal Treasurer (*Rigshofmester*) Peder Oxe and the entire Council of the Realm in a joint letter. In both letters, she explained that in spite of her and Spiegel's great efforts, they had not been able to achieve more than a one-year extension of the past due payments. She also underlined that no further postponement could be obtained for this particular loan and, in the letter to Oxe and the councilors, she stressed that they too were considered responsible for complying with the new agreement.<sup>566</sup>

The way in which Anna positions herself in these two letters is noteworthy and reveals her key role in the negotiations. When she explains that she and Frederik's delegate had done everything they could in order to obtain an extension of the payments, she is defending her brother's interests and appears as an extension of him. However, when she underlines that the future payments must be made in accordance with the new agreement, she is representing August and his interests.

The following year (1569) Frederik was unable to deliver another payment to August, and the Saxon councilor Heinrich von Gleissenthal was sent to Denmark to address the matter.<sup>567</sup> During his stay there, Gleissenthal reported to both August and Anna, and the electress again appears as an active participant in the negotiations. This time she addressed Frederik and the Danish Chancellor Johann Friis,<sup>568</sup> but the pattern resembles the correspondence with Oxe and the council from the previous year. She emphasized that it was on account of her loyal support for Frederik that August had agreed to a partial postponement (half of the due payments, including interests, had to be paid now, the other half was extended one year), but that it was vital for the preservation of August's friendship that these terms be respected. In her letter to Friis, she therefore expressed her reliance on his ability to ensure that the new and generous terms offered by August were respected,<sup>569</sup> in the same way as she had stressed this in the letter to Oxe and the councilors the previous year.

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<sup>566</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Torgau 3 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 77 a – 78 a (the sent letter is preserved in RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder); and Anna to Peder Oxe and the Danish Council of the Realm, Selchen 2 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 74 a – 6.

<sup>567</sup> Jensen (1982), p. 282.

<sup>568</sup> Anna to Heinrich von Gleissenthal, Dresden 3 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 67 a – b; Anna to Johan Friis, Dresden 3 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 67 b – 68 a; and Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 3 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 68 b – 69 b (the sent letter is preserved in RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder).

<sup>569</sup> Anna to Johan Friis, Dresden 3 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 67 b – 68 a.

But regardless of her admonitions to both Frederik and the councilors, the king was unable to meet even these reduced demands.<sup>570</sup> By January 1570, the Danish debts to Saxony amounted to almost 200,000 Thalers,<sup>571</sup> and throughout the spring Anna communicated with Frederik and his most senior advisors in order to achieve a new agreement. On 2 January 1570 Anna sent a long and friendly letter to Frederik in which she touched only briefly upon his debts. Nevertheless, the message of the brief passage was unmistakable: in order to maintain the good friendship with his generous and loyal brother-in-law, he had to deliver the due payments.<sup>572</sup> On the same day, the electress addressed Peder Oxe and Johann Friis to whom she revealed her worries in greater detail,

Because we worry that his beloved [August] in the end will be moved to impatience, and because nothing is more important to us than the preservation and enhancement of a good friendship and trust between His Royal Dignity [Frederik] and his beloved [August], we graciously request that You will think of ways in which his beloved [August] can have his demands met without further delay.<sup>573</sup>

Anna here articulated the responsibility she identified for herself as the active link between the two dynasties and emphasized the difficulties she faced with regard to maintaining and enhancing the friendship/(active) kinship between her two dynasties. When considering the quoted passage, it is crucial to remember that “friend” and “friendship” (*Freund/Freundschaft*) in early modern German at once can imply kin, kinship, and friendship,<sup>574</sup> hence referring also to the social expectations and obligations inherent in a kinship relation. However inadvertently, Frederik was challenging these expectations and obligations to a degree that compelled Anna to warn him and his councilors, though the two letters suggest that she expected his councilors – not the king himself – to find a solution.

At first sight, Anna’s correspondence with the Danish councilors gives the impression that her and August’s support for Frederik was declining and that she, by way

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<sup>570</sup> Jensen (1982), p. 282.

<sup>571</sup> Jensen (1982), p. 280.

<sup>572</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 2 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 100 a – b and 103 b – 104 a.

<sup>573</sup> “...Weil wir ... besorg S.L. [August] möchte zu letzt darob etwo zu vngedult bewegt werden Vvnd wir vns nichts embsiger angelegen sein lassen als zwisch Irer Ko W. vnd Sr L bestendige gutte freuntschaft vnd vertrauen Zuerhalten vnd Zuuormehren, So gesinnen wir gantz gnedist an Euch Ir wollet ... auff wege dencken ... das Sr.L. ohne lengere hintergang Zugehalten werde moge ...”, Anna to Peder Oxe and Johann Friis, Dresden 2 Jan. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 103 a – b. Regarding this translation of “zuhalten” see *DH'B*, vol. 32, column 447-448.

<sup>574</sup> Gaunt (2001), pp. 271-273; and *DH'B*, vol. 4, column 167-168.

of the councilors, subjected Frederik to increased pressure regarding the repayments. While she doubtlessly wished to ensure that the loans were repaid, her continued willingness and ability to convince August to extend the deadlines for her brother's loans point in another direction. The letters she sent to the Danish councilors therefore require further consideration.

The earliest preserved letter from Anna to Frederik's councilors was sent to his Chancellor Johann Friis and Holger Rosenkrantz, one of the senior members of the council, in October 1565.<sup>575</sup> This letter referred to some "disconcerting reports" which indicated that the members of the Council of the Realm had betrayed Frederik. The exact content of the reports remains unknown, but an impression can be gained from the warning Anna gave the two councilors concerning the eternal and disdainful defamation of the Danish name that would ruin the kingdom as well as the honor of the councilors and their descendants, if they deserted their Christian king in such a shameful manner and accepted the rule of another potentate.<sup>576</sup> In the parallel letter to Caspar Paselick, one of Frederik's most trusted advisors and *not* a member of the council, she requested information about the events that had given rise to the rumors that, "the councilors and estates of the kingdom want to depose our most beloved lord [and] brother and are involved in aberrant schemes".<sup>577</sup>

Although Anna ensured Friis and Rosenkrantz that she hardly could believe these distressing accounts, she continued her letter with a severe reprimand. If there were any truth to the rumors, they were threatening the name and honor of her brother, her late father, and the kingdom. She expected them to take the rumors to heart, address the matter with their co-councilors, and to act as the decent, honest and loyal estates of the kingdom. Finally, she demanded their immediate reply.<sup>578</sup> Having received their explanation as well as a verbal account from Caspar Paselick,<sup>579</sup> the electress expressed her satisfaction but

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<sup>575</sup> Anna to Johan Friis and Holger Rosenkrantz, Torgau 24 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 52 a – 53 a.

<sup>576</sup> Anna to Johan Friis and Holger Rosenkrantz, Torgau 24 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 52 a – 53 a. See also Jensen (1978), pp. 62-63.

<sup>577</sup> "... die Reichs Rathe vnd stende des Konigreiche ... vnserm besonder lieben herren Brudern der Kon Würde absetzenn, vnd mitt seltzame ... Pracktick vmbgeh sollen ...", Anna to Caspar Paselick, Torgau 24 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 53 a – b. See also Jensen (1982), pp. 163-164.

<sup>578</sup> Anna to Johan Friis and Holger Rosenkrantz, Torgau 24 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 52 a – 53 a.

<sup>579</sup> Regarding Johan Friis and Holger Rosenkrantz's reply, see Anna's subsequent letter to them, Dresden 19 Dec. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 70 b – 71 a. Regarding the verbal account provided by Caspar Paselick, see Anna to Holger Rosenkrantz, Dresden 25 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 84 b – 85 a; and Anna to Johan Friis, Dresden 25 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 85 b – 86 a.



reiterated their duty to remain supportive of Frederik and to ensure that her beloved brother had the support he needed in order to conclude the war with honest means.<sup>580</sup>

Until the early 1980s the reality of a deep conflict between Frederik and (some of) his councilors in 1565 was firmly established in the Danish historiography. However, Frede P. Jensen convincingly demonstrated that the rumors were unfounded and that Frederik's position in the kingdom ultimately – and in part because of the Saxon intervention – was reinforced by the misunderstandings and the councilors subsequent and explicit confirmation of their loyalty.<sup>581</sup>

By the time Anna again corresponded with the councilors much had happened. In the spring of 1568 the emperor offered to mediate a peace between the Nordic kingdoms. At first, Frederik was reluctant, but when August intervened and ensured that his brother-in-law would enter into the talks under the best possible circumstances, the negotiations were initiated. Towards the end of 1568, a peace treaty (*Roskildefreden*) that placed immense burdens on Sweden was agreed by the delegates and signed by Frederik II. Meanwhile, Erik XIV was ousted from the Swedish throne by his half-brother Johann III and, when the new king refused to ratify the peace treaty, the war continued.<sup>582</sup>

This meant that Frederik's desperate financial situation grew even worse. By January 1570 he had spent all he had, was deeply indebted, and had exhausted all opportunities to obtain further loans. The only way of raising more funds was to levy more substantial taxes within his territories and, as stipulated in his coronation charter, he needed the support and approval of both the council and the estates to do so.<sup>583</sup> On 1 January 1570, Frederik prepared an extensive letter to the members of the council who were due to convene one week later. He explained that he currently had access to no more than 1,500 Thalers and some gold and that unless the council and his subjects provided the necessary means (that is, approved taxes), he had no choice but to abdicate.<sup>584</sup>

Viewed in the context of Frederik's financial dependency on the council, the electress's correspondence with the councilors, and particularly the letter she addressed to Oxe and Friis on 2 January 1570, can be viewed *not* as a betrayal of Frederik but as a reinforcement of his appeal for the council's support of the increased taxation. When Anna

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<sup>580</sup> Anna to Johan Friis and Holger Rosenkrantz, Dresden 19 Dec. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 70 b – 71 a; Anna to Holger Rosenkrantz, Dresden 25 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 84 b – 85 a; and Anna to Johan Friis, Dresden 25 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 85 b – 86 a.

<sup>581</sup> Jensen (1978), pp. 45-82; Jensen (1982), pp. 145-146 and 154-165.

<sup>582</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 254-279.

<sup>583</sup> "Frederik II's håndfæstning", paragraph 8 (p. 97).

<sup>584</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 286-288.

repeatedly addressed royal treasurer, the chancellor, and the council, she explicitly “included them” and held them co-accountable for the war and the associated debts. Whether it was a coincidence or not, Anna’s letter to Oxe and Friis from January 1570 could not have been better timed and would have arrived in Denmark approximately two weeks after they had received Frederik’s ultimatum. In March, the estates assembled and granted the sacrifices that were required in order to bring the war to an end during the coming summer.<sup>585</sup>

During the spring of 1570s, several parties (France, Poland, Pomerania, Saxony, and the emperor) were attempting to reinvigorate the peace negotiations that had stalled in 1568. The belligerent parties finally agreed to the suggested talks and after five months of intense negotiations a peace agreement was sealed in Stettin in December 1570.<sup>586</sup> Although this peace agreement (stipulated in the Treaty of Stettin) was slightly less favorable for Frederik II and Denmark than the discarded agreement from 1568, it nevertheless meant that Frederik could hope to settle his vast debts. And, already four months after the treaty had been signed, the electress informed Peder Oxe and Holger Rosenkrantz that August was satisfied with the new agreement regarding the loans and that she too was “heartily delighted to understand that these matters have been solved in a way that enables the mutual trust and friendship to be preserved and enhanced”.<sup>587</sup>

In both the early 1550s and the late 1560s Anna was the active mediator of support that was of great significance to the preservation of the status of her two dynasties. In the early 1550s, her natal kin provided considerable financial and political support to August, but in the 1560s the stream was reversed. Whether she was pursuing the interests of her natal dynasty or those of her husband’s lineage, the electress acted with independence and her interventions were informed by the particulars of the given political situation. The electress’s correspondence also reveals that she was willing and able to act without the knowledge of her husband, but that when she did this, her actions were motivated by a strong identification with his interests.

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<sup>585</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 295-298 and 320.

<sup>586</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 330

<sup>587</sup> “... So haben wir solchs vor vnserer Person auch von hertzen gerne vernohm das diese sachen auff solche mittel gericht, dardurch badiersaits gutt vertrauen vnd freundtscahlt erhalten vnd gemehert werden moge ...”, Anna to Peder Oxe and Holger Rosenkrantz, Dresden 22 April 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 231 a – 232 a. See also Anna to Peder Oxe, Holger Rosenkrantz, and Caspar Paselick, Dresden 12 March 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 213 b – 214 a.

The examples that have been presented reveal that both Anna and her closest male relatives considered her mediation significant. In several cases, she and August sent parallel and coordinated pleas for support to her father, thereby hoping to enhance his willingness to accommodate their needs. Similarly, she was actively defending Frederik's interests and wishes towards their father when there were doubts about his participation in the Diet of the Electors in 1558 and, after more than two decades in Saxony, she tirelessly defended the interests of her brother and his territory when loans and repayments of debts were negotiated. During the late 1560s, she went even further and intervened in internal Danish politics with a view to ensuring that Frederik was granted the necessary means to conclude the Danish-Swedish war with his honor intact. However, the more she took it upon herself to promote the interest of one part towards the other, the greater responsibility she considered herself to have for the preservation of the "friendship" between the two parties.

The chronology that has been outlined in this section indicates that the age/generational structure of the dynastic figuration (the Oldenburgs and the Wettins) within which Anna was the living bond enhanced her ability to mediate favors successfully. When the status of August (and herself) was endangered, her father was still alive and in a relatively secure position that enabled him to accommodate their frequent pleas for help. When her brother needed assistance in the 1560s, she and August had already been the ruling couple of Electoral Saxony for several years and were able to mobilize important support for their brother(-in-law). This way, the electoral couple at once reciprocated the favors provided by Christian and accrued goodwill for the future. Frederik explicated this when he expressed his longing for the day that he could reciprocate the favors he had received from August and Anna to them – or to their children.<sup>588</sup>

But even if the generational structure privileged Anna and increased her abilities to mediate support between her two dynasties, the family structure does not alone account for her active and consistent participation in the exchanges. This was only possible because both she and her relatives (by marriage as well as by blood) viewed her as part of both dynasties. Anna recognized the importance of her position and, already a few years after

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<sup>588</sup> Frederik II of Denmark to August of Saxony, 28 Dec. 1565, letter no. 30 in *Frederik II's egenhændige breve* (1984), pp. 36-37.

her marriage, she took the responsibilities inherent in it upon her and managed this position with a view to perpetuating a positive convergence of exchange.

### **Brokering marriages**

Marriage alliances represented an important means of social reproduction within the ruling dynasties, and the remainder of this chapter will examine how the electress's double dynastic affiliation acquired considerable political relevance through her efforts to find suitable wives for her brothers. Several recent analyses have suggested that "mothers" and "uterine relatives" were the key players when marriages were arranged among both ruling and noble families across early modern Europe.<sup>589</sup> Similarly, it will here be shown that Anna and her female relatives were active agents on the princely marriage market and that the electress acted as a full-fledged member of her natal dynasty when suitable marriage alliances for its members were sought. The analysis will center on Anna's efforts to arrange suitable marriages for her youngest brother Hans and for Frederik. In both cases, the electress's direct involvement in the search began in conjunction with the 1566 Diet in Augsburg and the analysis departs from this event. First, however, a brief introduction to the relations between Anna, her mother, and her siblings is pertinent, because the thorny relationship between the dowager queen and Frederik had implications for Anna's role within the natal dynasty.

Anna's youngest brothers Magnus and Hans (the Younger) were excluded from any inheritance within their father's main territory, the elective kingdom of Denmark. They were, however, entitled to a share of their father's possessions in Schleswig-Holstein. Already in 1544, when Christian III's two younger brothers (Duke Adolf and Duke Hans (the Elder)) came of age, the small duchies had been divided between the three. Christian retained one third and a share in the jointly governed areas,<sup>590</sup> and it was this third that would have to be divided between Frederik and his two brothers after the death of Christian III. In an attempt to prevent any further fragmentation of the duchies, Christian had sought alternative territories for Magnus, but this ambition remained unfulfilled at the time of his death. Frederik therefore continued the efforts and only a few months after

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<sup>589</sup> See for example Ebba Severidt's analysis of the German princesses who married into the Italian Gonzaga family in Severidt (2002), pp. 228-247; Karl-Heinz Spieß's analysis of the late medieval nobility in the Holy Roman Empire, Spieß (1993), pp. 82-105; and the briefer observations by Rosemary O'Day in O'Day (2004), pp. 131-135.

<sup>590</sup> The 1544 division of the duchies is summarized in Venge (1980), pp. 331-339; Gamrath and Ladewig Petersen (1980), pp. 386-390; Frandsen (2001), pp. 289-291.

Christian's death, he obtained the right to all future appointments for the bishopric of Ösel (a small island next to Gotland in the Baltic sea, formerly a part of the German Order's possessions in Livonia). The young king also agreed to pay 30,000 Thalers to have the current bishop vacate the seat and appointed Magnus in his place. In return, Magnus had to transfer his claims in Schleswig-Holstein to Frederik.<sup>591</sup> Before Magnus renounced his claims to a share of Schleswig-Holstein, the dowager queen had approved the agreement between her two sons. However, once Magnus was in Livonia he was faced with – and created for himself – one conflict after another.<sup>592</sup> His increasingly unstable position gave rise to tensions between Frederik and their mother, and Dorothea came to view Magnus's new possessions as inadequate compensation for his legitimate inheritance within the Empire.<sup>593</sup>

The relationship between Dorothea and Frederik was burdened further when the latter – in his mother's view – delayed the negotiations concerning a marriage between Anna's younger sister, also called Dorothea, and Duke Wilhelm of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle. In spite of this obstacle, the wedding between Wilhelm and Dorothea was celebrated in 1561, but it had caused further strain to the already limited understanding between the king and the dowager queen.<sup>594</sup>

Although Frederik and Dorothea both were keen to find a position for Hans (the Younger) within one of the secularized bishoprics of the Empire, this too created tensions between them. In 1561 there was a genuine chance that Hans could become co-adjutor in Bremen and Verden, but because Dorothea had pursued this opportunity without prior consultation with the king, he refused to further his brother's case.<sup>595</sup> During the next years, Dorothea continued to safeguard the interests of her younger sons and, after considerable pressure, Frederik granted Hans his third of their father's possessions in Schleswig and Holstein in 1564. Although this division secured Hans's livelihood, it deprived him of the status as a ruling prince because the powerful nobility within the

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<sup>591</sup> Frandsen (2001), pp. 293-294 and 299-301.

<sup>592</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 41-43; Colding (1939), pp. 456-471.

<sup>593</sup> Colding (1939), pp. 146-148, Jensen (1982), pp. 244-251; and the brief biography of Magnus in *DBL*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., vol. 9, pp. 355-356.

<sup>594</sup> Colding (1939), pp. 146-147.

<sup>595</sup> Colding (1939), pp. 147-150.

duchies refused to include him in the joint-government of the territories.<sup>596</sup> Dorothea, however, held on to the hope that his status eventually would be improved.<sup>597</sup>

The relationship between the dowager queen and Frederik suffered yet another blow when the king declared war on Sweden in 1563. Dorothea was one of the most outspoken critics of her son's decision and she remained firmly opposed to the war. Towards the end of 1564 her disagreement was transformed into action when she, without Frederik's knowledge, offered Erik XIV (who was her sister's son) to mediate peace. Three months passed before Dorothea revealed this initiative to Frederik, who responded with anything but gratitude. He perceived her action as a betrayal and, even though Dorothea renounced her peace missions, the king's trust in his mother had suffered irreparable damage. He therefore began intercepted the letters that were addressed to her, obstructed the passage of her servants through the kingdom, and complained that she was denouncing him to friends and relatives.<sup>598</sup>

Hence, by the mid-1560s – when Anna's involvement in the marriage negotiations for Hans and Frederik becomes visible in the surviving letters – the situation among the electress and her closest relatives was as follows: Dorothea and Frederik were on very unfriendly terms, though Anna communicated frequently with both of them. As demonstrated in the first part of this chapter, her relationship to Frederik was close and, in spite of her and August's objections to his war, they continued to provide him with extensive financial and diplomatic support. However, the electress was in even more frequent contact with her mother and, though mostly indirectly, with Hans (the Younger) who lived with the dowager queen.

#### *Hans (the Younger) 's marriage*

The Saxon preparations for the 1566 Diet in Augsburg began early. In January, a Saxon envoy (the *Hoffurier*) was sent to Augsburg to arrange appropriate accommodation for the electoral couple and their extensive entourage,<sup>599</sup> and from mid-March to mid-May

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<sup>596</sup> Gamrath and Ladewig Petersen (1980), pp. 386-390.

<sup>597</sup> "... Wer weist was der liebe Got seiner L noch geben will ...", the dowager queen wrote to Anna in February, see Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 12 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 243 b and 245 a.

<sup>598</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 166-170. The conflict between Dorothea and Frederik can also be followed in the queen's letters to him, see *Samling af Dronning Dorotheas Breve* (1852-1855/1861-1865).

<sup>599</sup> Anna to Hans Grantz, "Hoffurier itzo zu Augsburg", Dresden 16 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 80 a – b.

1566,<sup>600</sup> they maintained a considerable household in the imperial city. In addition to Anna and August, their children (except for the very youngest), Anna's youngest brother Hans, four noble ladies/widows,<sup>601</sup> the Saxon Master of the Horse and his wife, one of the court chaplains, the physician Johann Neefen and his wife, as well as eight maidens and a court mistress were to be accommodated in two houses that were selected as Anna and August's temporary residence.<sup>602</sup> According to the chronicle of the Diet, the Saxon elector arrived to Augsburg with 900 horses and his entourage also included Joachim Ernst of Anhalt, Heinrich (XI) of Schlesien-Liegnitz and his wife, Duke Christian's preceptor, several councilors and secretaries as well as a group of Italian musicians.<sup>603</sup>

This sizeable entourage was presumably a result of the prominent role August expected to have during the Diet. While the discussions during the Diet were dominated by the threat from the Ottoman Empire, confessional disagreements within the Empire (particularly the problematic status of the non-Lutheran Protestants), and the conflict between the two branches of the house of Wettin,<sup>604</sup> the Diet also marked Maximilian II's official investment of August as elector.<sup>605</sup>

To Anna, the extended stay in Augsburg represented a welcomed opportunity to meet relatives and friends and to establish new acquaintances. In the letters she sent to relatives and friends during the first months of 1566, she frequently related her hopes that she would meet them in Augsburg.<sup>606</sup> However, shortly after her arrival to Augsburg, she expressed some disappointment to her mother that, so far, only the Duchess of Bavaria had

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<sup>600</sup> Regarding the departure from Saxony to Augsburg in early March, see Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Plauen 4 March 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 100 a – b. Regarding their arrival to Augsburg on 20 March 1566, see Anna's letter to Anna of Hohenlohe, 21 March 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 104 a – b. They left Augsburg 14 May 1566 (see Anna to her niece Anna of Orange, Augsburg 13 May 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 114 a – b). However, because they visited the ducal couple in Bavaria on their way back to Saxony, they did not arrive home until 9 June 1566 see Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Munich 20 May and Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 115 b – 116 b and 117 a – 119 b)

<sup>601</sup> Anna to Hans Grantz, Dresden 16 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 80 a – b.

<sup>602</sup> Anna to Hans Grantz, Dresden 16 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 80 a – b.

<sup>603</sup> *Deutsche Reichstagsakten. Reichsversammlungen 1556-1662. Der Reichstag zu Augsburg*, ed. by Lanzinner and Heil (2002), pp. 1484 and 1492-1493.

<sup>604</sup> See Lanzinner and Heil's introduction to *Deutsche Reichstagsakten. Reichsversammlungen 1556-1662. Der Reichstag zu Augsburg* (2002).

<sup>605</sup> See the official account of August's investment by Johannes a Francolin *Kurtzer Bericht welcher gestalt von ... Keyser Maximilian, ... dem andern, Der Churfürst Hertzog Augustus zu Sachsen, ... Reichs Lehen und Regalien, auff den itzigen irer Kay. May. ersten Reichstag, allhier zu Augspurg, den 23. ... Aprilis, öffentlich ... empfangen* (1566).

<sup>606</sup> Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 14 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 91 a – b; Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Weissenburg 15 March 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 103 a – b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Augsburg 3 April 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 108 a – b; Anna to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Augsburg 17 April 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 112 a – b. In Nov. 1565, Anna had inquired if Elisabeth and Ulrich of Mecklenburg would attend the Diet, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Torgau 26 Nov. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 63 a – b.

arrived, though “one is anticipating the arrival of the Countess Palatine and the Duchess of Württemberg after Easter and [assumes] that they will bring their daughters”.<sup>607</sup> In this phrase, Anna reveals one of the central purposes of her presence: her vivid interest in the presence of consorts and unmarried princesses was motivated by her search for a wife for her twenty-one-year-old brother Hans.

It was the dowager queen who had decided that Hans was ready to marry, but the responsibility of finding a bride was conferred on Anna from the beginning of the search.<sup>608</sup> Hans and Dorothea had arrived in Saxony in November 1565 and, when the queen left in late-December, Hans stayed behind in order to accompany his elder sister and brother-in-law to the Diet, where the search would be initiated.<sup>609</sup> Dorothea’s expectations were high and when Anna expressed some concerns about her brother’s value on the marriage market, the queen would hear nothing of it: “Your beloved brother has enough to provide a dower for a lady and, contrary to other lords who have extended their lands and people to the limit, his beloved [Hans] has no debts”.<sup>610</sup>

The electress’s challenge was amplified by the relatively meager presence of consorts and unmarried princesses during the Diet and her assignment grew even more difficult when Hans proved to be rather finicky. Having suggested several young princesses as prospective candidates, Anna complained to Dorothea,

Although I have made more than one proposal to his beloved [Hans], and his beloved has seen the persons, and [although] I subsequently reminded him that in princely marriages one does not simply [or] primarily consider physical beauty but regard the good descent of the princely house and lineage, the righteousness of the parents, the sincerity of the heart and other Christian virtues [to be] more important, his beloved has had no particular inclination or

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<sup>607</sup> “... man vermutet sich aber das die Pfaltzgreuin vnd hertzogin von Württemberg nach kunfftigen Ostern anhero kommen vnd ire fraulien mitt sich bring werden ...”, Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Augsburg 3 April 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 108 a – 109 b. See also Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 9 May 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 256 a – 258 a, in which the queen explicitly asks Anna to keep her informed about the arrival of the female consorts and the developments during the Diet.

<sup>608</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 12 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 244 a – b (only a fragment of this letter is preserved); and Dorothea of Denmark to August of Saxony, Kolding 12 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 242 a – b. It also appears from Anna’s later letter to her mother, dated Augsburg 3 April 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 108 b – 109 b.

<sup>609</sup> Regarding their arrival see Anna to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Torgau 16 Nov. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 59 b – 60 a. It is unclear exactly when Dorothea departed from Saxony, though by 6 Jan. 1566, Anna assumed that she already was in Celle by Anna’s younger sister, see Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 6 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 76 a – 77 a.

<sup>610</sup> “... dein L ... bruder [hat] noch wol so viel ... das SL ein Frewlein beliebdingen kan, Auch das SL nichts schuldig wie wol andere Herrn, die ... land vnd leut vffe euserst vorsetzt Haben ...”, Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 12 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 243 b and 245 a.



liking to the suggestions. His beloved also asked that I do not talk him into something to which he is not inclined.<sup>611</sup>

In her nuisance over Hans's lack of compliance and his preoccupation with the appearance of the young women, Anna admonished him and defined the qualities he ought to seek in a future wife. Corresponding to the criteria that have been observed in comprehensive analyses of noble marriages,<sup>612</sup> the dynastic background of a woman was the primary focus, though Anna also wanted both the both the young woman and her parents to be upright and good Christians. It is noteworthy that neither Anna nor Dorothea addressed the material gains Hans might obtain through marriage, particularly because the material assets of a prince often was a primary concern when his desirability as a husband was considered.<sup>613</sup>

Before Anna expressed her exasperation about Hans to their mother, three women had received particular attention during the Diet: a young princess from Württemberg,<sup>614</sup> the fourteen-year-old Maximiliana of Bavaria, and the twenty-year-old Elena of Schlesien-Liegnitz. Dorothea and Anna were keen to further an alliance with Württemberg, though when Hans asked his elder sister not to persuade him to a marriage against his will, he was referring to the pressure he faced concerning this possibility.

After initial skepticism, Hans had showed some interest in the youngest daughter of the ducal couple from Bavaria, Maximiliana. However, this suggestion was rejected by the dowager queen, who cited rumors that the young woman was unattractive and indicated that a Catholic bride was unacceptable.<sup>615</sup> Once Anna was aware of her mother's concerns, she refrained from further expressions of interests by the Bavarian party in order to prevent

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<sup>611</sup> "... Ob ich wohl SL mehr dann einen vorschlag gethann SL auch die Personen gesehen, vnd ich hirauff derselben allerley zu gemuth furen lassen das man in furstlichen heiraten nit allweg formemblich auff schone gestalt zu sehen sondern viel mehr ehrliche ankunfft d furstlich heuser vnd geschlechter[,] frombkeit d eltern[,] auffrichtigkaiet des gemuths Gottseligkeit vnd andere Christliche furstliche tugenden zu erwgen pflegte[,] So hab doch SL zu ... derselben vorgeschlag keine sonderliche naigung ... noch gefallen gehabt, Mich auch ... darfur gebethen SL zu dem darzu sie selbst nicht lust hetten nit zuberehd ...", Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Munich 20 May 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 115 b – 116 b.

<sup>612</sup> Spieß (1993), pp. 36-80.

<sup>613</sup> This appears from Anna's concerns about Hans's value on the marriage market discussed above and in Anna's assessment of Joachim Ernst of Anhalt in her letter to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Frauenstein 5 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 161 a – 162 a.

<sup>614</sup> It remains unclear which of the princesses of Württemberg Anna and Dorothea had their eyes on. Duke Christoph and his wife Anna Maria had eight daughters and the six youngest were all unmarried in 1566, see Press (1994), pp. 378-379.

<sup>615</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 9 May 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 256 a – 258 a; and Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 117 a – 120 a.

the disgrace of any of the involved parties.<sup>616</sup> This conscious and cautious behavior shows that any courtship represented a potential danger to the honor of both parts. Accordingly, Anna was given considerable responsibilities for the reputation of him and their mother during the search and it also could place her own name in danger.

Anna's responsibility for Hans's (and their mother's) honor implied that she also had to prevent undesirable alliances. Dorothea's fear of an unwanted union – and hence Anna's responsibility in avoiding such a situation – is most conspicuous in her and Anna's exchanges concerning Elena of Liegnitz. As the Diet was at its peak, Dorothea warned Anna about a possible initiative from Liegnitz and begged her to prevent this,

We are being told that the Duke of Liegnitz is very friendly towards our son and that [he (the Duke of Liegnitz)] likes to drink a lot. We beg You motherly, even though we know that Your Beloved will do so, to pay diligent attention and prevent that Your brother will be led to inappropriateness [and to ensure] that our son is not tied to or persuaded to [take] the sister of the Duke of Liegnitz. We would rather that his beloved died than marry to that place.<sup>617</sup>

The exact motives for Dorothea's strong aversion towards Heinrich XI of Liegnitz remain unclear, though the duke's biography contain several components that would suffice to make him an unwanted relative and thus his sister an undesirable match. Most significantly Heinrich's accession as the ruling Duke of Liegnitz in 1559 was questionable and it was widely assumed that he was behind the imprisonment of his own father. The relationship between the duke and his subjects was conflict-ridden, Heinrich (and his territory) was burdened by heavy debts resulting in part from his squandering of the limited resources available, and, as Dorothea pointed out, the duke was known to be a heavy drinker.<sup>618</sup> But when Anna received her mother's warning, she could calm the fears by assured the queen that Hans had not engaged improperly with the young Duchess of Liegnitz and because the Duke of Liegnitz had returned home there was no reason for further concerns.<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 117 a – 120 a.

<sup>617</sup> "... Wir werden bericht das der Hertzog von der Lignitz sich viel zu vnserm Sohn geselle, vnd lust habe zu vielm trincken, Bitten mütterlich vnangesehen das wir wissenn d.l. es doch thun wirt, die wolle ein flisig vffsehen Habenn, damit der bruder ... an vngePurliche orter nicht vorfurt werde, oder das sich vnser Sohnen zu des Hertozgen von der Lignitz schwester verbinden oder bereden laß, wolt ehe, das s.l. sterben dan sich in das orth ehlichen solt ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 9 May 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 256 a – 258 a.

<sup>618</sup> See the biographies of Heinrich of Schlesien-Liegnitz in *ADB* vol. 11, pp. 616-618 and *NDB* vol. 20, p. 404. Regrettably, the extensive writings by the duke's steward, Hans von Schweinichen, do not cover this early part of the duke's life.

<sup>619</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 117 a – 120 a.

With the Bavarian party and the danger from Liegnitz out of the way, Anna returned to the princess from Württemberg. Upon her return to Dresden, she wrote to Dorothea,

As Your Grace, I truly would have liked to see that his beloved [Hans] had taken a greater liking and inclination to the lady from Württemberg, because I sincerely find the lady [as a result of her] appearance, behavior, and restraint, not to be disagreeable. However, his beloved has no predilection for this [suggestion] and has asked that his beloved not be subjected to further pressure.<sup>620</sup>

In spite of her brother's repeated pleas that Anna refrain from further attempts to persuade him, Anna asked Dorothea to convince Hans that this "friendship" with Württemberg would be in his best interest. If the queen managed to do this, Anna promised that she would spare no efforts to bring the union to fruition. As she explained to her mother, her sisterly care for Hans and the close kinship between them meant that she would like to see him "Christian and well provided for".<sup>621</sup>

When Hans continued to resist the pressure, Dorothea attributed the difficulties to the Devil's hatred for the Christian estate of marriage and replied in a language that shows remarkable parallels to the Lutheran teachings on marriage, "the evil enemy loathes this estate and creates all kinds of obstacles against it, but at the end it has to happen".<sup>622</sup> One had to fight against this evil, but even if the queen was determined to do so, Hans's resistance proved stronger. In September, Dorothea surrendered and informed Anna that, "we will commend the particular matter to him [Hans] and to the will of the Almighty, and we have no doubts that [God] graciously will give him that which serves his temporary and eternal well-being".<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>620</sup> "... [Ich] hette ... in warheit fur mein person, so wohl als EG gerne gesch das SL zu dem württembergischen frälein besseren willen vnd naiging getragen, ... dan mir warlich das fralein von leib geberden vnnnd zucht nicht vbell gefallen[,] Es haben aber SL gar kein lust ... dar zu gehabt vnnnd darfur gebethenn ... SL derhalben nicht herter zudringen ...", Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 117 a – 120 a.

<sup>621</sup> "... Christlich vnd wohl vorsorgt ...", Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 117 a – 120 a.

<sup>622</sup> "... d böse feind kan disen Stand nicht leuden, vnd wirfft allerlej vnkraut darein, Aber es muß zu letzt darnoch gescheh ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Flensburg 4 July 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 276 a – 278 b.

<sup>623</sup> "... So vil vnsern lieben Sohn Hertzogen Johansesn anlangt, wollen wir die bewuste sache an seinen ort, vnd In willen des Almechtigen stellen, Nicht zweiuclende, derselbe werde Ime das Jennige das Ime zu Zeitlicher vnd ewiger wolfart gereichen solle, gnediglich versehen ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Celle 1 Sep. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 298 a – 299 a.

But the matter did not rest for long. Two months later Anna brought her mother and brother's attention to a potential union with a princess of Jülich(-Cleve-Berg).<sup>624</sup> This time Hans responded with unexpected enthusiasm and sent an envoy to inspect the young woman. When his interest persisted, Dorothea wanted the matter to proceed as swiftly as possible and she asked Anna to "prove herself as the loyal daughter and sister [and] pursue this".<sup>625</sup> Hans's envoy had explained that several other princes had expressed interest in the young woman and, in order to "win the bid", swift action was required. Once again, Dorothea reminded Anna of Hans's advantages: he had more than sufficient land to offer his bride a dowager fief; and he was, as opposed to many other princes, free of debts. This time, however, she added yet another asset, namely that Hans lived "in accordance with God's command".<sup>626</sup>

Six months earlier, when Anna still was in Augsburg, Dorothea had written to her, "We pray to God that his beloved [Hans] will continue to live in a way that allows us the motherly glory, that his beloved will enter the Holy life of marriage being immaculate and pure."<sup>627</sup> This emphasis on the sexual purity of a young man was not unusual. Although the legal practices in early modern Europe show that men generally received lighter punishments for premarital sex, men and women were – at least theoretically – on a par in this respect, and the dowager queen's conception of her son's morality as directly linked to his sexual purity reflects her strong Lutheran beliefs.<sup>628</sup> This reference in Dorothea's letter helps explain her worries that Hans may engage inappropriately with Elena of Liegnitz. The dowager queen clearly considered the moral virtue of her son to make him a better contestant on the marriage market. In keeping with Luther's teachings, Dorothea

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<sup>624</sup> Once again, the exact identity of the woman remains unclear: Duke Wilhelm V of Jülich-Cleve-Berg (1516-1592) had three daughters who were close in age: Maria Eleonora, born 1550; Anna, born 1552; and Magdalena, born 1553, and they all remained unmarried until the 1570s. See the biography of Wilhelm V in *ADB*, vol. 43, pp. 106-113.

<sup>625</sup> "... sie wolle ... sich die getreue tochter vnd schwester erzeig ... [vnd] ... in d sachen handeln ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 15 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 344 a – 346 a.

<sup>626</sup> "... in gotsgefallen leben ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 15 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 344 a – 346 a.

<sup>627</sup> "... [wir] bitten Gott das seine l. [Hans] mitler Zeit also leben moge das wir bey vns muterlich rhomen können, das seine l. noch vnbeflechet vnd rein in das Heilig Ehlich leben getrotten ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 9 May 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 256 a – 258 a.

<sup>628</sup> Wiesner-Hanks (2000), pp. 80-86. Corresponding to Dorothea's stress on a man's sexual purity, Heide Wunder has shown that the contemporary nobleman Hans von Schweinichen from Schlesien placed a similar stress on his innocence until his marriage in 1581 (Wunder (2001), pp. 317-318).

considered Hans's marriage to be the ideal protection of his soul, because only this Holy estate would ensure that he did not fall prey to adultery.<sup>629</sup>

The immense importance Dorothea attributed to the marriage of her youngest son, and to marriage itself as a crucial component of a Christian – that is *Lutheran* – life, was also disclosed when a renewed chance for a secularized bishopric presented itself shortly after the quest for the princess in Jülich had been initiated. When Dorothea heard that the Archbishop of Bremen (Duke Georg of Braunschweig-Lüneburg) had died, she immediately asked Anna and August to keep Hans's interests in mind and to further his chances for the vacant post. In spite of her ambitions for Hans's status and career, the queen had reservations and explained to Anna that this *by no means* could hinder his future marriage, “because to us the marriage is more important than the entire papacy. May God prevent that our beloved son should live against the will of God”.<sup>630</sup> She reiterated this in a parallel letter to August and explained that even if Hans were given the entire world, she would not allow him to sacrifice the Christian estate of marriage and live a godless life.<sup>631</sup> Forfeiting marriage was inconceivable to Dorothea who considered her son's marriage, confession, and salvation to be intrinsically linked. To the queen, Hans's continued adherence to Protestantism in beliefs as well as practice was far more important than his status and wealth in the temporal world and she considered it her – and Anna's – duty to facilitate this. Dorothea's worries proved to have been in vain as Hans's quest for a position in Bremen failed.

Meanwhile, the pursuit of the princess in Jülich proceeded, but much slower than Dorothea and Hans desired.<sup>632</sup> Towards the end of February Anna finally had news. An envoy from Jülich had explained that due to the serious illness of the young lady's father (Duke Wilhelm V of Jülich-Cleve-Berg<sup>633</sup>), Hans's inquiry had not yet had been brought to the duke's attention. In addition, reliable sources had informed Anna that the lady's mother was suffering from grave melancholy and that the young lady was supposed to be of

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<sup>629</sup> The Protestant view of marriage as a remedy against – or a means of preventing – sin is discussed by Harrington (1995), pp. 59-71. See also Susan Karant-Nunn's analysis of Johannes Mathesius sermons on marriage and women (Karant-Nunn (1992)).

<sup>630</sup> “... [es] ... sollte doch das gluck die heirat nit vhindern, dan dise sach mit d heirat, ist vns lieber dan das gantz Babpstumb, da vnser lieber sohn wid gots willen leben sollte dauor behute d allmechtig e got Sr. 1. ...”, Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 1 Jan. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 353 a – 355 b.

<sup>631</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to August of Saxony, small note enclosed with her letter dated Kolding 1 Jan. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, p. 352 a.

<sup>632</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Stolpen 6 Dec. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 167 a – 168 b.

<sup>633</sup> Pauls (1897), pp. 7-38.

“modest and weak intellect”.<sup>634</sup> Although Anna was reluctant to pursue the matter further, her mother persisted. Dorothea had heard differently and preferred to give credence to the word that “the lady is supposed to be beautiful and praised for her virtues throughout the territory”.<sup>635</sup> Her mother’s determination compelled Anna to elaborate on her skepticism: given the fact that she twice had had the proposal brought to the ducal household in Jülich but still was awaiting an answer, Anna was unable to do more.<sup>636</sup> If she received a positive signal from Jülich, she was willing to resume the efforts, but if the other part remained silent, “I can easily conclude how they are inclined towards it”. In Anna’s view, she risked shaming and dishonoring both Hans and herself by pushing the case further, but she emphasized that her reluctance was motivated only by genuine concerns for her brother, who she considered herself to have a sisterly duty to protect.<sup>637</sup> This convinced the dowager queen who again was forced to be patient.<sup>638</sup>

Only a few months later Hans, or rather Dorothea and Anna, resumed their courting. This time their attention was focused on the seventeen-year-old Elisabeth of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen. Anna considered her to possess “all the decent princely and Christian virtues” one could desire.<sup>639</sup> With this assurance from the electress, Hans and Dorothea traveled to Celle in order to inspect the woman and inquire how a proposal would be met by the recently widowed mother and Elisabeth’s guardians (Duke Wolfgang and Duke Philipp).<sup>640</sup>

The visit exceeded all expectations and the proposal was met with enthusiasm. Elisabeth’s uncles as well her mother Margaretha and the young Elisabeth responded positively and wished to see a wedding as soon as possible. Elisabeth’s guardians ensured Hans that as soon as the senior male member of their dynasty, Duke Heinrich of

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<sup>634</sup> “... geringen vnd bloden verstandes ...”, Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Goldbach 25 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 197 a – 198 b. The translation of “verstandes” represents difficulties, though given that it is derived from “verstehen” it seems reasonable to use “intellect”, see *DH/B*, vol. 25, column 1523-1524. The mother of the princess was Maria (1531-1581, born of Austria). See also Anna’s letters to Dorothea of Denmark, Salza 10 Feb. and 17 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 191 a – 193 a and 194 a – b.

<sup>635</sup> “... So sol das Frolein schon vnd von tugendt ... Im gantzen Land berombt sein ...”, Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Ahrensbock “Donderstag nach Judica” [20 March] 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 376 a – 378 b.

<sup>636</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Salza 9 April 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 206 a – 207 b.

<sup>637</sup> “... kan ich ... daraus leichtlich schliessen, Wie man darzu genaigt sey ...”, Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Salza 9 April 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 206 a – 207 b.

<sup>638</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding [18 May], 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 394 a – 395 b.

<sup>639</sup> “... alle redligkeit Furstliche vnd christliche tugent...”, Anna to Hans (the Younger), Dresden 30 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 273 b - 274 b. Although this letter is from a later date, Anna here refers to her earlier account (presumably from Sep. or Oct.) of the princess, see Dorothea’s brief reference to a new “opportunity” in her letter to August of Saxony, Winsen 14 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 405 a – b.

<sup>640</sup> Anna to Hans (the Younger), Dresden 6 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 260 a; and Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 6 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 261 b – 263 b.

Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, had given his consent, a date for the negotiations of a marriage contract could be set.<sup>641</sup>

Although everything looked promising, Dorothea was worried that the Devil again would interfere and with the instruction that Anna promptly bring the matter to the desired conclusion, the queen commended the matter to her daughter.<sup>642</sup> Anna, on the other hand, was unwilling to act too hastily but assured her mother that once Duke Heinrich had expressed his consent, she and August would make their support for the union known to Elisabeth and her relatives.<sup>643</sup> If a reply at that time showed any delay, Hans and Dorothea could rely upon her and August's faithful assistance.<sup>644</sup> However, already four weeks after Hans's first appearance in Herzberg, Margaretha of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen addressed the Saxon electoral couple and asked for their approval. Anna immediately sent copies of duchess's letters and her and August's replies to Dorothea and thus demonstrated that they had expressed their strong support for the union.<sup>645</sup> But Anna also had the dubious obligation to inform her mother that, according to the rumors that were circulating in the Empire, Dorothea was considered to be the reluctant party in the ongoing negotiations. According to Anna, these rumors had developed because Hans had not been allocated a household of his own and this issue would have to be solved immediately if an agreement were to be reached.<sup>646</sup>

On 2 March 1568, Anna could finally congratulate her brother that a date for the final negotiations had been set.<sup>647</sup> In a parallel letter to her mother, she reiterated her joy and assured the dowager queen that August would send a delegate to attend the talks that were due to take place in Braunschweig.<sup>648</sup> The details of the engagement were agreed upon without delay and in early May the engagement was official.<sup>649</sup> After a few obstacles

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<sup>641</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Winsen 15 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 3 a – 4 a.

<sup>642</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Winsen 15 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 3 a – 4 a.

<sup>643</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 30 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 272 b – 273 b.

<sup>644</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 30 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 272 b – 273 b; and Anna to Hans (the Younger), Dresden 30 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 273 b – 274 b.

<sup>645</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 27 Nov. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 287 a – 288 b. See also Anna's letter to Elisabeth of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen, Dresden 16 Nov. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 288 b – 289 b (the date of this letter is questionable. Its place in the letter-book suggest that it was predated or that "16" is a mistake).

<sup>646</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 27 Nov. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 287 a – 288 b.

<sup>647</sup> Anna to Hans (the Younger), Dresden 2 March 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 19 b – 20 a.

<sup>648</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 2 March 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 20 a – 21 a.

<sup>649</sup> Hans (the Younger) to Anna, Kolding 1 May 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 14 a – b; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark and Hans (the Younger), Dresden 17 May 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 54 a – 55 a and fol. 55 a – b; and Anna to Margaretha of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen, Dresden 11 May 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 52 a – b.

regarding the location and date of the wedding,<sup>650</sup> the nuptials were celebrated in Kolding on 19 September 1568,<sup>651</sup> two and a half years after Dorothea instructed Anna to initiate the search. As the wedding was approaching, Anna provided comprehensive advice and made arrangements that one of her and August's most trusted servants, the councilor Abraham Bock, could travel to Kolding and assist the queen in order to ensure that the celebrations were conducted in accordance with the conventions of the Empire.<sup>652</sup>

Anna's correspondence leaves no doubt that the search for a wife for Hans was led by her and Dorothea. Their lead in the search appears most clearly when the electress's correspondence with her mother is compared to her exchanges with her brother and when Dorothea's communication with Anna is viewed in relation to the queen's letters to August. While Anna discussed Hans's marriage with him during his stay in Saxony, the subject is not mentioned once in their correspondence until the negotiations with Braunschweig-Grubenhagen were well underway.<sup>653</sup> Similarly, the subject appears only rarely in Dorothea's letters to August. Between April and July 1566, when Anna and Dorothea discussed Hans's marriage in almost every letter they exchanged, the considerations about her son's marriage are not addressed a single time in Dorothea's frequent letters to August: she referred to Hans, thanked August for providing for him and educating him, but August was included only in the considerations relating to his marriage after Anna and Dorothea had made the choice and the legalities of the marriage contract

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<sup>650</sup> The changes of the wedding-date can be followed in: Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 13 Feb. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 10 a – 11 a; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, 27 April 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 44 a – 46 a; Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 10 March 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 23 a – b; Hans (the Younger) to Anna, Kolding 1 May 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 14 a – b; Dorothea of Denmark to Anna and August, Kolding 30 April 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 12 a – 13 a and Loc. 8501/5, pp. 406 a – 407 a; Hans (the Younger) to Anna, Kolding 20 May 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 22 a – b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 24 May 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 55 b – 56 b; Dorothea of Denmark to August, Kolding 10 Aug. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 408 a – 409 a; Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 16 Aug. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 30 a – b.

<sup>651</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 24 Sep. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 34 a – b.

<sup>652</sup> The preparations and the deliveries from Saxony can be followed in Anna to Hans Harrer, 1 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 73 a; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Torgau 4 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 79 a – 80 b; Anna to Hans Harrer, Colditz 25 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 91 a; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Colditz 7 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 91 a – b; and Anna to Dorothea and Hans (the Younger), Dresden 1 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 126 a – 127 a and 127 a – b.

<sup>653</sup> Compared to the preceding years, Anna's letters to Hans became more frequent after his departure from Saxony in the fall of 1566. However, the negotiations concerning the marriage are mentioned only once in the six letters from Anna to Hans that are preserved in her letter-books. The subject is touched upon in her letter dated Stolpen 6 Dec. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 168 b – 169 a; but it is absent from the following five letters: Senftenberg 16 Sep. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 141 b; Stolpen 2 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 158 b; Stolpen 17 Nov. 1566; DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 163 a – b; Salza 10 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 190 b; Dresden 14 June 1568, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 226 b – 227 a.



had to be specified.<sup>654</sup> Hence, neither Hans nor August appear to have participated when the potential candidates were selected.

When Dorothea decided that it was time for her youngest son to marry, she entrusted Anna with the responsibility for the selection of candidates and for the initial negotiations. The electress's position and her vast network within the Empire meant that she was able to obtain information about the potential candidates and their relatives and that she thus could determine the feasibility of specific alliances. Once the initial negotiations were initiated, Anna's familiarity with the practices within the Empire also granted her the ability to read the subtle signs that were expressed during the negotiations and this made her a well-suited guardian of the honor of both brother and mother.

Throughout the search, Anna communicated this knowledge to the queen and, although she appears to have abided by her mother's wishes, one should not underestimate the influence she could yield on both her mother and her brother. Both her perseverance concerning the princess of Württemberg, who she considered an ideal candidate, and her refusal to accelerate the ongoing talks (be they with Jülich or Braunschweig-Grubenhagen) testify to the weight of her word. Similarly, the dowager queen's reliance on her eldest daughter shows that she acknowledged her daughter's experience and placed great trust in her judgment.

When Dorothea requested Anna's help, she consistently appealed to Anna's *sisterly* loyalty and referred to her *sisterly* duties towards Hans. She also asked her to behave as the loyal *daughter* by accommodating the queen's request. One finds a comparable emphasis on Anna's role as sister and daughter in the letters she sent to Dorothea, though the electress usually invoked her sisterly concerns for Hans when she wanted to legitimize an objection to Dorothea. In this respect, the exchanges between Dorothea and Anna suggest that they both considered the electress's assistance to be an inherent part of the family relations between them.

However, other factors are likely to have contributed to Dorothea's reliance on her eldest daughter and thus to Anna's extensive involvement in the decisions concerning her brother's marriage. In order to show this, attention must be paid both to the arguments Dorothea presented when she stressed the importance of Hans's marriage and to the inner-dynastic tensions that dominated the House of Oldenburg during the 1560s.

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<sup>654</sup> The letters from Dorothea of Denmark to August of Saxony are preserved in DrHSA Loc. 8501/5.

The queen's letters testify to her deep religiosity and when she expressed her desire to see her youngest son married, she frequently made it clear that – corresponding to Luther's teachings – she viewed marriage as the only appropriate way of life. Her religious motives were particularly clearly articulated in conjunction with Hans's renewed chance to gain a position within the archbishopric of Bremen. As she stressed to both Anna and August, her son (and, implicitly, the queen herself) was only interested in the vacant post if it did not hinder his ability to comply with the Lutheran imperative to marry. Dorothea's strong religious stance resembles the patterns of behavior that were documented by Paula Sutter Fichtner when she examined the impact of religious prescriptions on inheritance practices among the Protestant princes of the Empire. Sutter Fichtner found that the religious prescriptions were frequently abided by even if they contradicted a materially oriented rationality.<sup>655</sup> However, regardless of the queen's sincere religiosity and her aspirations to abide by the Lutheran teachings, there may also have been other incentives behind her ardent pursuit of this marriage.

In 1561, Frederik II had come to the financial rescue of his other brother Magnus in Livonia, and the king's assistance came with several conditions. One of these was that Magnus could not marry without the approval of his older brother.<sup>656</sup> The agreement that was reached between the two reinforced Frederik's authority over Magnus and exposed the king's desire to control the important political tool represented by his brother's future marriage. Corresponding to Heide Wunder's observation that sons (or, in this case, brothers) could be subject to coercion as great as daughters when marriages were concluded,<sup>657</sup> Frederik's demand give reason to believe that he was prepared to subject Magnus to considerable pressure. The combination of this arrangement between Frederik and Magnus, Dorothea's conviction that Frederik had deceived Magnus when the latter renounced his inheritance in Schleswig-Holstein, and the profoundly burdened relationship between Frederik and his mother, the dowager queen's determination to see Hans married gains added significance. In one letter to Anna, the queen wrote that she wished to see him married during her lifetime,<sup>658</sup> and this desire is likely to reflect not only her religious convictions but also her aspiration to prevent Frederik from employing Hans in a politically motivated marriage alliance that served the king's interests more than Hans's.

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<sup>655</sup> Sutter Fichtner (1989), particularly pp. 61-72.

<sup>656</sup> Colding (1939), pp. 456-471; and Jensen (1982), pp. 41-43.

<sup>657</sup> See Heide Wunder's introduction to *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung* (2002), pp. 18-20; Bourdieu (1972/1976), pp. 137-140.

<sup>658</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, to Anna, Kolding 9 May 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 256 a – 258 a.

The tension between Dorothea and Frederik not only amplified Dorothea's desire to see Hans's married. It also increased Anna's involvement in the search for a suitable sister-in-law. Without the support from her eldest son, the dowager queen's reliance on her two married daughters increased. Although the consulted sources fail to reveal anything about the involvement on Anna's younger sister, Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, they do show that her and her husband's household provided a base from which the negotiations with the Duchess of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen were conducted.<sup>659</sup> However, with almost twenty years of experience in the Empire and a vast network among the Protestant dynasties, Anna could doubtlessly offer her mother and her brother more extensive advice on the availability of unmarried princesses, their families, the first cautious approach, the further negotiations, and the conventions according to which the wedding ought to be celebrated.

Anna's deep involvement in the search for a suitable wife for Hans testifies to her continued and active role within her natal dynasty and to her mother's great confidence in her. Yet, it also strengthened Anna's bonds to her relatives in Denmark and it gave Anna the opportunity to shape this marriage to the benefit of her "new" dynasty. As it will be demonstrated in the next section of this chapter, Anna's simultaneous efforts to negotiate a marriage for Frederik indicate that when the electress suggested the Catholic Maximiliana of Bavaria as a possible spouse for Hans, she was driven by her Saxon interests. In order to demonstrate this, attention is now turned to Anna's efforts to arrange a marriage for Frederik. The same part of the analysis reveals some of the limits of Anna's influence, her attempts to overcome these, as well as her continual negotiations of loyalties between her two dynasties and between the two factions of her natal house.

### *The marriage of Frederik II*

During the late 1550s and early 1560s, Frederik and his relatives pursued negotiations for several ambitious marriages alliances (with Lorraine, England, and Austria).<sup>660</sup> As these endeavors failed, the king became subject to increasing pressure from his mother, Anna, and even from the Council of the Realm. For both moral and political reasons, his relatives and the councilors wanted him to marry and secure the future of the dynasty and the kingdom by providing a legitimate heir. Dorothea frequently lamented Frederik's amoral

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<sup>659</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Winsen 15 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 3 a – 4 a.

<sup>660</sup> Daae (1872); Colding (1939), pp. 413-455; Lockhart (2004), pp. 101-104.

(that is his unmarried) life. By the mid-1560s the dowager queen had surrendered and focused her energy on Hans though, when she asked Anna to locate a suitable wife for Hans, she presented this as a direct result of Frederik's disorderly life, "Your Beloved is aware of the worries Your Beloved brother King Frederik has caused us because of his unmarried life, and because we have not been able to make him listen, we would like to see our other son Hans in the estate [of marriage] before we die".<sup>661</sup>

In contrast to their mother, Anna had not given up on Frederik. When the electress arrived in Augsburg in the spring of 1566, her attention was not limited to the young princesses that could be suitable for Hans; she also wanted to find a wife for Frederik. A few weeks after her arrival in Augsburg, she wrote to Frederik,

[H]ere at the Diet we have seen a person who, although she currently is not of our confession, would not be disagreeable to [You. We] are working diligently and [have] hopes to bring the matter so far that it can be dependent on the will and inclination of Your Royal Dignity. If we manage to obtain this, we have no doubts that Your Royal Majesty will not object to us and our heartily beloved lord [and husband], but follow us brotherly in this.<sup>662</sup>

Anna left no doubt about her expectation that Frederik comply with her and August's recommendations, and before Frederik had a chance to respond or knew who the woman was, Anna was involved in the first negotiations.

In mid-July she disclosed to Frederik that the woman in question was Maria, the eldest daughter of Duke Albrecht of Bavaria. According to the electress, she was a well-behaved lady of an excellent dynasty, her mother was a competent mistress of the house (*hauswirthem*), "exactly as I am and there is only little difference between us, I know of no other lady in Germany who would be as well-suited for you as this [one]".<sup>663</sup> Apparently,

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<sup>661</sup> "... Dein I hat ... von vns vorstanden, Was vor bekhommernus ... vns dein I bruder Konig Friderich wegen seins vnehlichenn lebens gewircket hat, Vnd weil wir ... bey s. l. das gehor hiercin nicht gehabt, das wir ... gern noch vor vnserm sterben den andern vnserm Sohn Hanssen, in den Stande sehen mochten ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, to Anna, Kolding 9 May 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 256 a – 258 a.

<sup>662</sup> "... wir [haben] eine Person alhier vffm Reichstages geschenn die gleichwohl noch zur zeit nicht vnser Religion [ist] ... [aber] fur dieselbig nicht vnbequemb sein mochte[,] Stehen auch in vleissiger arbeit vnd hoffnung die ding so fern zu bringen ... das es vns biss auff Ewer Ko W willen vnd gefallen heimgestellt werd möge[,] Wo wir nun solchs erlangen können So ... Seint [wir] auch d vnzweifelich zuuorsicht E Ko M werde alsdan vnss vnd vnsern hertzliebsten herren vnd gemahel desfalls nicht hinder setzen, Sondern hirinn ... bruderlich volgen ...", Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Augsburg 26 April 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 113 a – 114 a (the sent letter is preserved in RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder).

<sup>663</sup> "... gleich wie ich ... vnd ist zwischen vns beide wenige vnderscheidt ... ich wust kein freulein ihm deutschland die fur dir so woll wehr als diese kann ...", autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 18 July 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10.

Anna could think of no better compliment than pointing out the similarities between herself and the young woman's mother.

After both the Bavarian ducal couple and Frederik had expressed their initial interest in this union,<sup>664</sup> Anna spared no efforts to convince Frederik that Maria really was an ideal candidate. Although she had admonished Hans not to pay attention to the beauty of a prospective wife, she sent Frederik a small watercolor portrait of the young duchess and ensured him that he would take an even greater liking to her when they would meet.<sup>665</sup> In October, Frederik's Lord Stewart Hans Spiegel was in Saxony and Bavaria, presumably to learn more about the negotiations and to inspect the young woman on the king's behalf.<sup>666</sup>

However, by mid-December the negotiations still had not yielded the desired result and the delay gave rise to concerns. Anna explained to Frederik that the inability to conclude the talks was caused by two factors: the confessional difference between him and Maria and the continuing war between Denmark and Sweden. She advised the king to consult with his theologians in order to determine how far a marriage agreement could be stretched without causing harm to his conscience, but she also reminded him that she already had given her word to Maria's parents that their daughter, "with regard to the religion will be free and subject to no coercion".<sup>667</sup> This assurance did not suffice for the ducal couple who demanded that their daughter be granted the right to have her own Catholic court chaplain. Anna encouraged Frederik to meet this request, "until, by God's grace, she accepts on the right confession".<sup>668</sup>

The electress's advice concerning her brother's war was less specific. From the very beginning of the considerations of this marriage, Anna had used the prospect of a promising union to admonish her brother to seek peace.<sup>669</sup> But until December, she had mainly done this with reference to the extensive harm that was caused by the war and she now took a more encouraging approach by stressing the concrete benefit (a desirable marriage) that an

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<sup>664</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 18 July 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>665</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, 20 Aug. 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>666</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Senftenberg 10 Oct. 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder. Regarding the "inspections" of a prospective wife see Spieß (1997).

<sup>667</sup> "... der religion halben frey vngedrungen vnd vngezwungen sein solte ...", autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 19 Dec. 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>668</sup> "... bis gotth sein gnade gebe das sie ... zu rechten erkantnus kommen mochte ...", autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 19 Dec. 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>669</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Augsburg 26 April 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder; autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 1 Nov. 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder; autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 18 Dec. 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder; and Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, [Goldbach] 16 March 1567, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

end to the war could represent.<sup>670</sup> Once these two issues had been resolved, she assured him, the matter would – God willing – develop without further delay.

Three months later the situation remained unchanged and Anna informed Frederik that until his intentions were transformed into action (that is, until he issued a declaration regarding Maria's religious freedom and obtained a peace) there was nothing more she could do.<sup>671</sup> Only a few days later, she received Frederik's declaration concerning the princess's religious freedom – but it was already too late. The negotiations with Bavaria had come to a temporary standstill.<sup>672</sup>

The letters that were exchanged between Anna and Frederik concerning a possible marriage between Maria of Bavaria and the king reveal three important aspects of Anna's position within her dynasties. First, it is clear that both Anna and Frederik considered it fully legitimate for her to be in charge of the selection of his potential bride-to-be and to instruct him on the compromises that were necessary during the early negotiations. Secondly, the electress's exchanges with Frederik give an impression of the care with which she managed her position between her mother and brother. The more information Anna had about their relationship, the better she was able to coordinate her behavior towards both of them and shortly before the departure to Augsburg in March 1566, the electress inquired by one of her mother's most trusted employees about the current state of the relationship between the king and Dorothea.<sup>673</sup> The precarious nature of Anna's position is also revealed by the strong emphasis she placed on the confidentiality of her communication with Frederik. Once Anna disclosed the identity of Maria to her brother, she stressed

[Y]ou must keep this matter confidential and you [can] not reveal to our mother even with the slightest detail that I have made this suggestion. If it does not remain undisclosed, I could not have a real sisterly trust in you in the future.<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 19 Dec. 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>671</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, [Goldbach] 16 March 1567, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

<sup>672</sup> Autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, [without place] 22 March 1567, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder; and autograph letter from Anna to Frederik of Denmark, [without place] 12 April 1567, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder

<sup>673</sup> Anna to Cornelius Hamsfort, Torgau 27 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 86 a – 87 a.

<sup>674</sup> "... du wollest diese ding ... geheim halten[,] dich auch mit dem ... geringsten nichts kegen vnserm fraw mütter merckenn ... lassen das ich dier diesem vorschlagk gethann hab[,] dan da es nicht vorschweigen bleiben sollte ... so kundt ich kunfftigen zeitt kein schwesterlich recht vortrauen zu dier tragen ...", autograph letter from Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Stolpen 18 July 1566, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder.

The force with which Anna emphasized the importance of keeping this proposal away from Dorothea's attention cannot simply be explained by the conflict between her mother and brother. Regardless of the tension that existed between the two, the dowager queen wished to see Frederik married and, in this respect, Anna was in full compliance with her mother's wishes. Anna and Dorothea also agreed on the absolute importance of a peace agreement between Sweden and Denmark, and it can be assumed that Dorothea would have endorsed Anna's method of utilizing the prospect of a marriage as yet another argument with which to urge Frederik to seek and agree to peace. However, as revealed in conjunction with Anna and Dorothea's exchanges concerning Hans's marriage, Dorothea instantly rejected Anna's suggestion concerning a marriage between Hans and Maximiliana of Bavaria, and she repeatedly expressed her intense contempt for Catholicism. Anna therefore had reason to believe that Dorothea would object also to this parallel proposal concerning Frederik and Maria of Bavaria and she thus wanted to keep the potential influence of the queen at bay. In this way, the conflict between the dowager queen and Frederik granted Anna greater freedom and enabled her to suggest a marriage for Frederik that would have been more doubtful if he and Dorothea had been on better terms.

This brings attention to the third point, namely Anna's eagerness to see a marriage alliance between Bavaria and one of her brothers. The fact that she suggested Maximiliana as a potential wife for Hans and simultaneously presented Maria as the ideal spouse for Frederik point to a profound interest in developing closer ties to the ruling dynasty in Bavaria. Anna's enthusiasm for a Danish-Bavarian marriage can also be detected in her encouragements to Frederik that he meet the demands of Maria's parents and in the way she downplayed the confessional difference between the potential couple by indicating that Maria ultimately would accept the "true" (that is, Lutheran) faith if a marriage was concluded.

In chapter 2 it was noted that the electress maintained a more frequent contact with the Bavarian duchess than with any other Catholic consort, but that this correspondence never reached the frequency or confidentiality that can be observed in her exchanges with several Protestant consorts. The earliest preserved letter from the electress to Anna of Bavaria indicates that they met in Frankfurt a. M. when the duchess's elder brother Maximilian II was crowned as "Regis Germaniae" in 1562.<sup>675</sup> During the next couple of

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<sup>675</sup> Anna to Anna of Bavaria, Torgau 5 Jan. 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 68 a – 70 a.

years their communication was limited to formal greetings and exchanges of recipes for health remedies and foodstuffs.<sup>676</sup> However, from the mid-1560s the correspondence between the two consorts became more frequent, as did the communication between August and Albrecht of Bavaria.<sup>677</sup> In an extension of the 1566 Diet, the electoral couple even accompanied Anna and Albrecht of Bavaria back to Munich and spent a week there before returning to Saxony.

Already during the mid-1550s August had promoted a marriage between Frederik and Eleonora of Austria (1534-1594), a daughter of Ferdinand I and hence a younger sister of Anna of Bavaria. However, because of the confessional difference, this attempt to bring both Saxony and Denmark closer to the Habsburg dynasty was given up during the spring of 1556. The talks concerning this proposal are not reflected in the electress's correspondence but, in keeping with the patterns that here have been outlined, the Saxon proposal to Ferdinand was also presented by a woman: August's mother Duchess Katharina.<sup>678</sup> In 1564 Maximilian was elected emperor and this made Bavaria an even more desirable ally. Hence, in light of the earlier Saxon initiative to forge a marriage alliance between Frederik and a Habsburg princess, it seems reasonable to view Anna's later eagerness to see one of her brothers marry a Bavarian princess as a continuation of the efforts from the 1550s and thus as an expression of the Saxon interests that also motivated Anna.

As the electress's hopes for a Danish-Bavarian marriage alliance waned, she was informed that Frederik was considering a marriage to a sister-in-law of Count Günther of Schwarzburg.<sup>679</sup> When these rumors reached Anna, she instantly sent her brother a harsh reprimand<sup>680</sup> and instructed three of his most senior councilors (Peder Oxe, Johann Friis, and Holger Rosenkrantz) to bring to an immediate end to this plan. In the letter to the

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<sup>676</sup> See Anna to Anna of Bavaria, Dresden 26 June 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 97 a – b; Dresden 11 nov. 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 124 a – 125 a; Dresden 29 Jan. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 6 a; and Dresden 16 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 29 b – 30 a.

<sup>677</sup> Zimmermann (2004) and Albrecht P. Luttenberger's review of his analysis of the correspondence between August of Saxony and Albrecht of Bavaria (Luttenberger (2005)).

<sup>678</sup> The negotiations concerning a marriage between Frederik and Eleonora of Austria are discussed by Fröbe (1912), pp. 33-35; Colding (1939), pp. 53-57; Jensen (1982), p. 28.

<sup>679</sup> Anna to Hans Spiegel, Dresden 3 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 129 b – 130 a. The concerns about a marriage to the Countess of Schwarzburg continued until 1571, see Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, Güstrow 30 April 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 208 a – b.

<sup>680</sup> Regrettably the letter to Frederik is not preserved. However, in her subsequent letter to the king, Anna wrote, "... Vnd seint d schwesterlich F hoffnung vnd zuorsicht, E Ko W werden sich numehr In der and sachen darumb, wir dselben vortreulich vnd wohlmeinlich geschrieben, auch widerumb bruderlich erkleren ...", Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 1 Dec. 1568, RA TKUA pk. 40-10, 4th folder (the draft is preserved in DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 137 b – 138 a).



councilors she stressed that such a marriage would harm not only her brother and his territories, but also the councilors and the Danish subjects. She was greatly alarmed because she always had expected that “His Royal Dignity would marry to those princely dynasties within the Holy Roman Empire that would not devalue but rather enhance and benefit his own royal rank”.<sup>681</sup> Anna also stressed that she knew of several other possible matches that would serve Frederik and his kingdom well.

The relationship between Count Günther of Schwarzburg and Frederik was close. In 1560 Frederik used the count as his representative in the negotiations concerning a marriage with Renata of Lorraine<sup>682</sup> and, as one of the leading German condottieres, Schwarzburg entered the service of the Danish king when the war against Sweden was initiated in 1563. As a result of the military failures in 1564-1565, the financial difficulties, and tension between the king and some of his councilors, Frederik was forced to dismiss Günther of Schwarzburg in 1565.<sup>683</sup> The count had suggested a marriage between Frederik and one of his sisters-in-law already in 1564,<sup>684</sup> and when the subject resurfaced in 1567 the negotiations proceeded further. Frederik owed Schwarzburg almost 170,000 Thalers for the yielded military service,<sup>685</sup> and it is conceivable that the king viewed the potential marriage as a way of repaying this debt. Frederik invited Count Günther and his sister-in-law Juliana of Nassau to meet him in Segeberg in September 1568. However, the ongoing peace talks between Denmark and Sweden necessitated that Frederik postpone the meeting until February 1569.<sup>686</sup> But the meeting never took place and the talks concerning Frederik’s marriage Juliana of Nassau had come to an end. Frede P. Jensen suggests that the plan may have been abandoned because of Spanish resistance,<sup>687</sup> though Anna’s immediate and active intervention shows that the proposed marriage also met fierce resistance from Frederik’s closest relatives.

Although the danger of a misalliance had been averted, the incidence had made Anna aware of the very real risk that Frederik could marry without the approval of his relatives. This realization and a resolve to prevent an undesirable union prompted her to further action. On the same day that Anna expressed her disapproval of the Nassau proposal to the Danish councilors, she initiated a renewed search for a suitable wife for Frederik. As a first step, she arranged a meeting with her aunt Elisabeth of Mecklenburg with whom she

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<sup>681</sup> “... das sich S Ko W an solchen orten Im heilig Reich Teutsch Nation mit Chur vnd Fürstlich heusern ... verheiraten möchten die deselbten Königlichenn stande vnd herkommen nicht verkleinerlich sond zu ruhm auffnehmen vnnd aller wohlfart gedeyen mochte ...”, Anna to Peder Oxe, Johann Friis, and Holger Rosenkrantz, Dresden 25 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 134 b – 135 a.

discussed the “business concerning our beloved lord [and] brother the king”.<sup>688</sup> During the next three years Anna and Elisabeth mobilized a concerted “marriage offensive” towards Frederik and identified several princesses who they deemed suitable for the king.<sup>689</sup>

In addition to her aunt, the electress found other allies in Frederik’s councilors. In 1569, when the Saxon councilor Heinrich von Gleissenthal was in Denmark,<sup>690</sup> Anna instructed him to discuss the question of Frederik’s marriage with Peder Oxe and Johann Friis.<sup>691</sup> She wanted to know if there was any way that Frederik may be convinced to make another attempt in the negotiations with Bavaria,<sup>692</sup> Anna was so concerned about an undesirable alliance that she even brought up the Bavarian possibility with the dowager queen,<sup>693</sup> who now was on slightly better terms with Frederik. However, having discussed the matter with the king, Dorothea informed Anna that he “under no circumstances” (*keineswegs*) would marry the Bavarian lady.<sup>694</sup>

In December 1569, the dowager queen, Anna, and Elisabeth of Mecklenburg were concerned that Frederik again was considering two undesirable marriages.<sup>695</sup> The sources do not reveal who the two women were, though, in the spring of 1571, Juliana of Nassau

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<sup>682</sup> See the biography of Schwarzburg in *DBL* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., vol. VI, pp. 412-414.

<sup>683</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 118-123.

<sup>684</sup> Jensen (1982), p. 120, footnote 7.

<sup>685</sup> Jensen (1982), pp. 131-133

<sup>686</sup> See Frede P. Jensen’s notes in *Frederik II’s egenhændige breve* (1984), letter no. 37, Frederik II of Denmark to Count Günther of Schwarzburg, Frederiksborg 14 June 1568.

<sup>687</sup> Jensen (1982), p. 120 writes that the plan was abandoned, “possibly because of Spanish resistance”.

<sup>688</sup> “... [der] ... handel mit vnserm geliebt h brud dem konige ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 30 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 150 b – 151 b. See also the earlier letter from Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg (Dresden 25 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 135 a – b) in which Anna arranges the urgent meeting with her aunt.

<sup>689</sup> Their extensive efforts can be followed in Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, Güstrow 3 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 65 a – c; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 15 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 1 b – 2 b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg Dresden 25 March 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 19 b – 20 b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 12 April, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 21 b – 22 a; Anna to Heinrich von Gleissenthal, Dresden 3 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 67 a – b; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 30 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 74 b – 75 b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 77 b – 78 b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 2 Dec. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 84 a – 86 a; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 6 Dec. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 86 a – 87 a; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 8 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 117 a – 118 b; Anna to Frederik II, Dresden 19 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 124 a – b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Torgau 2 Oct. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 175 b – 176 a; Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 20 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 185 b – 187 a; Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, Güstrow 30 April 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 208 a – b.

<sup>690</sup> Anna to Heinrich von Gleissenthal, Dresden 30 May 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 31 b.

<sup>691</sup> Anna to Peder Oxe, Barenstein 29 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 51 a – 52 a.

<sup>692</sup> Anna to Heinrich von Gleissenthal, Dresden 3 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 67 a – b.

<sup>693</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 30 Sep. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 63 b – 64 a.

<sup>694</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, without date [between mid-September and early October 1569], Loc. 8533/5, pp. 105 b.

<sup>695</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 2 Dec. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 84 a – 86 a.

still appears as a potential candidate and references were also made to a princess from Jülich.<sup>696</sup> It may have been these possibilities Anna referred to and, if this was the case, she preferred the latter, because – as she explained to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg – “if it really cannot be otherwise, then this is better and more tolerable than the other proposal”.<sup>697</sup> Even so, Anna had not surrendered and she still pursued other possibilities including a marriage alliance with Bavaria.

In March 1570 Anna and August visited the imperial court in Prague. At the same time, the ducal couple from Bavaria was there and Albrecht of Bavaria informed August that two of his daughters still were unmarried. A proposal had recently been made regarding Maria but, if an agreement with Frederik could be reached, the duke was prepared to turn down the standing offer. Once Anna was back in Dresden, she immediately informed her mother about this development. Accentuating the endless shame that a misalliance could cause Frederik, his descendents, and his relatives (*vns als dem verwanthen*), she begged the dowager queen to – once again – admonish Frederik and persuade him to reconsider a marriage to Maria of Bavaria.<sup>698</sup> Anna addressed the same subject in an autograph letter to Frederik.<sup>699</sup> She was eager to receive his reply and, in her subsequent reminder, she argued that this renewed possibility was an indication of God’s approval of this union.<sup>700</sup> But five months later (August 1570), Anna still did not know if Frederik would reconsider this option or if other negotiations were in progress.<sup>701</sup> Towards the end of the year, Frederik’s refusal was clear, but by then Anna was already considering other options.<sup>702</sup>

In April 1571, Anna again stressed the importance of Frederik’s future marriage in a letter to Peder Oxe and Holger Rosenkrantz. The electress restated her strong wish to see Frederik married to a woman of appropriate rank and lamented the lack of success she thus far had had with her mediations. She now urged Oxe and Rosenkrantz to mobilize their fellow councilors and to make all possible efforts to convince Frederik to proceed with a

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<sup>696</sup> Autograph letter from Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, Güstrow 30 April 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 208 a – b.

<sup>697</sup> “... dann wo es Je anders nicht sein kan, So Ist vns doch dieser wegk angenehmer vnd leidtlicher als d and vorschlagk ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 2 Dec. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 84 a – 86 a. See also Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 6 Dec. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 86 a – 87 a.

<sup>698</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 8 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 117 a – 118 a

<sup>699</sup> The autograph letter is not preserved but Anna refers to it in her subsequent letter to Frederik, dated Dresden 19 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 124 a – b.

<sup>700</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 19 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 124 a – b.

<sup>701</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 26 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 167 b – 168 b.

<sup>702</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 20 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 185 b – 187 a.

marriage that was appropriate for his rank.<sup>703</sup> A few days after Anna had dispatched this letter, Elisabeth of Mecklenburg reassured her that although reports about Frederik's plans for a marriage again were circulating, she knew that nothing was set.<sup>704</sup>

With this news in mind, Elisabeth and Anna both welcomed the coincidental developments of the summer. During their summer travels, Elisabeth and Ulrich of Mecklenburg met the widowed duchess of Pomerania-Wolgast who was accompanied by her daughters. Shortly afterwards, Elisabeth informed Anna that one of the young Pomeranian princesses "is not unsightly, I am thinking that, God willingly, she would befit the king".<sup>705</sup> Elisabeth went on to explain that the mother was an honorable and virtuous woman and that, in light of the current political situation, this marriage could serve the king well, because "had it not been for Pomerania, the Swedes had not been able to continue the war against Denmark as long as they did".<sup>706</sup> Hence, it is incorrect when the established historiography maintains that the initiative for a Pomeranian marriage came from Jakob Zitzewitz and Caspar Paselick, two Pomeranians who were in the service of Frederik II, and that they subsequently asked Elisabeth of Mecklenburg for assistance.<sup>707</sup> The initiative came from Elisabeth and, as it will appear, upon the approval from Anna, the duchess turned to Paselick for support.

But the Pomeranian princess was not the only option that was entertained by Anna and Elisabeth. Around the same time they also discussed the possibility of a marriage between Frederik and Elisabeth's only child Sophie, to whom Anna also had a particular bond as godmother.<sup>708</sup> Writing to Elisabeth in early July, the electress expressed her wish that Sophie and Frederik could be joined, but she also acknowledged that the close kinship between them (Sophie's mother was a half-sister of Frederik's father) was likely to prevent it. Consequently, and because Anna considered a marriage between her brother and the

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<sup>703</sup> Anna to Peder Oxe and Holger Rosenkrantz, Dresden 22 Apr. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 231 a – 232 a.

<sup>704</sup> Autograph letter from Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, Güstrow 30 April 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 208 a – b.

<sup>705</sup> "... hette yhre drey dochter bey sich vnder den ist eyenne die nicht hesslich ist ... mych dunckt wens gott hette ... dasich sie dem konige wol gutte [... illegible ...] ...", Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, [without place] 22 June 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 215 a – b.

<sup>706</sup> "... wens pumern nicht gethan hette die schweden hetten den kryck so lange wider dennemarkchen nicht furen können ...", Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, without place 22 June 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 215 a – b. As opposed to his brother Johann Friedrich of Pomerania-Stettin, Ernst Ludwig of Pomerania-Wolgast had sided with Erik XIV during the Nordic Seven-Year-War (see Jensen (1982), p. 313).

<sup>707</sup> See for example Daae (1872) and Lockhart (2004), pp. 101-102.

<sup>708</sup> Regarding Anna's and August's roles as godparents, see for example Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 5 Dec. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 289 b – 190 a, in which Anna refers to Elisabeth's daughter as "... vnsere F lieben Pathen ...".

Pomeranian princess agreeable, she asked the duchess to present this suggestion to Frederik and his advisors.<sup>709</sup>

During a personal meeting in September, Anna and Elisabeth discussed the Pomeranian possibility further and immediately afterwards, Anna prepared an extensive letter for Frederik and a joint-letter to Peder Oxe and Holger Rosenkrantz. In the letter to Frederik she – once again – expressed her wish to see him married and revealed that the Duchess of Mecklenburg knew of several potential candidates who would be suitable for him. She therefore encouraged the king to arrange a meeting with the ducal couple of Mecklenburg as soon as possible.<sup>710</sup> The electress was more specific in the letter she prepared for Frederik’s councilors and explained that Elisabeth of Mecklenburg was willing to meet with Frederik and allow him to inspect two young ladies, who she and Anna both considered suitable for the king: Margaretha, a daughter of Philipp of Pomerania-Wolgast, and the duchess’s own daughter Sophie.<sup>711</sup> Anna explained that she would expect Frederik to choose one of the two and to proceed with the engagement and wedding without delay. She also stressed the importance of the councilors’ support by explaining how these two and very favorable opportunities could defer “other shameful and disturbing suggestions”.<sup>712</sup>

In spite of Elisabeth and Anna’s previous concerns about the close kinship between Frederik and Sophie, Anna’s goddaughter was still – or had reemerged as – a candidate. However, in the margin of Anna’s letter-book after the drafts for the quoted letter to Oxe and Rosenkrantz, a secretary added, “Because of the electress’s particular concerns, these two letters *concerning the Pomeranian marriage* to the king and the Danish councilors, have not been sent” [my emphasis].<sup>713</sup> Hence, although Anna had included Sophie of Mecklenburg as a candidate in the letter to the councilors, the focus was still on the Pomeranian princess and, because these two letters were not sent, only Elisabeth and Anna knew that Sophie also was a contender.

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<sup>709</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Stolpen 3 July 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 216 a. The draft for this letter is not preserved in Anna’s letter-books.

<sup>710</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Schönberg 13 Sep. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 286 a – b and 287 II/a.

<sup>711</sup> Anna to Peder Oxe and Holger Rosenkrantz, Schönberg 13 Sep. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 287 II/b – 288 b.

<sup>712</sup> “... anderer furstehender schimpflicher vnd bedencklicher vorschlage ...” / “... vnsers geliebt Vaterlands ruhmb ehr vnd wohlfart ...”, Anna to Peder Oxe and Holger Rosenkrantz, Schönberg 13 Sep. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 286 a – 287 II/a.

<sup>713</sup> “... diese baide briue An Kong vnd die denisch Reth, die Pommerische heirat belandend seint aus sondlichen bedenck d Churfurstin ... nit ausgang”, see DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 287 II/a.

Anna was determined to see her brother married to one of the German princesses that she and Elisabeth had selected. Not even Dorothea's death in early October interrupted the venture.<sup>714</sup> On the contrary, Anna seized this opportunity to remind Frederik of his duty marry according to his rank. In her reply to Frederik's notification of their mother's death, the electress wrote,

Because Your Royal Dignity has caused us great grief with this sad notification, we beg and admonish Your Royal Dignity most kindly [and] out of a sisterly, loyal heart, that you soon will rejoice us with the good notification that Your Royal Dignity has risen above Your disquieting [and] disorderly [way of life], entered into the Christian estate and – to the benefit of your kingdoms and territories – established a friendship through marriage to a princely house that is of [Your] equal rank and birth.<sup>715</sup>

Finally, in November 1571, the ducal couple of Mecklenburg traveled with the Pomeranian princess, their daughter Sophie, and a young lady from Holstein to Nykøbing Castle in Denmark where they met with Frederik. At the end of November, Anna informed her brother that according to “common rumors”, he was currently entertaining foreign guests in Nykøbing and was planning to conclude a marriage agreement. Unlike her reactions to earlier rumors about his marriage negotiations, she this time expressed all her good wishes for this commendable plan and assured him that she could receive no better news than that he had been bestowed a Christian and virtuous wife.<sup>716</sup>

Anna's letter shows that Frederik was unaware of his sister's involvement in the preparations for Elisabeth and Ulrich's visit to Denmark and that she wanted her association to remain secret. However, as Anna sent her good wishes for Frederik's marriage, a report was underway to her from Elisabeth. The duchess wrote that, contrary to all expectations, Frederik had refused the Pomeranian princess, and this caused her great concerns because the king may again resort to a disorderly life.<sup>717</sup> Frederik may, Elisabeth

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<sup>714</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Augustusburg 26 Oct. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 308 a – 309 b.

<sup>715</sup> “... So bitten vnd vermahlen wir E K W aus schwesterlichen trewen hertzen aufs freuntlichste vnd vleissigste Weill sie vns mit dieser betrubten botschaft zum hochsten bekommert gemacht[,] sie wolle vns doch bald mit einer frolich botschaft, das E Ko W sich ein mahl aus Irem sorklichen vnordenlichen wesen, In einen ... Christlichen stand begeben vnd sich zu einem ... furstlich hause das derselben ankunfft stand vnd geburth ebermessig, vnd iren konigreichen vnd landen ... nutzlich befreundet vnd verheiratet habef[,] wiederumb erfrewen ...”, Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Augustusburg 25 Oct. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 306 b – 308 a.

<sup>716</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Lochau 29 Nov. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 330 b – 331 b.

<sup>717</sup> Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, Nykøbing [Falster] 25 Nov. 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 241 a – b.

wrote, resume his highly inappropriate relationship with the Danish noblewoman Anne Hardenberg.

Frederik had had a relationship to Anne Hardenberg during the 1550s and had even considered marrying her. Presumably with a view to bringing this unwelcomed affair to an end, Frederik's mother took Anne Hardenberg in her service. However, with the death of the dowager queen, the future of the unmarried noblewoman was uncertain and she could represent a real "risk" to the <sup>718</sup>king. Shortly after Dorothea's death, the electress had requested that Anne Hardenberg come to Saxony.<sup>719</sup> According to Anna's letters to Hardenberg, the electress offered her protection and support as a reward for her faithful service to the Dorothea, though Anna may also have wished to remove the unmarried noblewoman from Frederik's proximity. However, Elisabeth and Anna's concerns proved unwarranted and, before Anne Hardenberg arrived in Saxony, the electress had received Frederik's proclamation that Sophie had won his heart (*vnser hertz eingenommen*). The king informed Anna that, unless she and August objected, he intended to marry Sophie. He also explained that his theologians already had approved this union in spite of the close kinship and that his councilors looked favorably upon an alliance with Mecklenburg.<sup>720</sup> Even though this notification was less of a surprise to Anna than her brother may have expected, she still did not reveal her involvement and simply she expressed her unequivocal support for his decision. But on the same day, Anna replied to Elisabeth and expressed her heartfelt joy about the news.<sup>721</sup>

The marriage between Sophie and Frederik was celebrated in June 1572 and this union fulfilled all of the electress's aspirations: the bride was of appropriate dynastic background and brought up by honorable parents; she already had close ties to Anna and her mother was Anna's closest confidante. The close relationship between Anna and her new sister-in-law was reconfirmed in Sophie's coronation when the new queen was accompanied and assisted by her mother and Anna throughout the ceremony.<sup>722</sup>

In the Danish accounts of Frederik's marriage it is often highlighted that all was set for a union with Pomerania prior to his meeting with the ducal couple of Mecklenburg in November 1571 and that Frederik's change of heart was completely unexpected. Danish

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<sup>718</sup> Regarding Frederik II's relationship with Anne Hardenberg see Bricka (1873), and brief biography of Anna Hardenberg in *DKBL* <http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/174/query/hardenberg/> (05.10.04)

<sup>719</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Augustusburg 2 Nov. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 319 b.

<sup>720</sup> Frederik II of Denmark to Anna, Frederiksborg 1 Jan. 1572, DrHSA Loc. 8530/2, pp. 92 a – 93 a.

<sup>721</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 13 Jan. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 10 b – 11 b.

<sup>722</sup> Reravius (1574), pp. Mv(2)-(3).

historians have also stressed that it was Frederik's councilors who convinced him to marry. Finally, it has been pointed out that the electoral couple in Saxony, and particularly Anna, was offended because Frederik had failed to keep her informed as the negotiations with Pomerania and Mecklenburg proceeded.<sup>723</sup> While some of these conclusions are substantiated by an examination of Anna's involvement, the electress's correspondence also calls for significant revisions.

Anna's correspondence with Elisabeth of Mecklenburg confirms that while Frederik's rejection of the Pomeranian princess was unexpected, his aunt and sister had considered a union between Sophie and the king for months. The references that were made to Sophie in Anna's letters suggest that both she and Elisabeth preferred an alliance between Mecklenburg and Denmark rather than a marriage between Frederik and Margarethe of Pomerania and that they hesitated to pursue it more insistently only because of the kinship between the king and Sophie.

There is no reason to doubt that the Danish councilors wanted their king to marry – and to marry in accordance with his rank – and that they exercised significant pressure on him. However, Anna's exchanges with the senior councilors indicate that she was the one who mobilized them in order to avert the danger of a misalliance between her brother and Juliana of Nassau in 1568.

The last question that must be addressed relates to the assumption that Anna (and August) were offended by Frederik's failure to consult with them during his negotiations with Pomerania and Mecklenburg. Anna's alleged resentment has been construed on the basis of Frederik's reply to the letter in which she expressed her good wishes for the ongoing marriage negotiations in Nykøbing in November. In this reply, Frederik expressed his surprise about the rumors that were circulating, thereby – according to the Danish tradition – keeping his sister's pressure at bay. Extensive attention has been paid to Frederik's apology, sent in a letter two weeks later, for the speed with which the negotiations with the Mecklenburg ducal couple had developed. Finally, Anna and

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<sup>723</sup> See the detailed introduction to the marriage contract from 1572 "Overenskomst angaaende Ægteskabet mellem Kong Frederik II af Danmark-Norge og Hertug Ulrik af Meklenborgs Datter, Prinsesse Sofie" (1572/1912); Grethe Jensen's biography of Queen Sophie in *Danske Dronninger* (2000), pp. 49-53; and the brief biography on Sophie in *DKBL* <http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/170/bio/1348/query/dronning%20sophie%20/>



August's alleged reluctance to attend Frederik's upcoming wedding, has been viewed as an expression of their disapproval.<sup>724</sup>

When Frederik replied to Anna's good wishes for the negotiations, he also informed her that, although there had been talks about a marriage, no agreement had been reached and he assured her that he never would make a decision of this importance without her and August's advice.<sup>725</sup> In his next letter to Anna he declared his intentions to marry Sophie but, in doing so, he explicitly asked for her approval.<sup>726</sup> While the sincerity of Frederik's assurance, apology, and request for approval should be read with skepticism, they are nevertheless significant. They indicate that *if* Frederik had resisted the influence Anna previously had exercised, he nevertheless acknowledged his duty to confer with her before a final agreement was concluded. Frederik's late notifications to his sister should also be viewed in the context of her continual encouragements that he marry. Throughout the winter 1571-1572, Anna encouraged Frederik to marry and, upon their mother's death, she stressed that she could receive no greater news than that he had married. However, in these letters, she did not make specific suggestions and wrote only that he – of course – should marry a woman of appropriate dynastic background. In this respect, the king complied with his sister's instructions and, corresponding to this, she responded with unequivocal joy when he informed her of his intentions to marry Sophie.

Although these observations raise doubts about Anna and August's alleged resentment regarding Frederik's marriage negotiations, this is inconsistent with the secrecy that surrounded Anna's communication with Elisabeth of Mecklenburg prior to meeting between the ducal couple of Mecklenburg and Frederik. In order to further examine this tension, two questions must be addressed: *(i)* to what degree and in which directions did Anna attempt to influence her brother?; and *(ii)*, did Frederik resist his sister's influence and, if so, why?

From 1566 Anna had made great efforts to arrange a suitable marriage for Frederik, though their exchanges leave no doubt that – at least until 1568 – they both considered her mediation desirable. In spite of Anna's very favorable view of a potential alliance with Bavaria, she advised Frederik to consult with his theologians prior to an agreement. Until the negotiations with Bavaria were halted in 1567, she expressed her readiness to accept

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<sup>724</sup> Introduction to "Overenskomst angaaende Ægteskabet mellem Kong Frederik II af Danmark-Norge og Hertug Ulrik af Meklenborgs Datter, Prinsesse Sofie" [København 17. Juni og 19. Juli 1572] in *Danmark-Norges Traktater 1523-1750* (1912), pp. 300-313.

<sup>725</sup> Frederik II of Denmark to Anna, Copenhagen 18 Dec. 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8530/2, pp. 86 a – 89 a.

<sup>726</sup> Frederik II of Denmark to Anna, Frederiksborg 1 Jan. 1572, DrHSA Loc. 8530/2, pp. 92 a – 93 a.

Frederik's decision and acknowledge the dilemma a bi-confessional marriage represented to her brother's conscience. However, the same willingness to recognize the king's decision vanished when Anna became aware of his negotiations with Günther of Schwarzburg. The threat of a misalliance immediately activated the electress who joined forces with the dowager queen, Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, and the Danish councilors. It was this danger that represented the greatest burden to the relationships between Anna and her brother, and during the next three to four years she made it apparent that his personal preferences ought to be secondary to the interests and reputation of their dynasty.

In an attempt to fend off the threath, Anna returned to the possibility of a marriage with Bavaria at least twice after 1568. She repeatedly reminded the councilors of the damage a misalliance would cause to their reputation and thereby urged them to critically assess any marriage Frederik may consider without her knowledge. Anna also urged her mother to do whatever she could to prevent the misfortune of an inappropriate union for Frederik. Writing to her mother in March 1570, Anna begged the dowager queen to make one last attempt to persuade Frederik to revive the talks with Bavaria because a marriage to an unsuitable woman would belittle, cause ignominy, and defame all of Frederik's relatives including Anna herself.<sup>727</sup> While this is the only instance in which the electress made the connection between her brother's potential misalliance and her own reputation explicit, the example is central and reveals a core characteristic of the notion of "dynastic capital" as it will be discussed below.

On the subject of Anna's influence on her brother, it is clear that Anna did attempt to shape Frederik's choice of partner. Until the danger of a misalliance became manifest in 1568, she and Frederik discussed her suggestions at length but, although she made her views clear and did what she could to persuade him, she nevertheless accepted that the decision ultimately was his. After 1568 the electress's attempts to influence Frederik changed. While she continued to express her wish to see him married to a woman of appropriate rank, she only rarely brought forth suggestions. Instead, she relied on her mother and Elisabeth of Mecklenburg when a concrete proposal had to be presented to Frederik and his councilors.

These observations are also relevant to the issue of Frederik's alleged resistance to his sister's influence. It seems likely that Anna's hesitation to discuss concrete suggestions

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<sup>727</sup> Anna wrote that the marriage would cause "... verkleinerung schimpff vnd nachrede ..." to herself and other relatives, Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 8 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 117 a - b.

with Frederik was related to his reluctance to follow his sister's advice concerning Maria of Bavaria. When the talks were terminated in 1567, the correspondence indicates that it primarily was due to the confessional difference between Frederik and Maria and the ongoing war between Denmark and Sweden. However, when Frederik refused to resume the talks in 1568 and 1570, he must have either worried anew about the confessional question or been concerned by other factors. One such "other" concern might have been that his sister and brother-in-law were using him in an alliance that ultimately served them and the Saxon interests within the Empire more than him and his territories. This motive, and Anna's awareness of the suspicion it could cause, can also help explain why she kept her later involvement concealed. However, she may also have wanted to keep her approval of other candidates unknown because she – at least until 1570 – continued to hope that Frederik eventually would give in to her pleas about a Bavarian marriage. If, in the meantime, she expressed support or even acceptance of other candidates, this would have detracted from her insistence that the Bavarian princess was the best candidate.

Consequently, it was the threat of a misalliance that changed the relationship between Frederik and Anna, because this incidence revealed that Frederik could and was ready to decide on his marriage without appropriate consultation of his relatives. Anna expressed her fierce resistance to the unsuitable union openly and she simultaneously joined forces with her closest female relatives in order to define acceptable alternatives – and these efforts she kept secret. Recognizing her brother's reluctance to follow her recommendations and/or his desire to take charge of his marriage negotiations, she developed alternative strategies that enabled her to exercise what she considered to be her rightful influence. Thus, in spite of Frederik's refusal of the Bavarian alliance and his independent negotiations with Günther of Schwarzburg, the king did ultimately acknowledge – at least in words – that it was his duty to confer with his sister prior to a final decision.

### **The consort's double dynastic affiliation and her dynastic capital**

Although Anna left her natal dynasty at the age of sixteen, she remained a full-fledged member of her natal dynasty for decades after she had married. The analyses in this chapter have demonstrated some of the ways in which Anna employed her double dynastic affiliation to transfer resources between the two dynasties she was part of. She was able to mobilize her father and brother's support for August and, after the death of Christian III,

both her mother and her brothers relied on her extensive assistance. The letters that were exchanged in conjunction with Anna's mediations of favors also show that both she and her closest natal kin considered it her right and her duty to participate actively in the matters pertaining to the reputation and status of individual relatives as well as dynasty as an entity.

The "positive convergence of exchanges" that characterized the marriage alliance established between Saxony and Denmark by Anna and August's marriage in 1548 was by no means simply the result of dynastic structures. Rather, the marriage strategy that aimed to bring the two families closer was *lived* and *performed* by the involved individuals. As one of the key-participants, Anna actively mediated favors and support between her two "houses". During the first years of her marriage, it was above all her "new" dynasty that benefited from the alliance and her contributions, but once August and Anna's positions as elector and electress were firmly established by the mid-1550s the balance was reversed. Anna's "new" position in Saxony granted her resources that could be employed to the benefit of her relatives in Denmark.

The resources that were mediated by the electress were financial support and contacts. The latter included both the introduction of her brothers into the Empire and Anna's active search for a suitable spouse for Hans and Frederik. In 1553 Christian III also provided legal advice to August and, fifteen years later, August's contact to the emperor enabled Frederik to obtain advantages in the peace negotiations with Sweden. Although it would require further analysis to assess Anna's contribution to these exchanges, these favors can – regardless of her active involvement or not – be viewed as additional benefits of the marriage strategy she was performing (that is, of her own marriage) by keeping the contacts between her two dynasties active. As she wrote to the Danish councilors she considered herself to have a particular responsibility for maintaining the "friendship" between the two families.

When Anna mobilized her father's support for August and her husband's support for her natal dynasty, she employed what one may refer to as her "dynastic capital". The notion of dynastic capital relies (albeit only implicitly in the available scholarship) on the concept of social capital.<sup>728</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman, who both have

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<sup>728</sup> Although Campbell Orr (2004) makes frequent use of the term "dynastic capital", neither she nor her sources make explicit references to the comprehensive theoretical discussions of social capital. For concise discussions of the concept and its development of the concept see for example Bourdieu (1983); Coleman

contributed significantly to the conceptual and analytical developments of this form of capital, insist that a differentiation of capital is necessary to move beyond a narrow, materialist understanding of the political economy and to include the social embeddedness of an individual in order to understand its actions and abilities to act.<sup>729</sup> Both points are crucial for an understanding of the position of the female consort.

In one of his most concise discussions of social capital, Bourdieu employs the dynamics within a noble family to clarify the nature of social capital. He defines it as derived from a belonging to a group, and particularly to a group within which the relationships are lasting, mutually acknowledged, and/or more or less institutionalized. Within this group the resources of individual members are in principle available to all members, and social capital thus refers to the actual and potential resources of a member, that is to all the resources that can be mobilized by an individual if need be. In this respect, the belonging to the group serves as a multiplier of the individual's own assets.<sup>730</sup> According to Bourdieu, the solidarity within a group results from the potential (material) gain that is represented by a "membership" to the group, but the cohesion of the group is maintained by continual processes of exchange: of gifts, favors, emotions, and/or words. These exchanges can be viewed as (re-)investments in and thus reconfirmations of the existing relationships.<sup>731</sup>

The relational nature of social capital implies that the members of a group have vested interests in the ways in which other members manage their resources. Any decline in the actual resources of one member equals a decrease of the resources that can be mobilized by other members. Moreover, if one member reaches outside the defined group, the cohesion of the group – and thus the continued availability of resources – may be endangered.<sup>732</sup> Consequently, the boundaries of the group have to be carefully guarded and, according to Bourdieu, this is particularly conspicuous when marriages are arranged. Any new member to the group has to be able to be integrated into the already existing

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(1988/2000); Lin (2001); and Halpern (2005), pp. 1-40. A critical assessment of Bourdieu's conceptions of capital is provided by Schwartz (1997), pp. 65-94.

<sup>729</sup> Bourdieu (1983); Coleman (1988/2000); Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), p. 119.

<sup>730</sup> Bourdieu (1983), pp. 190-195.

<sup>731</sup> Bourdieu (1972/1977), pp. 33-38; Bourdieu (1983), pp. 190-195. For a discussion of social capital with greater emphasis on "symbolic resources" (as knowledge and emotions), see Lin (2001), pp. 29-33.

<sup>732</sup> Bourdieu (1983), pp. 190-195.

solidarity and the associated exchanges. In order to ensure this, marriage alliances are usually concluded between families with status and wealth of comparable scale.<sup>733</sup>

Anna's mediation between her two dynasties shows how her simultaneous "membership" in the two dynasties indeed did multiply the resources, be it money, contacts/networks, or legal expertise, of the two families and its individual members. Similarly, the electress's strong opposition to Frederik's negotiations concerning a marriage to Juliana of Nassau shows that she guarded the preservation of the dynastic groups, she considered herself to belong to. Anna's concerns about Frederik's potential misalliance can be directly related to her interests in preserving her dynastic capital. If she managed to arrange Frederik's marriage, she could reinforce her active ties to the king and forge a new bond that was desirable for the greater family network. In contrast, a misalliance represented both a danger to her existing capital and a lost opportunity to enhance it by extended the network of carefully selected "equals". To Anna, performing the strategy inherent in her own marriage entailed not only the mediation of favors, but also her will/right/duty to broker future marriages with a view to preserving the group and thus the social capital it represented.

Although Christian III and Frederik II, as the heads of Anna's natal dynasty, held particularly important positions, the electress's dynastic capital cannot simply be equaled to the two men and an amicable relationship between Anna and the two. It was by way of her greater dynastic network – and particularly her close relationship to and shared interests with Elisabeth of Mecklenburg – that Anna was able to "make Frederik chose" a wife of appropriate background. Although Frederik, as the head of the dynasty, may seem to have enjoyed greater freedom than his younger brother Hans, there was more at stake when the king – *the* representative of the lineage – married. Consequently, his elevated status at once enabled him to resist direct instructions from his family members and subjected him to increased scrutiny, thereby spurring the development of Anna and Elisabeth's secret scheme.

Anna's continued belonging to the House of Oldenburg was not simply was a result of her status as a family member, but also of the steady stream of exchanges she made sure to maintain. While letters, emotions, information, and other immaterial exchanges could be

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<sup>733</sup> Bourdieu (1983), pp. 190-195. The same importance of "closure" among the group is stressed by Coleman (1988/2000), pp. 23-25. See also Bourdieu's earlier analysis of marriage strategies as a means of social reproduction, Bourdieu (1972/1976). In this earlier study, Bourdieu does not employ the term social capital, but in his examination of the dangers of misalliances, the threat to the group solidarity (and hence the members' social capital) is discussed at length.

conducted freely, the woman needed access to the resources of her new dynasty if she were to perpetuate the material exchanges that also were necessary for maintaining the “active membership” of her natal dynasty. In this respect, the dynastic capital that was represented by her natal kin depended, at least to some degree, on her successful integration into the family of her husband. A woman who did not effectively become part of her new dynasty could legitimately claim protection from her parents and siblings.<sup>734</sup> However, if she could not demonstrate her ability to mobilize the resources of her new family, it was more unlikely that the members of her natal dynasty would make their resources available to her, her husband, and the dynasty they represented. All favors had to be reciprocated and if the female consort could not ensure that this was the case, her ability to contribute actively and significantly to a positive convergence of exchange between her two dynasties was limited.

When a woman’s integration into her new dynasty, and thus her ability to shape the exchanges between this and her natal dynasty, are considered, this must be related to the age and gender structures in both of her families. In this chapter, an effort has been made to discuss various relationships across generations, between siblings, between female kin, and amongst male and female relatives. The findings indicate that Anna’s successful mediation of support between her two dynasties was facilitated in part by the generational structures of her two families. She and August were able to draw upon the support from her parents during the first years of her marriage. By way of her parents’ support, Anna contributed significantly to the maintenance of the status of her new dynasty, when it was threatened upon Moritz’s death in 1553. The standing she thereby gained within her new dynasty enabled her to provide the necessary support to the next generation of her natal dynasty. Hence, the particular timing of successions in Saxony and Denmark enabled Anna to establish a strong position in her new dynasty with the assistance of her parents. This reinforced her position within her new dynasty and, as a result, she was able to mobilize significant support for her widowed mother and siblings after her father’s death.

Similarly, the family structure and intra-familial relationships of the House of Wettin is likely to have contributed positively to Anna’s successful integration into her new dynasty. Shortly after Anna’s arrival in Saxony, the conflict between Moritz and August represented a chance for her to demonstrate the value of the support she was able to

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<sup>734</sup> See Arndt (1990) and Wilson (2004) for examples of consorts who successfully mobilized their natal dynasties (and neighbors) in the defense of their positions and rights. A similar example can be found in the biography of August’s sister Sidonia who married Erich of Braunschweig-Calenberg, see von Weber (1858) and Merkel (1899). Sidonia’s difficulties in her “new” dynasty are frequently reflected in Anna’s correspondence, but unfortunately space does not allow it to be examined here.

provide by way of her father. The importance of her dynastic network was underlined during the uncertain period that followed Moritz's death in 1553. The absence of other close relatives among the Wettins made the support from August's marital kin all the more significant and increased the elector's dependence on his father-in-law and on Anna's mediation.

The idea of a relative dynastic isolation and its effect on the interdependence between kin must also be kept in mind in the context of Anna's continued participation in the affairs of her natal dynasty. The conflict between Dorothea and Frederik meant that they both relied more on Anna than they may have done in other circumstances. To Anna, the same conflict implied that she had to negotiate her loyalties between two factions of her natal kin relatives but, because she managed to maintain good relations to both of them, it amplified her influence. As the tension between Frederik and Dorothea increased, Anna and August were the closest relatives of the king and their involvement in his government and life was considerable during the 1560s. When Anna communicated with Frederik and his councilors concerning both the king's debts and his marriage, she referred to Denmark as "our fatherland" and to the king as "our beloved brother",<sup>735</sup> thereby underlining her belonging to the kingdom and, implicitly, justifying her interventions.

Although the analysis reveals several specific circumstances that contributed to Anna's success as mediator between her two dynasties, this does not mean that the Saxon electress was an exception in this respect. Almost fifty years ago, the Saxon historian Elisabeth Werl examined in great detail how Elisabeth of Saxony (1502-1557, born of Hessen-Kassel, married to Johann of Saxony (1498-1537)) actively engaged in the discussions of, often conflicting, interests of her brother Philipp of Hessen and her new dynasty. The duchess was often consulted for advice and/or insisted on expressing her views concerning marriages, military alliances, and confessional questions that divided her two dynasties.<sup>736</sup> Similarly, Dorothea of Denmark continued to take active responsibility for her dynasty by birth. She intervened – though without the desired result – when her brother failed to pay the dowries for her sister and niece<sup>737</sup> and, during the 1560s, she

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<sup>735</sup> See for example Anna to Johann Friis and Holger Rosenkrantz, Dresden 19 Dec. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 70 b – 71 a; and Anna to Caspar Paselick, Torgau 24 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 53 a – b.

<sup>736</sup> Werl (1957).

<sup>737</sup> Regarding Dorothea's sister Ursula (married to Mecklenburg), see the letters from Anna to Ursula of Mecklenburg, Dresden 14 Dec. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 23 a – b; and Dresden 1 Feb. 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 53 b – 54 a, in which she refers to assistance from the Danish queen. Regarding Dorothea's niece Sidonia Katharina (married to Wenzel of Schlesien-Teschen), see Anna to Dorothea, Dresden 27 Nov. 1567,



asked Anna and August to protect and further the opportunities of her brother's children, because he, according to the dowager queen, was unable to defend the interests of "her" dynasty.<sup>738</sup> Anna's daughter Elisabeth, who married to the Palatinate, also attempted to mediate between her two dynasties. However, as it will be demonstrated in chapter 9, the confessional difference between Elisabeth and her husband led to increasing antagonism between the two spouses and their dynasties and this hindered the productive flow of favors. However, even after this marriage was dominated by tensions between Elisabeth's two dynasties, her husband and father-in-law continued their attempts to employ her as mediator. Hence, when Johann Casimir was fighting in support of the French Huguenots, he wanted August to serve as mediator in the peace talks of 1576 and attempted to ensure this by way of his wife's appeal to her parents. Elisabeth informed her mother that Johann Casimir wanted her to prove her love and loyalty towards him by convincing August to take on the role as peace negotiator. Hence, rather than delivering the plea, Elisabeth informed her parents of the way in which their son-in-law tried to make use of her and her relatives.<sup>739</sup> Even though Elisabeth complained that her parents-in-law did not treat her as "one of them",<sup>740</sup> they nevertheless attempted to employ her as mediator – suggesting that the consort's role as facilitator of inter-dynastic exchanges was considered an integral aspect of her position and a fundamental component of lived marriage strategies.

In the introduction the characterization of the female consort as a stranger within her new dynasty was mentioned. The examples that have been discussed in this analysis reveals that while a consort could remain a stranger in her new family, it was in the best interests of both her and her two dynasties that she did become an active member of her new family. If she managed to develop a genuine double dynastic affiliation, she could provide crucial support for both of her dynasties. In addition, the consort's active mediation of favors empowered her and paved the way for her extensive participation in the decision-making processes within both families.

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DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 287 a – 288 b. See Harris (2004), pp. 27-28 for similar examples among the English nobility.

<sup>738</sup> See the smaller note from Dorothea of Denmark to Anna that was enclosed with Dorothea's letter dated Flensburg 5 July 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, p. 279 a; and Dorothea of Denmark to August of Saxony, Ahrensbock "Donderstag nach Judica" [20 March] 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 373 a – 374 b.

<sup>739</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 24 March 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 50 a – b.

<sup>740</sup> See for example Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 12 Nov. 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, fol. 226 a, Heidelberg 13 July 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, fol. 17 a – b; and Kaiserslautern 27 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, fol. 21 a – b.



## Chapter 5

### The Duty to Deliver an Heir

While historians have recognized that hereditary rights structured the early modern political systems, they rarely pay more than passing attention to *the* fundamental precondition for the perpetuation of this system: the biological reproduction within the ruling dynasties. The dependence between the ruling dynasties and their territories, meant that the presence or absence of an heir could shape the future of both the dynasty and the territory. This correlation did not go unrecognized in early modern societies: as Erasmus Lætus wrote in his account of the birth and baptism of Prince Christian (IV) of Denmark (1577), the presence of an heir diminished the danger of a civil war,<sup>741</sup> thereby implying that the absence of an heir represented a risk of a succession war.

The extensive attention that is paid to the consort's role as mother in the funeral sermons shows that childbearing and the rearing of children were considered to be part of her office. Although historians frequently assert that the single most important duty of a princely woman was to provide her husband and the dynasty they had married into with a male heir,<sup>742</sup> scholars have yet to examine how this obligation manifested itself and the consequences it had for the everyday life of the princely women. While several of the more recent studies of early modern "elite" women consider the importance of childbearing,<sup>743</sup> they tend to focus on the broader nobility rather than the ruling dynasties and, presumably because of the absence of sources, they rarely examine the women's own experiences. Yet, Judith Aikin stresses in her careful analysis of the devotional handbook for pregnant women that was written by Aemilie Juliane of Schwarzburg-Rudolfstadt in the late seventeenth century, the "nature of the orthodox theological approach to pregnancy and childbirth" was profoundly gendered.<sup>744</sup>

Viewed from the "outside", the birth of a child, and especially of an heir, changed the status of the female consort: once the heir was born, the consort was not "only" the wife of a prince, but also the mother of the future ruler. As Barbara Harris argues in her study of English aristocratic women, the birth of an heir facilitated the mother's further

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<sup>741</sup> Lætus (1577/1992). See also Zanger (2002) for an analysis of the allegorical presentations of "dynastic reproduction" in Louis XIII and Anne of Austria's entry in Lyon in 1622.

<sup>742</sup> See for example Clarissa Campell-Orr's introduction to *Queenship in Europe* (2004), pp. 5-7; and the contribution to the same volume by Ingrao and Thomas (2002), particularly pp. 113-117.

<sup>743</sup> Bastl (2000), pp. 425-523; Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 231-251; Harris (2002), pp. 99-126.

<sup>744</sup> Aikin (2003), p. 41.

integration into the dynasty of her husband and can be assumed to have empowered her.<sup>745</sup> In contrast to Harris' observations on the English nobility, Ute Daniel has suggested that until an heir was born, princely women enjoyed unrestricted access to their husbands and thereby could exercise considerable power. However, once the heir was born, the consort risked being removed from her husband and could lose the power that was derived from her proximity to the ruler.<sup>746</sup> Although Harris and Daniel reach opposite conclusions regarding the impact of the birth of an heir on the status of the elite women, their contributions reveal that they both consider the birth of a son to be a crucial factor in the assessment of a consort's success and failure.

The goal of this chapter is to examine how the women responded to the expectations they faced with regard to childbearing. In the first section, the ways in which the patrilineal societies' inherent preference for sons rather than daughters became manifest will be examined in order to assess the women's awareness of the dependency that existed between their ability to deliver an heir and the perpetuation of the dynasty and its territorial possessions. The second part of the chapter analyzes the impact this preference had on the lives of the princely women. The women's accounts of their pregnancies, deliveries, and miscarriages are examined with a view to defining (i) the responsibility they considered themselves to have for their reproductive success or failure and thereby for the dynasty and the territory; (ii) the ways in which the expectations politicized the consorts, their bodies, and their reproductive ability; and (iii) the degree to which recurring pregnancies and lying-ins structured the consorts' lives.

### **A child or an heir**

According to Luther, the end and chief duty of marriage was to produce offspring. God had instructed humans to be "fruitful and multiply". However, Luther acknowledged that other duties accompanied the imperative to have children. In his *Sermon on the estate of marriage* (1519) he argued that,

[I]t is not enough that a child is born ... for heathens also bring forth children. A person has to raise children to the service, praise, and

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<sup>745</sup> Harris (2002), pp. 99-126, particularly pp. 99-100 and 111-117. This mechanism of empowerment and the contemporaries' recognition of it, is also clear in Pauline Puppel's excellent analysis of the landgravines of Hessen-Kassel who governed on behalf of their minor sons (Puppel (2004)), particularly her discussion of the marriage contracts among ruling dynasties and the rights of a biological mother to rule on behalf of minor sons, pp. 42-88). See also Heide Wunder's introduction to *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung* (Wunder (2002a)).

<sup>746</sup> Daniel (1997), pp. 208-217.

honor of God and seek nothing else out of it ... People look for heirs or pleasure in their children – the service of God remains only when it can.<sup>747</sup>

When Luther scolded his contemporaries for their desire for an heir, he revealed the tension that existed between the religious prescriptions concerning childbearing and rearing and the ideology of dynasticism. According to the theologians, children were God's blessing and should be brought up to honor him. They should *not* be considered heirs whose main-purpose was to bring pleasure to their parents or, implicitly, perpetuate the lineage and its power. However, the simple fact that Luther addressed the conflict between the two sets of ideas, indicate that the desire for an heir pervaded the early modern society and this is confirmed by the written exchanges concerning pregnancies and childbirth within the ruling dynasties.

Until a princely woman had given birth to at least one son, the news of her pregnancies and deliveries elicited reactions that highlighted the expectations of her. Already when a pregnancy was announced it was common practice that the wish for a son was made explicit. When Anna received news of her sister's first pregnancy, she congratulated her and expressed the wish that "Your Beloved will be bestowed a fine young heir."<sup>748</sup> A few weeks later, Anna's niece informed her aunt of her first pregnancy and she too received the electress's good wishes expressed in a variation of the same formulae.<sup>749</sup> During the same year Anna congratulated Sabina of Brandenburg on her recently announced pregnancy and wrote, "[We] wish that the faithful dear God will [grant] Your Beloved a safe delivery [and] that You will be delighted with a fine young son".<sup>750</sup> In spite of at least ten previous pregnancies, Sabina had no living sons and, although her husband already had an heir from his first marriage, this did not deter from Anna's wish that Sabina too should be granted this privilege.

If the pregnancy resulted in the birth of a daughter or, even worse, a stillborn son, the disappointment was obvious. When the first pregnancy of Anna's eldest daughter Elisabeth resulted in the birth of a stillborn son, her (step-)mother-in-law wrote to Anna,

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<sup>747</sup> From Luther's "A Sermon on the estate of marriage" (1519), quoted from *Luther on Women*, ed. by Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003), p. 91.

<sup>748</sup> "... EL mit ein schonen Jung Erben mogen begabt ... werden ...", Anna to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, without date [7-11 Nov. 1568], DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 132 a.

<sup>749</sup> Anna to her niece Anna of Orange, Dresden 1 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 137 a – b.

<sup>750</sup> "... Wuntschen ... EL zu rechter Zeit von dem getrewen lieben Goth ... glugliche ... entpindung das sie mit einem schonen Jungen Sohne erfrewet werden möge ...", Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 1 April 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 31 a – b.

With sadness and compassion, we cannot keep from Your Grace, that the Almighty God graciously has released Your Beloved's daughter ... of her female burden. However, [God] gave Her Beloved and us a dead fruit of the womb, [and] *it even had been a young Lord* [my emphasis].<sup>751</sup>

She continued the letter with an account of how profoundly this had saddened her own husband "as the grandfather" (*Altvatter*) and, because she knew that it also would pain Anna and August, she expressed compassion.<sup>752</sup> The letter from Amalia of the Palatinate to Anna shows that the grief and disappointment was particularly great because the child had been a boy. It also reveals that all family members had emotions at stake with regard to the next generation of the dynasty and that, as a result, the pregnant woman presumably was subject to considerable expectations from the extended family.

When Anna attempted to console her daughter after this tragic experience, she expressed her compassion but emphasized her gratefulness that God had saved Elisabeth. She instructed her daughter to commend the matter to God, who doubtlessly would bless her again (that is, make sure that she again would become pregnant) and bestow joy upon her in other ways.<sup>753</sup> A similar consolation was often suggested to the parents of a newborn daughter.

In January 1567 Sabina of Hessen-Kassel gave birth to her and her husband's first child. Having received news of the birth, Anna congratulated the father (Wilhelm IV) and expressed the conventional wish that the daughter would live long and grow up to be an honorable Christian princess who would bring joy and pride to her parents. Yet, the electress also expressed the hope that God would help Sabina to her former strength in order for her to please Wilhelm with a young son and heir during the coming year.<sup>754</sup> Two years later, the landgrave again had his hopes high, but in July 1569 Sabina gave birth to twin daughters. Anna again congratulated the father and expressed the wish that, "may the merciful God strengthen Your Beloved's kind and beloved wife so that she can please

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<sup>751</sup> "... [wir] mögen EL ... nit ohne sondere bekummernus vnd mitleiden nit verhalten, das den Allmechtige Gott EL dochter ... Ihrer weiblichen Burde ... gnediglichen entbunden, Aber Ihre Liebden ... vnnd vns mit einer Todten Leibsfrucht, so danoch ein Herrlein gewesen begabet ...", Amalia, Electress Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 28 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 237 a – b.

<sup>752</sup> Amalia, Electress Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 28 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 237 a – b.

<sup>753</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Annaburg 21 Oct. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 116 a – b.

<sup>754</sup> Anna to Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel, Salza 30 Jan. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 183 a.

Your Beloved with a fine young lord during the coming year".<sup>755</sup> The very same words were sent to Sabina.<sup>756</sup>

When Anna congratulated the parents of newborn daughters, her attempt to console them for the child's sex was at least as prominent in the text as her good wishes for the daughter. As sincere as this attempt to comfort the parents may have been intended (and received), the explicit anticipation of future pregnancies and hopes for an heir confronted the consort with the growing expectations of those that surrounded her. The consolation also emphasized the inferior status ascribed to the daughter(s). This however, appears to have been an unintended result and after Anna had expressed her combined congratulations and consolations to Wilhelm of Hessen, she admonished him to treasure the children God bestowed upon him. This reprimand was prompted by the landgrave's unequivocal expression of disappointment: prior to the birth of the twins he had asked August to be a godparent for the unborn, but much desired, "son". However, when the unborn child proved to be two daughters and *not* the hoped-for son, the invitation to the godparents was withdrawn. Anna scolded him for the disdain he thereby expressed for his daughters and the female sex,

[W]e get the impression that [because] our Lord did not grant it exactly according to Your Beloved's wish, the poor female sex is being disrespected by Your Beloved, as if they were not worthy that one invites foreign godparents.<sup>757</sup>

In this reprimand, Anna implicitly employed the religious teachings (that all children were given by God and should be brought up to God's honor) to challenge Wilhelm's disappointment that resulted from the rationality inherent in the dynastic state. Yet, it is remarkable that the electress used this argument to make the leap from the newborn daughters to the entire female sex and thereby construed her objections as a reaction to an offence of her as a woman. And this was not the only time Anna confronted the landgrave with his disregard for his daughters.

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<sup>755</sup> "... wolle ... der ... Barmhertzig Goth EL freuntliche geliebte Gemahelin ... gnediglich stercken ... das sie EL aufs kunftige Jar mit einem schonen Jungen herren erfrewen moge ...", Anna to Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 6 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 44 b – 45 a.

<sup>756</sup> Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 6 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 45 a – b.

<sup>757</sup> "... wir vermercken aber fast soviell das [weil] es vnser herr Goth auch nicht allerding nach EL. gefallen gemacht [so] muß das arme weibliche geschlecht vonn EL auch noch verachtet werden. als wenn sie nicht würdig das man främbde gevattern irenthalben einlahden ... solte ...", Anna to Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 6 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 44 b – 45 a.

In 1571 Sabina again gave birth to a daughter and, as previously, Anna wished her an expedient recovery so that she soon could please her husband with a son.<sup>758</sup> In a simultaneous letter to Wilhelm, she did try to console him with the hope of future pregnancies, but also urged that, in spite of the disregard he expressed for this poor daughter, he should keep his faith in God and consider her a gift from the Lord.<sup>759</sup>

During the spring of 1572 Sabina informed Anna that she again was pregnant. Anna instantly replied and articulated the wish that the “fruit of [Sabina’s] womb” proved to be of “male sex” (*manlichs geschlechts*).<sup>760</sup> As Anna was impatiently awaiting the news of Sabina’s delivery,<sup>761</sup> the joyful news arrived that Wilhelm and Sabina finally had a son, and the electress immediately congratulated the landgravine, “we have been profoundly and heartily rejoiced by the letter from Your Beloved’s lord and husband from which we understand the joyful news that the merciful God graciously has released Your Beloved and bestowed [upon You] a fine young son”.<sup>762</sup> To both Sabina and Wilhelm Anna expressed the hope that the newborn son would grow into a “Christian, upright, and estimable governing prince”,<sup>763</sup> thereby linking the birth of the son directly to the future of Hessen and the Empire.

Whereas Anna’s admonishments to Wilhelm of Hessen appear to have been quite unusual, the formula with which she wished a parturient expedient recovery in order to soon bear an heir recur in numerous exchanges: in 1571, Anna used it when she congratulated Duke Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel on the birth of a daughter,<sup>764</sup> and when Dorothea of Schönburg had a granddaughter in 1572, Anna consoled her with the same phrase.<sup>765</sup> The electress also used variations of the same formulae in her exchanges concerning the births of her nieces in Denmark.<sup>766</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 17 June 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 248 a.

<sup>759</sup> Anna to Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 17 June 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 247 a – b.

<sup>760</sup> Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 1 March 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 23 b – 24 a.

<sup>761</sup> Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 28 May 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 68 a – b.

<sup>762</sup> “... sehr vnd hertzlich haben wir vns vber E.L. geliebten herren vnd Gemahels schreiben erfrewet, doraus wir die froliche botschafft verstanden das d Barmhertzig Goth E.L. ... mit gnaden entbunden vnd einen wohlgestalten Jungen Sohnn beschehert hat ...”, Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Dippoldiswald 31 May 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 72 a – b.

<sup>763</sup> “... ein Christlicher frommer vnd loblicher Regirender Furst ...”, Anna to Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel, Dippoldiswald 31 May 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 71 b – 72 a, and Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, same date, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 72 a – b.

<sup>764</sup> Anna to Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Stolpen 6 July 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 256 a.

<sup>765</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Schönburg, Dresden 31 June 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 42 a – 42 b.

<sup>766</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, [without place] 15 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 98 b – 99 b; see also Anna’s inquiry to Frederik II of Denmark, Annaburg 14 Dec. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 249 b – 250 a; Anna to Sophie of Denmark, same date, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 250 a – b; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg,



However, the daughters who were born once an heir was present, were embraced without reservations. In 1577, Sophie of Denmark “finally” delivered a son and, in 1578, a second son was born. Two more daughters followed in 1580 and 1581 and, in 1583, a third son was born. However, when Augusta and Hedwig were born in 1580 and 1581 respectively, they were welcomed without consolations for their sex.<sup>767</sup> Likewise, two years after Sabina of Hessen had given birth to a son, her fifth daughter was born, and she too was welcomed without reservations and reiterated hopes for a future heir.<sup>768</sup>

In spite of this pattern that indicates that one heir sufficed, August of Saxony – and perhaps Anna as well – did not consider one son an adequate guarantee for the secure future of the Albertine Wettins and Saxony. When Anna thanked Sabina of Brandenburg for congratulating her upon the birth of a daughter in 1567, the electress added that,

[O]ur beloved lord and husband [had] presumably taken greater pleasure [in this event], if the Almighty God had bestowed upon us a young lord and heir to the territory. However, because the dear God preferred it differently, we have to keep in mind that the female sex has as great a part in God’s kingdom as the male [sex].<sup>769</sup>

The disappointment Anna ascribes to August appears somewhat unusual because she and August at this time had a seven-year-old son, Christian. However, during the previous seventeen years they had also lost five sons and three daughters; their four-year-old daughter Maria had died two years before this letter was written and, three months before her death, they had lost the eleven-year-old heir Alexander. Clearly, these experiences had proved just how fragile the line of succession could be.

It is also noteworthy that Anna presents the disappointment as August’s, while she finds solace in the theological teachings on the spiritual equality of men and women. As in her letters to Wilhelm of Hessen, the Christian teachings provided consolation when a woman had failed to fulfill the expectations inherent in the dynastic rationality. However, by the very same reference, Anna implicitly reveals that she shared the preference for sons

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same date, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 251 a – b; and Anna to Sophie of Denmark, Annaburg 23 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 7 a – b.

<sup>767</sup> See the letters in which Anna congratulates the parents: Anna to Sophie of Denmark, Schwerin 14 April 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 29 b – 30; Anna to Frederik II, Augustusburg 16 Aug. 1581; and Anna to Sophie of Kassel, Augustusburg 29 Aug. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 145 b – 146 a (original page no. 53 b – 54 a).

<sup>768</sup> Anna to Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel, Torgau 6 July 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 203 b – 204 a.

<sup>769</sup> “... wiewol vermutlichlich wan der Allmechtige Gott, vnß einen jungen Herren vnnd landeß Erben beschere[,] mochte vnser ... Hertz liebster Herr vnnd Gemahl grosserer erfreuung darob empfangen haben[.] Weil es aber den lieben Gott anders gefallen[,] So müssen wir gedengken das weibliche geschlecht sei gleich so wol teilhafftig des Reich Gottes, alß das Manliche ...”, Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 7 Dec. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 290 a – 291 a.

and was in need of consolation. Nevertheless, with the reference to the single part of the Christian anthropology that placed men and women on equal footing, the mothers' of newborn daughters could console themselves, justify their affection for a female child, and encourage a disappointed father to embrace his daughter.

In chapter 2 it was argued that the recurring formulae can be viewed as ritualized language that represent the summation of fundamental values and dynamics of a society. The consistency with which the desire for a son was expressed in highly formalized phrases even upon the supposedly joyful delivery of a daughter leave no doubt that the strong preference for male children was collectively shared among the members of the ruling families. The women's consolations to each other and to the fathers of newborn daughters show that while the women shared this preference and, perhaps unwittingly, reinforced the expectations of a princely women by reiterating the hopes for a son, they also were able to employ the religious instructions in their responses to both their own and their relatives' disappointment. These observations correspond to the ways in which the birth of sons and daughters were received among the nobility at large.<sup>770</sup> However, the consorts' explicit references to their sons as future ruling princes and heirs to the territories reveal that their thoughts on childbearing were conditioned by their rank: they did not simply give birth to sons and/or heirs, but to future rulers.

Corresponding to the unequivocal preference for sons over daughters, the birth of a son, and particularly that of the first son, was celebrated with greater splendor than the birth of daughters. When Anna gave birth to a son (Alexander) in 1554, August expressed his gratitude to God by releasing numerous Saxon prisoners,<sup>771</sup> and the baptism of Anna's nephew Christian, the heir to the Danish throne, was celebrated with an elaborate court festival. In addition, his birth and the celebrations were recorded in a detailed Latin account composed by the royal historiographer Erasmus Lætus.<sup>772</sup> In contrast to this, Wilhelm of Hessen cancelled the planned celebrations for a baptism when the unborn "son" proved to be two daughters and, during her pregnancy in 1578, Anna's daughter Elisabeth informed her mother that Johann Casimir intended to celebrate the baptism of the child with great pomp *if* it was a son.<sup>773</sup> According to Rolf Strøm-Olsen it was only in the sixteenth-century that baptism became "a part of European ritual ceremony" and his

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<sup>770</sup> Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 231-241; Harris (2002) pp. 99-100

<sup>771</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 21-22.

<sup>772</sup> Lætus (1577/1992).

<sup>773</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 11 March 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 138 a – b.

analysis of the baptism of the later emperor Charles V reveals that the new ritual vocabulary created “a new political space by politicizing the birth of the male heir”.<sup>774</sup> These increasingly elaborate celebrations of an heir’s baptism doubtlessly heightened the consorts’ awareness of their duty to deliver a son.

The two formulae Anna combined when she congratulated and consoled the parents of newborn daughters contain a noteworthy difference. In the sentiments expressed for newborn daughters, God is credited with bestowing a daughter upon the parents but, when the hopes for other pregnancies and/or a son are expressed, it is the woman who – hopefully – will please her husband with an heir in the near future. The fact that God appears as the provider of all children (daughters as well as sons), while the women are construed as the ones who can please their husbands’ with a son suggests that the responsibility for childbearing was shared between the Almighty and the mothers. This overlapping responsibility should not be viewed as a challenge to God’s status as provider of children, but it does suggest that the women’s awareness of their duty to deliver an heir included the recognition of a significant responsibility and its fulfillment required deliberate efforts on her part. The dominant medical paradigm ascribed the full responsibility for “barrenness” to women<sup>775</sup> and, as it will be discussed below, a woman could be considered good or bad at bearing children and giving birth. This acknowledged responsibility for the future of the dynasty meant that if the wish/need for an heir was left unfulfilled, the individual woman took – at least part of – the blame upon herself.

In spite of the clear preference for sons that pervaded the ruling dynasties one should be careful not to equate this with a greater affection for sons than for daughters as the children were growing up. Although Anna considered it necessary to admonish Wilhelm of Hessen to embrace his daughters, there is abundant evidence of parental love for both sons and daughters. Numerous studies have challenged Philippe Ariès and Lawrence Stone’s conclusion concerning the restrained parental love of the early modern period.<sup>776</sup> The correspondence of the princely women confirms that parental love was – as several

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<sup>774</sup> Strom-Olsen (2002), pp. 35 and 38.

<sup>775</sup> According to Thomas Laqueur man was only likely to be ascribed the responsibility for a couple’s barrenness if he was unable to have intercourse (Laqueur (1990), pp. 98-103)). See also Maclean (1980), pp. 28-46; Berriot-Salvadore (1991/1997), pp. 352-355; and Caroline Walker Bynum’s concise summary of the differences and similarities between the Aristotelian and the Galenic theories of conception in the essay “The Female Body and Religious Practice” (Bynum (1992), p. 214).

<sup>776</sup> Ariès (1960/1965); Stone (1977). The most thorough revision of Ariès’s and Stone’s studies remains the excellent monograph by Pollock (1983). See also the review article Cunningham (1998).

historians have pointed out – considered “natural”.<sup>777</sup> When Anna informed Ludmilla, Countess of Thurn-Valsassina of the death of her three-year-old son Magnus, she wrote that because of the “natural motherly love” the loss caused her great pain,<sup>778</sup> and in her correspondence with Elisabeth in the Palatinate, Anna often stressed that her concerns for the daughter resulted from the way in which “a motherly heart was inclined towards her children”.<sup>779</sup>

Here the subject of parental love is only introduced to emphasize that the “natural” motherly and fatherly love for a child extended to both sons and daughters and that even after the birth of a long awaited son, the living daughters retained their place in their parents’ hearts. Three weeks after Sophie of Denmark had given birth to her first son, she wrote to Anna, “Your Beloved has without doubt been informed that the divine Almighty graciously released us [from our female burden] on the 12th of April and bestowed upon us a young and healthy son. Our two other children and daughters are also in good health and we thank and praise the Almighty for all of it”.<sup>780</sup> As in Sophie’s previous letters to Anna, the two daughters figure as prominently as the newborn son in her account, and they continue to be present in the queen’s letters after the birth of her second and third sons.<sup>781</sup>

Fathers also referred to their children with affection. As suggested in recent studies of the late medieval and early modern nobility, it may even be that fathers developed closer relationships to their daughters than to their sons.<sup>782</sup> When Johann Casimir of the Palatinate expressed his wish for an heir in a letter to his mother-in-law, he wrote, “hopefully, the Almighty will confer his grace and bestow upon me a young son to my Maria”.<sup>783</sup> Neither the troubled relation to his wife, nor the continued absence of a son detracted from his affection for “his Maria”.

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<sup>777</sup> Rogge (2000); Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 244-251; Harris (2002), pp. 107-111.

<sup>778</sup> Anna to Ludmilla of Thurn-Valsassina, Dresden “tage Stephani der Hailigen Marteres” [26 Dec.] 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 84 a – b.

<sup>779</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Torgau 2 March 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 36 a – 37 a; Dresden 25 July 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 237 a – 238 b; Annaburg 28 Feb. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 186 b – 187 a (original page no. 10 b – 11 a).

<sup>780</sup> “... Es werde ... E.L. [...] sweiffell verständigtt sein worden das vns seine Gottliche Allmacht den 12th ... Aprilis, mit gnaden verlost, vnd einen Jungen gesunden Sön beschenct vnd verliehen. Das sindt auch vnserer beiden andere Kinder vnd Töchter ... bey gutter gesundtheitt, Vor welche alles wir seiner Almachtt lob eher vnd dangk sagen ...”, Sophie of Denmark to Anna, Frederiksberg 4 May 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8534/5, p. 39. Similar characteristics can be found in the letter to Anna from Sabina of Brandenburg, [place not legible, 24 March 1569?], DrHSA Loc. 8528/4, p. 65.

<sup>781</sup> See the letters from Sophie of Denmark to Anna, dated 1571-1585, in DrHSA Loc. 8534/5.

<sup>782</sup> Hufschmidt (2001), p. 251; Spieß (1993), pp. 479-483.

<sup>783</sup> “... vhoffentlich sein almacht wurde gnaden vleihen vnd mir diss jhar ein junge sohn zu meinen Maria beschern ...”, Johann Casimir, Count Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 29 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 112 a.

Anna's eldest brother Frederik also took an active interest in his children and repeatedly referred to them in his daily records. Yet, the Danish king referred to his two eldest much more frequently than to his daughters.<sup>784</sup> His daughters are only mentioned by name twice in the records from 1583, 1584 and 1587: when Augusta fell ill in 1584 and when Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel sent an envoy to inquire about the possibility of a marriage to Elisabeth in 1587.<sup>785</sup> However, even if the stronger presence of Frederik's sons seems conspicuous, one should be careful not to interpret this quantitative difference as an expression of a greater care and love for the sons. The sons' prominent presence in his father's notes from 1583 are mostly concerned with their education and the estates' recognition of Prince Christian as heir to the kingdom. Once the education of the two eldest sons was in progress away from their parents, they are almost absent from the records. In contrast, the king continues to refer to his wife Sophie and their two eldest daughters, and their presence in his notes increase in the late 1580s.<sup>786</sup> This suggests that the frequency with which the king referred to his sons and daughters respectively was a reflection of the ways in which the gendered upbringing shaped the contact between children and parents. Because Frederik's daughters were educated at home (and by their grandmothers), whereas the sons had their own household from the mid-1580s, the contact to the daughters inevitably became more frequent and – perhaps also – closer than to the sons.

The letters that were exchanged between Anna and her father (see chapter 4), between Elisabeth and August, and between Friedrich III of the Palatinate and his daughters show that fathers and daughters generally remained in frequent and confidential communication also after the daughters had married and left their “home” territory.<sup>787</sup>

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<sup>784</sup> Examples of Frederik's references to his children during the year 1583: “my son Christian” on 3 Jan. 1583, 21 Jan. 1583, 31 March 1583, 5 April 1583, 19 April 1583, 9 May 1583, 21 Sep. 1583, 21 Nov. 1583; “my children” on 31 Jan. 1583, 1 Feb. 1583, 24 March 1583, 26 March 1583, 31 March 1583, 9 April 1583, 19 April 1583, 25 July 1583, 24 Aug. 1583, 1 Sep. 1583, 12 Sep. 1583, 16 Sep. 1583, 18-20 Sep. 1583, 29 Sep. 1583 1 Nov. 1583, 11 Nov. 1583, 1 Dec. 1583, 25 Dec. 1583; “both my sons”/“my two sons” on 23 Feb. and 11 March 1583; “my two daughters” 21 May 1583; “my son [Hans]” 26 July 1583; “my son Ulrich” 7 Nov. 1583, 11-12 Nov. 1583, 14 Nov. 1583, see “Kong Frederik II's Kalenderoptegnelser for Aarene 1583, 1584 og 1587” (1872-1873), pp. 4-18.

<sup>785</sup> Regarding Augusta's illness, see Frederik's note dated 24 June 1584, and regarding a marriage proposal for Elisabeth, his note dated 4 Oct. 1587 in “Kong Frederik II's Kalenderoptegnelser for Aarene 1583, 1584 og 1587” (1872-1873), pp. 25 and 39.

<sup>786</sup> In 1587 Frederik's references to his “two eldest daughters” exceed the references to his other children, see “Kong Frederik II's Kalenderoptegnelser for Aarene 1583, 1584 og 1587” (1872-1873), pp. 32-40.

<sup>787</sup> Numerous of Anna's letters to her father Christian III of Denmark are preserved in TKUA, pk. 40-10. Most of the letters Elisabeth sent to August are bound in DrHSA, Loc. 8514/4. A few letters from Elisabeth to August can be found among the letters she sent to Anna in DrHSA Loc. 8532/4 and DrHSA 8535/2. See also

Finally, the mother's expressions of grief upon the death of a child suggest that the emotional ties between parents and children were conditioned less by sex than by the age of the deceased child. When Anna of Hohenlohe lost one of her daughters in 1560, the electress expressed compassion and articulated her understanding of the fact that this loss was particularly difficult, "because the young lady already was fairly grown up".<sup>788</sup> Five years later, the eldest son (Alexander) of Anna and August died, and again Anna emphasized his age – but not his sex and his status as heir – as a factor that added to her grief when she informed her brother of her loss.<sup>789</sup> And, when Anna notified her sister-in-law Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach about Alexander's death, she explained that her grief upon the untimely death of this "almost grown-up son" caused her great pain.<sup>790</sup>

The pronounced preference for sons (at least until one or more were born) constituted a frame within which all pregnancies and births were considered and written about by members of the ruling dynasties. Princes as well as consorts established a clear connections between the future of the dynasty and territory in relation to pregnancies and deliveries: in the terminology of Ernst Kantorowicz, both men and women knew that the continuance of the *body politic* was dependent upon the consort's body.<sup>791</sup> This however, does not seem to have influenced the emotional ties between children and parents as the children were growing up.

### **Embodying the future: Pregnancies and childbirths**

Several scholars have pointed out that the natural body of a consort (as that of other elite women) was politicized by the centrality of hereditary rights and the resulting importance of biological reproduction. In her analysis of the Tudor court, Linda Gregerson maintained that, "none of [Anne of Boleyn's] contemporaries assumed that Anne's body was *hers* to

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the letters exchanged between Friedrich III, Elector Palatine and his daughters Elisabeth and Dorothea Susanna in Ernestine Saxony, in *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. I-II (1868-1872).

<sup>788</sup> "... weil das fräulein albereit zimlich erwachsen [war], Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Dresden 1 April 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 124 b – 125 a. It remains unclear how old the daughter was: according to *Europäische Stammtafeln* vol. 17, table no. 6, Anna of Hohenlohe had four daughters, born 1541, 1548, 1551 and 1555. Dorothea (born 1551) supposedly died in August 1559 and as this is the only registered death of a daughter around 1560.

<sup>789</sup> "... im seiner blüenden Jugend ...", Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Torgau 22 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 50 a – 51 b.

<sup>790</sup> Anna to Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Torgau 26 Nov. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 62 a – b.

<sup>791</sup> Kantorowicz (1957/1997). See also Rachel Weil's concise discussion of Kantorowicz's terminology in relation to the "body of the queen", Weil (2002) and Schulte (2002).

use”.<sup>792</sup> However, in spite of the recurring discussions of the consorts’ politicized body, we know little about the women’s own thoughts about their bodies and how they responded emotionally to the pressure she faced with regard to childbearing.

### *Introducing obligations*

A remarkable manuscript titled *Edlich guet ertzeney den Frauen (Some good Remedies for Women)* indicates that Anna was introduced to gender-specific knowledge concerning the female body, pregnancies, and childbirth as well as to various remedies associated with her body’s reproductive capacities around the time of her wedding. The manuscript consists of twenty-eight numbered folio sheets (fifty-six pages of text) with neatly penned recipes and health advice intended to help women limit or stimulate menstruation, help them get pregnant and/or relieve various complications during pregnancy, childbirth, and the subsequent period of recovery. When the writing is compared to the few autograph letters preserved from Anna, this hand shows close resemblance to her “young” hand. The very first text of the manuscript is “1548”, the year Anna married, and this reveals that she compiled the collection shortly before or after her wedding.<sup>793</sup>

As the wedding itself, the introduction to this gendered knowledge was an integral part of a women’s transition from childhood to adulthood. Most princely women married between the ages of fifteen and twenty<sup>794</sup> and in many cases the weddings can be assumed to have taken place at the earliest possible time (that is, shortly after the menarche of the bride).<sup>795</sup> Hence, to numerous princely women the impending wedding not only represented a fundamental social change of their lives, it was prompted by bodily changes and accompanied by the introduction to the gendered knowledge concerning the reproductive capacity of the female body. All in all, these far-ranging changes would have

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<sup>792</sup> Gregerson (2002), p. 134. Discussing the mechanisms of power in the early modern society, Foucault highlighted the importance of blood and biology for the elites’ maintenance of their status and argued that it fashioned a particular understanding of both sexuality and the body, see Foucault (1976/1990), pp. 103-131 and pp. 135-159.

<sup>793</sup> SLUB Msc. nr. C 294. “1548. Edlich guet ertzeney den Frauen”, 28 Bl. Mbd. mit Ornamenten. Auf dem Einbanddeckel: A[nna] K[urfürstin] Z[u] S[achsen] 1571. Elect. 417. The binding is marked “AKZS 1571” but the content reveals that manuscript was bound several years after it was written.

<sup>794</sup> A survey of the thirty-two consorts in Saxony, Brandenburg, Denmark, and Sweden between 1520 and 1670, reveal that their average age at marriage was 18.5. The vast majority of princely women were married between the age of fifteen and twenty and their husbands were on average thirteen years older. The information is collected from a broad range of German, Danish, and Swedish biographical reference works and *Europäische Stammtafeln*.

<sup>795</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 24-27.

increased significantly the women's awareness of her body and the immense importance attributed to her reproductive capacity.

When princely women married relatively shortly after her sexual maturity, it often took a couple of years before the first child arrived. Anna married at the age of sixteen and her first child was born approximately two years later. Her daughter Elisabeth was eighteen when she married and it took two and a half years before her first child was born.<sup>796</sup> Although there could be a delay in the arrival of the first child, numerous children usually followed. The most immediate expression of the political conditioning of the consorts' bodies can be found in the frequently recurring pregnancies and childbirths of most princely women. Between 1550 and 1575 Anna of Saxony gave birth to fifteen children, though only four of them survived to adulthood.<sup>797</sup> Compared to her contemporaries, the electress both bore and lost more children than most others but, nevertheless, frequent pregnancies were the norm throughout the ruling dynasties: among Anna's fifteen closest female relatives who reached adulthood,<sup>798</sup> only three did not have children and they all married relatively late.<sup>799</sup> The other twelve had anywhere between one and fifteen children, but the vast majority of them had between five and nine children.<sup>800</sup> Although the information that is readily available in the genealogical overviews only occasionally includes stillborn children and never contains information about the women's miscarriages, they suffice to show that pregnancies and childbirths were familiar events to all members

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<sup>796</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), p. 26 refers to this as "youthful sterility".

<sup>797</sup> The children were: (1) Johann Heinrich (2/5 (?) May 1550-12 Nov. 1550); (2) Eleonore (11 Oct. 1551-24 Apr. 1553); (3) Elisabeth (18 Oct. 1552-2 Apr. 1590); (4) Alexander (21 Feb. 1554-8 Oct. 1565); (5) Magnus (24 Sep. 1555-Nov./Dec. 1555); (6) Joachim (3 May 1557-21 Nov. 1557); (7) Hector (7 Oct. 1558-Nov./Dec. 1558); (8) Christian (29 Jan. 1560-25 Sep. 1591); (9) Maria (8 Mar. 1562-6 Jan. 1566); (10) Dorothea (4 Oct. 1563-13 Feb. 1587); (11) Amalia (28 Jan. 1565-2 Jul. 1565); (12) Anna (16 Nov. 1567-27 Jan. 1613); (13) August (23 Oct. 1569-12 Feb. 1570); (14) Adolph (8 July 1571-12 March 1572); and (15) Friedrich (24 Jun. 1575-24 Jan. 1576).

<sup>798</sup> The relatives included: her mother, her sister, her mother's sisters, her father's sisters as well as her sisters-in-law (the sisters of August and the wives of her brothers).

<sup>799</sup> The three childless relatives were (1) her mother's sister Ursula, born of Saxony-Lauenburg; (2) her father's half-sister Dorothea, born of Denmark; and (3) her sister-in-law Sidonia, born of Saxony. In 1551, at the age of thirty, Ursula became the third wife of the approximately forty years older Heinrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. By the time of their marriage, he already had two sons and four daughters, and he died only nine months after their wedding (see *ADB*, vol. 11, pp. 542-543). Dorothea married the much younger Christoph of Mecklenburg-Gadebusch in 1573, when she was forty-five (see *ADB*, vol. 4, pp. 240-241). In both of these biographies, the women's age help explain why they remained childless. Sidonia's case is slightly different: she was twenty-seven when she married Erich of Braunschweig-Calenberg (who was ten years younger) in 1545 and, although twenty-seven also was a relatively advanced age for a newly married princess, it does not suffice as explanation for her childlessness. Her efforts to have children will be discussed below.

<sup>800</sup> Figures developed on the basis of the information provided in *Europäische Stammtafeln*.



of the ruling dynasties. Even if a woman remained childless, she – as well as her male relatives – would take a keen interest in her relatives' pregnancies and deliveries.

*Personal experiences of childbearing and unfulfilled duties*

Because childbirth within the ruling dynasties was a political and collective event, it is often argued that the bodies of princely women were “semi-public”. This however, is contradicted by the fact that the princely women rarely wrote about the somatic experiences that inevitably were part of childbearing. In contrast to the desire for an heir that was uttered so directly, it is very unusual to find sources in which the princely women write about their physical condition during pregnancies and childbirth. The correspondence between Anna and her eldest daughter Elisabeth constitute a rare exception: in the approximately 190 preserved letters from Elisabeth to her mother and in Anna's replies, Elisabeth's bodily experiences of childbearing, including the development of pregnancies, miscarriages, and births of both living and stillborn children are described in detail and Anna replied with advice and detailed instructions concerning Elisabeth's body. The exchanges between mother and daughter can be supplemented with letters that were sent to Anna by the trusted and experienced women the electress sent to assist her daughter during her advanced pregnancies, deliveries and lying-ins.

The following analysis will focus on this part of Anna's correspondence in order to examine how a princely woman responded to the expectations she faced with regard to childbearing and the ways in which these expectations conditioned her relationship to her body. Although an effort has been made to contextualize Elisabeth's experiences and Anna's responses with examples from the electress's correspondence with other women, the unique character of this particular material often prohibits broader comparisons.

Several factors contributed to the making of this exceptional material. First of all, Elisabeth's “reproductive biography” constitutes an unusually tragic example of its kind. Her pregnancies were characterized by severe difficulties that forced her to consult with others. Secondly, her marital difficulties resulted in her partial social isolation in the Palatinate and this reinforced her reliance on her consanguine relatives, particularly Anna (see chapter 9). Thirdly, Anna did not – as most other mothers – travel to her daughter's new home in order to assist by the births of her grandchildren. Finally, and this makes Anna's absence during her daughter's deliveries all the more puzzling, the electress was renowned for her medical knowledge (see chapter 6). The combinations of these four

factors not only prompted Elisabeth to share – in writing – her experiences with her mother, they also strengthened Anna’s active interest in (or surveillance of) her daughter.

Before the women’s own accounts of her pregnancies are discussed, a central term requires clarification. In her extensive work on the history of the “unborn” and early modern pregnancies, Barbara Duden has demonstrated that the particular noun “pregnancy” *did not and could not* exist in the early modern world. “Our” understanding of a pregnancy as a sequence of developments that are more or less identical in all cases, and thus the idea of *a* pregnancy, was made possible through findings of medical and anatomical studies in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.<sup>801</sup> Therefore, early modern women, including Elisabeth, did not carry a fetus, they would go “as if God had blessed [them]”, carry a “feminine burden” or have been blessed with “a fruit of the womb”.<sup>802</sup> In one case, Elisabeth wrote that she had thought she “was going pregnant”.<sup>803</sup> For a lack of a better term, the anachronistic noun pregnancy will be employed in the analysis, though with great care.

The correspondence between Elisabeth and Anna began immediately after Elisabeth’s wedding in June 1570. At the same time, the Saxon electress also initiated a correspondence with her daughter’s court mistress, the Saxon widow Anna von Wolfersdorf, whom she had selected to accompany and assist her daughter during the transition from one dynasty to another. The electress wished to be informed of everything regarding Elisabeth’s behavior and her physical well-being.<sup>804</sup> The latter entailed information about Elisabeth’s menstrual cycle. Replying to an inquiry from the electress, Anna von Wolfersdorf explained,

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<sup>801</sup> See Duden (2000) and Duden (2002).

<sup>802</sup> The examples of these expressions are almost endless. See for example Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to August Kaiserslautern 11 May 1573, “... der liebe gott [mich] gnediglichen ... beseliget hat ...”, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 133 a; Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna Kaiserslautern 29 Dec. 1575, “... vnd sein all anzeigung dar ... wie mich vnser hergott ... gesegenet hatt ...”, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 29 a – b. For examples of the expression “... weibliche bürde ...”, see Johann Casimir, Count Palatine to August Heidelberg 15 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, pp. 156 a – 157 a; and Heinrich von Petzwitz to Anna, Kaiserslautern 26 July 1576, Loc. 8535/2, pp. 84 a – b. For examples of “... lebendiger leibes frucht ...”, see Johann Casimir to Anna, Kaiserslautern 5 April 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 5 a, and Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 28 June 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, p. 60 b.

<sup>803</sup> “... wie ich EG nechsten habe wider geschrieben das ich mich versehe ich ginge schwanger ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, without place [Kaiserslautern?] 9 Jan. 1582, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 228 a – b. See also Duden (2000) and Duden (2002), pp. 11-48.

<sup>804</sup> Anna to the court mistress Anna von Wolfersdorf, Dresden 5 March 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 211 a – 212 a; Dresden 20 May 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 238 a – 239 a; Stolpen 24 July 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 265 a; Dresden 21 Aug. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 275 b – 276 a; Augustusburg 27 Oct. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 310 b – 311 a; Dresden 8 Jan. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 1 b – 3 a; Torgau 1 Jan. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 5 a; Torgau 24 Jan. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 17 b – 18 a.

I cannot keep from Your Electoral Grace that my gracious lady has not had 'her time' for two months, I hope the dear, faithful God has blessed her with a fruit of the womb, though I cannot know this. As long as I have been here it has not been away from her princely grace for this long, but her princely grace keeps it completely secret from me, I am not supposed to know, though others speak about it. God knows that I wish from my heart that it is true as I, God willingly, hope.<sup>805</sup>

In spite of the court mistress's observations, Elisabeth was not pregnant and another five months passed before Anna received the joyful news that her daughter had been "blessed".

Anna expected her daughter (and/or son-in-law) to keep her informed about a possible pregnancy. Volunteering this information was considered a "daughterly" and "sonly" (or in this case a "son-in-law'ly") duty. When Elisabeth was pregnant for the first time, Anna and August were not notified about it until after the time of quickening (in this case, during the twentieth week of the pregnancy) and the electress requested an apology for this late notification. Although she received the desired apology and assured Johann Casimir that the disagreement caused by the late notification had been "favorably and mercifully atoned and forgotten",<sup>806</sup> she did not trust that she would be kept adequately informed. One year later, she heard rumors that Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel was sure to have seen Elisabeth's "pregnant body". Even if, as Anna wrote to her daughter, she would take particular joy in this kind of news, she found it, "not only a little bit unsettling, that he [the landgrave] should be better informed of Your Beloved's condition than we [are]". Elisabeth was admonished to immediately reply and inform Anna of her condition so as to make sure that her mother "would [not] have to wait to hear such from others".<sup>807</sup> But the rumors were untrue and, with the exception of her first pregnancy in 1573, Elisabeth sent Anna frequent and detailed accounts of any somatic change that could indicate a pregnancy.

Elisabeth *appears* to have been pregnant at least eight times between 1573 and 1585. Yet, neither she nor Anna would have agreed to this number. To Elisabeth and her

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<sup>805</sup> "... ich kan ewr efg ... nicht vorhalten das meine gnedige frau ire zeit in zwei monat nicht gehabt[,] ... ich ... hofe der libe getrewe gott werde ir furstlich gnaden mit frucht des leibes vorsehen haben[,] doch kan ich sulches nicht ... wisen[,] es ist ir fg noch nicht so lange ausen gebliebn weil ich hir gewset ... / ir fg halten es aber gar heimlich vor mir ich sols nicht wisen / da doch sunsten ander darvon zu reden wisen / ... / aber gott weis das ichs ia ir fg vonn herzen wol gonnen wolt das es war were als ich dann obegotwil hofe ...", Anna von Wolfersdorf to Anna, without place [Heidelberg?], "am tage lichtmes" [2 Feb.?] 1572, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 140 a – 141 a.

<sup>806</sup> Anna to Johann Casimir, Count Palatine, Dresden 28 June 1573, DrHSA, Kop. 517, fol. 60 a – 60 b.

<sup>807</sup> This and the previous two quotes are from Anna's letter to Elisabeth, without date [ultimo Oct. 1577], DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 217 II/a.

contemporaries, two of the pregnancies that retrospectively can be identified as miscarriages were not pregnancies. In the following, all the potential pregnancies will be addressed and the discrepancy between our current perception of the pregnancies and the content of her letters will be addressed.

Six of Elisabeth's pregnancies resulted in the birth of a child: (1) on 15 September 1573, Elisabeth gave birth to a stillborn son; (2) on 26 July 1576, Maria was born and she lived for almost seven months; (3) on 5 May 1578, a daughter, named Elisabeth after her mother was born and lived for two years and five months; (4) on 6 January 1581, the daughter Dorothea was born (she was the only child to survive her parents (+ 18 September 1631)); (5) on 28 February 1584, a stillborn daughter was delivered; and, finally, (6) on 7 February 1585, another stillborn daughter was born. The other pregnancies resulted in miscarriages, one during the nineteenth week of a pregnancy and the other during the eighth month of a pregnancy.<sup>808</sup> Elisabeth and Johann Casimir continued to carry the hope for a son at least until 1585, and Elisabeth may have been pregnant again after 1585. Yet, this escapes our attention because she now longer had her mother to confide in (Anna died in October 1585).

The letters Elisabeth sent her mother show that she kept a careful calendar of her periods and when she experienced a cessation of her menstruation this was taken as a first hint that she may be pregnant. In 1577 she wrote, "four days later it again hit me but with no pain, since then I have had it one other time also without pain, so I believe it is not with me".<sup>809</sup> Elisabeth knew that menstruating almost always meant that she could not be pregnant. In contrast, she also knew that an absence of a period not necessarily implied that she was pregnant,

"[M]ost beloved mother it is going with me in the tenth week, I do not know if the dear God has blessed me or if the flux has been interrupted by the cough, be is as he [God] wishes, by the other children I also coughed but not this much",

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<sup>808</sup> The possibility of three additional miscarriages exists. However, her accounts of these potential pregnancies do not provide sufficient details for any clear conclusions to be drawn. For example, in May 1577 Elisabeth wrote to her mother, "... hertzallerlibeste frawmutter itzo gehts wider mit mir in die 7 wochen[,] gott weis was es ist ..." (Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 4 May 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 119 a). Yet, this is the only time she referred to this irregularity of her menstruation and it may have been a result of what appears to have been an earlier miscarriage (though this too remains unknown, see Elisabeth to Anna, Heidelberg 5 March 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 114 a) or of the death of her seven-month-old daughter (and only child) Maria in February 1577 (see Elisabeth to Anna, [without place] 23 Feb. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 114 a).

<sup>809</sup> "... 4 dagen ... nach ist mir wider angestossen aber mit keinen schmerzen[,] dar seitter habe ichs wider ein mahl krigt auch mit keinen schmerzen also das ich denken kan das nichts mit mir ist ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 3 April 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 115 a – b.

she wrote in 1580.<sup>810</sup>

The uncertainty Elisabeth expressed and the bodily changes she described show that to her, and to her contemporaries, the first phase of a pregnancy did not begin (as we would believe) at the time of conception but when a woman noticed a bodily change. The first sign was usually a cessation of her menstruation, though Elisabeth knew that a pregnancy only was one among several possible explanations. The considerable uncertainty meant that all other signs of the body were read and compared to experiences from previous pregnancies. Next to the cough Elisabeth mentioned in the above-quoted passage, she referred to other recurring symptoms, “[I]t goes with me in the tenth week and all indications are as if our Lord God has blessed me, I do not know what it is and how it will develop with me, may it have the outcome God wishes”.<sup>811</sup> A few years later, when she had not menstruated for twelve weeks, Elisabeth wrote to Anna, “I feel exactly as by the other children, I vomit so very much and everything makes me feel sick, as by the other children”.<sup>812</sup> This phrase she repeated almost verbatim three months later when she her flux had been stagnated for thirteen weeks, “in other respects I feel as by the other children, I vomit and am very weak.”<sup>813</sup>

With the exception of the first pregnancy mentioned above, Elisabeth usually informed Anna of a potential pregnancy already around the sixth or seventh week. However, having experienced the disappointments of being “mistaken”, she sometimes chose to wait longer before she shared her hopes with Anna. During spring of 1577, she twice noted irregularities of “her time”<sup>814</sup> and, when her menstruations stopped again in the fall, she waited much longer than usual before notifying Anna,

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<sup>810</sup> “... hertzallerlibeste frawmutter es geht auch itzo mit mir in die zehent woche[,] nicht weis ich ob der liebe gott mich gesegnet hatt oder ob der fluss von husten mir verstopft[,]... zu den andern kindern habe ich auch gehust aber so sehr nicht ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 9 June 1580, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 201 a – b. For a discussion of the various meanings attributed to menstruation and cessation of menstruation in early modern England, see Crawford (1981) and Duden (1991/1993), pp. 83-88.

<sup>811</sup> “... [ich kan ... EG ... nicht verhalten] das nu mit mir in die zehente wochen gehet vnd sein all anzeigung dar wie mir ist gewessen wie mich vnser her gott ... gesegnet hatt[,] nicht weis ich was es ist vnd wie mir gehen wird[,] es krige ein aus gang wie gott will ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 29 Dec. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 29 a – b.

<sup>812</sup> “... es ist mir eben als zu den andern kinder[,] ich breche mich so sehr vnd ist mir alles vbel[,] wie zu den andern kindern ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 3 July 1581, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 226 a – b.

<sup>813</sup> “... es ist mir sunsten eben wie zu den andern kinder[,] ich breche mich vnd bin so matt ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 21 Oct. 1581, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 225 a – b.

<sup>814</sup> See Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 23 Feb. and 5 March, Kaiserslautern 4 May 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 113 a – 114 a, 119 a.

I have now gone for sixteen weeks and the entire condition is as if the dear God again has blessed me, may the dear, faithful God direct it with me according to his Godly will, for a time I have not been well. I am still not well although it is now much better than before.<sup>815</sup>

According to Elisabeth, it was sickness that had stopped her from writing to Anna sooner. However, it seems likely that recent disappointments made her reading of her somatic changes more cautious and that the greater doubts had delayed notification. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Elisabeth, during a later pregnancy, made explicit reference to her previous experiences (see below).

During the summer and fall of 1581, Elisabeth experienced what appears to have been one, and perhaps even two, miscarriage(s) within only a couple of months. Two years passed before she again became pregnant, and when the signs of a pregnancy finally were there, the feelings she expressed to her mother were mixed if not outright confused,

I do not know how the dear, faithful God has sent it with me, it is now going with me for thirteen weeks but, because it has gone so wrong for me with the growth the last two times, I fear everything about it. But it comforts me that I am not getting thick and my stomach is smaller than I have had it for a long time, may the dear God again delight me.<sup>816</sup>

In this case, Elisabeth did not refer to a fruit of the womb nor of a feminine burden. Rather, she described to the content of her womb during the two previous “mistakes” as a growth. Nevertheless, she specifically referred to her bad experiences and linked her current fear to those. This time Elisabeth was pregnant, though sadly, she gave birth to a stillborn daughter.<sup>817</sup>

Only nine months after this delivery, Elisabeth again had reason to believe that she “had been blessed”,

[I]t is again with me in the sixteenth week, I hope God again has blessed me but, because I have been betrayed so often, I cannot say it

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<sup>815</sup> “... ich gehe itzo bis in die 16 wochen vnd ist alle gelegenheit mit mir als wen mich der libe gott wider gesegnet hette[,] der liebe drewe gott wolle es mit mir schiken nach seinen gottlichen willen[,] ich bin ein zeit daher nicht wol auff gewest ... ich bin wol noch nicht sehr wol auff aber es ist doch viel besser itzo den zu vor ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 22 Nov. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 130 a – b.

<sup>816</sup> “...auch weis ich nicht wie der libe drewe gott mit mir schicken hatt[,] es geth itzo mitt mir in die 13 wochen ein weil mirs fur[ige] iar 2 mahl so vbel gangen hatt mit dem gewachsen so furchte ich mich itzo auch alles darfur[,] aber des droste ich mich ich werde noch iar nichts dickt vnd ist mir mein bauch kleiner als ich in langer zeit gehabt habe[,] der libe gott wolle mich gnediglichen wider erfrewen ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 24 Sep. 1583, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 240 a – b.

<sup>817</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 28 Feb. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 244 a - b, and Elisabeth to Anna, Heidelberg 23 March 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 248 a.

to be true until it moves. May the dear God again send it according to his Godly will.<sup>818</sup>

In this passage, she again is linking her doubts to the experiences that had taught her not to trust the bodily changes she observed as proof of a pregnancy.

The accounts Elisabeth sent to Anna show that the first many weeks of what only later could be verified as a pregnancy were characterized by uncertainty, hopes, and fears.<sup>819</sup> All bodily changes were noted and carefully interpreted through comparisons with previous experiences. Only God knew what the signs meant, and Elisabeth herself could only hope that the Almighty had been merciful and that the “symptoms” truly indicated that she was with child rather than the victim of sickness – the most plausible alternative with which she could explain the changes she noted.<sup>820</sup>

It is also in light of this uncertainty that one must understand the relatively late notification of pregnancies that appears to have been the norm between Anna and her other relatives and friends. As demonstrated in the first part of this chapter, Anna took a keen interest in the pregnancies of her correspondents. However, the information she exchanged with other princely women concerning pregnancies and deliveries rarely exceeded the happy announcement of a pregnancy, and a pregnancy was usually revealed only two to four months before the expected delivery. Even Anna’s closest relatives and confidants did not share the thoughts of a potential pregnancies until their “condition” was visible: Anna’s niece (Anna of Orange), who had been brought up by the electress, informed her aunt of her pregnancy only two months before she expected the child to be born.<sup>821</sup> Similarly, Elisabeth of Mecklenburg shared the news of her pregnancy with Anna, one of her most trusted relatives and correspondents, approximately three months before she gave birth.<sup>822</sup> However, once the news of a pregnancy was public and/or the woman’s body began to show it, information traveled quickly. In March 1570, Barbara of Liegnitz-Brieg added a small autograph note to a longer letter, she had dictated to Anna, “we cannot keep from Your Beloved that the Duchess of Teschen is going with ‘a heavy body’ and, because we

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<sup>818</sup> “... mit mir gets in die 16 wochen wider[,] ich hoffe der libe gott werde mich wider geseant haben ich kans aber fur ein warheit nicht schreiben bis sichs reget den ich bin so offte bedrogen worden[,] der libe gott schicke wider nach seinen gottlichen willen ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 4 Nov. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 257 a – b.

<sup>819</sup> See Duden (2000) and Duden (2002) for similar observations.

<sup>820</sup> Duden (1987), pp. 181-194 and Duden (2000).

<sup>821</sup> Anna to Anna of Orange, Moritzburg 24 Aug. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 52 a – 53 a.

<sup>822</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 19 June 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 45 a – b. Anna’s letter reveals that the good wishes were sent as soon as she learned of the happy news. Sophie, Elisabeth’s only child, was born on 4 Sep. 1557.

know that Your Beloved would like to hear this, we do not wish to keep it from you”<sup>823</sup>  
The Duchess of Teschen was Anna’s niece Sidonia of Schlesien-Teschen and two months later she gave birth to a son.

Relatives and friends only revealed the suspicion of a pregnancy sooner if they had serious concerns that something was wrong or if they met each other in person. When Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, a very distant relative but frequent correspondent of Anna, experienced all the signs of pregnancy at the age of fifty-one, she was puzzled. Prompted by her uncertainty, the margravine asked Anna for advice during their simultaneous visit by the electoral couple of Brandenburg.<sup>824</sup> Once Anna returned to Dresden, she inquired by various “knowledgeable women” (*vernünftig weiber*) if this was likely to be a pregnancy. In her letter to Katharina, Anna stressed that she had not revealed the identity of the margravine to the people she had consulted but explained that the same “knowledgeable women” had told her about several women who had been pregnant and delivered healthy children at an even higher age. Consequently, Anna had high hopes that God again had blessed Katharina. If however, the Margravine wanted to gain certainty, she could employ the following method: after a good night sleep, she should place a heated pepper cake on her navel while grabbing with her hands in both sides (presumably, both sides of her waist). If there were a “living fruit”, this would make it move, Anna explained while also apologizing for her inability to provide a better answer.<sup>825</sup>

Anna was eager to hear more about Katharina’s condition. Six weeks later, she inquired by Sabina of Brandenburg if she knew how the condition of the margravine had developed.<sup>826</sup> It is significant that Anna inquired by Sabina rather than by Katharina herself; it indicates that Sabina had been part of the earlier conversation with Anna and Katharina and it suggests that the subject was considered more sensitive to the margravine, than to Anna and Sabina. At least until April, Anna assumed that Katharina was pregnant

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<sup>823</sup> “... wir wollen el nicht for halten das die Herzogin zu teschen mitt schweren leibe get[,] vnd weil wir wissen das es el gern horen ...[,] so haben wir es el nicht wissen zu for halten ...”, autograph note sent with the letter from Barbara of Liegnitz-Brieg to Anna, Brieg “Dienßtag nach Oculi” [27 Feb.] 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8232/3, p. 186.

<sup>824</sup> This appears from Anna’s reply, Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Dresden 22 Jan. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 110 b.

<sup>825</sup> “... Wan sie wohl geschlaffen haben, vnd lassen einene breitten Pfefferkuchen warmen vnd leg derselb vff den nabel vnd greiffen darnach mit Iren Henden In beide seitten[,] Ist dan ein lebendige frucht vorhanden, so reget es sich gewiß ...”, Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Dresden 22 Jan. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 110 b.

<sup>826</sup> Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresen 9 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 119 – b.



and sent her a recipe for *Kinderbalsam*,<sup>827</sup> a potion, the electress frequently sent to pregnant relatives and friends and instructed them to take.<sup>828</sup> The margravine's further development remains unknown, though she did not give birth to any more children. However, even without information on the further development, the example suggests that it was the combination of the margravine's uncertainty and her personal meeting with Anna that prompted her to disclose the details, which would not been shared under different circumstances. The electress's assurance that she had not revealed Katharina's identity and her indirect inquiry by Sabina of Brandenburg give the impression that the margravine's condition was considered highly confidential – perhaps even bordering on being a taboo.<sup>829</sup>

The same sensitive nature of the thoughts concerning a potential pregnancy can be found in one of Elisabeth's references to "being mistaken". In one of the quoted passages, she wrote that she been betrayed (by the signs of her body) and, although Anna after one of Elisabeth's earlier "mistakes" had consoled her daughter with the fact that "many women of both higher and lower rank often had similar [experiences]",<sup>830</sup> Elisabeth clearly carried her "mistakes" with a sense of guilt that caused her to abstain from a definite conclusion that she was pregnant. This sense of being mistaken and betrayed indicates that a hasty conclusion concerning a pregnancy was met with disapproval from those around her, and this helps explain why the women in general were hesitant to announce a pregnancy until it was relatively advanced. This is significant, because it relativizes the prevailing notion that the bodies of princely women were "public" and that "there was no taboo or embarrassment" associated with the discussions of pregnancies.<sup>831</sup> It seems that there were taboos, though these were not necessarily associated with the actual somatic changes, but rather with the women's interpretations of these changes.

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<sup>827</sup> Anna to Katharina von Brandenburg-Küstrin, Dresden 29 April. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 134 b – 135 a.

<sup>828</sup> See for example: Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a – 16 b; Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 11 March 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 121 b – 122 a; Anna to Agnes, Countess of Solms, Dresden 6 March 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 10 a; Anna to Casper Peucer, Schellenberg 7 Jan. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 194 a – b; Anna to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Dresden 6 Aug. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 182 a – 183 b.

<sup>829</sup> A similar conclusion is suggested by Kristian Bosselmann-Cyran in his analysis of the late medieval and early modern language on sexuality and childbearing, see Bosselmann-Cyran (1997).

<sup>830</sup> "... das dergleichen vielen Frauen hohen vnd Nidern stande oftmals begegnet", Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 207 b – 208 a, and Anna to Margarethe von Schleinitz, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 206 b – 207 a.

<sup>831</sup> Harris (2002), p. 101.

*Conflicting clues: abstract calculations and somatic sensations*

In one of the quoted passages from Elisabeth's letters, she referred to the moment of quickening as a sensation that would grant her certainty about her assumed pregnancy.<sup>832</sup> This corresponds to the emphasis that is given to the moment of quickening in numerous studies of early modern pregnancies.<sup>833</sup> In spite of the general agreement, that sensing the child move was a confirmation of a pregnancy, Elisabeth's accounts also show that one must be careful not to overestimate the certainty women derived from it. However, before this can be demonstrated adequately, attention must be paid to the way in which Elisabeth kept track of time in relation to her potential pregnancies. Both she and other princely women generally predicted the time of the delivery with great accuracy, but the abstract calculations were carefully compared to the bodily sensations.

In his pioneering study of pregnancies and childbirth in early modern France, Jacques Gélis maintained that until the late eighteenth century, the duration of human gestation was believed to be indeterminate. Two hundred and seventy days was an ideal, but nature often proved otherwise. Deliveries, and also deliveries of healthy, living children, could be early or late, at times several weeks or even months. There were several ways of measuring the length of pregnancies and predicting the expected time of delivery, and the length of a pregnancy was often considered to be dependent upon the sex of the child, girls requiring more time than boys because of their "colder" complexion.<sup>834</sup>

Elisabeth calculated her pregnancies in weeks and, in contrast to the conclusions drawn by Gélis, their calculations were quite similar to today's methods. What is striking, however, is that Elisabeth began her calculations from the first cessation of her menses and, although this did not prove a pregnancy, the hopes for it remained intact until proved wrong either by other signs or the return of her period. When Elisabeth writes that she is, for example, in the tenth week, it thus appears as if it was what also today would be considered the tenth (or perhaps eleventh) week of a pregnancy.<sup>835</sup> In general, Elisabeth's predictions – and those of other princely women – for an expected delivery were

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<sup>832</sup> Elisabeth to Anna, Heidelberg 4 Nov. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 257 a – b.

<sup>833</sup> Duden (1991/1993), pp. 79-82.

<sup>834</sup> Gélis (1984/1991), pp. 61-65.

<sup>835</sup> The example that reveals the similarity between Elisabeth's calculations and the current way of measuring the length of a pregnancy most clearly is from 1576. On 24 March Elisabeth observed that it was "... with her ..." in the twenty-first week. Counting from 24 March until 4 August when she, later (13 May), predicted the birth would take place, is exactly nineteen weeks. Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna Kaiserslautern 24 March 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 50 a – b; and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 13 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 68 a – b.

remarkably accurate. Already by her second pregnancy in 1576, Elisabeth predicted that the birth would take place 4 August;<sup>836</sup> and the daughter Maria was born 26 July. In 1578 Elisabeth's calculations indicated that the child would be born on 4 May; and a second daughter (Elisabeth) was born on 5 May.<sup>837</sup> Hence, although the women knew exactly how long a pregnancy was expected to last, but – as it will appear – they did not always trust their own or each other's calculations.

During Elisabeth's pregnancies, the first sense of the child's movements almost always served as a catalyst for a letter to her mother (or father), and the tone in the letters was characterized by lesser uncertainty, "I cannot keep from Your Grace's [knowledge] that the dear God mercifully has blessed me with a fruit of the womb, for which I praise and thank the eternal Almighty",<sup>838</sup> she wrote after she had felt the child during her first pregnancy. Similarly, five years later, she informed her mother that, "God had blessed [her] with a living fruit of the womb".<sup>839</sup> In relation to this latter pregnancy, Elisabeth also provided an account that shows just how powerful the feeling of the child's movement was in shaping her predictions for the expected birth. She wrote, "and it is now with me in the twenty-second week though, for the past four weeks, I have felt my child strongly and I worry that I will not go as long as I had thought".<sup>840</sup> Because she had felt the child so strongly, she assumed that her calculations were wrong. Hence, the bodily experience weighed heavier than her carefully counted weeks.

Implicit in this conclusion is an expression of the women's belief that a pregnancy always lasted approximately the same time. As a rule – and contrary to the conclusion of Gélis – they did not seem to believe that it could vary and, when a delivery was either earlier or later than they had predicted, they concluded that their calculations had been wrong, *not* that the duration of a pregnancy varied.

In the examples presented above, the moment of quickening does appear as a crucial piece of evidence in favor of a pregnancy. However, in Elisabeth's letters one can also find

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<sup>836</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 13 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 68 a – b.

<sup>837</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 3 May 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 142 a.

<sup>838</sup> "... [ich] kan ... EG tochterlichen nicht verhalten das mich der libe gott gnediglichen mit leibes frucht beseliget darfur ich dem almechtigen ewig lob vnd danck sage[,] der almechtige gott wolle mir mit gnaden helfen vnd mich gnediglichen in rechter zeit erfreuen...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to August, 11 May 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 137.

<sup>839</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, [place not legible] 4 Jan. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 131 a – b.

<sup>840</sup> "... vnd ist itzo mit mir in die ... 22 woch aber mein kind habe ich gerne fur 4 wochen stark ... gefult also das ich sorge habe ich werde nicht so lang gehen als ich gemeint hatte ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, [place not legible] 4 Jan. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 131 a – b.

contradicting statements and feeling the child was not always a definite proof of going pregnant. In 1579 she wrote,

[M]ost beloved mother, I still go as described and I am, thank God well. May God help further I feel the child so very seldom and, when I feel it, I feel it so vaguely that I almost cannot feel it outside, God help me this none of my other children have done. God help most beloved mother, I fear it is not a child because it ought to move.<sup>841</sup>

At this time, Elisabeth was at least eight months pregnant and had just returned to the Palatinate after an extensive stay in Saxony.<sup>842</sup> Her description shows that she, Anna, and several other women with whom the matter had been addressed (see below) had all been convinced that Elisabeth was pregnant. It was on the basis of this “certainty” that Margaretha von Schleinitz and Anna of Hohenlohe, the two women who had assisted Elisabeth by her previous deliveries, accompanied her on her trip from Saxony back to the Palatinate.<sup>843</sup> However, even though Elisabeth clearly had felt the child and still felt it vaguely, the change gave her reason to question if it even was a child.

Two weeks later, Margaretha von Schleinitz sent the following account to Anna,

In all humbleness I cannot keep from [Your knowledge] that last Saturday, which was 7 March, the blood [came from] my Princely Grace and Mistress [Elisabeth] as I confirmed myself, and the following Sunday it came very strongly from her Princely Grace. But no piece has come from her, only a very strong bleeding and it has been bleeding uninterruptedly until this hour and always bleeding so very much. [We] all have the thoughts that we do not know what to do with her Princely Grace, if it is a child or none.<sup>844</sup>

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<sup>841</sup> “...hertzallerlibeste frawmutter ich gehe noch alles so vnd bin gott lob wol auff[.] gott helffe hin furter ich spure das kind so gar selten vnd wen ichs fulle so fulle ichs so leis das ichs haussen kaum fullen kan[.] gott helffe mir es hatts mir fur meiner kinder keines gethan[.] gott helffe hertzallerlibeste frawmutter ich furchte es sei kein kind ein weil sichs so solten reget ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 20 Feb. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 173 a.

<sup>842</sup> Assuming that Johann Casimir was the father of the child Elisabeth expected, she would have had to be in the eight month of the pregnancy, because she had last seen her husband around 20 June 1578. In early August 1578, Elisabeth travelled to Saxony and remained there until January 1579. Regarding Johann Casimir’s departure from the Palatinate in June 1578, see Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 26 June 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 150 a. Regarding Elisabeth’s trip to Saxony, see Elisabeth’s letters to Anna dated 15 July and 7 Aug. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 150-154.

<sup>843</sup> Regarding Elisabeth’s departure from Saxony, see Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Hof 20 Jan. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 161 a. Regarding the presence of Margaretha von Schleinitz and Anna of Hohenlohe, see their letter to Anna: Anna of Hohenlohe to Anna, Heidelberg 7 Feb. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 169 a; Margaretha von Schleinitz to Anna, Hof 20 Jan. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 162 a; and Margaretha von Schleinitz, Heidelberg 7 Feb. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 161 a.

<sup>844</sup> “.... ECFG kan ich vntertheniglich nicht bergen das am nesten vergangen sonabent welche der 7 Marti war / der geblute bei meiner FG vnd frauen [wie] ich beweiset[.] vnd folgenden sonntag gar sehr von ihr FL gangen aber doch gar kein stuck sondern gar stark ein geblute vnd hates ... bis auff diese stunde vnd imber so sehr geblute ... [wir] machet vns alle gedanken das wir nicht wissen wie wir mit ihr FG daransein Ob es ein kint

Even though these developments made Margaretha von Schleinitz question if Elisabeth actually was pregnant, Elisabeth herself continued to hope for a child. One week after the initial bleeding, she wrote to Anna,

[M]ost beloved mother, it has ended with me and I again got my 'time' today eight days [ago,] I have had it a lot, first I felt pain in my back, but my stomach/womb has not gotten smaller. I do not know if I carry a child, the blood has been very fresh and well colored, yesterday and today I have not seen more, I do not know if it will come again. Oh most beloved mother, if I do not carry a child how, will I ever do it again, it is not moving anymore – the dear faithful God would not punish me like this.<sup>845</sup>

In this passage the oscillation between hope and fear is lucidly revealed. While both hope and fear are expressions of Elisabeth's personal experiences and wishes, they should also be considered in relation to the social and political structures within which she lived. The pressure to deliver a living son would have been considerable after almost nine years of marriage. Anna too held on to the hope. She cautioned Margaretha von Schleinitz and Anna of Hohenlohe to be patient before dismissing the hopes,

Because the time had not fully passed and particularly because our daughter here in your presence has explained that the fruit moved so much in her that it almost caused her pain. Nobody can be sufficiently prudent in these matters [and] for that reason one must await the time.<sup>846</sup>

With this letter Anna sent a particular herb and explained that this should be boiled in wine and given to Elisabeth because,

[I]f it is a living fruit, this drink will strengthen it, but if it is a different burden, it will help that Her Beloved is freed from it sooner.

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oder keins ist ...", Margaretha von Schleinitz to Anna, [Neustadt] 12 March 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 181 a – b.

<sup>845</sup> "... hertzallerlibeste frawmutter mit mir hatt sichs geent vnd habe mein zeit wider krigen heutte acht dage[,] ich habes sehr gehabt[,] ich habe erst wehe in rucken gehabt .... aber mein bauch ist nichts kleiner worden[,] nicht weis ich ob ich ein kind dar bei drage[,] das geblut ist so frisch vnd wol gefarb gewessen[,] gistern vnd heutte habe ich nicht mehr gesehen[,] nicht weis ich ob es wird wider komen[,] ach hertzallerlibeste frawmutter wen ich ... kein kind drage wie wolte ichs nimer mehr thun[,] es regets sich itzo nicht mehr ... [-] ... der libe drewe gott wolle mich ia nicht so straffen ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 13 March 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 182 a.

<sup>846</sup> "... Weill aber die Rechnungen ... nicht allerding aus gewesen ... Sonderlich weil vns vnser tochter alhier in ewer gegen wertigkait berichtet das sich die frucht denmassen bej Ir reget das es Ir gar wehe thate[,] ... vnd kan diesen sachen nimand klug genug sein, darumb muss man d Zeit erwarten ...", Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 207 b – 208 a. See also the similar account from Anna to Margarethe von Schleinitz, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 206 b – 207 a. Regarding this translation of "klug" see *DHfB*, vol. 11, column 1269-1285.

And, until the estimated time has passed, [Her Beloved should] take no other remedies".<sup>847</sup>

However, if it became clear that Elisabeth was not pregnant, Anna wanted the Countess of Hohenlohe to make sure that Elisabeth's body would be purged with the advice of a doctor.<sup>848</sup>

During the next two weeks Elisabeth's body showed further changes and Margaretha von Schleinitz dutifully reported to Anna,

[I regret] that it will not happen this time, because it is now visible on her Princely Grace ... that the stomach/womb of her Princely Grace is getting smaller from day to day, my hope has now fully perished.<sup>849</sup>

A few days later Elisabeth's hopes also had waned, and she explained that her stomach was getting smaller and softer<sup>850</sup> and, after another two days had passed, she concluded that she had not been pregnant, "I am sad that it has not been a child."<sup>851</sup>

Towards the end of April, Elisabeth informed her mother that she had had to stop taking the remedies Anna had sent because they made her very sick. However, arrangements had been made for Doctor Wilhelm Rascalon to purge her.<sup>852</sup> Although the exact form of purging remains unspecified, the fact that Anna already had provided her daughter with a remedy that caused her to vomit, combined with the involvement of a doctor, suggest that this was a more radical approach. In any event, the suggested cure reveals that Elisabeth's condition was considered to be an imbalance of the fluids. According the prevalent medical theories, the monthly period relieved women from the extra fluids they were considered to contain/produce (as opposed to men). During a pregnancy the fluid accumulated in the womb and nourished the child and, when a woman

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<sup>847</sup> "... ist es ein lebendige frucht So werde der track die das kindt stercken ist es aber ein ander burde so befurdert es auch das Ire L derselben desto ehr ledig werden Gesinnen derhalben gnedigst Ir wollet bej Irer L anhalten das sie solch tranck vnd sonst fur aus gang d Rechnung keine andere artznej gebrauchte ...", Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 207 b – 208 a, and Anna to Margarethe von Schleinitz, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 206 b – 207 a.

<sup>848</sup> "... Wan aber alle rechnung ... auss sein vnd sich befindet das Ire L keine lebendige frucht tragen, Alsdan will hoch von nothen sein das Irer L der leib mit rath erfarnier Artzes wohl gereiniget werde ...", Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 207 b – 208 a, and Anna to Margarethe von Schleinitz, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 206 b – 207 a.

<sup>849</sup> "... [ich beklage leider] das es auff dis mal nicht geschehen wirt[,] den es lest sich mit ihr FG ahn sehen ... als werde ihr FG der leip von tag zu tag kleiner das mir die hoffnung nuhmer gar entfallen ...", Margaretha von Schleinitz to Anna, [Neustadt] 29 March 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 183 a – 184 a.

<sup>850</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 1 April 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 186 a.

<sup>851</sup> "... ich bin bedruht das es kein kind gewessen ist ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 3 April 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 187 a.

<sup>852</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 25 April 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 191.

was breastfeeding, the woman's extra bodily fluids were transformed into milk. When, however, the periods stopped and the woman was not pregnant, this would result in an accumulation of unwanted fluids in her body, and this unbalance had to be countered if the woman were to regain her health.<sup>853</sup>

The treatment Elisabeth received after her "miscarriage" and her statement that "it had not been a child" show that to her and her contemporaries, this had *not* been a pregnancy. Consequently, she did not practice the six weeks of lying-in nor the rite of churching during this spring. Approximately three weeks after Elisabeth's dramatic flux in 1579, Margaretha von Schleinitz requested to be brought back to Saxony.<sup>854</sup> Neither the quickening nor the other bodily changes had been reliable proof of a pregnancy.

Three years later, Elisabeth had a similar experience. On 9 January 1582, Elisabeth wrote to Anna,

[M]ost beloved mother, as I wrote to Your Grace last, I believed myself to be going pregnant. As Your Grace's child I cannot keep from you that I went like that until the nineteenth week and then I started [bleeding]<sup>855</sup> and two pieces came from me. One was rather large the other not so large, I allowed people to see them, also a midwife, they all agree that no child was with it [and] for that I thank the dear God. I was quite ill from it but it has, praised be God, all improved well with me, may the dear faithful God protect me further, I have even been sorrowful.<sup>856</sup>

In this passage, Elisabeth recounts what can be interpreted as a miscarriage. Both the physical symptoms and the emotional reaction she describes indicate this. It remains unclear if Elisabeth had felt the child during this pregnancy though, according to her own calculation, she was in the nineteenth week when "she broke of". When she was pregnant in 1578, the quickening was noted during the eighteenth week, and in 1580 she informed

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<sup>853</sup> Duden (1991/1993), pp. 83-88; Laqueur (1990), pp. 35-43 and 103-108.

<sup>854</sup> "... vnd die weil ich nuhmer wenick nutze alhir bin[,] so gelanget ahn ECFG mein gantz vndertheniger Beten ECFG die wolle die gnedigiste vorschaffung thuen das der jorge sorge noch vor den erster feiertagen mocht ahn herkomen vnd mich apfedern ...", Margaretha von Schleinitz to Anna, [Neustadt] 29 March 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 183 a - 184 a.

<sup>855</sup> The literal translation would be "... I broke of ..."

<sup>856</sup> "... hertzallerlibeste frawmutter wie ich EG nechsten habe wider geschrieben das ich mich versehe ich ginge schwanger[,] kan ich EG kindlichen nicht verhalten das ich bin so gangen bis in die 19 wochen da bin ich angebrochen vnd sein 2 stuck von mir gangen[,] einer ist zimlich gros gewesen das ander nicht so gros[,] ich habe es leuden sehen lasse vnd einer wehe fraw[,] sie sprechen alle ein ... es ist kein kind darbei gewesen[,] das dancke ich den liben gott[,] ich bin zimlich krank daran gewesen aber gott sei lob es hatt sich alles fein mit mir gebessert[,] der libe drewe gott behutte mich hin furter gnediglichen[,] ich bin so gar bedruckt gewesen ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, [without place] 9 Jan. 1582, DrHSA Loc.8535/2, pp. 228 a - b.

her mother that she had felt the child already from what she counted as the tenth week.<sup>857</sup> But although she had not felt the child during this “pregnancy”, both Elisabeth and Anna appear to have been fairly certain that this really was a pregnancy. Already when Elisabeth was in her thirteenth week of this pregnancy, she wrote, “in other respects I feel exactly as by the other children, I throw up and am very weak”<sup>858</sup> and, in early November, Anna referred to Elisabeth’s “fruit of the womb”, an expression she only used when the signs were considered sure.<sup>859</sup> It was due to this relative certainty that Elisabeth was so bewildered by the “two pieces” that had come from her and only after she had showed these pieces to other people – including the midwife – who assured her that it had not been a child, could she believe that she had not been pregnant.

Elisabeth was not the only princely woman who experienced this form of “betrayal”. August’s sister Sidonia had married Erich of Braunschweig-Calenberg three years before Anna arrived in Saxony and, in spite of the geographical distance, Anna and Sidonia developed a close and confidential relationship. Hence, when Sidonia – after great difficulties – finally appeared to be pregnant in 1556, Anna was among the relatives she consulted. According to one of Sidonia’s calculation, the child should arrive around Christmas of 1556.<sup>860</sup> However, in November she became aware of potential irregularities and turned to Anna for advice and/or various remedies. This time, Anna consulted with one of her court mistresses and replied that,

“[the court mistress] did not consider it wise that we sent Your Beloved several things [remedies], because in these matters one has to examine and consider all kinds of details that we, because we are not there [with you], cannot know. And if we did provide you with these things] we could perhaps do Your Beloved more harm than good”.<sup>861</sup>

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<sup>857</sup> Regarding 1578, see Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, [place not legible] 4 Jan. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 131 a – b, and regarding 1580, see Elisabeth to Anna, Friedelheim 16 Aug. 1580, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 204 a; and Anna’s reply, Moritzburg 12 Sep. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 70 a – b.

<sup>858</sup> ... es ist mir sunsten eben wie zu den andern kinder ich breche mich vnd bin so matt ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 13 Oct. 1580, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 206 a.

<sup>859</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 7 Nov. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 186 b – 187 b (original page no. 74 b – 75 b).

<sup>860</sup> This appears from her later letter to her mother, see Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenburg to Catharina of Saxony, Münden 1 Jan. 1551, DrHSA Loc. 8498/6, p. 144. Yet, it is not clear how this prediction differed from a second calculation.

<sup>861</sup> “... sie hat aber nit fur guth angesehen das wir EL viell dinges schicken soltten, Dan in diesen sachen muss man allerlej zufelle vnd gelgenheit die wir vnsers abwesens nit wissen können, ansehen vnd bedencken, vnd mochten EL vielleicht damit mehr Irr machen dan dienstlich sein ...”, Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenburg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a – 16 b.



As a result, Anna sent only her *Kinderbalsam* and her *Kinderöl*, an oil that was to be given to the child immediately after delivery.<sup>862</sup> However, the *Kinderbalsam* that was intended for Sidonia did not solve the difficulties, and the oil was never used.

In mid-December, Sidonia explained to her mother that her water had broken once. During the Christmas days, this had happened another two times and had caused her great pain.<sup>863</sup> The duchess was at a loss and did not know what to make of it, “I don’t know how God will send it with me but the child is – praised be God – still strong in me, I feel it every day”.<sup>864</sup> Although Sidonia previously had believed that the child would be born around Christmas, the irregularities, combined with the sense of the child in her womb, caused her to conclude – as Elisabeth – that she had miscalculated the pregnancy. At the end of March, Sidonia and her closest relatives still hoped and believed a child would arrive, and Anna comforted her sister-in-law that prayers would be said for her and the unborn child in the Saxon churches.<sup>865</sup> When the unusual pregnancy continued without signs an impending delivery, Anna inquired for news by Sidonia’s sister Emilia who was (or had been) in Braunschweig to assist Sidonia.<sup>866</sup> A few weeks later, Emilia sent Anna a copy of an account of Sidonia’s development that had been written by her mother-in-law Elisabeth, Countess of Henneberg (“Elisabeth of Braunschweig”). This account is not preserved (Anna returned it to Emilia with her reply), but the electress’s reply reveals that although Elisabeth of Henneberg/Braunschweig had doubts about Sidonia’s condition, she held on to the hopes for her sister-in-law,

Concerning Your Beloved’s dear sister, we would be saddened to understand [it,] if it should come to such an end with Her Beloved as the [Countess] of Henneberg describes. However, we have recently received a letter from Her Beloved [Sidonia] in which she, praise be God, has hopes for something better.<sup>867</sup>

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<sup>862</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenburg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a – 16 b.

<sup>863</sup> This appears from her later letter to her mother, Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenburg to Catharina of Saxony (Anna’s mother-in-law), Münden 1 Jan. 1551, DrHSA Loc. 8498/6, p. 144.

<sup>864</sup> “... nychtt weys yeh wys gott mytt myr machen wyll aber das kynt yst gotthllopp noch stharg beyr myr ych fulle es all thage ...”, Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenburg to Catharina of Saxony (Anna’s mother-in-law), Münden 1 Jan. 1551, DrHSA Loc. 8498/6, p. 144.

<sup>865</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenburg, Dresden 31 March 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 39 a – b.

<sup>866</sup> Anna to Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Dresden 31 March 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 37 a.

<sup>867</sup> “... Was EL freuntliche liebe schwester ... betrifft, were vns bekommerlich zuerfahren wan es mit irer lieb eine solche gelegenhait vnd entschafft haben vnd bekommen solte wie die von henneberg schreibt ..., Wir haben aber von Irer Lieb noch newlicher schreib entpfang darinnen sie sich Goth lob noch eines besser vertragen ...”, Anna to Emilia of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Dresden 22 April 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 41 a – b.

But sadly, sometime between late April and early July it became clear that no child would arrive and, under the given circumstances, Anna could only assure her sister-in-law of the gratefulness she felt for Sidonia's own recovery.<sup>868</sup>

Although Sidonia did share her worries with Anna, the contrast between the details she sent to her mother and the more sparse information she sent to Anna is striking. The details of her bodily developments were only disclosed to her mother. It is also noteworthy Elisabeth of Henneberg (or Braunschweig-Calenberg), who spent much time with Sidonia during these months, gave up hope sooner than the duchess herself. This is in line with the pattern one could observe around Anna's daughter in the Palatinate, where Margaretha von Schleinitz consistently dismissed the hopes for a pregnancy sooner than Elisabeth. Finally, Anna's inquiry by Emilia (rather than by Sidonia herself) resembles the electress's indirect query concerning the development of the potential pregnancy of Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin outlined above.

Next to these similarities which all confirm that details of the body were intimate, there is a striking difference between the consolation Anna sent to Sidonia and the ways in which she consoled other relatives and friends.<sup>869</sup> Usually Anna would refer to the hope of a future pregnancy when she expressed her compassion for the loss of a child and consolation for a birth of a daughter (that is, rather than a son). However, in the letter to Sidonia she refrained from this. This omission was conscious and must be understood in relation to both the difficulties Sidonia had had getting pregnant and the increasing difficulties in her marriage. By the time it became clear that Sidonia's "pregnancy" did not result in a delivery, the duchess was thirty-nine years old and this had been her only pregnancy. In addition, the marriage between Sidonia and Erich came under great strain when he, after only a few years of marriage, converted to Catholicism and spent most of his time away from his territory and wife. Already in 1550 there were thoughts of a divorce.<sup>870</sup> However, shortly after the marital crisis during the spring of 1550, Sidonia revealed her desperate desire for a child in a letter to her sister-in-law Agnes (Moritz' wife) for help. Sidonia had heard that Agnes and Anna both had consulted with a "eyn pfafe"

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<sup>868</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 22 July 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 46 a – b.

<sup>869</sup> See for example Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Annaburg 21 Oct. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 116 a – 117 a, and Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to Anna, 22 Dec. 1558, DrHSA Loc. 8528/1, p. 171, in which the duchess expressed her condolences to Anna upon the loss of her son Magnus but encouraged her to find consolation in the fact that God already had given her a second son.

<sup>870</sup> See the exchange between Sidonia's mother-in-law Elisabeth of Braunschweig/Henneberg and Albrecht of Prussia regarding Erich and Sidonia's potential divorce in November 1549, *Elisabeth von Braunschweig-Lüneburg und Albrecht von Preußen. Ein Fürstenbriefwechsel* (1954), pp. 75-80.

who knew an art that helped women conceive. Soon after, Sidonia had heard, Anna had been pregnant, and she therefore begged Agnes to “write [and tell me] what nature it has with this priest, in order for me to get [hold of him] and hear his advice”.<sup>871</sup>

The exact meaning Sidonia ascribed to the word *Pfaffe* remains unknown. While the word originally referred to a member of the clergy, Luther’s writing invested it with a strong derogatory connotation and his adherents generally employed it to refer to Catholic priests, people/theologians who deviated from his teachings, or even as a synonym to the Devil.<sup>872</sup> If this was the sense in which the duchess employed it, the example shows that Sidonia was willing to transgress the confessional boundaries and/or the theologically sanctioned medical practices of the time in order to bear children (regarding the relationship between theology and medicine, see chapter 6). However, even if the *Pfaffe* simply was a theologian, the inquiry still reveals Sidonia’s preoccupation with her infertility. Similarly, her belief that Agnes and Anna had used the advice of the priest shows that to Sidonia, the thought that her sisters-in-law had taken such pains to provide the desired heir were readily believable, and that she too was prepared to do anything she could to fulfill this duty – perhaps in an attempt to restore her endangered marriage and to improve her own unfavorable position among her marital kin.<sup>873</sup>

Elisabeth’s two miscarriages and the development of Sidonia’s pregnancy show that even after the quickening, a degree of uncertainty remained. Jacques Gélis has stressed that until the moment of the birth “the womb held a secret”,<sup>874</sup> but he confined this “secret” to the sex of the child. In reality, the secret of the womb was much greater than that: Elisabeth feared whether or not the content of her womb was even a child,<sup>875</sup> and Sidonia’s one-year-long “pregnancy” did not bring forth a child. Contemporary stories and literature about monster births flourished throughout early modern Europe and provided women with an ample supply of grotesque and frightening examples of the degree to which one could be “betrayed”.<sup>876</sup> The same stories would have emphasized the responsibilities of the

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<sup>871</sup> “... el wollet myr tzu schreyben wies wmb den pffafen eyn gesthalt hatt ... das ych yn beqhomen muchtstt vnd seynen rart horen muchtt ...”, autograph letter from Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg to Agnes of Saxony, dated “am tage der hymell fart vnsers herren” [15 May] 1550, DrHSA Loc. 8498/9, p. 10.

<sup>872</sup> *DWB*, vol. 13, column 1584-1586.

<sup>873</sup> Dr. Helga-Marie Kühn, Göttingen, is currently preparing a biography of Sidonia in which she pays extensive attention to the duchess’s pregnancy and childlessness.

<sup>874</sup> Gélis (1984/1991), pp. 86-92.

<sup>875</sup> “... ich furchte es sei kein kind ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 20 Feb. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 173 a.

<sup>876</sup> Röcke (2001). Among the books discussed by Röcke are (1) Johann Herold’s translation of Lycosthenes’s *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum Chronica (Wunderwerck oder Gottes unergründliches Vorbilden, das er inn*

pregnant women: as an intermediary between the unborn and the outside world, she had to conduct herself in particular ways so as to avoid the terrible fate related in the tales.<sup>877</sup> Because of the prevalent conviction that shock, anger, and other strong emotions could damage the child, pregnant women were at once sheltered and held responsible. According to Ulinka Rublack, a pregnancy empowered a woman and she could consciously use this to negotiate her social (particularly marital) relations.<sup>878</sup> This however, was only one side of the story and Anna's frequent reminders that Elisabeth should eat certain foods, abstain from others, and generally protect herself from dangerous influences show that the women also were held accountable for the well-being of the unborn child.<sup>879</sup> In addition, the pregnant women did not always welcome the sheltering. As one example in Anna's letters shows, the electress objected because it meant that knowledge of certain, potentially upsetting developments, was withheld from her. In the early 1570s, Elisabeth's court mistress had withheld information about Elisabeth's recent illness and Anna reprimanded her that,

Regardless of the pregnant body we carried at the time, you had not needed to fear that we would have been so upset about it that it could have done damage to us, because you know that we, praised be God, are not so faint-hearted in such cases.<sup>880</sup>

Anna's reaction is interesting because it reveals that she felt excluded as a result of the consideration afforded her. However, when she demanded to be kept informed, she implicitly claimed a greater responsibility for the well-being of the unborn child

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*seinen gschöpffen allen, so Geystlichen, so leyblichen ... von anbegin der weldt, biß zu unserer diser zeit, erscheynen ... lassen ...* ) published in Basel 1557. This book is listed as entry no. 72 in the inventory of Anna's personal library, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62; and (2) Jobus Fincelius's *Wunderzeichen. Warhafftige beschreibung und gründlich verzeichnus schrecklicher Wunderzeichen und Geschichten ...*, first published in Nurnberg 1556. A later edition of the third part of Fincelius's work is listed as entry no. 248 in Anna's personal library, see SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62. For other overviews/interpretations of the prevalent literature on "monster births" in early modern Europe (focused mainly on England, France and Italy), see Park and Daston (1981) and Bates (2004).

<sup>877</sup> Gélis (1984/1991), pp. 66-92; Rublack (1996), especially pp. 93-97.

<sup>878</sup> Rublack (1996).

<sup>879</sup> The most striking example is Anna's letter to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, dated Annaburg 21 Jan. 1576 (DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 133 a – 134 b) in which the electress instructs her daughter not to let herself be shocked or saddened because it could damage the child. Therefore, Anna tells her not to trust the bad news she receives concerning Johann Casimir's involvement in the French Wars of Religion. However, during Elisabeth's later pregnancies, Anna also sent various remedies and instructions, see for example Anna to Elisabeth, Pforta 1 April 1578, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 205 a – 206 a (original page no. 39 a – 40 a), and the more general instructions concerning Elisabeth's eating habits in Anna to Elisabeth, Moritzburg 12 Sep. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 70 a – b.

<sup>880</sup> "... So hettest du dich auch nicht befahren dorffen, das wir vns vngeachtet vnsers damals tragend schwangern leibs, dermassen darfur entsetzet, das vns solchs schedlich sein mogen, dan dir ist bewust das wir Goth lob in solchen fellen so kleinmutig nicht sein ...", Anna to the court mistress Anna von Wolfersdorf, Stolpen 25 July 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 265 a.

The womb could contain a much greater variety of forms than “baby boys” and “baby girls” and the pregnant woman held a considerable responsibility for its contents. The feminine burden could be a child or it could not be a child – in spite of all other sign of a “completed pregnancy”. The contents could be only blood or it could be pieces of flesh and blood. If there was a child, this could be a “monster child” (a deformed child), it could be a stillborn child, or it could be the living son that everyone wished for. However, final proof of a pregnancy was available only if a child appeared; only then could the parturient know that she actually had “gone pregnant”. As Barbara Duden has shown, until the eighteenth century “the unborn” was imagined as a fully developed child, with head, body and limbs from the very moment it came into its mother’s womb,<sup>881</sup> and this explains why the miscarriages discussed above were not considered as such. In contrast, Elisabeth’s deliveries of three stillborn children in 1573, 1584, and 1585, brought forth dead, but fully developed children, and only this form of a small child provided the proof that she truly had been pregnant.

#### *The deliveries*

It is estimated that in early modern Britain around twenty-five in 1,000 women died during childbirth compared to forty in 1,000 in France. Historical demographers have not provided comparable figures for sixteenth-century “Germany” and the available material indicates that figures varied greatly from region to region and between city/town and countryside. As many as ten percent married women are thought to have died during childbirth in certain cities, but figures as low as 0.2-0.3% have been suggested for other parts of the Empire. However, as Heide Wunder observed in relation to these figures, women from the upper strata of society married at a considerably younger age than most other women and their younger age increased the risks of complications and the dangers to both mother and child.<sup>882</sup>

Anna and her contemporaries – men and women alike – could not help but be aware of the dangers associates with pregnancies and childbirth. In 1568, the electress expressed her condolences to the imperial councilor Johann Ulrich Zasius (1521-1570) who lost his wife as a result of complications during a pregnancy<sup>883</sup> and, a few months later, Anna informed Elisabeth of Mecklenburg that, “reliable news had arrived, that the wife of the

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<sup>881</sup> Duden (2002).

<sup>882</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 114-115; Hufton (1995), pp. 181-182.

<sup>883</sup> Anna to Johann Ulrich Zasius, Dresden 24 April 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 38 b – 39 a.

Spanish king on the 4th of this month, as Her Royal Dignity delivered a young son who only received the emergency baptism, died on the same day together with the child and were buried together in a grave”<sup>884</sup>.

When Anna was pregnant in 1557, her eldest child (Elisabeth) was in Denmark with Anna’s parents and the electress was desperate to have her daughter back before the time of her impending delivery, “because who knows what the dear God wants to happen to me”, she wrote to her mother,<sup>885</sup> thereby indicating her wish to see Elisabeth before she faced the risks associated with the childbirth. The awareness of the dangers is also visible in the above-mentioned letters to Sidonia and Elisabeth in which Anna expressed her gratefulness for their recovery after complicated “pregnancy” or deliveries.

Impelled by their fears, the women took all possible precautions to reduce the dangers associated with childbirth. It has already been shown how Anna communicated with Margaretha von Schleinitz and the Countess of Hohenlohe regarding remedies and treatment when complications developed during Elisabeth’s pregnancy in 1579. However, the same example also revealed, as did Anna’s letter to Sidonia from 1556, that with the exception of very particular remedies, including the widely distributed *Kinderbalsam* and *Kinderöl*,<sup>886</sup> Anna was reluctant to suggest medical remedies to her pregnant relatives and friends. According to Anna, the only true guardian (*Nothelfer*) in the childbed was God and, in an attempt to ensure his help, frequent prayers were said for the safe deliveries of numerous relatives.<sup>887</sup>

Early modern births are often described as collective dramas in which an entire village took part.<sup>888</sup> This emphasis on the collectivity of a birth is equally relevant for the arrival of a child within the princely dynasties. Considering the political-dynastic

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<sup>884</sup> “... Es seint auch gewisse Zeitung anher gelangt, das des Konigs zu Hispanien Gemahel den 4 diß monats als Ire Ko. W. eines Jung sohns gemesen, welcher nur die Gehetauffe entpfangen desselbten tages sampt dem kinde vorschieden vnd des andern tags miteinander In ein grab bestattet worden ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 19 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 133 b – 134 a. See *DWB*, vol. 13, column 954 for the variations of the expression “Nothtaufe”.

<sup>885</sup> “... den wer weis wie es der liebe gott mit mir schicken mochte ...”, Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 4 April 1557, TKUA, pk. 40-10, 2<sup>nd</sup> folder.

<sup>886</sup> For other examples of Anna sending these two remedies, see Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 11 March 1560, Kop. 509, fol. 121 b – 122 a; Anna to Agnes, Countess of Solms, Dresden 6 March 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 10 a; and Anna to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle Dresden 6 Aug. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 182 a – 183 b.

<sup>887</sup> See for example Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 13 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 68 a – b; and Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a – 16 b.

<sup>888</sup> Hufton (1995), p. 183. Birth and pregnancy must be distinguished from each other, describing the view of pregnancy in seventeenth-century Germany, Ute Daniel writes, “Schwangerschaften galten damals als lästige, eher uninteressante Krankheiten”, Daniel (1997), p. 214.

importance of the birth of a potential heir one may even argue that the collective dimension of these deliveries was greater than others. However, even if there was a great interest in the birth of a (princely) child, this did not mean that numerous people witnessed the actual delivery. In contrast, the assistants were carefully selected and the course of events was not discussed with anyone outside this small group of women.

Mothers generally made an effort to be with their daughters when they were to give birth. When Anna wanted to have her daughter back in Saxony before her delivery in 1557, it seems likely that this entailed a visit from her mother around the time of her delivery. As Anna was pregnant in 1561-1562, Dorothea began planning a trip to Saxony already three to four months before the expected due date in order to be with her daughter when the child arrived.<sup>889</sup> The dowager queen also wanted to come to Saxony for Anna's delivery in 1567, though this trip had to be cancelled because of the plague that made travels unsafe.<sup>890</sup> Likewise, Elisabeth of Mecklenburg consistently traveled to Denmark to be present when her daughter Sophie was facing childbirth.<sup>891</sup> While the daughters clearly appreciated their mothers' presence, the mothers' impetus for this practice was often stronger. Hence, when Sidonia was pregnant, her mother was greatly upset because Sidonia's sister and mother-in-law were to be present, while she had not been asked to come.<sup>892</sup> The importance mothers ascribed to their own presence also appears from a rather unusual request Dorothea of Schönburg, Anna's close friend and faithful provider of employees for her household, sent to the electress in the spring of 1569. Dorothea's daughter Margarethe (married to Count Wilhelm of Hohnstein-Vierraden) was facing her first delivery and, although the young couple currently was visiting Dorothea and Georg of Schönburg, their son-in-law wished to return to Brandenburg with Margarethe prior to her delivery. He had asked that Dorothea accompany them in order to be present for the delivery but, due to her recent illness, she was not inclined to undertake this trip and asked Anna to convince Wilhelm of Hohnstein that he and Margarethe should remain by his

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<sup>889</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Torgau 5 Jan. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 1 a - 2 b.

<sup>890</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 6 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 261 a - b, and Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, same date, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 261 b - 263 a.

<sup>891</sup> Elisabeth of Mecklenburg's presence by her daughter Sophie of Denmark during her advanced pregnancies and all of her seven deliveries appear from the letters from Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Crottendorf 27 July 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 79 a - b; Annaburg 4 Nov. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 239 b - 240 a; Annaburg 31 March 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 15 b - 16 a; Anna to Ulrich of Mecklenburg, Wolfenbüttel 24 April 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 30 b - 31 a; Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Blasern 7 July 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 43 a - 44 a; and Schneeberg 13 Aug. 1583, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 131 b - 132 b (original page no. 41 b - 42 b).

<sup>892</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a - 16 b.

parents-in-law until the child had been born. The electress did as requested and appealed to Wilhelm,

You will understand that she [Dorothea] as the mother would be greatly upset if she could not be with her daughter for the first time [her daughter's first delivery] and would have to trust unknown people and how painfully this would go to her heart if it [the delivery] did not go well (may God prevent that). Therefore, [and] because your wife already is with her mother and has only a short time before her delivery, we graciously desire You will kindly grant Your wife that she can have her first childbed with her mother.<sup>893</sup>

The letter had the desired effect and three months later Wilhelm asked Anna to be the Godmother of his newborn daughter whose baptism was to take place at the residence of his parents-in-law shortly.<sup>894</sup> Anna provided further help to Dorothea of Schönburg in connection with her daughter's first childbirth. At the end of June, she urged Dorothea to send the midwife "Mutter Mertten" back to Dresden.<sup>895</sup> As "Mutter Mertten's" return was delayed further, the electress sent a reminder and explained that, "many honorable, pregnant women are eagerly awaiting the midwife".<sup>896</sup>

"Mutter Mertten" assisted Anna with (at least) nine of her births, and the electress generously shared her competence. In 1566 the electoral commander in the Erzgebirge Wolf von Schönberg humbly requested that his wife be granted permission to borrow Anna's "personal" midwife. The electress assured him that she would like to accommodate his request but was unable to do so because, "upon the humble request from one of our beloved husband's noble servants, we have promised the same midwife to his wife who also hopes to deliver around the same time".<sup>897</sup> Anna apologized profusely for her inability

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<sup>893</sup> "... Nun konnet Ir ... erachten das Ir als d mutter ... gantz bekommerlich furfallen wirdet Wann sie das erstemal nicht selbst bey Irer tochter sein vnd ... vnbekanten leute ... vertrauen solte, do es auch anders als gluglich wohl (welchs Goth gnediglich vorhueten wolte) zueh solte, wie schmerzlich Ir solchs zu hertzen gehen wurde. Weill dan ewer Gemahelin itzo albereit bey d Fraw Mutter ist vnd nicht lang mehr zu irer geburt zeit hat ... So gesinnen wir gantz gunstig Ir wollet gedachter ewer Gemahelin freuntlich vergonnen das sie Ir erst kindtbette bey Irer mutter ... halten möge ....", Anna to Wilhelm, Count of Hohnstein-Vierraden, Dresden 29 April 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 26 b – 27 a. See also Anna to Dorothea of Schönburg, Dresden 29 April 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 26 a.

<sup>894</sup> Anna to Wilhelm, Count of Hohnstein-Vierraden, Dresden 30 June 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 41 b – 42 a.

<sup>895</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Schönburg, Dresden 30 June 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 42 b – 43 a.

<sup>896</sup> "... viel erbare schwangere Frawen vff die wehmutter mit grossen verlangen wartten ...", Anna to Dorothea of Schönburg, Kunersdorf 9 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 45 b – 46 a, and Kunersdorf 11 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 46 a – b.

<sup>897</sup> "... wir gedachte wehfraw auff vnterthenigst ... ansuch vnsers hertzlieben ... Gemahels hoffdiener eines von adel zu seinem weibe welche Ires verhoffens gleich vmb dieselbig Zeit ... niderkommen wirdet gnedigst vergönnet vnd Zugesagt [haben] ...", Anna to Wolf von Schönberg, Stolpen 8 July 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 128 a – b.



to meet the request. A few days later, the wife of the electoral huntsmaster (*Jägermeister*) Cornelius von Ruxleben turned to Anna with a similar request. Again, Anna had to decline the request and explained that “Mutter Mertten” was promised to another noblewoman around the same time. If however, this woman was “released of her burden” before Ruxleben’s wife, Anna would send the midwife to the huntsmaster’s wife.<sup>898</sup>

Simultaneous requests for “Mutter Mertten” were not unusual. In January 1573, the wife of the trusted secretary Hans Jenitz was granted permission to use her services<sup>899</sup> and, three few days later, the physician Johann Neefen presented a request for “Mutter Mertten” on behalf of the wife of the councilor David Pfeifer. Wishing to accommodate the needs of both women, Anna instructed the court mistress Catharina Kleinin to coordinate the midwife’s schedule and travels in a way that would enable her to attend to both.<sup>900</sup>

While Anna clearly made efforts to meet these requests for her midwife, the examples also show that “Mutter Mertten” was sent only to Anna’s personal acquaintances. As most other servants, early modern midwives moved within particular social groups and giving birth as well as lying-in were conditioned by the socio-political standing of the parturient or – in this case – her patrons.

The rank-specific nature of childbearing also appears from Anna’s search for a woman called Margaretha from the town Hain in 1585. Margaretha was a sister of one of August’s barber-surgeons and Anna had heard that she “serves the noblewomen in childbed”. When (not *if*) the administrators in Hain had found Margaretha they were to send her to Dresden immediately.<sup>901</sup> The need for Margaretha was presumably due to the advanced pregnancy of Anna’s daughter-in-law Sophie, who gave birth to a son five weeks after this request was sent.<sup>902</sup>

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<sup>898</sup> Anna to the wife of the huntsmaster (*Jägermeister*) Cornelius von Ruxleben, Stolpen 18 July 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 132 a – b. Already in 1561, Anna had provided Ruxleben’s wife with another midwife (from Freiberg), see Anna to Cornelius von Ruxleben, Dresden 24 Feb. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 160 a.

<sup>899</sup> Anna to Catharina Kleinin, Torgau 17 Jan. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 15 a.

<sup>900</sup> Anna to Catharina Kleinin, Torgau 20 Jan. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 15 b – 16 a. A similar case is reflected in Anna’s letters to the noble widow Elisabeth Pilug, Dresden 10 April. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 33 a, and Bockendorf 3 Aug. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 96 b – 97 a.

<sup>901</sup> “... die weiber dem Adel in den Sechswochen warten soll ...”, Anna to the Council in Hain, Dresden 25 Jan. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 50 b.

<sup>902</sup> The son Johann George was born in Dresden 5 March 1585. Anna’s anticipation of the grandchild is expressed in her letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 18 Feb. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 60 b – 61 a.

The electress also recruited a midwife for her niece, Dorothea Catharina, Burgravine of Meissen<sup>903</sup> and, when a second niece, Anna (Moritz' daughter) was approaching the time for her first delivery, her "old servant Magdalena" was sent to take care of her when in childbed. The electress assured her niece that she also would have liked to send other experienced women, including a midwife. However, knowing that the delivery would take place in Brussels, Anna felt assured that the parturient would be able to find a competent midwife there. Moreover, she was concerned that "the women in the Netherlands would consider it a disdain" if a Saxon midwife was sent to assist the young princess.<sup>904</sup>

During her first pregnancy, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, did express her wish to give birth with her mother in Saxony, and both she and Anna tried to convince Johann Casimir that it would be appropriate. Yet, Johann Casimir refused with reference to the dangers a long journey would represent to Elisabeth (and the child she was expecting).<sup>905</sup> To compensate for her own absence, Anna made arrangements that "an experienced midwife as well as two honorable noblewomen" were sent to the Palatinate to support Elisabeth in her labor.<sup>906</sup> While the two noble women were not named in 1573, the widowed noblewoman Margaretha von Schleinitz from Saxony and Anna of Hohenlohe were repeatedly sent to the Palatinate for Elisabeth's later deliveries and, as already revealed, they sent detailed descriptions of the developments to Anna and were expected to give verbal accounts upon their return to Saxony. While Anna and the Countess of Hohenlohe collaborated in various medical undertakings (see chapter 6), the crucial qualifications of the two women were their rank, their personal experiences of giving birth, and their familiarity with both Anna and Elisabeth. The importance of personal experience is revealed by Elisabeth's (step-)mother-in-law Amalia, Electress Palatine, who did not have children herself. After Elisabeth's first delivery, Amalia explained to Anna that she would have liked to be personally present at the time of the birth, but "because we as [an]

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<sup>903</sup> Anna to her niece Dorothea Katharina, Burgravine of Meissen, Dresden 5 March 1557, Kop. 509, fol. 34 a. Anna sent Dorothea Katharina a midwife from Freiburg – probably the same midwife who was sent to Ruxleben's wife in 1561, see Anna's letter to Ruxleben, Dresden 24 Feb. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 160 a.

<sup>904</sup> "... die weiber in Niderland [es] für eine vorachtung anziehen [wurden] ...", Anna to her niece Anna of Orange, Moritzburg 24 Aug. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 52 a – 53 a.

<sup>905</sup> Johann Casimir, Count Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslauter 24 June 1573, Loc. 8532/4, pp. 217 a – b, and Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 28 June 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 60 b – 61 a.

<sup>906</sup> "... eine Erfaren Hebamen neben zweyen Erbaren weiber von Adel die SL In Iren nöthen dinstlich vnd beÿständig sein mogen versehen werden sollen ...", Anna to Johann Casimir, Dresden 28 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 60 a – b, and Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 28 June 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 60 b – 61 a.

inexperienced [person] do not have knowledge of these matters, we did not want to hinder the other experienced [helpers] by being a on-looker".<sup>907</sup>

Just as the pregnancy, the actual delivery implied a responsibility of the parturient. As Ulinka Rublack has shown, women in seventeenth-century Württemberg could be brought to court for a lack of effort when in labor.<sup>908</sup> While it seems highly unlikely that this could happen to a princely woman, Elisabeth clearly felt a responsibility when her deliveries did not go well. Because Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, never gave birth to a living son, her deliveries were painful reminders of an unfulfilled duty and she considered herself to have failed. The degree to which she expressed her feeling of deficiency and grief depended upon the circumstances of the birth and after the births of her three living daughters (in 1576, 1578 and 1581), the joy overshadowed the guilt. However, after the births of the stillborn children, she struggled to come to terms with a sense of guilt, and these difficulties appear to have increased with each of the three stillborn children.

After her first pregnancy resulted in the birth of a stillborn son, Elisabeth thanked her father for his compassion but made no reference to the actual delivery and mentioned the child only as an "it". She wrote,

I thank the dear, faithful God that the Almighty has bestowed upon me so much patience in my cross, I no longer take it as hard upon myself. Rather my thoughts are that the Almighty God, who gave it to me, took it back to himself and [that he] knows better how to look after it than I could do it for him.<sup>909</sup>

In this letter, written more than two months after the birth, the stillborn son remains an "it" [es], "something" God had given and taken. But, although there were both physical and emotional difficulties after the delivery, Elisabeth gradually was able to console herself with the fact that God took "it" back because he knew better how to look after "it". Most likely, Elisabeth never saw this child. The child was not baptized and did not have a name. This left Elisabeth with only an abstract idea of the son she had given birth to. However,

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<sup>907</sup> "... Wir hetten auch selbst gern in der Person der geburts Zeit beÿgewohnt, weil wir aber dem sachen, als vnerfarn, nit vorstendig, Haben wir als ... ein zusehender leuth andre erfarnere diß orts, wie billich mit vnserer gegenwart nit verhindern wöllen ...", Amalia, Electress Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 28 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 237 a – b.

<sup>908</sup> Rublack (1996), pp. 90-93.

<sup>909</sup> "... ich dancke ... den liben treuen gott das mir seine almacht so gross gedult in meinem Kreuz verlihen hat[,] also das ich mich solches nicht mehr so hart an neme[,] sondern sein das meine gedanken der almectige gott der mirs gegeben hat hats auch wider zu sich genomen vnd hats viel besser versorget als ich es im sorgen konte ....", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to August, Kaiserslautern 19 Nov. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 167,

the phrase “ ... I no longer take it as hard upon myself ...” emphasizes that in spite of this abstract imagination of the child, Elisabeth felt a responsibility for her “failure”.

After her second stillborn child, Elisabeth’s concerns were different. In February 1584, she delivered a stillborn daughter, and three weeks later she wrote to her mother,

Although the situation, as God knows, pains my heart profoundly, I have patiently committed myself to the will of God and, because it has pleased the Almighty that the child should not receive the Holy Baptism, then I know for sure that the dear child was baptized by the blood of Jesus Christ inside my womb, because as I was carrying it I daily commended it to my faithful God.<sup>910</sup>

Again, the child was not baptized and did not have a name, but this time Elisabeth did refer to it as “the dear child” and to the way in which it had lived in her womb. This change can perhaps be explained by the experience of motherhood she had gained during the eleven years that separated the two events: during those eleven years she had given birth to three living daughters. However, the greater presence of this child – and presumably also Elisabeth’s increased theological awareness – meant that she not only was distressed about its death. This time she paid equally great attention to the fact that it had not been baptized. The argument in which she finds consolation for this was developed most clearly in Johann Bugenhagen’s widely circulated writings on the fate of children who died before they had been baptized. Contrary to the distressing, but prevalent, belief that the soul of an unbaptized child was lost, Bugenhagen maintained that when a child was born of a Christian mother who had commended her unborn child to the protection of God while carrying it in her womb, the child was granted salvation.<sup>911</sup> Bugenhagen’s work was reissued numerous times during the sixteenth century,<sup>912</sup> and his argument was reiterated in the publications of other theologians.<sup>913</sup> Elisabeth’s concerns and her summary of the Lutheran teachings shows how this idea was appropriated by a reader/listener and that it did grant consolation.

One year later, Elisabeth was again preparing for a delivery and expectations were high. Shortly before the birth, Elisabeth shared her worries with her mother,

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<sup>910</sup> “... wie wol mir der fal hertzlich zu hertzen gett das gott weis so habe ich mich doch in der liben gottes willen gedultig ergeben vnd weil sein almacht so gefallen hatt das libe kind die selige dauf nicht empfangen hatt so weis ich doch gewis das das libe kind in meinem leibe mitt dem blutt iesu christi gedaufft ist[,] den ichs meinem liben gott weil ich mitt im gangen bin meinem drewen gott daglich befohlen ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 23 March 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 248.

<sup>911</sup> Bugenhagen (1542). See also Burckhard (1912), p. 13.

<sup>912</sup> The collection at HAB contains editions from 1542, 1551, 1552, 1557 and 1575.

<sup>913</sup> For an example of another authors who communicated Bugenhagen’s argument, see Salmuth (1583), pp. 368-377.

[O]h my most beloved mother, as Your Grace know I am not good at giving birth and for that reason I have had the Countess of Hohenlohe brought to me and asked her that she will come back when the dear God releases me. The almighty God knows that I am not good at giving birth and the dear countess helps me very much in the labor, God knows that, after God, I put my faith in her. Oh most beloved mother, during the writing of this letter, all kinds of desolation came to me, may the dear God continue to protect me and release me with grace at the right time”.<sup>914</sup>

When this passage was written, Elisabeth believed it would be another nine weeks before the child arrived. Yet, she was terrified and blamed herself for not being adroit at giving birth. Only one week later, the labor began and ten days after the delivery, she dictated the following passage in the letter that was sent to Anna,

[U]ntil now [we] had been going in the good hope that the Almighty God would delight us and our kind, much beloved lord and husband with a young heir. Nevertheless, and with feelings of sorrow and worries, we cannot keep from Your Grace’s [knowledge] that we have been released of the burden we have carried and brought to the world a young daughter, though unfortunately dead.<sup>915</sup>

This time Elisabeth’s main concerns were not centered on the loss of a child or the fact that it had not been baptized. The dominating thought was that she had – yet again – failed to deliver the heir that everyone had hoped for.

Anna tried to console her daughter with the fact that the poor child, if it had lived, would have been baptized and brought up in the “false, Godless, and distorted” Zwinglian/Calvinist beliefs of its father. For that reason, “it is all the easier to commend this matter to the eternal God with Christian patience”.<sup>916</sup> However, Elisabeth was also instructed to pray that God again would bless her, “in which case Your Beloved will know

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<sup>914</sup> “... ach mein hertzallerlibeste frawmutter weil den EG wissen ... das ich iar ein schwere binderin bin habe ich die greffen von holloeh ... hir her zu mir hollen lassen vnd habe sie wider gebotten das sie die zeitt wolte wider bei mir sein wen mich der libe gott entbinden wird ... [.] nu weis der almechtige gott das ich ein sehr schwerliche binderin bin vnd mir die gutte greffen in der zeit ... sehr behilfflich ist also das gott weis ich mich ... nach gott mein drost ... auf sie habe ... [.] ach mein hertzallerlibeste frawmutter in verfertigung dieses schreiben ist mir allen hand drewbsal for komen ... der libe gott wolle mich forter schutzen ... vnd mich zu rechter zeitt mitt gnaden entbinden ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 30 Jan. 1585, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 261 a – b.

<sup>915</sup> “... ob wir wol bishero inn guttes hoffnung gestanden sein Göttliche allmacht würde vnns vnd vnseren freuntlichen hertzgeliebten herren vnd gemhall mit einem Jungen erben erfrewen[,] so konen wir das EG gleichwol mit traurigen bekümmerten gemüth nit pergen ... [das wir] ... vnserere getragenen büerden entpunden worden vnnd ein Junge dochter ... doch leider todt ... zur weldt geboren ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, without date [9 Feb.] 1585, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 262.

<sup>916</sup> “... falschen Gottlosen Ihrthumb ...” / “... So ist dieses fahl den ewige ... Gott, desto leichter mit Christlicher geduldt in seinem willen zubefehlen ...”, Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 20 Feb. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 30 a – b.

how to be more careful”,<sup>917</sup> Anna admonished her. Hence, also in the electress’s view, Elisabeth carried part of the responsibility for the continued absence of an heir and the untimely delivery of the stillborn daughter.

The responsibility Elisabeth felt for her “failure” to provide her husband, herself, and her other relatives with an heir was considerable. The most unequivocal expression of this can be found in the fact that, although a pregnant woman could expect considerations from those who surrounded her, Elisabeth did not once suggest that her marital difficulties or the distress she felt as a result of Johann Casimir’s forceful introduction of Zwinglian/Calvinist practices in his territories (see chapter 9), contributed to her unsuccessful deliveries. It was her reaction to these developments – not the developments as such – that caused the problems and, as Anna wrote, Elisabeth would simply have to take greater care and not allow herself to get upset or become despondent. Hence, in contrast to the conclusion drawn by Ulinka Rublack,<sup>918</sup> Elisabeth did not appear to have employed their reproductive capacity as a significant means with which she could negotiate her positions in relation to her husbands. Nevertheless, and as it will be demonstrated next, their pregnancies and deliveries did exempt them from some duties.

#### *The consorts’ duties during pregnancies and lying-ins*

During the summer of 1569, Anna and August were planning a trip to Hessen and Anna expressed her anticipation of this chance to see Wilhelm and Sabina of Hessen. The plans for the trip were prompted by Wilhelm’s above-mentioned request that the electoral couple would be the godparents of his unborn “son” and Sabina predicted that the child would be born before Bartholomew’s Day (24 August). But Anna was also pregnant and expected the arrival of her tenth child in the middle of October. Already in July, when the timing of the trip was being discussed, Anna asked for forgiveness if her advanced pregnancy proved to be an obstacle that prohibited her from traveling.<sup>919</sup> As it turned out, Anna’s concerns were unfounded. As already revealed, the electoral couple was “un-invited” when the landgravine had twin-daughters rather than the desired son. Nevertheless, Anna’s concern that she may be unable to travel reveals that a pregnancy could interfere with the otherwise tight itineraries of princely couples.

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<sup>917</sup> “... Auff welchen fahl DL sich auch besser in Acht zu haben wirdt wissen ...”, Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 20 Feb. 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 30 a – b.

<sup>918</sup> Rublack (1996).

<sup>919</sup> Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Dresden 2 July 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 43 b – 44 b.

Similarly, as a result of advanced pregnancy, Christina, Duchess of Schleswig-Holstein, declined the invitation to the wedding celebrations of Anna's daughter Elisabeth and Johann Casimir of the Palatinate in 1570. When Anna received Christina's declination, she apologized that the duchess had even been invited: had the electress known that Christina was pregnant, no invitation would have been extended and she would not have been placed in the uncomfortable position of having to decline it.<sup>920</sup> Both this example and Anna's letter to Sabina of Hessen indicate that a pregnancy instantly excused the consort from dynastic obligations as the wedding in Heidelberg or the planned baptism in Hessen. However, while August intended to travel to Hessen with or without Anna, Christina's pregnancy also impacted her husband's calendar. Her husband, Duke Adolph, did attend Elisabeth and Johann Casimir's wedding, but Anna was concerned about his potential absence from his wife when she was due to give birth and endorsed her uncle's decision to travel to Heidelberg only after Christina had ensured her that, according to her "calculations", he would have sufficient time to return. Even then, though, Anna urged him to return home as soon as the wedding had taken place.<sup>921</sup>

The two examples show that an advanced pregnancy could define limits for the activities of both men and women. Yet, Anna's letter to Sabina of Hessen also suggests that if the electress's pregnancy went well, she was prepared to travel even during the final months prior to a delivery. And indeed, in September 1569, she and August first entertained the electoral couple of Brandenburg in Saxony and subsequently accompanied them to Kopenick. She returned to Dresden on 25 September and four weeks later she gave birth to a son.<sup>922</sup>

While pregnancies could set limits for the women's mobility, they generally continued their correspondence until only a few days before the birth of a child. Two days before Elisabeth gave birth to a healthy daughter on 5 May 1578, she sent a long autographed letter to Anna, though she did apologize that her reply had not followed Anna's latest letter sooner. The reason was that, "sitting and bending is so difficult for me

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<sup>920</sup> Anna to Christina of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, Karlsbad 17 April 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 132 b – 133 a.

<sup>921</sup> Anna to Christina of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, Heidelberg 5 June 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 149 b – 150 a.

<sup>922</sup> Anna summarized her travels during September in the letters to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, dated Grunheide 13 Sep., Kopenick 20 Sep., and Dresden 26 Sep. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 58 a – 59 a.

that I cannot describe it to Your Grace".<sup>923</sup> Similarly, Anna dictated letters to both relatives and various employees/administrators until only a few days before her deliveries: in 1557, until three days before the birth;<sup>924</sup> in 1563, letters were sent on the very same day as the delivery;<sup>925</sup> and, in 1569, the last letter was sent two days before her delivery.<sup>926</sup> The electress also resumed her correspondence only a few days after her deliveries: having given birth on 7 October 1558, her letter-books resume on 9 October;<sup>927</sup> in 1563, the letter-books are active from four days after the delivery;<sup>928</sup> and, in 1569, letters were sent in her name six days after the birth.<sup>929</sup> After the birth of her daughter Maria on 28 January 1565, she resumed the correspondence already the following day<sup>930</sup> and, when she gave birth to her son Adolph in 1571, this was announced with unreserved joy in a letter – penned by a secretary – only hours after his arrival.<sup>931</sup>

Because the preserved drafts for Anna's outgoing letters were penned by secretaries, one should be careful not to draw too strong conclusions on the basis of these examples. However, the letters from her daughter reveal that it was the norm rather than the exception that a princely woman resumed her correspondence shortly after giving birth. Only hours after Elisabeth had given birth to a daughter in July 1576, a secretary prepared a letter – in Elisabeth's name – informing Anna of the happy news and the following day Elisabeth sent an autograph letter for her mother.<sup>932</sup> Approximately three weeks after her delivery in January 1581, she wrote a long autograph letter to Anna and apologized that she had not written her since her daughter's birth, thereby revealing that it was considered unusual and required an apology when a childbirth hindered communication with even the closest relatives for this long. The explanation was that Elisabeth, shortly before the birth and

<sup>923</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 3 May 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 115. Already in March, Elisabeth had complained that she was so large that she hardly could bend while writing, see her letter to August, Kaiserslautern 11 March 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 136

<sup>924</sup> See Anna to Balthasar Klammer, Councilor to Duke Franz Otto of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Dresden 30 April 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 44 a – b, the son Joachim was born on 3 May 1557.

<sup>925</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 4 Oct. 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 110 b, the daughter Dorothea was born on the same day.

<sup>926</sup> Her last letter before the birth of August (23 Oct. 1569-12 Feb. 1570) is dated Dresden 20 Oct. 1569 and the next is dated Dresden 29 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 73 b – 74 b.

<sup>927</sup> Anna to Hans Harrer (the Saxon Treasurer (*Kammermeister*)), Dresden 9 Oct. 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 82 a – b.

<sup>928</sup> Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 8 Oct. 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 112 a.

<sup>929</sup> Her last letter before the birth of August (23 Oct. 1569-12 Feb. 1570) is dated Dresden 20 Oct. 1569, and the next is dated Dresden 29 Oct. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 73 b – 74 b.

<sup>930</sup> Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 29 Jan. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 6 b – 7 a.

<sup>931</sup> Anna to Anna of Bavaria, Stolpen 8 July 1571, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 9 a.

<sup>932</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 26 July 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 86 a – b (penned by a secretary), and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 27 July 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 87 a (autograph).



during the first days after the delivery, had been so ill that she believed herself to be dying.<sup>933</sup>

The rapid resumption of letter-writing and the fact that Anna sent letters not only to close relatives but also instructions to the employees within the household and territory show that advanced pregnancies, childbirths, and the lying-ins did not interrupt this part of the consorts' daily routines for long. This, of course, raises questions about the degree to which a princely parturient was expected to, allowed to, and/or wanted to respect the prescriptions for the lying-in after a delivery.

As demonstrated by Susan Karant-Nunn, the six-week confinement of a parturient and the ritual of churching represented difficulties to the reformers. Prior to the Reformation the women's seclusion and the subsequent and purifying ritual of churching were explained with reference to women's increased susceptibility to the Devil during pregnancy and childbirth. The Lutheran theologians would not, however, accept that childbearing made women "unclean", because both marriage and reproduction within marriage were instituted by God and therefore honorable. After lengthy discussions, the Lutheran authorities argued for the continuance of churching, *not* because the women were unclean, but because the mothers needed time to recover and look after their newborn. Only after the mother had received the Eucharist during the ensuing churching did she re-enter the greater community and could return to her daily routines.<sup>934</sup> While this represented a strong continuity, Karant-Nunn also observed considerable variations between the different Lutheran territories especially during the first decades after the Reformation.<sup>935</sup> Yet, variations can also be found during the latter half of the century and among the princely women.

The consorts often referred to their lying-in, but the exact prescriptions appear to have been subject to rather liberal interpretation. Approximately three weeks after Anna had given birth to a daughter (born 16 November 1567), Sabina of Brandenburg requested the recipe for a particular salve from her. Anna replied that because she had placed it "somewhere else" and, because her current lying-in prevented her from searching for it herself, Sabina would have to be patient. As soon as the forty days had passed, she would look for it and send it to Sabina. The phrase Anna used to excuse herself was, "because we

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<sup>933</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 20 Jan. 1581, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 213 a – b.

<sup>934</sup> Karant-Nunn (1997), pp. 80 and 86-87.

<sup>935</sup> Karant-Nunn (1997), pp. 78-80.

ourselves cannot yet walk about and outside”.<sup>936</sup> In this case, Anna clearly followed the prevailing instructions concerning the lying-in and specifically referred to its duration of forty days. While the availability of servants, secretaries, and nurses allowed the consorts to conduct business almost as usual as soon as their physical recovery permitted, certain matters – as for example the request for a confidential recipe – could not be entrusted to a servant and had to wait until Anna again was free to leave the house.

Two years later, Anna again referred to her lying-in. Having given birth on 23 October 1569, Anna looked back on the past six weeks in a letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, “because the gracious God inflicted our heartily beloved lord and husband with great pains in the left arm and [because] we have kept watch of and had great worries about this, we have not exactly had six quiet weeks in our childbed”.<sup>937</sup> Whether or not this meant that Anna and August actually saw each other during these weeks remain unclear, but the electress’s letter-books do indicate that she was particularly active during this lying-in. Next to the frequent but usual letters to her relatives and female friends, she corresponded with the Danish nobleman Peder Oxe, her brother’s servant Hans Spiegel, Wenzel III of Schlesien-Teschen, Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia, August’s councilors in Dresden as well as several Saxon local authorities during the first six weeks after the delivery.<sup>938</sup> The relatively stronger presence of these male-addressees during this lying-in indicate that, contrary to what she was accustomed to from her previous births, August’s illness meant that she had to engage in the daily administration of the household – and perhaps even of matters related to the territory – during this period.

In spite of these variations, Anna instructed her niece Anna of Orange to hold her first childbed in accordance with the prescriptions – and her rank,

Your Beloved will protect Yourself as much as possible and not leave [the childbed] too soon, rather [you should] wait until after the usual time as it is appropriate for a princely person. Your Beloved will find that we mean this well and that it will serve You to the best and [help You] regain Your former strength and health.<sup>939</sup>

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<sup>936</sup> Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 7 Dec. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 290 a – 291 a. See also Sabina’s autograph reply, dated 14 Dec. 1567, Loc. 8528/4, pp. 14 a – b.

<sup>937</sup> “... Wir haben ... nicht fast ruige ... Sechs wochen In unserm Kindbett gehabt, dan der Barmherzige Gott unserm herzlichsten Herrn vnd Gemahl mit grosser schmerzen In dem linck Arm Heimgesucht, darob wir viel Wachens vnd Bekümmernuß gehabt ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 2 Dec. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 84 a – 86 b.

<sup>938</sup> See Anna’s outgoing letters dated between 29 Oct. and 2 Dec. 1569 in DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 74 a – 86 a, and DrHSA Kop. 356 a, fol. 224 b – 253 b.

<sup>939</sup> “... Sie wolle sich ... souiel muglich vorschonen vnd ... vnnd nicht zu baldt widerumb heraus kunfftig machen, Sondern der gewonlichen Zeitt wie sich einer furstlichen Person zimbt aus warten, Dann EL werde befinden, das wir es treulich meinene, vnd es derselben selbst zum besten vnd wider bringung Ires voriges

In this passage Anna summarized the Lutheran reasoning behind the lying-in. However, by highlighting its importance both for her niece's health and for her reputation (as it is appropriate for a princely person), she revealed that the theological prescriptions frequently were disregarded.

The letters Elisabeth sent from the Palatinate to her mother in Saxony during the first weeks after her deliveries suggest that she remained in daily contact with Johann Casimir during her supposed seclusion. Prior to the examples from this bi-confessional marriage, it should be added that while the Zwinglian/Calvinist theologians discontinued the rite of churching, the women still were expected to remain secluded during the six-week-long lying-in. However, as a Lutheran and in spite of her husband's disagreement with the rite of churching, Elisabeth did practice this.<sup>940</sup> It can therefore be expected that whatever subtle differences one could find between the Lutheran and Zwinglian/Calvinist prescriptions for the lying-in, Elisabeth received her instructions from her Lutheran mother/parents. As Elisabeth gave birth to her second child in 1576, Johann Casimir was not present and returned to their residence in Kaiserslautern approximately three weeks after the birth of their daughter. In the first letter Elisabeth sent to Anna after her husband's return, she summarized the couple's long and difficult exchange regarding the baptism of the child and lamented the fact that Johann Casimir had already departed from Kaiserslautern again.<sup>941</sup> While she does not write that they had seen each other, her account of their interactions and her frequent usage of the phrase "he/I said" suggest that they did speak face-to-face (the content of their exchanges are discussed in chapter 9). This pattern reappears during the last weeks of Elisabeth's lying-in in 1581. Approximately a week before she intended to have her churching, she recounted an extensive discussion she had had with Johann Casimir concerning his demand that she, even after the end of six-week-long childbed, should continue to dress as she did during this period of confinement. In the account she consistently used the terms "my lord [and husband] *said* to me" (my emphasis), indicating that this exchange also took place in person.<sup>942</sup> And it seems as if

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stercke vnd gesundtheitt gereichen wirdt ...", Anna to her niece Anna of Orange, Frankfurt a. M. 12 Nov. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 64 b – 65 a.

<sup>940</sup> See the reference to Elisabeth's churching in her letter to Anna, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 14 Feb. 1581, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 214 a – b.

<sup>941</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 26 Aug. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 99 a – b.

<sup>942</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Kaiserslautern 14 Feb. 1581, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 214 a – b. The discussion concerning Elisabeth's dress was of great confessionals significance. As a Zwinglian/Calvinist, Johann Casimir is likely to have wanted his Lutheran wife to dress modestly than the

Elisabeth's husband was not the only person who was granted access to her during her lying-in. Three weeks after she had given birth to a stillborn daughter in 1585, her parents sent a Saxon delegate to the Palatinate and Elisabeth subsequently assured her mother that "I have heard Your Graces motherly admonition [presented] by the councilor of my lord [and] father".<sup>943</sup>

The most striking example of a liberal interpretation of the prescriptions for the women's confinement appears in the brief autograph notes Anna's brother, Frederik II, made in his calendar. On 26 July 1583 Frederik wrote "[t]oday my Sophie was released [of her female burden] and had a son". Five weeks later, he wrote, "[t]oday I went to Haderslev [and] the same night my Sophie lay with me again". Finally, on 5 September, that is exactly six weeks after Sophie had given birth to a son, her husband noted, "[t]oday my Sophie went to church".<sup>944</sup> These succinct notes suggest that while Sophie remained at the residence in Haderslev, the couple resumed sexual contact prior to Sophie's churching. This was a clear breach of the theological prescriptions that stipulated that the woman was not to engage in sexual activity with her husband until after her churching.<sup>945</sup>

All of these examples show that the Lutheran princesses practiced a degree of confinement and adhered to the practice of churching. However, they also indicate that the new justification for the lying-in may have opened room for more liberal interpretations of the prescriptions. If the women no longer were considered unclean and if they recovered well from their deliveries, they could resume their normal duties, including the sexual relationship with their husband, even prior to their churching.

Scholars disagree profoundly as to whether the lying-in represented yet another way in which men exercised control over women or if it offered women a chance to escape an otherwise suppressive environment.<sup>946</sup> Drawing upon the arguments presented first by Natalie Zemon Davis and developed further by Adrian Wilson, Barbara Harris maintains that the aristocratic women of late-medieval and early-modern England during these

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Lutheran authorities prescribed. Elisabeth did not describe the difference between her Saxon dresses and the ones he had made for her in detail, but revealed that they new ones (i.e. the ones Johann Casimir had had made for her) were black. In an attempt to ensure the approval of her parents, Elisabeth sent a copy of the pattern for the new skirts to Saxony.

<sup>943</sup> "... EG mütterliche erinderung habe ich von meines herren vatters cantzeler angehört ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 29 Feb. 1585, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 263.

<sup>944</sup> "Y dach bleff mit Soffye farlösst och fych ent sönt ..." / "Y dach dro ieg tyl Haddersschleff ...; samme nat lae mint Soffye huss meg igent" / "Y dach gich mint Soffye y kyrke", from "Kong Frederik II's Kalenderoptegnelser for Aarene 1583, 1584 og 1587" (1872-1873), pp. 13-14.

<sup>945</sup> Karant-Nunn (1997), p. 79.

<sup>946</sup> Karant-Nunn (1997), pp. 72-90; Wilson (1990), pp. 87-88; Harris (2002), pp. 106-107.

unique periods of their lives were “moved ... into a female space controlled by other women” and that, for this period of time, they enjoyed a rare exemption from their husband’s authority.<sup>947</sup> Although Anna lamented the turbulence of her lying-in in 1569, thereby indicating that some degree of quietness was granted to the post-parturient, the princely women of Lutheran Germany do not appear to have lived in an exclusive female space during the six weeks that followed childbirth. Most of the women lived in some degree of physical seclusion from men during the first week or two after childbirth, but it was rare that they remained in the female sphere for six weeks. The numerous references to some form of interaction between husband and wife also suggest that even if “men in general” were kept at a distance, the husbands continued to see and speak with their wives, and Elisabeth’s account of her discussions with Johann Casimir concerning her way of dressing shows that he continued to claim his husbandly authority. In short, the women were not exempted from the male authority that structured their immediate family and by way of their speedy resumption of letter writing (to both men and women) they continued to be embedded in the larger patriarchal society. But they also continued to exercise the authority their rank conferred upon them.

Pregnancies and deliveries are prominent throughout Anna’s correspondence. However, the general impression is that when a pregnancy and childbirth proceeded without complications, the reproductive duties of the consorts did not interfere drastically with their other responsibilities. The women often continued to travel until shortly before the delivery and resumed the duties they could fulfill without leaving the house within a matter of days after their deliveries. Yet, advanced pregnancies were instantly accepted as a legitimate reason if the mother-to-be chose to refrain from travel. However, as the example of Elisabeth and Johann Casimir reveals, this also meant that the father-to-be by way of his husbandly authority could refuse his wife the right to travel with reference to the potential danger this could represent to the unborn child.

### **Politics and the reproductive duties of the consort**

As outlined in the introduction, this chapter has examined how the importance of childbearing, particularly the preference for sons over daughter made itself manifest in the exchanges between Anna and other consorts and rulers. It has also been examined how the

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<sup>947</sup> Harris (2002), pp. 106-107; see also Davis (1975), Wilson (1990) and the brief discussion by Bastl (2000), pp. 473-476.

women responded to the expectations they faced, how it conditioned their relationship to their bodies; and to what degree their reproductive duties structured their lives.

In the first section, it was demonstrated that the preference for sons was articulated in very straightforward terms: when a daughter was born, the hopes for a son in the near future were instantly explicated. Moreover, the desired sons were not simply referred to as sons but heirs, future rulers, and princes. By way of this terminology and the celebrations that marked the birth of a son, the women could not but be acutely aware of the dependency between the political-dynastic status quo and their reproductive duties. The unequivocal preference for sons conflicted with the religious teaching promoted by Luther and the women (or at least Anna) skillfully employed the religious teachings to counter the disappointment that was associated with the birth of a daughter.

The correspondence between Anna and Elisabeth provides a rare impression of the ways in which a princely woman responded to the expectations related to childbearing. The detailed accounts Elisabeth sent of her (assumed) pregnancies and the bodily changes she sensed demonstrate that she monitored her body closely. The exchanges between Anna, Elisabeth, and the Saxon servants/court mistresses who were sent to the Palatinate also show that Elisabeth was subject to her mother's close scrutiny – represented by the Saxon servants/court mistresses, who dutifully reported to the electress. Once Elisabeth had realized the importance her mother attributed to the notification of a potential pregnancy, she complied with the expectations and volunteered the information about her bodily changes to Anna. The first signs of a pregnancy were interpreted very cautiously. Even after the moment of quickening, some uncertainty prevailed. Only after the child was born, could the pregnancy be verified. Nevertheless, as soon as the somatic changes that suggested a pregnancy were noticeable, the women were expected to conduct themselves with the utmost considerations for the “fruit” that may be there. Elisabeth's reactions to her miscarriages reveal that the women felt betrayed and sensed guilt if they had drawn conclusions about a potential pregnancy that subsequently did not result in the birth of a child.

Both Anna and Elisabeth considered a woman to bear a considerable responsibility for the delivery of a living child. While Elisabeth expressed her sense of guilt by referring to herself as being a “difficult deliverer” [not good at giving birth], Anna admonished her to conduct herself more carefully if she again got pregnant. The ways in which princely women took upon themselves the responsibility for the dynasty's future are also

perceptible in the efforts they made to overcome the potential difficulties they faced with regard to conceiving and giving birth. This is most strikingly revealed in the case of Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, who desperately wanted to consult the *Pfaffe* who allegedly had helped her two sisters-in-law to fulfill their reproductive duties. Although the reference to the *Pfaffe* remains a singular example, the frequently reiterated wish for an heir suggest that the absence of an heir constituted a much greater and more frequent concern than the division of property and titles between two or more sons. In other words, fertility was more important to the survival of a dynastic state than the intensely researched inheritance rules.

Examining the expectations of princely women with regard to pregnancies and deliveries and the ways in which the women described their somatic experiences, there is no doubt that they, their relatives, and the servants who assisted them considered the reproductive capacity of a princely woman to be of crucial importance. In anachronistic terms, one may say that the female body was a key resource for the princely women, their marital dynasty, and the entire political system. This corresponds to what Linda Gregerson concluded in her work on the Tudor court: that the body of the queen was not hers to use. However, as refreshingly tangible as this conclusion may appear, it does not recognize the complex nature of the consort's body.

Early modern bodies were not simply "bodies" but integral parts of a person. Barbara Duden has stressed that the distinction between a biological body and a social body developed only gradually during the early modern period,<sup>948</sup> and Natalie Zemon Davis departs from a similar premise in her discussion of the early modern self. According to Davis the boundaries around both the conceptual and the bodily self were shifting and open, "because of openings into other people's bodies and minds, it was not always certain where one person ended and another began", Davis writes.<sup>949</sup> This meant – among other things – that humans, in the words of Caroline Bynum Walker, *were* their bodies (rather than souls who temporarily inhabited the body).<sup>950</sup>

The preserved order of Anna's incoming letters reveals the strong social embeddedness the electress perceived her correspondents to exist within: the letters she received from Elisabeth were bound together with the letters from her husband, parents-in-

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<sup>948</sup> Duden (1987), pp. 20-25.

<sup>949</sup> Davis (1986), pp. 53 and 59.

<sup>950</sup> See Caroline Walker Bynum's essay "The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages" in Bynum (1992), p. 224. See also Labouvie (2001) and Rublack (2001).

law, sister- and brother-in-law but also with those from her court mistresses and chaplain.<sup>951</sup> At the same time, Elisabeth remained part of her parents and whatever she did reflected upon her parents. The frequently recurring term *Blutsfreund* or *Blutsverwandte* (“blood-friend/blood-relative” or kin) as well as the rarer, but very graphic, expression *leibliche Schwester* (“bodily” – or biological – sister),<sup>952</sup> reflect some of the ways in which this bodily dimension of the (dynastic) sense of belonging was articulated.

In the context of these observations, the body of the consort – or rather, the consort with both her body and her soul – appears as one part of the greater collectives within which she gained her self-understanding. She was at once an extension of her blood relatives (in the very literal meaning of the term) and the vessel that had been chosen to “enflesh” the blood of her new dynasty for the future.<sup>953</sup> However, because the theories of gestation emphasized the importance of the mother’s spiritual/emotional condition at least as much as her physical well-being, this ability to enflesh her husband’s dynasty was dependent not simply on her body, but on her as an entire person. While this implied that a woman had a considerable responsibility for childbearing (it was *her* not her body who held the key to the dynasty’s future), it also meant that it was shared – emotionally and through the scrutiny of her body – with the social context. Whether the pregnant woman wanted it and/or benefited from this or not, the closest relatives and most trusted female members of the household took active part in the process.

The awareness of a person as an entity of inseparable body and soul also facilitates a better understanding of the ways in which the responsibility for childbearing appears to have been shared by God and the mother, as noted in the first part of the chapter. When the body was an integral part of the person, God’s will was made manifest not simply in thoughts and emotions but in tangible bodily changes including the course of a pregnancy and the outcome of a delivery. The woman could do anything that was “humanly”

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<sup>951</sup> See chapter 2 and Arenfeldt (2004).

<sup>952</sup> For usages of of the terms *Blutsverwandt/Blutsverwandtnis* and *Blutsfreund*, see for example: Anna to her uncle Hans of Schleswig-Holstein-Hadersleben, Dresden 4 Oct. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 6 b – 7 b; Anna to Balthasar Klammer, Councilor to Duke Franz Otto of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Dresden 30 April 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 44 a – b; Anna to Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Leipzig 12 Jan. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 180 b – 181 a; and Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 25 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 126 a – 127 a. For Anna’s usages of the term “... *leibliche Schwester* ...” see her letter to Elisabeth of Henneberg (born duchess of Württemberg; 1548-1592), Dippoldiswalde 21 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 356 b – 357 a.

<sup>953</sup> The term “enfleshed” is from Bynum (1992), p. 215, see also her discussion of the more pronounced bodiliness of women in the late middle ages, pp. 214-238.



possible, but God was ultimately the one who controlled the affairs of the world – including the consort's body.<sup>954</sup>

As will be addressed in chapter 9, Anna kept a close watch not only over her daughter's body: the electress's instructions regarding her daughter's faith were at least as frequent than those pertaining to her body. Nevertheless, the two are comparable and both are expressions of Elisabeth's double dynastic embeddedness: she was an extension of her relatives. Some may object that this emphasis on social and bodily embeddedness can be interpreted as something that limited the woman's ability to act autonomously but, as stressed by Natalie Zemon Davis, embeddedness will only be exaggerated if its ability to prompt self-awareness is forgotten.<sup>955</sup> In other words, to be was to belong – and both being and belonging contained a spiritual/emotional as well as a bodily dimension.

In the introduction to this chapter, the conflicting conclusions drawn by Ute Daniel and Barbara Harris concerning the way in which the birth of a son influenced the position of a consort were mentioned. The analysis of the Lutheran consorts in sixteenth-century Germany suggests – as Harris argued in her work on English aristocratic women – that the fulfillment of this duty empowered the consorts. Daniel's suggestion that princely woman (at the German baroque court) risked losing influence once an heir was born, is not applicable to the sixteenth-century dynasties, where the consort's position appears to have been in greater jeopardy if she did *not* deliver an heir. The numerous pregnancies of most princely women (for example Anna, Elisabeth, Sabine of Hessen-Kassel, Sabine of Brandenburg) were partially motivated by a collectively shared desire to have at least one heir. In this way, the unfulfilled duty presumably did mean, as Daniel rightly points out, that the women continued to have access to their husbands. However, the correlation between an active sexual relation and the consort's power is much too crude. As the troubled marriage between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir reminds us (see chapter 9), the continued pregnancies did not mean that the prince and the consort had anything but purely physical contact. In addition, Daniel's conclusion does not take the fragility of a child into account. As the rather extreme case of Anna's children shows, it could take as many as nine sons for one to survive to adulthood. How then did the absence of a son undermine the position of the consort? Three marriages among Anna's closest relatives suggest that continued absence of an heir contributed to marital difficulties: the marriages of her sister-

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<sup>954</sup> Elisabeth used the term "menschlich" when she described her faith in Anna of Hohenlohe as opposed to her faith in God in the letter to Anna, Heidelberg 30 Jan. 1585, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 261 a – b.

<sup>955</sup> Davis (1986), p. 63

in-law Sidonia, her daughter Elisabeth, and her niece Anna all ended tragically and none of the three women had given birth to a living son. However, because the same three marriages suffered from confessional conflicts between the spouses and, because two of the three marriages were ultimately terminated because of adultery,<sup>956</sup> one should not overestimate the correlation between the absence of an heir and a failed marriage. This caution is all the more important because one also finds marriages without sons that appear to have been a success in all other respects (for example Elisabeth and Ulrich of Mecklenburg who had only one daughter).<sup>957</sup> The consort's "failure" to deliver an heir represented a serious challenge to a marriage and, if it already was under strain, the unfulfilled desire for a son doubtlessly contributed to its further deterioration, not least because the consort rarely could become a full-fledged member of her "new" dynasty without being the mother of the next generation. Once a son was born, the consort was – literally – "incorporated" into her new dynasty and the "natural" motherly love she felt for her children meant that she always would defend the interests of her son and, hence, of her "new" dynasty.<sup>958</sup> In other words, her love for the children was considered to overrule whatever conflicting interests of her natal dynasty that she may have (been) identified with. In this way the children, and particularly the son(s), empowered their mothers. The links the women established between the birth of a son and the future of the territory as well as the dynasty show that they too were aware of this.

In closing, it must be added that a consort's responsibility for the dynasty's biological future extended further than to pregnancies and childbirths. Once the child was born, it had to be kept alive, brought up to become an honorable prince or princess and, as demonstrated in chapter 4, married to a suitable husband or wife. Although the correspondence of Anna of Saxony contains ample information on the mothers' efforts to keep their children sound both in body and soul, this will have to be examined in future research.

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<sup>956</sup> Regarding the marriage of Anna and Wilhelm of Orange, see von Weber (1864) and Kruse (1934); regarding Sidonia and Erich of Braunschweig-Calenberg, see von Weber (1858) and Merkel (1899).

<sup>957</sup> A similar point is noted by Harris (2002), p. 241.

<sup>958</sup> Puppel (2004), pp. 59-82.

## Chapter 6

### The Consort's Care for the Ill and Women in Labor

In chapter 3 it was demonstrated how the sixteenth-century theologians lauded Anna and other consorts for the care with which they looked after their subjects. Some of the authors made explicit reference to Anna's apothecary and the generosity with which she shared both remedies and advice. Like the pious St. Elisabeth of Thuringia, Anna was supposed to have attended personally to the poor, the ill and the women in childbed. Although some of these claims remain unsubstantiated, Anna's interest in medicine is well documented. Karl von Weber devoted sixty pages of his biography of the electress to a detailed presentation of the remedies she produced and, since the publication of his work in 1865, Anna's competence and interest in medicine and apothecarial "science" has been part of her standard biography.<sup>959</sup>

Given the extensive attention that has been paid to Anna's apothecarial interests, it is remarkable that these activities have not been explicitly related to her office as female consort. The purpose of this chapter is to address this by demonstrating how Anna and other consorts viewed their wide-ranging medical and apothecarial undertakings as an expression of their responsibilities as *Landesmutter*.

The fear of disease and death were fundamental forces in early modern Europe.<sup>960</sup> It is widely acknowledged that women were active contributors to the practice of medicine and apothecarial "science" that sought to counter the immanent dangers to the extent that God permitted.<sup>961</sup> Yet, much research has focused on the (more or less successful) attempts to exclude women from an increasingly professionalized medical sector.<sup>962</sup> The process of professionalization constitutes an important meta-context within which the medical practices of the female consort must be considered. However, if one is to gain an

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<sup>959</sup> Von Weber (1865), chapter 11 titled, "Anna's medicinische Thätigkeit", pp. 425-486. The chapter is summarized by Sturmhoefel (1906) pp. 284-292. See also Sommerfeldt (1924) and Peickert (1933) for supplementary information. Anna's apothecarial interests are also emphasized in the shorter biographies of her in *DBL*, *DKBL*, and in the article on August in *ADB*, vol. 1, pp. 674-680.

<sup>960</sup> Cunningham and Grell (2000), especially chapter 5 titled, "The Pale Horse: Disease, Disaster and Death", pp. 247-318; and the contributions to *Fear in early modern society*, ed. by William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts (1997).

<sup>961</sup> Lindemann (1999), pp. 104-105; Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 98-104; Wiesner (2000), pp. 116-117. For the most recent and comprehensive analysis (though confined to French material), see Broomhall (2004).

<sup>962</sup> In-depth investigations and/or good case studies include: Labouvie (1999); Flügge (1998); the contributions to *The Art of Midwifery. Early Modern Midwives in Europe* (1993).

understanding of the ways in which Anna and her colleagues viewed their medical undertakings, it would not be productive to depart from the question regarding exclusion.

As Robert Jütte and Ines Elisabeth Kloke have demonstrated, the early modern *Hausmutter* was expected to have the necessary medical and apothecarial skills to care for members of the household and neighbors.<sup>963</sup> The frequently invoked analogies between the household and the territory implied that the *Landesmutter* of the sixteenth century held these responsibilities not only for a narrowly defined household but also for the population of her and her husband's territory. These rank-specific and elastic definitions of "house" meant that the medical responsibilities of princely women extended considerably further than those of most women in the early modern society, a tendency that is confirmed by several studies.<sup>964</sup> If the women's own views of their medical and apothecarial projects are to be understood, the medical undertakings of the female consort must be situated within this context.

In her meticulous analysis of the roles and practices of noblewomen in early modern Germany, Anke Hufschmidt touched briefly upon the medical knowledge and ways in which the women provided medical/apothecarial care for the members of their households. Hufschmidt's account deserves attention because she appropriately addressed this subject in the section titled "Herrschaft und Wohltätigkeit" (Authority and Charity). The duty to protect and provide for the subjects is thus considered an integral part of a position of authority,<sup>965</sup> and the direct link between authority and protection brings attention to the political dimension of charity. However, because Hufschmidt relied primarily on the information provided in the funeral sermons, the women's own understanding of this duty remains unexplored.

The correspondence of Anna of Saxony contains abundant information about her and her correspondents' medical and apothecarial activities. The letters also provide an impression of how the women viewed their care for subjects, neighbors and friends as an integral part of their God-given office – their vocation – as *Landesmutter*. In order to examine how the electress and her female correspondents viewed their commitment to the healing arts, four aspects will be addressed: (i) the women's sources of medical knowledge

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<sup>963</sup> Jütte (1987) and Kloke (1987), especially pp. 159-161.

<sup>964</sup> For example Linda Pollock's commentary in her edition of Lady Grace Mildmay's papers, Pollock (1993); Schumm (1963); Schumm (1985); Schenda (1982), particularly his reference to several noble and princely women, p. 18; Anselmino (2003), pp. 20-22; Szász (2004); Bernschneider-Reif (2004), pp. 163-167 where she refers to the apothecarial undertaking of several countesses in early modern Thuringia.

<sup>965</sup> Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 209-211.

and the implicit gendering of the same knowledge; (ii) the application of the knowledge and the motivating factors behind the efforts to produce a remedy; (iii) the theologically defined boundary between acceptable and unacceptable cures, the women's awareness of this boundary, and the dangers that could be associated with the women's medical knowledge; and (iv) Anna's attempts to improve the Saxon midwifery. Consequently, the focus of the analysis is on the cultural and political aspects of the women's medical undertakings.<sup>966</sup>

Von Weber and Sturmhoefel's detailed accounts of Anna's medical and apothecarial interests will be used as points of reference throughout the analysis. However, with few exceptions, the unpublished sources used by the same authors have been "revisited". The extensive re-examination of the sources is necessitated by the pronounced impact of a nineteenth-century view of both women and science in the two available studies. Two examples suffice to demonstrate this. In concordance with von Weber's general veneration for Anna he noted that, "because of the partaking compassion inherent to the female nature, most women are inclined towards quacks. In the case of Anna, this inclination was paired with medical knowledge".<sup>967</sup> But in stark contrast, he took an overbearing stance towards Anna's foremost teacher in the healing arts, Dorothea of Mansfeld, "truly childlike, the old countess believed in the effectiveness of her potions".<sup>968</sup> A re-reading of the letters is crucial if these misrepresentations are to be revised.

In addition to the correspondence, this analysis draws upon several sources that were unknown to (or unexplored by) the older biographers. The most notably of these are the inventories of Anna's library and the electoral library in Dresden as well as selected medical manuscripts that have belonged to Anna and her eldest daughter Elisabeth.

### Sources of knowledge and the gender of medicine

Karl von Weber argued that Anna began the systematic collection of recipes for health remedies in 1562,<sup>969</sup> and Heinz Peickert stated that the physician in her parents' household,

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<sup>966</sup> Alisha Rankin (Harvard University) is currently preparing a dissertation on the apothecarial undertakings of several German princesses of the sixteenth century, including Anna of Saxony from a "history of science-approach".

<sup>967</sup> "... Die den meisten Frauen eigne, auf dem theilnehmenden Mitleiden des weiblichen Gemüths beruhende Neigung zum Quacksalbern war bei Anna in der That mit medicinischem Wissen gepaart...", von Weber (1865), p. 433

<sup>968</sup> "... Warhaft kindlich glaubte die alte Gräfin selbst an die Wirksamket ihrer Heiltränke ...", von Weber (1865), p. 442.

<sup>969</sup> Von Weber (1865), p. 446. He presumably drew this – rather simplified – conclusion on the basis of Anna's letter to Cornelius Hamsfort, Torgau 5 Jan. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 2 b – 3 a, in which she asked

Cornelius Hamsfort, introduced her to the field of medicine.<sup>970</sup> The electress's interests in remedies have also generated a desire to determine when the Dresdner court apothecary (*Hofapotheke*) was founded. The suggestions range from 1579 to 1581 even though an "Electoral Apothecary" (*kurfürstliche Apotheker*) was employed in Anna and August's service already from the 1550s.<sup>971</sup> However, both the letters and several manuscripts in the Saxon University Library reveal that the process through which Anna acquired her medical knowledge and the ways in which the knowledge became manifest in actions were more gradual and more complex than the reference to a simple date or attribution to a single person can reveal.

In chapter 5 it was argued that Anna was introduced to a specific field of gendered medical knowledge related to childbearing in conjunction with her weddings. Throughout her life, she actively developed her medical knowledge and this is reflected in both her personal library and the larger electoral library in Dresden. Both of these collections contained numerous works on medicine and health remedies.<sup>972</sup> The acquisition and consultation of books and recipes are revealed by a number of examples in the correspondence. During the spring of 1562 Anna's mother visited Saxony and the queen subsequently asked her daughter to provide her with a copy of a particular apothecary book.<sup>973</sup> A few months later, Anna informed her mother,

As I understand from Your Grace that You would like to have the book that is called the House Apothecary, I have brought about the one part of it, which Your Grace will find enclosed, and I have conscientiously ordered the second part.<sup>974</sup>

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Hamsfort for advice on the principles according to which her collection of recipes should be organized in a new manuscript.

<sup>970</sup> Peickert (1933).

<sup>971</sup> Von Weber (1865), p. 433; Sommerfeldt (1924) p. 142.

<sup>972</sup> The identifiable titles within Anna's personal library range from recipe books and herbals to the Paracelsian treatises on illness, see SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62.

<sup>973</sup> Dorothea had probably been introduced to the desired book during her recent visit in Dresden. It is likely to have been Hieronymus Brunschwig's *Thesaurus pauperum: Ein fürtrefflich und volkomne Haußapoteck ...* (1539). Brunschweig's *Thesaurus pauperum* is listed as a two-volume work (no. 1329 and 1576, fol. 72) in the 1576 inventory of the electoral library, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19. Regarding the genre "Hausapotheken" see Joachim Telle's introduction to the genre in *Pharmazie und der gemeine Mann* (1982), pp. 60-61.

<sup>974</sup> "... Nachdem ich von EG ... vormarckt, das die selbige das Buch so man die Haus Apotecke nennet, gerne haben wolten, Als habe ich das eine teil dauon Zuwege gebracht wie EG solchs herneb zubefinden, Vnd der andern teil halb auch vleissige bestellung gethan ...", Anna to Dorothea, Torgau 24 April 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 24 a - b.

Similarly, Anna sent Mattioli's herbal and a second unspecified but related book to her sister-in-law Sidonia a few years later.<sup>975</sup>

But the printed texts made up only part of the collected resources. Numerous entries in the inventories are described as "Ein geschriebenes arzneibuch", that is a *written*, as opposed to a *printed*, book. This can be exemplified by entry no. 136 in the inventory of Anna's personal library, *Ertzney Buch durch Margareth von Ponickau zusammen brach in 4<sup>o</sup> geschrieben [15]60* ("Remedy Book compiled by Margarethe von Ponickau, quarto, written 1560"). This title is a comprehensive manuscript of 368 sheets/736 pages preserved in the manuscript collection in the Saxon University Library<sup>976</sup> and, as it will appear below, it is only one among numerous, handwritten volumes on medicine that were collected by Anna (and August). Margarethe von Ponickau was married to Hans von Ponickau, one of August's councilors and the commander at Grimma for decades. Through her husband's service, Margarethe was in frequent contact with Anna and provided various services herself. During the 1550s, their daughter Katharina served as a noble maiden in Anna's household.<sup>977</sup> As the next example will show, the listed and preserved volume was probably not Margarethe's own copy of the manuscript but, more likely, a copy Anna had made.

In 1576 Anna borrowed a recipe book from the noblewoman Armegart von Bartesleben. When returning it, she praised the content and asked to borrow more recipe books.<sup>978</sup> Hence, Armegart sent a second book and, when Anna returned this volume during the subsequent summer, she felt the need to explain the delay: in the book she had found numerous useful and good remedies which she had wanted to copy. However, because she only could assign the task copying these to a particularly trusted employee the process had been delayed.<sup>979</sup>

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<sup>975</sup> Anna to Sidonia, Dresden 15 Oct. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 123 b – 124 a, and Dresden 7 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 139 b – 141 a. Anna had a copy of Mattioli's herbal in her library, see entry no. 45 in the inventory, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62. Regarding Mattioli's herbal see Anderson (1977), pp. 163-172.

<sup>976</sup> SLUB Msc. nr. C 330. Ponickau, Stadthalterin Margaretha von, "Erczenei Buch von vilen bewerten stucken menschlicher gebrechen, in nöthen nuczlich czu gebrauchen." 1560. 16. Jahrh. 25 Capitel. Mbd. mit den Wappen des Kurf. August und der Kurf. Anna. 4'. Auf dem Einbanddeckel: A[gust] H[erzog] Z[u] S[achsen] K[urfürst]. 368 Bl. Elect. 700.

<sup>977</sup> Regarding Margarethe von Ponickau (born von Holdaes) and her relatives, see the genealogical overview on Trothe.de: <http://www.trotha.de/biographien/thilo-muehlberg/> (02.01.05). The funeral sermon held for her husband Hans von Ponickau (1508-1573) recounts his service to the Saxon electors but includes no references to his wife, see Balthasar Sartorius *Leichpredigt, Gehalten vber dem Begrebnis des Leichnams, des Edlen, Gestrengen ... Herrn Hansen von Ponickaw auff Pomsen* (1573).

<sup>978</sup> Anna to Armegart von Bartesleben, Annaburg 9 June 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 220 b – 221 a.

<sup>979</sup> Anna to Armegart von Bartesleben, Annaburg 9 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 25 a – b.

An exchange between Anna, Doctor Johan Neefen's wife Appolonia, and the apothecary Johann Unter der Linden from the same year discloses how the process of copying may have taken place. Having entrusted Appolonia with the responsibility for several recipes she wanted to have copied,<sup>980</sup> Anna subsequently instructed Neefen, "you have to present yourself by Appolonia in order to copy the recipes in her house, and [you] will not leave this until they all are completed."<sup>981</sup> Appolonia too was instructed to make sure that Johann did not depart until the assignment had been completed.<sup>982</sup>

The recipes that here were transcribed by Johann Neefen may have been the ones from Armegart's "first" book. But even if they were not, the example offers an impression of the confidentiality that accompanied the transmission of medical knowledge. In the later letter to Armegart, Anna stressed the care with which her books were handled while on loan and she emphasized that only the most trusted employees had been allowed to see the recipes. The same confidentiality of the content explains why the books were sealed and accompanied by one of Anna's own messengers as they were returned.

Other exchanges of recipes appear to have been more coincidental. When Anna and August resided in Augsburg during the Diet in 1566, the electress (or one of her secretaries) copied some of the recipe books that belonged to Anna Maria of Württemberg. However, certain important details of the instructions were overlooked and, the following fall, Anna asked the duchess for further explanations.<sup>983</sup> Similarly, the electress acquired various recipes from the Danish noblewoman Birgitte Gøye when she was in Denmark to participate in Frederik II's wedding to Sophie of Mecklenburg in the summer of 1572.<sup>984</sup>

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<sup>980</sup> Anna to Appolonia Neefen, Annaburg 13 Feb. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 149 a.

<sup>981</sup> "... du wollest dir zu Ihr [Appolonia Neefen] vofugen solche Kunst Inn Ihren haus abschreib, vnd daruon nicht ablassen biß sie fertigk sein ...", Anna to Johann Unter der Linden, Annaburg 13 Feb. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 149 a.

<sup>982</sup> Anna to Appolonia Neefen, Annaburg 13 Feb. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 149 a. A note by the letter to Appolonia suggests that the plan changed slightly and that the apothecary instead followed Anna's second instruction: to bring the recipes to Annaburg and reside there while transcribing them. In other cases, Anna's personal secretary Johannes Appenfelder was entrusted the transcription of medical books and manuscripts, see Ohnsorge (1940), p. 177. However, the nine letters from Anna to Johannes Appenfelder, which have survived, do not contain any information about this (DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 132 b – 133 a; DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 262 b (original page no. 86 b); DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 56 a and 289 b (original page no. 123 b); DrHSA Kop. 524, fol. 80 a; DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 152 b – 153 a (original page no. 62 b – 63 a) and 157 a (original page no. 67 a); DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 103 a). Finally, an exchange between Anna and the Austrian noble woman Brigitta Trautson reveals that the young noble women who served a consort or a higher-ranking noble woman also could be asked to copy medical manuscripts. Having received a recipe book from Brigitta Trautson in 1571, Anna thus sent a small gift to the maiden (*Jungfraw*) who had done the transcription, see Anna to Brigitta Trautson, Dresden 4 June 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 242 b – 243 b.

<sup>983</sup> Anna to Anna Maria of Württemberg, Dresden 27 Sep. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 254 a – 255 a.

<sup>984</sup> Anna to Birgitte Gøye, Frederiksborg 18 [July 1572], DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 98 a.



In all exchanges of recipes, the confidential status of the knowledge was stressed. When Elisabeth, Countess of Henneberg, sent Anna a selection of recipes, the electress's reply reveals that the countess had refused to share the same recipes even with her sister and Anna acknowledged the "daughterly inclination and trust" she expressed by sharing the same knowledge with her. Anna also promised never to share the recipes with anyone else without the permission of the countess.<sup>985</sup> Even in relation to Anna of Hohenlohe, one of the electress's closest confidantes, the trust was made explicit. When the electress sent Anna of Hohenlohe a copy of some of her and August's recipes, the countess had to promise that she would not allow them to be passed on. In return, the electress assured Hohenlohe that, "in like manner, You shall not worry about the other book, it will all remain unspoken of".<sup>986</sup> This last passage underlines the reciprocity of the trust, a dimension that is articulated even clearer in a letter from Anna to Anna of Bavaria,

As we have entrusted almost all of our most secret arts to Your Beloved, We beg ... that if Your Beloved has something exceptional [that is, a recipe], You will not keep it from us, Such we will keep secretly by ourselves in the same ways as we expect that Your Beloved will not make known the [recipes] you have received from us.<sup>987</sup>

The confidentiality of recipes was also made explicit in the exchanges between Anna and her eldest daughter, Elisabeth. When Elisabeth asked for her mother's formula for *aqua vita*, she felt the need to reassure her that it would be kept secret. She wrote, "I promise Your Grace upon my soul that I will teach it to no [other] person, unless the dear God gives me children[, then] I will leave it as a treasure for them".<sup>988</sup> In this passage, the recipe for the *aqua vita* appears as a precious heirloom and, unless God blessed Elisabeth with children, she promised not share the knowledge with anyone. More than twenty years prior

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<sup>985</sup> "... leiblich schwester ... "/> "...tochterliche ... naigung vnd vertrauen ..." Anna to Elisabeth, Countess of Henneberg (born Duchess of Württemberg; 1548-1592), Dippoldiswalde 21 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 356 b – 357 a.

<sup>986</sup> "... So dorffen ir auch des andern Buchs halb nicht bekummern es soll alles wohl vorschweig bleiben", Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Dresden 14 April 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 12 a – 13 a.

<sup>987</sup> "...Weil wir EL auch fast alle vnserer geheimbste kunste vertreulich mittgetheilt, So bitten wir hinweder F wo EL etwas ... sonderlichs hetten, sie wolttten vns desselbige auch ... nicht vorhaltt Solche wollenn wir Im gutter geheimb bei vnß bewaren, Immassenn wir vnß vorsch EL das Jenige so sie vom vnß bekommen, auch nicht gemein mach werden ...", Anna to Anna of Bavaria, Torgau 5 Jan. 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 68 a – 70 a.

<sup>988</sup> "... [ich] wils EG zu gesagt haben auf mein sehle das das ichs keinen menschen leren wil wider lest mir der libe gott kinder denen wil ichs zum schatz hinder mir lassen ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Heidelberg 4 Nov. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 257-258. However, Elisabeth only embarked upon the production of *aqua vita* after her mother had encouraged her to do so, see Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 31 Jan. 1582, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 7 a – 8 a.

to his request, Anna referred to the recipes of her *aqua vita* and *Giftpulver* as her treasures,<sup>989</sup> and it is clear that she had instilled this respect for the knowledge of the remedies in her daughter.

An example from a few decades earlier reveals that the recipe for the *aqua vita* truly was guarded as a treasure. When Elisabeth's sister-in-law Dorothea Susanna, Duchess of Saxony-Weimar, had asked for the same recipe, Anna politely declined with the explanation that she had promised the Countess of Mansfeld not to share this knowledge with anyone.<sup>990</sup>

In spite of the elaborate assurances, the confidentiality was not always respected. Having borrowed a book from the Austrian noblewoman Brigitta Trautson, Anna had allowed Elisabeth of Mecklenburg to borrow the same, though not without worries. She thus informed the duchess,

We have been assiduously sought by the person who has entrusted [the book] to us and, although we would not like to cause Your Beloved inconvenience, we nevertheless have to return the mentioned book to where it belongs. And if Your Beloved could sent it to us prior to Michealmas that would be most graciously appreciated.<sup>991</sup>

Five months later, the book still had not been returned.<sup>992</sup> After another four months, Anna finally returned a recipe book to Brigitta Trautson and apologized profusely for the delay, which she ascribed to her frequent travels and her current pregnancy that had weakened her. She did not, however, mention the book's "detour" to Mecklenburg.<sup>993</sup>

Dorothea of Mansfeld (1493-1578) and Anna of Hohenlohe (1522-1594) were Anna's most important collaborators with regard to health remedies and she referred to "the old Countess of Mansfeld" as her teacher (*Lehrmeisterin*).<sup>994</sup> Anna became acquainted with both countesses shortly after her arrival in Saxony and, already in the 1550s, Dorothea of

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<sup>989</sup> "... welches wir für vnserm schatz achtenn ...", Anna to Barbara of Liegnitz-Brieg, Dresden 12 May 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 132 a – 133 b.

<sup>990</sup> "... solches nicht weg zu lernen, noch von mir kommen zu lassen ...", Anna to Dorothea Susanne of Saxony Weimar, dated 17 Nov. 1564, quoted from von Weber (1865), p. 455.

<sup>991</sup> "... [Was dz Buch betrifft,] seindt wir ... von d Person so es vns vertrauet ... embsig ersucht worden, vnd ob wir wol E. L. hirinnen nicht gerne vngelegenheit zuziehen So müssen wir doch obberuet buch an gehörende orth wieder einstellen Vnd do nun E. L. vnns solches vor Michaelis ... zufertigen kontten, gereicht vns dz zu gar freundlichen gefallen ..." Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 14 July 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 154 a – b.

<sup>992</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Weidenhain 4 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 183 b – 184 a. Only in this later letter is it revealed that the book is an "Arzneibuch".

<sup>993</sup> Anna to Brigitta Trautson, Dresden 9 April 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 227 b – 228 a.

<sup>994</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 19 April 1564, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 155 a.

Mansfeld co-taught her niece Anna of Hohenlohe and the electress.<sup>995</sup> From the very beginning of their correspondence, Mansfeld's expertise on health remedies is noticeable: two years after Anna's arrival in Saxony, the countess asked Anna to send a green jasper stone to her father in Denmark with the instruction that he should wear it around his right arm and the subsequent years the countess sent various other remedies to the Danish king.<sup>996</sup> Until the death of Dorothea of Mansfeld, almost 30 years later, she served as Anna's personal mentor.

In the late 1550s, Dorothea of Mansfeld gave Anna a book with recipes for various remedies (a so-called *Kunstabuch*) and this too was a manuscript. Shortly after the countess had visited Saxony in 1560, Anna noticed that the same volume was missing and addressed Mansfeld,

As we during these days were looking for some recipes in the *Kunstabuch* which we were given by You, we were unable to find the same [book] even after diligent searches, But we do remember that You had the same book and wrote some [recipes] in it or from it during your recent visit. For that reason, we kindly request that You will look diligently for the mentioned *Kunstabuch* in your travel chest. If You find it – as we hope – [You will] send it back to us with this our messenger.<sup>997</sup>

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<sup>995</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 11 Dec. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 250 b – 251 b. Anna began to produce the *aqua vita* at the mid-1550s: already in 1556 she sent it to several relatives, see her letters to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a – 16 b, to Dorothea of Mansfeld, 24 Jan. 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 27 a – b. Nevertheless, in the mid-1560s Anna still consulted the countess to make sure that her *aqua vita* was prepared correctly, see Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 19 April 1564, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 155 a.

<sup>996</sup> Anna to Christian III, Weissenfels "dinstag nach marie" 1550, RA, TKUA pk. 40-10. Dorothea of Mansfeld may have known the royal couple in Denmark already prior to Anna's marriage with August. Yet, the fact that Anna served as middle-(wo-)man between the countess and her parents suggests that contact was established through her: during the summer of 1558, the countess sent various remedies to the Danish king (see letter from Anna to Christian III, Dresden 10 June 1558, original in RA, TKUA pk. 40-10 and the draft in DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 56. In 1558, a letter from the Countess of Mansfeld to the Danish king (dated Mansfeld 3 Aug. 1558) was enclosed with Anna's letter to her father dated Zschopau 14 Aug. 1558, RA TKUA pk. 40-10. Moreover, when Christian III died in 1559, Dorothea of Mansfeld was among the first Anna informed, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 91 b – 92 b. It is also significant that Anna referred to Dorothea of Mansfeld as "die Gräfin von Solms" (her maiden name) when she wrote to Christian III, whereas she consistently appears as the Countess of Mansfeld in other parts of the correspondence. This could be read as an indication that Anna's parents had known her prior to her marriage.

<sup>997</sup> "... Als wir diese tage Inn vnserm Kunstbuch so wir von euch bekommen ... nach etzlichen Kunsten nachsuchen müssen haben wir dasselbig nach vleissiger vnbsuchung nit finden können. Wir können vns aber entsinnen das Ir solch Kunstbuch In ewer nehern gegen wertigkait gehabt vnnd etzliche stuch dorein od doraus geschriebenn Derwegen begeren wir ... gnedig Ir wollet nach berurten Kunstbuch In eweren raiselad ... mit vleiß vnbsuchen ... do Ir das, wie wir verhoffen findet vnß bej diesem vnserm both auch wid schick ...", Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 3 April 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 125 a – b. Dorothea of Mansfeld seems to have given several books (manuscripts) to Anna: in the late 1550s or early 1560s, she asked that Anna please send her three books bound in parchment in which she could write, see Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna, 1 June [late-1550s-early-1560s], DrHSA Loc. 8528/1, p. 329.

At first sight, the passage may seem to reveal a rather careless handling of the *Kunstabuch*. This however, is only the case if one forgets the close relationship between Anna and the countess. Rather, the passage testifies to Anna active usage and appreciation of the book. It also reveals that the manuscript continued to develop even after Mansfeld had given it to Anna and that both the giver and the receiver remained actively attached to the book and its contents, which thereby constituted a dynamic bond between the mentor and her pupil.<sup>998</sup> Another testimony to the trust Anna placed in the countess's judgment appears in their correspondence from the following year (1561): the electress sent Dorothea of Mansfeld two chests of *Kunstabücher* and asked that she please assess all of the recipes they included.<sup>999</sup>

The examples that have been presented so far suggest that the personal exchange of written recipes was the most important sources for Anna's medical knowledge. However, this mode of exchange may be significantly overrepresented in the electress's correspondence, simply because the recipes and book were accompanied by letters. Consequently, perhaps the most important form of exchange, namely those which took place during personal meetings and "hands-on-instructions", are likely to escape scrutiny. Occasionally, the material does offer a glimpse of Anna's preference for personal instructions rather than written explanations. Having requested written advice regarding the production of *aqua vita* from the Countess of Mansfeld, Anna added, "though we really have greater need for Your personal instruction".<sup>1000</sup> Seven years later, the same discontent had been expressed with the written instructions. Dorothea of Mansfeld had sent the electress a recipe for a salve and, having attempted to produce it, Anna was dissatisfied with the result and turned to her mentor for further explanations,

[A]lthough we have received the recipe for the salve, we do not know how to go about the handiwork [and, because] You currently hesitate to travel, [which means] that You cannot show us this yourself, we graciously request that You will send us the recipe as

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<sup>998</sup> In a couple of letters from the early 1560s, Dorothea of Mansfeld again refers to the active usage of one of Anna's books to which the countess wanted to add new recipes, see DrHSA Loc. 8529/3, pp. 5 a and 26 a. For more examples of the continual exchange of recipes see Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 9 Feb. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 13 a; Dresden 14 Feb. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 16 a; 20 Feb. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 16 a – 16 b.

<sup>999</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 22 March, 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 166 a.

<sup>1000</sup> "... ob wir wohl ewer personlichen vnterweisung viel nötiger bedarfft hetten ...", Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 25 Jan. 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 28 a – b.

well as a precise and detailed description of the entire process of the handiwork [and] how one must go about this [my emphasis].<sup>1001</sup>

The passage makes clear that the written directives that comprise the sources available to the historian were inferior substitutes for personal and “hands-on” instructions. This hierarchy of written as opposed to personal instructions helps explain why Anna, in her reply to her daughter’s request for the recipe for the *aqua vita*, suggested that Elisabeth consult with Anna of Hohenlohe, because the countess was much closer to Heidelberg (Elisabeth’s residence at the time) than the electress herself.<sup>1002</sup>

The examples that have been discussed above only include women. Yet, Anna of Saxony also corresponded with several men about health remedies. Anna’s brother Frederik requested copies of a cookbook and various recipes for remedies,<sup>1003</sup> the Saxon secretary Hans Jenitz and the learned nobleman Johann Ungnad taught Anna various “arts” (*Künste*),<sup>1004</sup> and August of Saxony also took an active interest in medicine. In the late 1550s the Countess of Hohenlohe sent Anna, “the recipe for the poison as the late Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg had it”. The two women were comparing different recipes for a particular powder against the poison (*Giftpulver*) and, in her reply, Anna explained how Margrave Albrecht’s recipe differed from August’s formula, which she would send her a copy of shortly.<sup>1005</sup> August’s interest in health remedies is also reflected

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<sup>1001</sup> “... wiewohl wir das Recept ... bekommen haben wie man solche salbe machen soll[,] [wissen wir nicht recht wie] wir mit der handarbeit vmb Zugehen [sollen], *Ir euch auch nuhmehr zureisen vordrossen macht das Ir vnß solchs nicht allemahl selbst weisen konnet*. Als begeren wir gnedist Ir wollet vnß das Recept sampt dem gantzen proceß d handarbeit wie man allenthalb damit vmbgeh soll, nochmals aigentlich vnnd ausfurlich auffgezeichnet Zuschicken ...” (my emphasis), Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 19 April 1564, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 155 a.

<sup>1002</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 11 Dec. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 250 b – 251 b. Anna began to produce the *aqua vita* at the mid-1550s: already in 1556 she sent it to several relatives, see her letters to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a – 16 b, to Dorothea of Mansfeld, 24 Jan. 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 27 a – b. Nevertheless, in the mid-1560s Anna still consulted the countess to make sure that her *aqua vita* was prepared correctly, see Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 19 April 1564, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 155 a.

<sup>1003</sup> “... ein Kochbuch vnd Arzneystuck ...”, Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 15 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 358 b – 362 a (original page no. 192 b – 196 a); and the letter with which Anna sent “zweij geschriebene Kochbucher” and “etzliche gutte Arznejstucke”, Schwerin 14 April 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 28 b – 29 b.

<sup>1004</sup> Anna to Hans Jenitz, Annaburg 11 Dec. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 369 b – 370 a (original page no. 203 b – 370 b). See also Anna’s advice to Hans Jenitz during his wife’s illness the same year, Annaburg 14 Oct. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 342 b – 343 a (original page no. 176 b – 177 a). Hans von Ungnad to Anna 4 March 1561, DrHSA Loc. 8528/2, pp. 264 a – 268 b, and Anna to Hans von Ungnad, Dresden 24 March 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 167 a. See also the entry “Etzliche Arznej Künste herm Hanßen Vngnadens geschrieben in quarto, grun Pergamen” in SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 26 Nr. 59, fol. 5 b. Regarding Hans von Ungnad, see *ADB*, vol. 39, pp. 308-310, and *DBE*, vol. 10, p. 156.

<sup>1005</sup> “... das Recept vor die Gift so etwann marggraf Albrecht zu Brandburck etc seliger gedechtnus gehabt ...” / Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Schweinitz 12 July 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 64 a – b.

in the inventories of his and Anna's book collections. In the late 1580s an inventory of several medical books and manuscripts located at the electoral residence in Dresden was compiled. One record is described as, "Various written remedies in part [with] Duke August's own hand",<sup>1006</sup> and the description of the first record in the same inventory states that August had been particularly fond of these three handwritten remedy books.<sup>1007</sup> The Saxon elector was not an exceptional case in this respect: a similar pattern existed within the Hohenlohe-family,<sup>1008</sup> in Prussia, Hessen-Kassel,<sup>1009</sup> and the vast collection of medical manuscripts preserved from the electors of the Palatinate show comparable traits.<sup>1010</sup>

However, the fact that men and women shared an interest in medicine does not imply that the knowledge and the associated practices were gender neutral. The most obvious gendering of early modern medicine appears from the discipline's status as part *scientia* (theoretical medicine), part *ars* (experience-based practice of medicine).<sup>1011</sup> As all sciences, theoretical medicine was – generally speaking – the exclusive domain of men, whereas both men and women practiced the healing arts. Yet, it is important to note that the neat distinction between *scientia* and *ars* did not correspond to the reality of sixteenth-century Germany. Only few of the practicing physicians were university trained and, even among these, the practical education and experience-based knowledge conferred great authority.<sup>1012</sup> Among the apothecaries, a theoretical education was inconceivable. Hence, as stressed in the social history of medicine, the categories of learned and popular medicine are only useful if one allows for overlaps between them. The different medical traditions developed in dialogue with each other<sup>1013</sup> and it is likely that a closer analysis would reveal

<sup>1006</sup> "Allerley geschriebener Arzneyen Zum theil Herzogecn Augusti eigner handt ...", SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 26 Nr. 59, fol. 1-2.

<sup>1007</sup> SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 26 Nr. 59, fol. 1-2.

<sup>1008</sup> Weyer (1992), pp. 273-274 and 358-359. Weyer characterized Anna as "eine eifrige Alchemistin" (p. 274), yet his work suffers under a strong dependence on Schmieder's *Geschichte der Alchemie* (1832). The brief account of Anna and August of Saxony (pp. 273-274) is an almost literal repetition of the information (including the wrong factual information) presented by Schmieder. A more detailed account of the recipe book by Anna of Hohenlohe's daughter-in-law Magdalena can be found in Schumm (1985).

<sup>1009</sup> See Anselmino (2003) and Moran (1990).

<sup>1010</sup> The vast collection of medical papers in the University Library of Heidelberg reveal that Elector Friedrich III, and particularly his son Ludwig VI and daughter-in-law Elisabeth (born of Hessen-Kassel) shared an interest in this subject, see the online resources *Heidelberger medizinische Handschriften – digital*: <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/helios/digi/medhss.html>. Regarding Elisabeth (born of Hessen-Kassel), see also the inventory of her library UBH Cod. Pal. germ. 801, fol. 1 a – 17 b.

<sup>1011</sup> Siraisi (2000), p. 4.

<sup>1012</sup> Siraisi (1990) and Lindemann (1999), pp. 92-119. Paracelsus and Rösslin are but two of the best-known examples of highly influential practitioners with limited formal education.

<sup>1013</sup> Whereas Mary Lindemann argues against a strict separation of learned and popular medicine (see Lindemann (1999), p. 4), David Gentilcore has recently proposed that the distinction between popular and elite medicine must be maintained because it represented two different mentalities. However, his analysis

that the courts, perhaps particularly the female consorts, constituted important loci for these exchanges – at least in sixteenth-century Germany.<sup>1014</sup> One case in point can be found in Anna's correspondence from the mid-1560s. Anna of Bavaria had sent some recipes to the Saxon electress, who was unfamiliar with some of the plants (or the Bavarian names for the same plants) required for the remedy. She therefore asked if the duchess could please explain the names further or if she could send the Latin names for the plants. Anna then could ask August's physician (Johann Neefen) to translate them.<sup>1015</sup> A few years later, Anna sent various recipes to the Empress and suggested that she consult with her "most famous physicians" (*Hochberumbten Leipärtzte*) to determine whether or not to use the potions Anna had given her.<sup>1016</sup>

Anna's biographers have generally emphasized her collaborations with male physicians and pharmacists. As mentioned above, the physician at the Danish court Cornelius Hamsfort appears as Anna's teacher in one account and others have highlighted her collaborations with the physicians Johann Neefen, Caspar Peucer, Paul Luther, Simon Kohlreuter, Joachim Camerarius, the court physicians in Halle (Georg Lauer) and in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (Andreas Bacher), the apothecary Johann Unter der Linden and his successor Andreas Peißker.<sup>1017</sup> Anna's correspondence reveals that while she did communicate frequently with the physicians Cornelius Hamsfort, Johann Neefen, Caspar Peucer, and with the apothecary Johann Unter der Linden in Dresden,<sup>1018</sup> she had only

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focuses on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italy and given the gradual development of formal medical education, his arguments are not convincing in the context of sixteenth-century Germany (Gentilcore (2004)). See also Britta-Juliane Kruse's considerations of the dissemination of medical knowledge in the fifteenth century in Kruse (1996), pp. 8-76.

<sup>1014</sup> Although a few historians have addressed the role of the courts as loci of "scientific" exchanges, none of the available studies consider the role of women at the courts and they only rarely consider the exchanges between "popular" and learned sciences at the courts. See for example Moran (1990) and Kaufmann (1999). The forthcoming work by Alisha Rankin will hopefully fill this gap.

<sup>1015</sup> Anna to Anna of Bavaria, without date (btw. 18 June and 5 July 1565), DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 29 b – 30 a.

<sup>1016</sup> Anna to the Empress (Anna, born of Hungary and Bohemia), without date [btw. 14 and 18 July 1570], DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 154 b – 155 b.

<sup>1017</sup> Von Weber (1865); Sturmhoefel (1906); Sommerfeldt (1924). Regarding Johann Neefe, see also Neefe (1898), pp. 292-314.

<sup>1018</sup> Though it doubtlessly is incomplete, the following overview provides an impression of the electress's contact with the various medical "experts": At least 33 letters (dated 1559-1572) from Anna to Cornelius Hamsfort are preserved. See DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 94 a – b, 96 b, 103 a – b, 119 b, 127 a, 134 a – b, 157 b – 158 a, 167 a, 178 b, 183 a, 194 a – b, 196 b; DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 2 b – 3 a, 38 a – b, 45 a – b, 72 b – 73 a, 78 b, 92 b – 93 a, 94 b – 95 a, 98 b – 99 a, 107 a, 118 b, 126 b, 142 a – 143 a and 166 a – b; DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 86 a – 87 a, 106 a – b, 139 a – b, 189 b – 190 a, 227 b and 238 a – b; DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 316 a – 317 a; Kop 516, fol. 33 b – 34 a. A series of letters relates to the recruitment of a physician and a barber-surgeon for the electoral household exist, but it is rare that specific medical advice is discussed: several letters reveal Anna's respect for and acquaintance with the Hamsfort: in January 1558, that is, shortly after the death of Anna's son Joachim (+ 21 Nov. 1557), she begged her father to allow Hamsfort to come to Saxony in order to supervise the care of her children. However, most letters focus on the well-being of Anna's mother Queen

intermittent contact with the others.<sup>1019</sup> Moreover, it should be stressed that the contact to several of these “experts” was mediated by the Countess of Mansfeld and other female friends/relatives.<sup>1020</sup> Finally, it must be emphasized that Anna collaborated as much with the spouses of these “professionals” as she did with the “professionals” themselves. Appolonia, the wife of Johann Neefen, was given responsibility for the transcription of recipes.<sup>1021</sup> In like manner Catharina Kleinin (usually referred to as “die Doctor Kleinin” and employed as court mistress for Anna’s children) and “Veronica Apothekerin zu

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Dorothea; the care for Anna’s son Duke Christian during his stay in Denmark, 1562; and the education of Hamsfort’s son at the schools in Saxony. The contact between Anna and Hamsfort ceased shortly after Dorothea’s death in Oct. 1571. At least thirteen letters (dated 1556-1574) from Anna to Johann Neefen are preserved in Anna’s letter-books. See DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 21 a (Colditz 23 Nov. 1556); DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 138 b; DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 148 a – 149 b, fol. 152 b – 153 a, fol. 156 b; DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 289 a – b; DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 102 b – 103 a; DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 116 a, fol. 337 b; DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 86 a, fol. 89 b – 90 a, fol. 92 b, and fol. 184 a – b (Torgau 10 May 1574). Only a few of these letters touch upon health remedies or cures. However, it appears from Anna’s letters to other correspondents that she did consult with Neefen, see for example Anna’s letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg 1565 regarding the plague (Dresden 6 March 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 9 a – 10 a). Moreover, at least two of the medical manuscripts in Anna and August’s libraries were penned by Neefen (vol. no. 392 in the 1574 inventory of the electoral library SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574), Nr. 19, fol. 70 a, and entry no. 192 in the inventory of Anna’s library, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a Nr. 62). Johann Neefe’s career is outlined in Neefe (1898), pp. 292-314. At least eight letters (dated 1568-1573) from Anna to Caspar Peucer have survived. See DrHSA Kop. 513, 141 b – 142 b; DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 5 a, 194 a – b, 209 b, 219 b – 220 a and 241 b; DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 37 a – b and 116 b – 117 a. Naturally, the contact between Anna and Peucer ceased when he came under suspicion of Crypto-Calvinism in 1573 (see chapter 9). The Saxon collection of medical manuscripts contained at least three volumes by Peucer, see vols. no. 2, 77, and an unbound manuscript without listed on fol. 8 a, in SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 26 Nr. 59. At least seven letters from Anna to Johann Unter der Linden have been preserved. Examples from these are provided throughout this chapter. Moreover, vol. no. 693 of the 1574 inventory of the elector’s library is described as “Ein geschriebenes Artzneybuch auf pergament Hansen vnder der Linden Handschrift”, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 70 b. Yet, as the example discussed above reveals, Johann Neefen may have *penned* the manuscript, but establishing definitive the authorship of the text is more difficult.

<sup>1019</sup> Four letters from Anna to Joachim Camerarius have been located (see DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 92 a – b, 125 a, 239 b – 240 a (original page no. 108 b – 109 a) and 261 a – b (original page no. 130 a – b). They are dated between Sep. and Dec. 1584 and concern Anna’s acquisition of various equipment for distillation and a mobile kitchen. Only one letter from Anna to Andreas Peißker and Paul Luther, respectively, have been located (DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 149 b, Nov. 1583, and DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 299 b – 300 a), and not a single letter to Simon Kohlreuter, Georg Lauer or Andreas Bacher has survived in her letter-books. The absence of letters does not, however, mean that contact did not exist, but simply that it was limited. Hence, Kohlreuter is mentioned in Anna’s letter to “M. Johan Trullern”, Glugsburg 5 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 352 b and in her letter to “Agnes Löserin zu Pretzsch”, Annaburg 8 Oct. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 75 b – 76 a. Georg Lauer is mentioned in Anna’s letter to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Rabenstein 3 July 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 63 a. Moreover, Anna and August had medical manuscripts by Kohlreuter, Camerarius, and Luther in their libraries, see vols. no. 79, 247, 268, and the list of unbound medical manuscripts in SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 26 Nr. 59. Neither von Weber, Sturmhoefel, or Sommerfeldt mention the Saxon court physician Johann Göbel, though Anna also communicated with him (see the letter dated Annaburg 14 Jan. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 180 a – b (original page no. 4 a – b)) and the Saxon libraries contained numerous texts written by him, see SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 26 Nr. 59.

<sup>1020</sup> Dorothea of Mansfeld’s mediation between Anna and the court physician in Halle appears from Anna’s letter to Mansfeld, Rabenstein 3 July 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 63 a.

<sup>1021</sup> However, Appolonia’s services were not limited to the medical field. The previous years she also received orders for needlework from the electress, see Anna to Appolonia Neefen, Mühlberg 28 Aug. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 65 b – 66 a; Mühlberg 13 and 16 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 84 a and 89 b.



Dresden” (the wife of the apothecary Johann Unter der Linden) are frequently present.<sup>1022</sup> This pattern confirms Heide Wunder’s observation that the early modern “labor market” to a great extent was made up of working couples who shared a significant part of the skills/knowledge that were required for a profession that later may have become a male prerogative.<sup>1023</sup> However, in contrast to Saxony where the servants in the electoral apothecary included several married couples, the rulers of Württemberg employed almost only women in their apothecary throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>1024</sup>

A striking example of the continual exchanges between men and women and between “learned” and popular medicine can be found in the medical manuscripts that belonged to Anna’s daughter Elisabeth. Compiled on the initiative of Elisabeth, one of the volumes contain recipes from more than 100 sources, including Anna and August; Moritz of Saxony and his wife Agnes; the Countesses of Hohenlohe, Mansfeld, Henneberg, and Solms; the rulers and consorts in Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein, Hessen, Prussia, Anhalt, Brandenburg and Bavaria; various members of the Saxon nobility; and several members of the House of Wittelsbach in the Palatinate. Yet, one also finds recipes from “Johannes Appendecker” (that is, Johann Unter der Linden, Dresden), Johann and Appolonia Neefen, and Simon Kohlreuter.<sup>1025</sup> Elisabeth’s collection of medical manuscripts shows a marked influx from Saxony, but the Countess of Hohenlohe may have been a mediator of some of the “Saxon” recipes. In general, many more women appear as “authors” (or at least as Elisabeth’s “sources”) of the recipes, though the titled doctors are – of course – men.

The “expert” who figures most prominently in Elisabeth’s medical manuscripts is Wilhelm Rascalon, a Heidelberger physician, who often was consulted by Friedrich III of the Palatine, Ludwig VI and his wife Elisabeth, but also by Johann Casimir and

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<sup>1022</sup> More than sixty letters from Anna to Catharina Kleinin are preserved in Anna’s letter-book. Most letters focus on the care for Anna’s children, health remedies, and orders/deliveries of foodstuff. Veronika’s responsibilities for the preparations of remedies and transcription of recipes appear from Anna’s letters to Johann Unter der Linden, DrHSA Kop. 521 (1567), fol. 235; DrHSA Kop. 519 (1575-76), fol. 149; DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 41; fol. 116 a (original page no. 39 a); fol. 226 a (original page no. 50 a); DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 260 a (original page no. 94 a) and fol. 285 a (original page no. 119 a), and Anna’s letter to Veronika, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 326 b (original page no. 160 b). See also Anna’s letter to the noblewoman Elisabeth von Auerswalden, dated Torgau 10 April 1576, (DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 187 b – 188 a).

<sup>1023</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 63-103; and, with particular focus on physicians and apothecaries, Flügge (1998), pp. 100-107.

<sup>1024</sup> Flügge (1998), pp. 102-105.

<sup>1025</sup> See the detailed registration of the medical manuscripts in the University Library in Heidelberg: *Die medizinischen Handschriften unter den Codices Palatini germanici 182-303*, ed. by Matthias Miller and Karin Zimmermann: <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/5709>. The index to the manuscript UBH, Cod. Pal. germ. 250 contains several references to Saxony and servants in the Saxon electoral household.

Elisabeth.<sup>1026</sup> But Rascalon also appears in Dresden; writing to Elisabeth and to Anna of Hohenlohe in the late 1570s, the electress thanked both women for the letters they had sent with Doctor Wilhelm Rascalon, who now had arrived in Dresden.<sup>1027</sup> Although the letters from Anna do not reveal the purpose of Rascalon's visit to Saxony, the example testifies to the personal contact between the physician, Elisabeth, Anna of Hohenlohe, and the Saxon electress. While the material (both Anna's correspondence and the medical manuscripts in Dresden and Heidelberg) leaves no doubt that the vast majority of recipes were exchanged between women, the example highlights the overlaps between so-called learned medicine and the apothecarial and medical undertakings of (princely) women.

Given the predominance of women in the consorts' medical manuscripts, it seems curious that von Weber, Sturmhoefel, and other historians have focused on Anna's collaborations with the male experts. It is presumably due to the way in which this emphasis allowed the biographers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to "professionalize" Anna's knowledge. Unfortunately, this treatment meant that Anna's extensive collaboration with the other women was underestimated and, as a result, the inherent exchanges between different medical traditions escaped attention.

This brings the focus back to the questions concerning the gendering of medicine. If both princely men and women participated in the practice of medicine (*ars*), how were these practices gendered? The taxonomy of knowledge that is reflected in the 1574 inventory of the electoral library provides clues. In the inventory, one finds the familiar distinction between "Artzney" and "Wundartzney [vnd] Anatomia". The exact meaning of these terms demands consideration. "Artzney" is explained as "remedies and everything related to the medical cure of humans as well as apothecarial matters" and the seventy listed titles include recipe books for remedies, herbals, cookbooks, and manuals for brewing and distillation.<sup>1028</sup> Cooking, brewing and distillation were traditionally performed

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<sup>1026</sup> Regarding Wilhelm Rascalon (1525/1526-after 1591) and his service to the rulers of the Palatinate, see *Die medizinischen Handschriften unter den Codices Palatini germanici 1-181*, ed. by Matthias Miller and Karin Zimmermann: <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/5711> and *Die medizinischen Handschriften unter den Codices Palatini germanici 182-303*, ed. by Matthias Miller and Karin Zimmermann: <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/5709>, particularly the detailed lists of content for UBH, Cod. Pal. germ. 177, 224, 231, 238, 240, 243, 246, 250, and 256.

<sup>1027</sup> Wilhelm Rascalon appears in the letter from Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Dresden 24 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 337 b – 338 (original page no. 171 b – 172 a); Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 24 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 338 a – 340 a (original page no. 172 a – 174 a); and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Neustadt 27 Sep. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 196 a.

<sup>1028</sup> SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 69 a – 72 a.

by women and health remedies were produced using similar procedures.<sup>1029</sup> As the theologians prescribed in house manuals, a woman's proper place was within the house. Corresponding to this ideal, the section of the library titled, "Gartenbuchlein, Feldbaw vnnd Haushaltung" (Gardening books, Agriculture, and *Oeconomia*) contains literature related to health care, namely recipes for herbal wines.<sup>1030</sup> The same overlap between the production of foodstuff and remedies was also articulated when Anna recruited a noble maid for her daughter's household. Informing Elisabeth about the abilities of this woman, the electress wrote,

[A]ccording to Your daughterly plea, we are sending You a noble maiden and we imagine she will be most useful to Your Beloved. As she cooks very well, Your Beloved can also use her in your apothecary and for making preserves.<sup>1031</sup>

In contrast to the broad range of works that are listed as *Arznei*, the twenty-two works listed in the German section titled *Wundarznei* and the twenty Latin titles listed in the section *Chirvrgica* are confined to a relatively narrow scope.<sup>1032</sup> While the majority of these titles deal exclusively with surgical procedures and anatomy, a few titles reveal that this category and the broader category of *Arznei* were linked by the production of salves used for wounds. Nevertheless, the male gendering of this field comes through, not least because several of the German titles reveal the close link between warfare and surgery by including the term *Feldtbuch* (book for the battle field).<sup>1033</sup>

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<sup>1029</sup> Hickel (1982) provides a most helpful introduction to the production of remedies in the early modern kitchens and laboratories.

<sup>1030</sup> This section encompasses works on gardening, cattle, and a volume containing recipes for herbal wines and other "getrancke" (SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 69 a – 72 a fol. 91 a). In addition, the sections "Philosophische bucher" and "Geometria, Astrologia, Arithmetica" also contained two titles on medicine/health care. These overlaps reflect the close ties between medicine, astronomy, astrology, alchemy and natural philosophy. At first sight, this could be interpreted as a presence of "theoretical medicine". However, the links between the numerous fields were equally pronounced in applied medicine. The interdependences between various scientific disciplines are discussed by numerous contributions to *Natural Particulars* (1999); see also French (2003); Fink-Jensen (2004) provides a good overview and although his focus is on the Danish case, he carefully situates this case within a European context.

<sup>1031</sup> "... [wir] schick ... DL ihre Töchterliche bitt nach hirbey eine Jungkfraw von Adel [Catharinen Mörnin genant] ... verseh vns sie werde fur DL gar wohl dienstlich sein, dann sie ... zimblich wohl kochen können, dhalb DL sie zu Ihre Apoteck vnd eingemachte ding gebrauch ...", Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 23 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 106 a – b.

<sup>1032</sup> SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 75 a - 76 a and 123 a – 124 b. Hasse (2000), p. 244 mistakenly writes that the section "Chirvrgica" only contained six titles.

<sup>1033</sup> See for example "Feldtbuch der wundartzney ..."; "Wundartzney oder feldtbuch"; "Ein Feldwundartzneybuchlein geschriben vonn allerley probirtenn pflasterm Vnnd andderm stuckenn", SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 75 b – 76 a. Lindemann (1999), pp. 109-116, and Flügge (1998), pp. 87-122 both discuss the education, guild-organization and gendering of the early modern barber-surgeons, and it is clear that women from other social groups could practice surgery.

The impression of this gendering (remedies being produced primarily by women and surgery being performed by men) becomes more pronounced when the content of the larger library of the elector is compared to the inventory of Anna's personal library. Among the approximately 500 titles in her library only two titles were related to surgery and both of these were authored by Paracelsus, one of the first and highly controversial authorities who attempted to bridge the gap between the curing of diseases and surgery.<sup>1034</sup> In contrast, Anna's library contained at least thirty-four different titles on the more broadly defined areas of health remedies, diets and recipes for both remedies and food.<sup>1035</sup> In spite of Anna's far-reaching medical interests, surgery remained outside of her expertise and when she was asked for advice within this field, she did not dispatch her own advice but sent a barber-surgeon – as it will be demonstrated below.

These observations suggest that medicine, apothecarial "science", and surgery above all were gendered by their relationships to other and more clearly gendered fields of knowledge and activities. Nevertheless, one finds frequent overlaps between the male and female gendered areas, as for example in the production of ointments for wounds.

In addition to this gendering of medical knowledge and practices, the biological differences between men and women defined male and female areas of knowledge. It was only during the sixteenth century that male doctors gradually were allowed to examine the intimate parts of women's bodies.<sup>1036</sup> Women remained the experts on pregnancies and childbirth and their knowledge was primarily founded on practical experience. Even among the princely women who had easy access to physicians and extensive libraries, the knowledge that could be acquired through the (male) experts and the printed texts (authored by men) remained secondary. Anna's correspondence contains numerous examples that verify this claim. The nobleman Wilhelm von Oppersdorf from Schlesien turned to the electress to ask for advice after his wife had miscarried.<sup>1037</sup> Count Franz von Thurn consulted Anna when his daughter (the widow of Heinrich, Count of Hardeck) experienced health problems that were believed to have originated in the uterus and, hence, gender

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<sup>1034</sup> SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B Vol. 24 a Nr. 62: entry no. 25 "opus chirugium Aureoli Theophrasi paracelsi; deutsch durch adam von Bodenstein. franckfurth am mayn 65 in folio weis leder mit clausure", that is, Paracelsus's *Opus chyrurgicum* (1565); and entry no. 252 "wundt vnd leib artzei d. Theophrastus Paracelsius franckfort am Maÿn 61 8° schwartz leder mit schwartze benden", namely Paracelsus's *Wundt und Leibartznei* (1561). The two titles thus appear to be different edition of the same work.

<sup>1035</sup> SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B Vol. 24 a Nr. 62, see the following entries: 45, 49, 59, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 76, 107 (identical to 108), 136, 139, 141, 147, 148, 154, 156, 174, 180, 184, 202, 206, 226, 234, 235, 264, 270, 274, 277, 321 (identical to 381), 328 (identical to 335), 330, 341, and 437.

<sup>1036</sup> Arons (1994), here particularly p. 9; Kinzelbach (1999), pp. 181-182; Flügge (1998), p. 103.

<sup>1037</sup> Keller (2003), p. 374.

specific.<sup>1038</sup> Similarly, when the wife of a Leipziger burgher asked for Anna's help during a difficult pregnancy, the electress recommended that she woman consult "the Sieberin [that is, Regina Sieberin] and other knowledgeable women" for advice.<sup>1039</sup>

Recapitulating the findings of the brief account, it is clear that Anna gained her medical expertise from both men and women, from "professionals" as well as lay-practitioners (however problematic these categories are), and that she consulted both printed texts and manuscripts. The same pattern is reflected in the medical manuscripts preserved from her daughter. However, the exchanges between women were particularly important, a reflection of the ways in which the medical knowledge and the associated practices were gendered. The examples also indicate that the women's medical knowledge was above all a practical and experience-based knowledge, which – in spite of the growing importance of the written word – continued to survive and circulate through personal meetings and hands-on instructions.

Medical recipes were surrounded by great secrecy and when a recipe was shared, a bond of trust was created. In the discussion of secrecy it is crucial to differentiate between recipes and remedies. As it will appear below, remedies were distributed generously and the sharing of an ointment or a salve did not imply a comparable degree of trust. However, even if Dorothea of Mansfeld and Anna of Hohenlohe remained the electress's closest collaborators, she also exchanged recipes with numerous other princely women, relatives and friends. The examples presented above constitute only a fragment of the numerous instances revealed by the correspondence;<sup>1040</sup> medical knowledge was exchanged so frequently and with so many different people that the constant emphasis on secrecy becomes questionable. Yet, the assurances given by Anna's daughter when she asked for Anna's recipe for *aqua vita* suggest that the requests for confidentiality was more than empty words even if the recipe for the *aqua vita* – undoubtedly Anna's most popular potion

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<sup>1038</sup> Anna recommended a visit to "Carlsbad" and she sent "hauptwaßer", "ein waßer für die Mutter" and a glass of her yellow *aqua vita*, see Anna to Count Frantz von Thurn, Annaburg 15 July 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 128 b – 129 a.

<sup>1039</sup> "... die Siberin vnd anderer verstandig Weiber ...", Anna to "Hanßen Helffrichs zu Leipzick Weib", Dresden 28 Feb. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 155 b. Anna's contacts with Regina Sieberin can be documented from 1565 to 1580 and the electress considered her to be highly qualified. See for example Anna's letter to Regina Sieberin, Annaburg, 5 Aug. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 329 b (original page no. 163 b). Anna's daughter Elisabeth also had several of Regina Sieberin's recipes in her medical manuscripts, see *Die medizinischen Handschriften unter den Codices Palatini germanici 182-303*, ed. by Matthias Miller and Karin Zimmermann: <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/5709>, pp. 491, 494, and 496.

<sup>1040</sup> Recently Katrin Keller has shown how the exchange of recipes/remedies was an important component in Anna's correspondence with the noblewoman Brigitta Trautson in Vienna, Keller (2003), pp. 373-374. Among the other important collaborators were Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, who will appear later in the chapter, and the abbess of the reformed convent in Weissenfels, Margaretha von Watzdorf (see von Weber (c. 1863)).

– was surrounded by greater secrecy than any other recipe. Nonetheless, even if varying degrees of secrecy existed, the recurring stress on confidentiality should never be dismissed as insignificant and two related factors contributed to its importance: one was a constant fear of poisoning that comes through in numerous letters; the other related to the fine line that separated cures from curses in the early modern world.<sup>1041</sup> Both aspects will be discussed below.

### **The usages of medical and apothecarial knowledge**

A few years after Anna's niece had married and left Saxony, she sent her aunt a "yellow salve for the hands". The electress replied,

[A]lthough we do not use this [salve] but, because Your Beloved knows how to make such, we beg that Your Beloved will send us [an account] of the ways in which one usually makes it, so that we can have the same [recipe] written with our other arts.<sup>1042</sup>

Anna's reply can be read in two fundamentally different ways. When viewed in isolation it seems to indicate that the collection of recipes was a goal in itself. However, when it is read in the context of Anna's dedication to the production and distribution of remedies, it suggests that her recipes constituted a reservoir of knowledge she could draw upon if or when the need arose. Throughout Anna's letter-books one can find examples of how she actively participated in the production and distribution of remedies and medical advice. In order to facilitate the comprehensive and continual production, elaborate laboratories (*Distillierhäuser*) were built at least at four of Anna and August's most favored residences: Dresden, Annaburg, Torgau, and Stolpen.<sup>1043</sup>

In order to show how and when the medical knowledge was put to use and with a view to specifying the consorts' motives for these activities, this section centers on the production and distribution of health remedies. In both parts one can identify two different modes: a more or less continual production and distribution, defined primarily by the

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<sup>1041</sup> Arendt-Schulte (1997), pp. 225-235; Horsley and Horsley (1986/2001); and Kinzelbach (1999), pp. 168-179.

<sup>1042</sup> "... wiewol wir derselbigen nitt gebrauch, Weil aber EL. wissen wie man solch Salbe zubereiten So bitten wir EL. wolle vnß die weise wie man die Pflaget zumach ... zuschickk[,] Damitt wir die selbig zu andern vnsern Künst schreiben lassen können ...", Anna of Saxony to Anna, Princess of Orange, Torgau 15 April 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 21 a–22 a.

<sup>1043</sup> Regarding the laboratories, see Sommerfeldt (1924), pp. 140-142 and his references to von Weber (1865). Regarding Anna's term *Distillierhaus* see for example Anna's letter the administrators at Torgau, Eilenburg and eleven other locations, dated Annaburg 16 March 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 13 a. See also Hickel (1982).

seasonal yields of nature, and a second more erratic production and distribution that was structured by special requests and/or the outbreaks of epidemics.

When a remedy had to be produced, the first challenge was the acquisition of the necessary ingredients. Anna relied on an extensive network of friends, employees, local administrators, and Saxon subjects when procuring ingredients for her apothecarial production. Whereas the more exotic goods were provided by a range of different suppliers,<sup>1044</sup> the large majority of raw materials were readily available in Saxony. The electress had a considerable herb garden<sup>1045</sup> and other ingredients were through the local administrators and the recurring requests testify to a strong seasonal awareness that structured the production. From the early 1560s Anna thus issued large-scale annual orders for spring flowers by the local administrators throughout Saxony. In 1577 she requested,

[A]s the blue violets and soon hereafter the lilies of the valley are coming forth and will flower, [and because] we have a great need for these for remedies in our distillation houses, we request and command that you will arrange for all violets and lilies of the valley to be brought to you on one given day and [that you will] send the same, bound in clean baskets, by a personal messenger and have them entrusted to Doctor Kleinin.<sup>1046</sup>

Almost identical letters can be found from 1563, 1566, 1568, 1571, 1572, 1581, 1584, and 1585.<sup>1047</sup> When one or more of the administrators neglected the order, as for example in

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<sup>1044</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 465-486 provides a detailed account of how Anna acquired the various remedies, for example: tobacco from Hessen, amber as well as eland claws from Brandenburg, Turkish and Indian balms for wounds from Vienna and the Palatinate, and "unicorn", that is, the horns from the narwhal from Denmark.

<sup>1045</sup> Anna's garden is mentioned in numerous letters, see for example: Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Salza 23 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 195 b – 196 a; Anna to Martin Pfünzing, Dresden 3 Sep. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 108 b – 109 a; and Anna to Georg Winger, Torgau 11 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 165 b – 166 a (original page no. 13 b – 14 a).

<sup>1046</sup> "... nach dem numehr die Plauen Violn vnnnd hernach baldt zaucken blumlein ... herfür kommen vnd blumen werden, dere wir eine gute notturff in vnser distillierhaus zur artznej bedurffen, Als begehren wir vnnnd befahlen dir hiermitt, du wollest ... diese verordnung vnnnd bestellung thuen d die alle violn vnnnd zauken blumlein ... auff einen gewissen tagk zu bracht dieselben als dan durch eigene bothen ... in saubern korben verbunden anhero schicken, Vnd d doctor Kleinen [Catharina Kleinin] vberantwortenn lassen ...", Anna to the administrators at Torgau, Eilenburg, Gleitsnau, Weissenfels, Leipzig, Lieberswerda, Meissen, Dresden, Pirna, Stolpen, Radeberg, Moritzburg and Dippoldiswalde, dated Annaburg 16 March 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 13 a.

<sup>1047</sup> See the following requests: Dresden 5 April 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 81 a; Dresden 25 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 97 b – 98 a; Dresden 22 March 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 26 a; Dresden 24 Feb. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 6 a; Dresden 17 May 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 38 a; Dresden 13 Feb. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 107 a – b (this request differs from the others by specifying the need for the flowers at both Annaburg and in Dresden); Dresden 13 April 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 35 a; and Dresden 1 March 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 65 a.

1563 and 1585, the electress reiterated her need with insistence.<sup>1048</sup> Although the requests are only preserved from the nine years, these suffice to demonstrate the recurrent need for the flowers, which – presumably – were used for one of her balms.<sup>1049</sup>

Corresponding to the spring delivery of violets and lilies, Juniper berries were requested in the fall. In 1583 Anna requested no less than ten bushels of fresh Juniper berries from Thilo von Trotha, the electoral commander at Weida.<sup>1050</sup> The berries were to be delivered to the bailiff at Augustusburg, who was responsible for their transport to Anna's gardener Georg Winger. All of the three steps were managed by direct instructions from Anna.<sup>1051</sup> The scale of these deliveries varied and depended on the yields of the particular year. Hence, in 1584 Trotha could only supply two – rather than ten – bushels, but the annually recurring nature of the need for Juniper berries was made explicit in the communications of the same year. According to Anna's request, the secretary Hans Jenitz had asked her if "we [Anna] also this year are in need of Juniper berries."<sup>1052</sup>

When requesting the Juniper berries, Anna did not explicitly state that they were intended for remedies but other cases reveal that they were used for this purpose. Several years before these large-scale deliveries appear in the correspondence, Anna sent a detailed instruction to Catharina Kleinin that she immediately had to start the elaborate distillation of a particular potion that, among other ingredients, required "two handfuls of Juniper berries"<sup>1053</sup> and, already in 1561, Anna had shared this or a related recipe with Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin.<sup>1054</sup>

Not only the ingredients that originated from plants were dependent upon the seasonal changes. When Anna sent Elisabeth of Mecklenburg several *Hirschkreuze* (a particular part of a deer heart), she assured the duchess that they had been taken from the

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<sup>1048</sup> See Anna to administrator in Meissen, Dresden 5 April 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 81 a; and Anna to "die Ambtleutte vnd Schossere zu Eilenburgk, Torgaw, Liebenwerda, Meissen, Dreßden, Pirnaw, Stolpen, Radebergk, Moritzburgk, Dippoldißwalde, Honstein, Tarandt", Dresden 6 May 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 103 a.

<sup>1049</sup> Sommerfeldt (1924), p. 141.

<sup>1050</sup> Anna to Thilo von Trotha, Klotzsche 6 Oct. 1583, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 139 b – 140 a (original page no. 49 b – 50 a). Similar requests were sent to von Trotha in 1581 and 1584, dated Schneeberg 16 Sep. 1581, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 157 b (original page no. 65 b) and Dresden 19 Oct. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 117 b. Biographical information about Thilo von Trotha available on: <http://www.trotha.de/biographien/thilo-muehlberg/> (02.01.05).

<sup>1051</sup> The three steps of the request are: (1) Anna to Thilo von Trotha, (2) Anna to the administrator (*Schossere*) at Augustusburg, and (3) Anna to Georg Winger, Gardener at Annaburg. All three letters are dated Klotzsche 6 Oct. 1583, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 139 b – 140 b.

<sup>1052</sup> "... wir auch dis Jahre wacholder behre bedurffen ...", Anna to Thilo von Trotha, Dresden 19 Oct. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 117 b.

<sup>1053</sup> Anna to Catharina Kleinin, Borssenstein 30 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 40 b – 41 a.

<sup>1054</sup> Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Lochau 8 Sep. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 186 a – b.



deer hearts at the right time.<sup>1055</sup> Deer antlers too were collected at a particular time of the year and the efficacy of snow, rain, and dew depended upon the time it had been collected.<sup>1056</sup>

The examples reveal Anna's reliance upon (the cultivated) nature and its yields. It is presumably in light of the same that one must consider the ordinance August issued in 1564 prohibiting the "herbal women" (*Kreutterweiber*) around Schwarzenberg to collect herbs and roots.<sup>1057</sup> By way of her status in the territory, Anna was able to secure the desired resources, be these from flora or fauna, for her apothecarial production. The electress's requests for the various ingredients also show that she actively employed the administrative infrastructure of Saxony and, also in this respect, it was her position within the territory that enabled her to maintain the large-scale production in her laboratories. Similarly, it was only by way of her highly rank-specific network that Anna was able to obtain the more exotic and expensive ingredients she needed.

Although Anna depended on the administrative infrastructure of the territory, the examples leave no doubt about her active participation in both the acquisition of raw materials and the production of remedies. Her personal participation in the production was revealed already in the previous section when her exchange with Dorothea of Mansfeld concerning the "handiwork" that was required for the production of a particular remedy. However, the actual production of remedies is rarely visible in the letters, presumably because it took place where Anna resided and she therefore communicated verbally with others who were involved. Yet, a couple of fragmented pieces of information deserve attention because they indicate that the preparation of particular remedies was dependent upon Anna's personal participation.

In March of 1579 Anna was residing at Annaburg and preparing to produce one of her most prized remedies, the *aqua vita* that was used for a great variety of purposes.<sup>1058</sup> She requested "Johann Apothecker" (Johann Unter der Linden) to bring the particular roots

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<sup>1055</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 6 March 1565, Kop. 512, fol. 9 b – 10 a. According to *DWB* a *Hirschkreuz* is "... ein beinahe dreieckiger oder kreuzförmiger, beinhardter knorpel, der am grunde des herzens aus der zusammentretung der pulsadern entsteht ...", see *DWB*, vol. 10, column 1569, that is, it was a particular part of a deer's heart. The exact usage remains unclear but it was probably used either as a "talisman" or in various remedies. According to von Weber (1865), p. 474, the *Hirschkreuze* had to be "taken" between the two "Frauentage" (between 15 Aug. and 8 Sep.).

<sup>1056</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 465-466.

<sup>1057</sup> Sommerfeldt (1924), pp. 138-144.

<sup>1058</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 456-459.

and the sugar needed for this process.<sup>1059</sup> Other exchanges reveal that the preparation of this particular potion was usually started during the spring and that the process took at least three years and required elaborate equipment.<sup>1060</sup> When Heinrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel in 1558 politely requested a new delivery of the *aqua vita*, Anna replied that for the moment her supplies were out but that she was in the process of preparing it again.<sup>1061</sup> From the mid-1560s, Anna sent annual supplies of *aqua vita* to Johann Jacob von Khuen-Belasy, Archbishop of Salzburg. However, in 1573 the delivery was delayed for several months and comprised only a modest portion. In the accompanying letter, Anna excused the delay and the amount and explained that it was due to her extended stay in Denmark the previous year. Yet, she also assured the Archbishop that she would make more of the precious potion during the coming year and, as soon as it was ready, he would receive more.<sup>1062</sup> The electress's explanations suggest that her absences from Saxony interrupted her apothecarial activities. Although, she also delegated responsibilities for the production or distribution of a specific remedy to Catharina Kleinin, Doctor Neefen, or the electoral apothecary,<sup>1063</sup> the production remained under her personal control.

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<sup>1059</sup> Anna to Johann Unter der Linden, Annaburg 12 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 285 a (original page no. 119 a). The exact recipe for this universal remedy remains unknown. Even when Anna and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, referred to parts of the formula, it was always surrounded by secrecy and several steps of the production are referred to simply as "... as you know ...", see the version of recipe for the *aqua vita* as sent by Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna in order to get her advice, Heidelberg 4 Nov. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 257-258; the more detailed recipe written in DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 156 c – f (dated 1568 or 1569); and the considerations by von Weber (1865), p. 456.

<sup>1060</sup> Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Dresden 17 Nov. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 114 a – 115 a; and the examples mentioned by von Weber (1865), pp. 455-456. Anna acquired at least parts of the equipment for the distillation from Augsburg already in the late 1550s and later additional material (perhaps for Annaburg) was requested via Joachim Camerarius in Nuremberg in 1584 (see von Weber (1865), p. 454).

<sup>1061</sup> "... wir seind aber im werck dasselige wider zumach ...", Anna to Heinrich of Braunschweig, 15 July 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 68 b – 69 b. A similar exchange between the electress and Heinrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel can be found from the following year; see Anna's letter to the Duke dated 29 Oct. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 108 b – 109 a.

<sup>1062</sup> Anna to Johann Jacob von Khuen-Belasy, Archbishop of Salzburg, Dresden 7 March 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 22 b – 23 a.

<sup>1063</sup> Catharina Kleinin was often entrusted both remedies and the production of specific remedies, and as hinted above, her involvement in the apothecarial production has to be viewed in light of her husband's profession as a physician. In 1577, a delivery of 25 deer antlers (a necessary ingredient for numerous recipes), Italian hazelnuts, two "stock Sprickanten krautt" and some roots were entrusted to Catharina, see Anna to Catharina Kleinin, Borssenstein 2 Aug. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 41 a. See also Anna's letters to Catharina Kleinin dated: Vienna 18 Feb. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 33 a, and Borssenstein 30 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 40 b – 41 a. An example of Anna's instructions to her apothecary can be found in her letter to "Andres Beissker Apotheker", Weissenfels 5 Nov. 1583, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 149 b – 150 a (original page no. 59 b – 60 a). Finally, Anna to Johann Neefen, Sitzeroda 11 Dec. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 71 b.

When Anna wrote about the physicians who were employed in the electoral household, she consistently referred to them as August's physicians.<sup>1064</sup> In contrast, the employees who were involved in the production of remedies (the apothecaries and their spouses, the court mistress, and the "distiller" (*Waserbrenner*)) were all under Anna's direct authority. When a new apprentice was recruited for the apothecary in 1575, the communication went via Anna rather than August.<sup>1065</sup> The consorts' authority over other servants within the apothecary and laboratory is also seen a couple of years later when Anna of Hohenlohe wrote a letter of recommendation for the distiller Marius Buchen to the electress.<sup>1066</sup> Anna replied that, because she already had a good distiller, she could not take him in her service. The electress also explained that she had offered to recommend Marius Buchen for a position by Sabina of Brandenburg or Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin but that he had preferred the next letter of recommendation be sent to Anna Maria of Württemberg.<sup>1067</sup> Not a single man is mentioned as a prospective employer for the distiller in Anna's account of her conversation with Marius Buchen and there is no doubt that the production of remedies was the domain of the consorts.

As the electress was in charge of the apothecarial production, she also managed the distribution of remedies and the next examples have been selected to demonstrate this. However, because the production and distribution of medicine was intrinsically connected – particularly when specific needs arose – the same cases also provide supplementary information regarding the periodic and sudden production of medicine prompted by outbreaks of particular diseases.

From the late-1550s and until her death, Anna began a new calendar year by a comprehensive distribution of *aqua vita*, small portions of a particular powder that was used against a range of illnesses (*Giftpulver*), and New Year greetings. The glasses of yellow and white *aqua vita* were sent to a range of relatives, neighbors, friends, and clients, but only few addressees received both potion and powder. Six lists, which were compiled as the New Year shipments were prepared in 1571 and 1574, reveal the considerable extent of this annual distribution. In 1571 the *aqua vita* was sent to at least 33 different addressees and the lists from 1574 provide the names of 26 different relatives and friends. With few

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<sup>1064</sup> See for example Anna's letter to Anna, Duchess of Bavaria, without date (btw. 18 June and 5 July 1565), DrHSA Kop. 512, fol., 29 b – 30 a, and Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Stolpen 5 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 159 b – 160 a.

<sup>1065</sup> Anna to Hieronymus Rauscher, Annaburg 14 March 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 30 b.

<sup>1066</sup> Anna of Hohenlohe to Anna, Neuenstein 29 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8536/8, p. 91.

<sup>1067</sup> Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 15 Jan. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 5 b – 6 a.

exceptions they all received one glass with white and one glass with yellow *aqua vita*. In addition, the archbishops of Salzburg and Mainz received small containers with the “powder against the poison” and the Countess of Solms received a different potion made from deer antlers (*Hirschkolbenwasser*) instead of the *aqua vita*.<sup>1068</sup> However, a couple of years later, the Empress was granted a double portion (four glasses) of the *aqua vita*<sup>1069</sup> and, in the context of Anna’s careful accounts, this can only be read as an expression of the electress profound deference for the Empress. Not even Anna’s closest confidante and most frequent correspondent Elisabeth of Mecklenburg received more than the two bottles.<sup>1070</sup>

But the electress also distributed her *aqua vita* to the people in her immediate vicinity. Only a few years after she began to produce the potion, she believed that the requests to her exceeded those received by her mentor, the Countess of Mansfeld. Having received a letter in which the countess referred to the large number of people who requested her *aqua vita*, Anna replied that she experienced an equally great demand and believed that she had distributed more than the countess. In spite of the competition and complaints the great demand elicited, Anna proceeded with the reminder – to both herself and the countess – that, “even so, one must help good friends and the needy”.<sup>1071</sup> This phrase could have been taken straight from a funeral sermon and she made an effort to fulfill her obligations towards the needy as she defined it.

The electress’s high-ranking friends continually turned to her for advice and she generously supplied remedies and instructions. In 1559-1560, Sabina of Brandenburg received a steady stream of remedies and instructions;<sup>1072</sup> the Holsatian nobleman and governor in Schleswig-Holstein, Heinrich Rantzau received the popular *Giftpulver*;<sup>1073</sup> and, as Dorothea and Georg of Schönburg’s daughter was seriously ill, Anna sent a range of

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<sup>1068</sup> The recipe for the *Hirschkolbenwasser* is summarized in Anna’s letter to Barbara of Liegnitz-Brieg, Torgau 18 Nov. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 196 b – 197 a. According to *DWB*, vol. 10, column 1568, *Hirschkolben* refers to a deer’s newly grown antlers as they are still soft. The lists are bound in DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 3 and 5 (the latter is dated Dresden 1 Jan. 1571), and fol. 104 b, 105 a, 106 a, and 107 a. The last four lists are not dated but are bound among the letters from January 1574.

<sup>1069</sup> Anna to Empress Maria, Dresden 3 Jan. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 153 a – b (original page no. 1 a – b).

<sup>1070</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 3 Jan. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 154 b – 156 b (original page no. 2 b – 4 b).

<sup>1071</sup> “... Jdoch muss man gutten freuden vnd arment leuten auch aushelff ...”, Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 25 Jan. 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 28 a – b.

<sup>1072</sup> See the letters from Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Havelberg 10 Aug. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 105 a – 106 b; Dresden 17 Nov. 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 114 a – 115 a; Dresden 5 Jan 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 115 b – 116 a; Dresden 11 March 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 121 b – 122 a; and Dresden 28 March 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, 123 b – 124 a.

<sup>1073</sup> Anna to Heinrich Rantzau, Dresden 2 June 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 41 a.

remedies and detailed instruction for a cure.<sup>1074</sup> When Anna received requests that outlined more complicated cases, she frequently consulted with Doctor Neefen before advice and remedies were dispatched. Hence when Sabina of Brandenburg again experienced health problems in 1566 and 1571, Anna enclosed Doctor Neefen's advice in her reply<sup>1075</sup> and the same pattern was followed when the young daughter of Barbara of Liegnitz-Brieg was seriously ill.<sup>1076</sup> In other cases, Anna was more reluctant to dispatch remedies or advice without knowing the exact details of the condition. Having received one of the numerous requests for help from Sabina of Brandenburg, Anna explained,

Your Beloved must consider that it is precarious to advice Your Beloved in an unknown condition from such distance or to send remedies that (regardless of how well they are intended) could do as much harm as good.<sup>1077</sup>

If however, the electress sent further details, Anna promised to consult with Doctor Neefen and send his advice.<sup>1078</sup>

Although most of the recipients of the electress's remedies and medical advice were high-ranking friend and relatives, one also finds cases in which "common" subjects turned to her for medical assistance. In the late 1570s, an unnamed Saxon woman appealed to the electress's compassion because her husband, a Saxon weaver, was experiencing severe problems with one of his legs. Having received the plea and consulted with August, Anna forwarded the supplication to her apothecary Johann Unter der Linden with the instructions that he and "Master Rudolf, the barber-surgeon" ("Meister Rudolff der Barbier") should travel to the weaver's house in order to determine the possibilities of a cure. If the man could be cured, Anna would provide a house in which the treatment could take place and she would pay all of the associated expenses.<sup>1079</sup>

The electress's distribution of remedies to the larger Saxon population is most clearly visible when epidemic diseases ravaged Saxony. Although the profound and wide-ranging

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<sup>1074</sup> Anna to Georg of Schönburg and his wife Dorothea (she was the daughter of Dorothea of Mansfeld), Grünhain 27 Aug. 1565; and Schwarzberg 30 Aug. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 39 a – b and 39 b – 40 b.

<sup>1075</sup> Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Stolpen 5 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 159 b – 160 a; and Dresden 12 Nov. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 322 b – 323 b.

<sup>1076</sup> Anna to Barbara von Liegnitz-Brieg, Dresden 5 April 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 11 b – 12 a.

<sup>1077</sup> "... So haben EL F zuerachten das ... [es] ... bedencklich ist EL also vnbeanter gelegenheit vber land zurathen od artznej (die derselben wie ... gut es auch gemaint wurd) Jo so bald schedlich als nutzlich sein konte) zuschicken ...", Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 3 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 137 b – 138 b.

<sup>1078</sup> Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 3 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 137 b – 138 b. For a similar phrase, see also Anna to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 3 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 142 a – 143 a.

<sup>1079</sup> Anna to Johann unter der Linden, Nossen 5 Aug. 1578, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 116 b – 117 a.

impact of epidemic diseases on early modern societies have been examined from numerous perspectives, the particular role that was attributed to the *Landesmutter* in times of crisis has not been treated. Yet, it is well known that Ambroise Paré's influential book on the plague (1568) was written at the request of the French Dowager Queen Catherine de Medici<sup>1080</sup> and, as demonstrated in chapter 3, the religious authorities in several Lutheran territories encouraged the consorts to express their compassion for the frail and the needy in concrete actions. In the last examples it has already been revealed that remedies and advice often were sent in response to specific needs and appeals.

However, the demands on the consort were greatly amplified when the territory was inflicted with the plague. In the fall of 1566, Anna thanked the forester at Hohnstein for a large delivery of berries, leaves and roots. In the same letter, she instructed him to send – in great haste – baskets full of “Angelica root, Agrimony, Hog’s fennel and/or Masterwort”.<sup>1081</sup> All of the plants mentioned were recognized as effective remedies against the plague<sup>1082</sup> and the urgency with which Anna needed the roots at Stolpen was presumably due to the outbreak, which is continually present in her correspondence during the fall of 1566.<sup>1083</sup> Only a couple of days later, the electress sent her “powder against the poison” to Dorothea Susanna in Weimar and explained,

And because of the assaulting dangerous disease, the demand for this powder has been so great that we have distributed all of the old and had to prepare new, may God the Almighty give that Your Beloved will not need it.<sup>1084</sup>

The previous year (1565), several German territories were afflicted by an epidemic and, when Mecklenburg was hit, Elisabeth asked for Anna’s help. Anna consulted with

<sup>1080</sup> Cunningham and Grell (2000), pp. 280-284.

<sup>1081</sup> “... Angelica wurtz, Steinwurtz od Engelsüßwurtz, Swalmen wurtzel vnd Meister wurtzel ...”, Anna to Nickel Müller, the forester at Hohnstein, without date (Senftenberg btw. 18 Sep. and 5 Oct. 1566), DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 142 a.

<sup>1082</sup> Sommerfeldt (1924) pp. 139-140 refers to Angelica as a commonly used remedy against the plague and Paracelsus recommended “Schwebelwurtz” against the plague in *Zwey Bücher ... von der Pestilenz und jhren zufällen* (1564).

<sup>1083</sup> Anna to Agnes of Solms, Senftenberg 10 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 146 a – b. See also the more detailed account of the epidemic and its spread throughout Saxony in Anna’s letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Stolpen 21 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 151 b – 152 b. Already at the beginning of September, August had explained to his mother-in-law, that the plague had forced him and his family to leave Dresden and take refuge in Stolpen, see August to Dorothea, Lochau 6 Sep. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 302 a – b. In November Anna complained to her mother that the situation with the plague continued to worsen, Anna to Dorothea, Stolpen 2 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 334 a – b. Regarding the epidemics of the 1560s see Eckert (1996), pp. 78-86.

<sup>1084</sup> “... Vnd ist solch Puluer wegen der eingefallenen gefehrlichen sterbens leufte so sehr bej vns abgeholt das wir das alte gar ausgeteilt vnd von newen wider zurichten müssen, der Almechtige gebe das es EL nicht bedorffe ...” Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Stolpen 15 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 149 a – 150 a.

Johann Neefen who had provided “a full account of how one is to behave is such a pandemic”.<sup>1085</sup> In accordance with Doctor Neefen’s recommendations, the electress also sent Elisabeth a portion of the electuary he had prescribed, the recipe for the same, and a “small box filled with our powder against the poison”.<sup>1086</sup> Anna’s powder against the poison could be used as both a prophylactic and a cure. If, according to Anna, a person had to work in the poisoned air, he could protect himself against the plague by drinking one serving of wine in which a pinch of the powder had dissolved. But if a person already was infected, the powder had to be distributed according to the visible symptoms and the victim’s complexion and strength.<sup>1087</sup> Even this limited information that was provided by Anna in the accompanying letter suggests that she and the court physician viewed the plague as an external poison against which an antidote had to be provided and this understanding corresponds to the way the disease was regarded by the most “advanced” medical treatises of the time.<sup>1088</sup>

Assuming that the duchess would need more of the powder, Anna also explained that the main ingredient was Agrimony or, alternatively, Angelica. Agrimony, she explained, usually grows in rocky soil, is yellow in the inside, has thick hard leaves and tastes sweet. She was convinced that Elisabeth could easily get hold of this.<sup>1089</sup> The straightforward manner with which Anna explained the composition of the powder reveals that the duchess – at least in Anna’s perception – had the skills that were required for the prompt production

<sup>1085</sup> “... ein gantzen bericht wie man sich in solchen leuffen halten soll ...”. The same “bericht” is listed as entry no. 192 in the inventory of Anna’s library, “Ein bericht wie man sich in sterben leuffen halten sol durch Johan Neffen dresden 66. 4° schwartz leder vergult mit gelbe benden”, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B Vol. 24 a Nr. 62. The subsequent year, Anna sent a copy of Doctor Neefen’s treatise to Barbara of Liegnitz-Brieg, see Anna’s letter dated Dresden 30 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 272 a – b. Regarding the identification of this epidemic as bubonic plague, see Eckert (1996), pp. 78-86

<sup>1086</sup> “... schlechtlein voller vnscrs giftpuluers ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 6 March 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 9 a – 10 a.

<sup>1087</sup> The instructions were as follows: “... des mag ein mensch d in vorgiffter luftt zuschaffen zu morgens eine Messerspitz voller In wein einnehmen, so soll er desselbten tages fur der seuche sich[er] sein, do aber die seuche albereit einen menschen angefallen, Soll man Ime nach gelegenheit seiner Complexion stercke vnd alters diß puluers ein quitten od, ein halb quinten od auch ein drittenteil eines [quinten], wo es mit kalte kommen Im warmen wein, wo es Inen aber mit hitz ankommen In bieressig eingeb] ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 6 March 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 9 a – 10 a

<sup>1088</sup> This view was above all promoted by Paracelsus, see Lindemann (1999), pp. 75-77; Cunningham and Grell (2000), pp. 280-281; and Harrison (2004), pp. 32-33 and 47-48. It is remarkable that this view appears to have been commonly accepted already in the early to mid-1560s. It was only during the 1560s that Paracelsus’s ideas were the subject of extensive discussion in neighboring France. Inspired by his ideas, the celebrated court surgeon Ambroise Paré published his treatise on the plague in 1568 (three years after the example presented above) in which a similar view was presented, see Lindemann (1999), pp. 75-77; Fink-Jensen (2004), pp. 144-146.

<sup>1089</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 6 March 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 9 a – 10 a.

of more *Giftpulver* and that she was expected to provide remedies for a larger number of people.

A decade later (1577), the plague again raged in Saxony.<sup>1090</sup> This time the area around Anna's newly built castle Annaburg in her dowager fief was hit particularly hard. From September until November the administrator (*Schösser*) at Annaburg sent frequent reports concerning the rising death tolls to Anna<sup>1091</sup> and, from the early stages of the outbreak, the electress admonished him to make sure that "the remedies we have prescribed are used assiduously".<sup>1092</sup> A couple of weeks later Anna turned to Gotschalck von Leipzig, the bailiff (*Forwergsverwalter*) of the electoral estate in the small town of Krogstad. She had heard that the blacksmith in Krogstad had an unusual and salty spring in his garden and she instructed Gotschalck to find the spring, fill the bottles he had received with its water, and send them to Anna as quickly as possible. The next day, she instructed Gotschalck to dispatch a courier who was to run "day and night" to ensure the fastest possible delivery of the desired water.<sup>1093</sup> Although Anna did not make it explicit that the water was to be used against the disease, the context of the requests and the urgency with which the acquisition was made leave little doubt that it was to be used against the impending danger.

Anna's actions during the times of epidemics and her advice to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg suggest that she considered the female consort to have a particular responsibility in times of crisis. However, in order to clarify the connection between the consort's office and these responsibilities, one must consider the ways in which the plague was viewed in the sixteenth century.

As other diseases, the outbreaks of plague were regarded as God's *just* punishment for the sins of humans,<sup>1094</sup> and this view was shared by the Saxon electress. Writing to her brother Hans, she explained that more than eighty people had died of the plague during the past months and continued, "may the dear God mercily divert his just anger and well-deserved punishment from us".<sup>1095</sup> This conception of illnesses raised doubts about what

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<sup>1090</sup> According to Eckert (1996), pp. 87-93, this too was an outbreak of the bubonic plague.

<sup>1091</sup> DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 47 b, 48 a, 49 a – b, 50 a and 54 a, dated Sep.-Nov. 1577. See also the earlier letter (Mühlberg 27 Aug. 1575) to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg in which Anna explains how all servants have been evacuated from Annaburg because of "... bese Fieber vnd Hauptkranckheit ...".

<sup>1092</sup> "... die artzney so wir verordnen lassen vleissig gebrauch ...", Anna to the administrator (*Schösser*) at Annaburg, Glücksburg 20/26 Sep. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 47 b – 48 a.

<sup>1093</sup> Anna to Gotschalck von Leipzig, 5 and 6 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 50 a – b.

<sup>1094</sup> Cunningham and Grell (2000), p. 253.

<sup>1095</sup> "... der liebe Goth wolle seinen gerecht Zorn vnd solche wohlverdiente straff gnediglich von vnss abwenden ...", Anna to her brother Hans (the Younger) of Holstein, Stolpen 17 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 163 a – b.



the proper and pious response to the outbreak ought to be. It could imply that an attempt to escape the danger at once was considered impious and futile: impious because it represented an attempt to evade God's will and futile because God determined who would survive.<sup>1096</sup> While Luther shared the view of epidemics as God's punishments for the inevitable sins of humans, he also stressed that the same inflictions were sent to test the faith of believers. The appropriate response was to patiently submit oneself to the test and to demonstrate one's continued belief by a true, Christian compassion expressed in the care of those who were ill. This, however, did not imply that one should not take precautions. On the contrary, Luther also wrote,

[B]y God's decree the enemy has sent us poison. Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminate. [...] If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me.<sup>1097</sup>

Consequently, the attempts to overcome the disease using medicine did not constitute a challenge to God's will. On the contrary, both priests and the holders of public offices had a particular responsibility for the community and, in contrast to the "common (wo-)man", these groups were not allowed to flee from the plague.<sup>1098</sup>

Viewed in the context of these instructions, Anna's distribution of remedies and medical advice appear as an integral part of her God-given office. When God had assigned her the office as *Landesmutter*, he also commanded her to care for subjects, friends, and neighbors. It was this vocation and the God-given directives Anna strove to fulfill through her medical and apothecarial projects. However, in keeping with this adherence to the religious instructions, she often stressed that God was the only true physician.<sup>1099</sup>

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<sup>1096</sup> See the concise discussion in Cunningham and Grell (2000), pp. 284-288; Dörmeier (2003), pp. 14-50; and, with particular emphasis on the Zwinglian/Calvinist views, Dörmeier (1992), pp. 331-397.

<sup>1097</sup> The passage is from Luther's open letter titled "Whether one may Flee from a Deadly Plague" (1527), quoted from Cunningham and Grell (2000), pp. 285.

<sup>1098</sup> Cunningham and Grell (2000), pp. 285.

<sup>1099</sup> Hence, "... [wir] zweifeln nicht der Almechtig rechte artz werde helffen das es euch wohl bekomme ...", Anna to Dorothea of Schönburg, Dresden 22 March 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 218 b. In a similar way, Anna referred to God as the only true protector (*Nothelfer*) in her letter to Anna of Orange, Moritzburg 24 Aug. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 52 a – 53 a.

### Forbidden practices and dangers of medical knowledge

While the recipes for medical remedies were surrounded by secrecy, the actual remedies and prescription for cures were generally offered with remarkable openness.<sup>1100</sup> Yet, exceptions to this rule existed and they deserve attention because they help in a delineation of the accepted medical “paradigms”.

Shortly before Christmas of 1579, Anna sent a very long and cryptic letter to Anna of Hohenlohe. She wrote, “in congenial trust, we inform you that the mentioned cure – the faithful God be thanked – continues to look promising”. The same cure could be expected to demand considerable time and the “said person” (who performed the cure) was concerned that her long absence from her home may cause her current employer to terminate her service there. In an attempt to prevent this, the same “said person” had humbly requested that Anna – through the Countess of Hohenlohe – obtain a written statement from her lord, in which he guarantees his acceptance of the situation. The guarantee had to be obtained without revealing the whereabouts of the “said person” and it was required urgently, because the same “said person” had to request certain materials required for the progress of the initiated cure from her home. Anna expected that the cure would be completed around Pentecost and asked Hohenlohe to arrange that the trusted coachman then returned to pick up the “frequently mentioned person”.<sup>1101</sup>

Four months later (March 1580), the subject recurs in an equally enigmatic letter to the countess. Anna and August were getting ready for a trip to Denmark<sup>1102</sup> and, although Anna would have preferred to bring the “said person” along, the “said person” had humbly solicited that she be released from the electress’s service. Anna accommodated the request and found consolation in the fact that the “said person” had promised to return to Saxony whenever she was needed.<sup>1103</sup>

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<sup>1100</sup> For a very openhearted account of an illness see Anna’s letter to Count Frantz von Thurn, Annaburg 15 July 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 128 b – 129 a. This is example particularly interesting because Anna previously had had only limited contact with the count and his daughter.

<sup>1101</sup> “... [wir] fügen ... Euch In gnedgisten vertrauen zuwissen das sich die bewuste Cura dem getreuen Gotth sey danck noch zimbleich wol Anlesset ...”, Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 18 Dec. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 377 a – 379 a, and the reply from Anna of Hohenlohe, 5 Jan. 1580, DrHSA Loc. 8536/8, pp. 95 a – b.

<sup>1102</sup> They were to attend the celebrations that were planned for the day when Frederik II were to enfeoff his two uncles and younger brother with their possession in the duchies Schleswig and Holstein. However, by the time they arrived to Schwerin their plans had changed, Anna to Frederik II, Schwerin 14 April 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 28 b – 29 b.

<sup>1103</sup> Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 9 March 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 21 a; and Anna of Hohenlohe to Anna, 30 March 1580, DrHSA Loc. 8536/8, pp. 101 a – b.

What can be made of these two secretive messages? According to von Weber, the executioner from Schwäbisch Hall was brought to Saxony in 1579 because he supposedly knew a cure against humps and hunched backs. The youngest daughter of the electoral couple (also called Anna) was believed to have suffered a fracture in her back while still an infant. This, however, was discovered only years later when the girl's back proved to be bent or hunched. During the 1570s, the electress sought advice from her female friends throughout the Empire, but none of the suggested cures or experts brought about the desired improvement. By the time the daughter had turned twelve, a solution had still not been found and – writes von Weber – the executioner was recruited.<sup>1104</sup>

With the exception of the two letters summarized above, a request by the Danish Court Mistress Inger Oxe in 1574,<sup>1105</sup> and a more explicit communication regarding back and shoulder problems (not referring to the daughter Anna, though) with Margarethe Leuschnerin, the widow of a physician/apothecary in Meissen, during 1575, Anna's letters reveal nothing about the subject. It would clearly be hazardous to simply conclude that this "said person" is the same as the executioner to whom von Weber referred, not least because the letters to Anna of Hohenlohe reveals that this "said person" was a woman. On the other hand, Kathy Stuart has shown how the early modern executioners openly practiced medicine and regarded it as a legitimate part of their profession.<sup>1106</sup> This however, did not mean that they were safeguarded against accusations from other medical practitioners and the examples provided by Stuart suggest that they were more likely to become the target of criticism if their wives took active part in the healing arts.<sup>1107</sup> Hence, if the "said person" were the wife of the executioner rather than the executioner himself, the secrecy is less surprising. An extensive search in the Saxon archives may reveal if this woman was the person von Weber referred to as the executioner.<sup>1108</sup> Here however, the example only serves to illustrate the secrecy with certain conditions and particularly cures or healers were surrounded.

The extent of the measures taken to cure the young duchess and the secrecy with which these matters were handled can be viewed as an expression of parental care and concern for their daughter's well-being. But the secrecy with which the "said person" was

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<sup>1104</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 427-428.

<sup>1105</sup> Anna to Inger Oxe, Dresden 14 Aug. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 216 b – 217 a.

<sup>1106</sup> Stuart (1999), pp. 149-185.

<sup>1107</sup> Stuart (1999), pp. 154-155.

<sup>1108</sup> In spite of the lack of references in von Weber's work, the large majority of the quotes and information he provides can be found in Anna's correspondence. However, in some instances he draws extensively upon information from August's letters or – perhaps – other parts of the vast collections in the Saxon archives.

surrounded suggests that her services transgressed the boundaries of the acceptable “paradigm(s)” of medicine as this (or these) existed among the German elites. Anna’s awareness of the same limits was revealed in her communications with the widow Margarethe Leuschnerin (see chapter 7), who lost the electress’s favor when the controversial nature of her remedies was revealed to Anna.<sup>1109</sup>

Even if Anna knew what was acceptable, she consulted with the “said person” and, in contrast to Leuschenrin’s fate, this “said person” enjoyed the electress’s protection. And this may not have been the only instance in which Anna consulted with practitioners who the contemporary theological authorities may have considered questionable. As discussed in chapter 5, Anna’s sister-in-law Sidonia was eager to establish contact to the *pfaffe* who knew an art that helped women conceive and, according to Sidonia, both Agnes (Moritz’ wife) and Anna had used the advice from this man.

The two examples indicate that when the established authorities and their cures had failed to bring about the desired effect, Anna, her sister-in-laws, and the Countess of Hohenlohe were willing to seek advice and cures from a more contested part of the available spectrum of medical practitioners. Yet, the readiness to transgress the boundaries of the theologically sanctioned medicine must be viewed in relation to the importance of solving the problem in question. The crucial importance of biological reproduction within the princely dynasties has already been discussed (chapter 5). When Anna was ready to let the “said person” treat her daughter, it thus represents her profound care and concern for the child. Yet, without thereby disputing Anna’s genuine care for her daughter, the desperate desire to see her cured should also be considered in the context of an early modern marriage market among the elites. A visible handicap considerably diminished the chances of a politically advantageous or even appropriate marriage – and the daughter indeed did marry a prince of much lesser standing than would be expected of a woman with her dynastic background.<sup>1110</sup>

However, in a discussion of the medical knowledge and practices of princely women, the most significant aspect is the stark contrast between the secret cures/healers and the medical advice, which was openly dispatched. The secrecy surrounding the two healers

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<sup>1109</sup> Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Dresden 22 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 105 b – 106 a.

<sup>1110</sup> The daughter Anna married Johann Casimir of Saxony-Coburg in 1586. The marriage was most unhappy and when Anna was accused of adultery, the couple was divorced (1593). She was imprisoned at the castle Coburg where she died in 1613, see Wank (1898). Several shorter biographical studies of Johann Casimir have been published more recently, but they all rely on Wank when summarizing the marriage between Anna and Johann Casimir.

indicates that the electress and the Countess of Hohenlohe were fully aware that the requested service transgressed the theologically sanctioned medical practices that they – as secular authorities – were expected to reinforce by example. In this, but also in their more restricted practice of apothecarial production, the princely women walked a fine line. The rumors that sometimes circulated about the malevolent nature of their apothecarial undertakings meant that they could not help but be aware of this.

Although Anna viewed her care for her and her subjects as part of her office exactly as it was prescribed by the panegyric texts, not everyone agreed with the ways in which she managed this responsibility. More than once the rumors that Anna was a sorceress (*Zauberin*) came to her attention. Already in 1567, Anna became aware that the apothecarial production could be the subject of gossip. In her exchanges with Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Anna assured the margravine that a certain Merten von Seydewitz from the Saxon village Plota, who had spread horrible rumors about Katharina's apothecary, would not be left unpunished.<sup>1111</sup>

Ten years later (1576), Anna herself became the subject of rumors, which partly were related to her apothecary. The Saxon huntsmaster (*Jägermeister*) Cornelius von Ruxleben lost the grace of the electoral couple because he had defamed Anna, her mother, and the young Duke Christian. During the interrogations, von Ruxleben admitted to have claimed that Anna was greedy, that August had hit her, and that “our gracious Lady, the Electress knew great poison and evil”.<sup>1112</sup> As would be expected, von Ruxleben was imprisoned, but this did not curtail the rumors. Approximately one year later, a new version of the same accusations emerged in the Palatinate and Elisabeth informed her mother that one of the noble women in her service had revealed that a newly arrived Saxon servant Sibylla Seydewitz was spreading terrible gossip.<sup>1113</sup> With great distress, Elisabeth summarized the rumors as follows:

Your Grace's late mother was a declared messenger of the Devil and a whore and Your Grace regarded her as the same. Your Grace should also be a whore, please forgive me for the will of God that I write this to Your Grace, [but] her words were like this. And Your Grace was not only a whore but also a sorceress and Doctor Kleinin had taught Your Grace to conjure tricks. Once my lord [and] and

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<sup>1111</sup> Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Schwarzberg 31 Aug. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 247 a – b.

<sup>1112</sup> “... vnser gnedigsten Frawen der Churfürstin ... Khonte grossen gift vnnd bößheit ...”, quoted from the transcripts of the interrogations 4 Dec. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 9667/27. Similar statements can be found in DrHSA Loc. 9667/28, pp. 25-30. See also the documents from the case in DrHSA Loc. 9668/1-9.

<sup>1113</sup> The noble maiden is referred to as “Sybilla Sewitzchin” in Elisabeth's undated letter to Anna [Oct.-Nov. 1577], DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 130.

father should have demanded that Your Grace should send all the womenfolk away or my lord [and] father would put Your Grace in a sack and drown [You].<sup>1114</sup>

The servant Sibylla had told other horrible lies both to the members of Elisabeth's household and to people in the territory. She was instantly sent back to Saxony where Anna promised to make sure that appropriate action was taken.<sup>1115</sup>

It is hardly a coincidence that two of the three instances of offensive assertions related to the consorts' apothecarial production originated from individuals who belonged to the same noble family. While Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin had been the victim in 1567, Anna had acted in the case against Merten von Seydewitz and, ten years later, the electress became the target of related insults that were spread by his relative.<sup>1116</sup> However, Sibylla's claims about Anna can also be related to von Ruxleben's story. Although some transformations had taken place, the structure and the core elements remained unchanged: the gossip was still primarily about Anna and her mother, it alleged that they lived immorally, it included a reference to a conflict between Anna and August, and it contained clear references to Anna's medical/secret knowledge. Whereas von Ruxleben had made reference to Johann Neefen, Sibylla referred to Catharina Kleinin.

In the last version of the allegations Anna and her female collaborators are construed as almost stereotypical images of sorceresses who banded together through their diabolic knowledge and practices. Adding the detail that August had threatened to drown them, Sibylla linked the women to water, a medium that was intimately connected to the persecution of witches – even if the account of the water ordeal appears somewhat

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<sup>1114</sup> "... EG frawmutter selige die wer ein offenlicher balg vnd hure gewesen vnd EG hetten sie selber darfur gehalten ...[,] ... EG sein auch ein hure[,] EG ver zeihen mich vmb gottes willen das EG ich so schreiben[,] ire wörter haben so gelaut[,] vnd EG sein nicht allein ein hure sundern EG were auch ein zeuwerin vnd die dochter kleinen hette es EG gelernt das EG zeuweren konten[,] ... mein herr vater solte es ein mahl wider EG gesagt haben EG sollen die allen weiber von sich thun oder mein herr vater wolte EG mitt den alten weibern in ein sack stecken vnd er seuffen ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, without date [Oct.-Nov. 1577], DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 130.

<sup>1115</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, without date [Oct.-Nov. 1577], DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 130. The events were not entirely unexpected. Already in an earlier letter (Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 23 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 106 a – 107 b), Anna had warned her daughter that the maid had, "... ein vnnutz böse Maul ... vnd gege ander leuten grosse klagen fur wenden, vnd allerlei schimpffliche rehden treiben soll, dhalb DL Ihr wohl antzeig magk, sich solcher vnnutzer rehde zuenthalt, da sie es aber nicht vnnterlassen wirdett, So wollen DL vns sie wider herein schicken...". It therefore was already agreed that the maid should be sent to Saxony if problems occurred. See also Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 18 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 135 b – 136 a.

<sup>1116</sup> The exact kinship between the Merten and Sibylla von Seydewitz has not been established.

erroneous. Finally, the allegations of Anna's (and her mother's) maleficent magic appeared in a narrative that also contained references to their sexuality.<sup>1117</sup>

Anna and her colleagues were aware of – and they may even have shared – the ambiguous view that surrounded the healing arts. The care they took to keep certain cures secret shows that they also knew the fine line that separated the acceptable from the questionable means in medical practices.<sup>1118</sup> As Ingrid Ahrendt-Schulte has argued with great erudition, the materials, processes, and skills employed in the production of health remedies and foodstuff showed close resemblance the – more or less imaginary – process a sorceress was believed to follow when preparing her mixtures. Hence, nourishment and malevolent substances came to be viewed as poles of the same female-gendered processes. Consequently, the knowledge of women (*die Kunst der Frauen*) existed as an ambiguous phenomenon that had the power to both cure and curse.<sup>1119</sup> When a remedy was produced, Anna or one of her trusted employees kept it under close surveillance. Likewise, when ingredients, potions, powders, or electuaries were in transit they were always kept in sealed containers and transported by trusted servants.<sup>1120</sup> The constant fear of poisoning and the related care that was taken to guarantee the remedies' purity must be viewed in the context of these beliefs.

Anna took a remarkably calm stance towards the rumors about her. The culprits were held responsible but the electress does not appear to have perceived them as any real threat. Similarly, the allegations do not imply that her apothecarial activities and medical advice

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<sup>1117</sup> It has only been possible to consult a few titles among the vast literature on early modern witchcraft: good overviews are presented by Wiesner (2000), pp. 270-277; and Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 143-152. Wunder pays particular attention to Electoral Saxony. The link between witchcraft and sexuality is addressed explicitly by Zika (1990/2001); the intricate interrelations between cures and curses are discussed in several contributions to *Gender and Witchcraft* (2001) as well as by Ahrendt-Schulte (1997).

<sup>1118</sup> Von Weber (1865) presented other examples of what he considered to be Anna's "superstition" pp. 364-366.

<sup>1119</sup> Arendt-Schulte (1997), pp. 213-235, particularly pp. 225-229.

<sup>1120</sup> Regarding this close surveillance, see for example Anna to Catharina Kleinin, Borssenstein 30 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 40 b – 41 a; regarding sealed containers see Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 12 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 15 a – 16 b; Anna to Margaretha of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen, Dresden 10 Sep. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 43 b; Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 7 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 139 b – 141 a; Anna to Margaretha von Schleinitz, Annaburg 27 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 206 b – 207 a; and finally, Anna to Hedwig of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Dresden 13 May 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 147 a – 148 a. The fear of poisoning was so fundamental that it rarely was explicated. One of the few instances in which it appears is a letter Anna's sister-in-law, the Danish Queen Sophie, sent to her father, Duke Ulrich of Mecklenburg, dated Gedser 5 Dec. 1575. She thanked him for the remedy against her husband's fever and assured him "Och wisen die leute wol, das e: g: dem kunigk nichtes schicken, das in schaden don kan", see "Nogle Breve fra Frederik II's Dronning Soppie til hendes Fader Hertug Ulrik af Mecklenborg". See also Anna's letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg in which she refers to rumors about poisoning of the heir to the Spanish throne, Dresden 7 Oct. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 121 b – 122 a.

posed a general challenge the theologically sanctioned field of medicine. In contrast, Anna's tempered reaction combined with the efforts she took to keep other – and more questionable – cures secret, reveal her (and her collaborators) awareness of the boundary that divided “black and white” magic: if used appropriately, their gender-specific and arcane knowledge was used in the service of God and it brought about the laudable manifestation of the *Landesmutter*'s Christian love and charity towards their subjects and friends. Yet, the distinction between black and white magic, that is between service to the Devil and to God, is much cruder than the complex reality within which the women had to manage the medical care of their subjects. As frequently argued, the Protestant demonology was characterized by a greater concern about popular magic than with maleficent witchcraft,<sup>1121</sup> a tendency that corresponds to the broad conception of magic in the influential Saxon *Constitutiones* (1572).<sup>1122</sup> Anna's actions suggest that she – consciously or not – shared this order of priorities: the unauthorized healers consulted by Anna should, by all means, be kept secret but the electress was not frightened by the rumors that accused her of maleficent magic. The same stance is reflected in her admonition to Margarethe Leuschnerin (see chapter 7): she admonished the widow for improper healing methods but she did not denounce her as a witch to the theological authorities. However, in order to identify the contested medical practices – and to either distance themselves from these or to keep their transgression of the theologically sanctioned practices secret – Anna and her collaborators had to have an intimate knowledge of both theology and its subfield of demonology. By way of her role as a secular authority whose prime duty was the defense of God's true word, the consorts also had an obligation to guard the theologically defined boundaries between appropriate and dangerous practices in the healing arts.

In spite of, or perhaps, because of the ambiguous status of the healings arts, Anna and her collaborators referred to the powers of their knowledge with a degree of wit. When Dorothea of Mansfeld sent August a pair of scented gloves with which he was particularly pleased, Anna replied,

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<sup>1121</sup> Clark (1990); and Rowland (1996). Manfred Wilde refrains from an explicit assessment of this question in his comprehensive analysis of the witchcraft trials in Saxony, though his account of the basis on which the processes were conducted in sixteenth century Saxony suggests that he would agree, see Wilde (2003), pp. 110-141. See also his discussion of processes initiated due to “Segensprechen, Wahrsagen und Gotteslästerun”, pp. 227-237 and his brief considerations regarding denunciations, pp. 310-314.

<sup>1122</sup> Wilde (2003), pp. 28-34; and Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 192-195.



It gives us all kinds of second thoughts that You possess such particular [and] secret knowledge and that You have the audacity to oust us, for which we rightly have reason to be jealous of You.<sup>1123</sup>

In order to grasp the friendly wit of the passage, the profound trust that existed between Anna and the countess must be kept in mind. It seems highly unlikely that Anna was concerned that “the Old Countess” with the scented gloves was practicing “love-magic” on August.<sup>1124</sup> Yet, the passage shows that the power of the women’s arts was taken so much for granted that it could be employed in a humorous exchange between Anna and her trusted teacher.

### Midwifery

In the funeral sermons, pregnant women and women in childbed were defined as a group of subjects who had a particular need for the consort’s protection. In these instructions a biological gendering of medicine is immediately apparent. By virtue of her sex – that is by being able to carry and give birth to a child herself – the consort was assigned the responsibility for the pregnant subject. In other words, the *Landesmutter* held a responsibility for the successful reproduction of the territorial population.

The history of midwifery has become a field of research that epitomizes the professionalization of a scientific field and the associated exclusion of women. Since the early 1990s several studies of (early) modern European midwifery have been published and the conclusions are unequivocal: the art of midwifery was traditionally a domain of women but, as formal qualifications gradually became an inexorable requirement for practicing, men gradually came to dominate the field. However, female practitioners were excluded only slowly and the process of exclusion was never “completed”. In her excellent study of the legal framework for fifteenth and sixteenth century midwives in Germany, Sibylla Flügge rightly stresses that the increased regulation of midwifery and the associated professionalization of the vocation was part of the comprehensive state-formation process.

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<sup>1123</sup> “... So bringet es vnß ... allerlej nachdenck das Ir ... einen sonderlichen heimlichen verstand ... habt vmd euch vnterstehet vns zuuerdringen hetten[,] derhalben wohl vrsach mit euch zueiferenn ...”, Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld, Dresden 25 Jan. 1557, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 28 a – b.

<sup>1124</sup> It should be added that when this letter was sent the countess was in her mid-sixties, she had given birth to thirteen children and was clearly considered “old” by those around her, hence, Anna always referred to her as the “die alte Grefin”. However, if the contemporaries believed that “love-magic” was at play, the countess’s age would of course not have mattered. The extraordinarily close relationship between Anna and Dorothea of Mansfeld appears most clearly in Anna’s letter to the countess, Lochau 21 Sep. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 293 a – b, in which the electress offered to take the countess into her household and provide for her. Dorothea of Mansfeld did not accept the offer but continually turned to Anna and August for financial assistance and legal help.

The efforts were made in the service of “allen guten Policeyen”<sup>1125</sup> or, as Anna wrote in a letter that will be quoted below, to the benefit of the commonwealth. In order to appreciate the political significance of the efforts Anna and several other consorts made to improve the midwifery within the territory, this explicit reference to the commonwealth is crucial.

Several princely women were actively involved in the re-organization of midwifery during the early modern period. In 1545, Anna of East Frisia issued an ordinance barring the inappropriate celebrations that often unfolded immediately upon the birth of a child. The measure was explained with a reference to the danger that if the women who had assisted the parturient were intoxicated, they would not be able to tend to the needs of mother and child.<sup>1126</sup> In retrospect, Katherina of Braunschweig-Lüneburg contributed more than any other princess to the increased regulations of early modern midwifery in Germany. One of the most influential treatises on the subject, Eucharius Rösslin’s *The Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives* (first published in 1513), was written at her request and is often considered to mark the beginning of the professionalization of midwifery.<sup>1127</sup>

Rösslin’s work also has immediate relevancy to the measures Anna took in order to improve the situation in Saxony. In 1570 the electress asked Martin Pfinzing, a wealthy merchant and a member of the city council in Nuremberg, to help recruit an experienced midwife for Saxony and, as pointed out by Sibylla Flügge, the wording of Anna’s letter show a remarkable resemblance to Rösslin’s prologue.<sup>1128</sup> While Flügge did consider the exchange between Anna and Martin Pfinzing, the Saxon electress played only a peripheral role in her analysis and the full extent of Anna’s efforts remains unclear. The aim of this section is to provide a more comprehensive account of Anna’s systematic efforts to improve the Saxon midwifery and to relate this to her role as *Landesmutter*.

Already four years before Anna sent the above-mentioned letter to Martin Pfinzing, she had attempted to improve the Saxon midwifery. In 1566, she wrote to the town council in Zwickau,

Because there currently is a great scarcity of knowledgeable [and] competent midwives [and because this scarcity] often causes many honest, Christian, pregnant women and their seeds [unborn children] terrible harm or even their lives and, because the old midwife who

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<sup>1125</sup> Flügge (1998), ch. 7-8 (pp. 186-239), ch. 16 (pp. 383-415), and ch. 19 (pp. 463-491). See Labouvie (1999) for an analysis of the subsequent centuries.

<sup>1126</sup> Flügge (1998), pp. 333-334.

<sup>1127</sup> Arons (1994), pp. 1-25; Riha and Tröhler (1994).

<sup>1128</sup> Flügge (1998), pp. 393-394. Regarding Pfinzing, see *NDB* vol. 20, p. 335.

lives in your [town] is much praised for her competence in these matters, we have had her called to us. Having had talks with her we have understood that she has good knowledge and lengthy experience of the matter [and] she offers to diligently teach and train some women who are capable in this [matter].<sup>1129</sup>

In this way, Anna instructed the town council of the midwife's new duty to teach and train other women. It does not appear where the instructions should take place but, because Anna ordered the council to increase the midwife's payment, it seems likely that she would continue to live in Zwickau. As it will appear below, this was also the case when Anna, seven years later, assigned apprentices to another experienced midwife in the town of Olbernhau.

Already at this point Anna recognized the temporary nature of the arrangement she had made with the midwife in Zwickau. Her letter to the town council reveals that she was aware that the age of the midwife would compel her to retire in the not-so-distant future.<sup>1130</sup> Consequently, when Anna turned to Martin Pfinzing in 1570 she was not looking for a new solution but rather for a way to continue the already existing training system. According to Flügge, the electress asked Martin Pfinzing to send an experienced Nuremberger midwife to Saxony where she was to teach at the "midwifery school" (*Hebammenschule*) Anna wanted to establish.<sup>1131</sup> Anna did not use the term *Hebammenschule* and her initiative was based on apprenticeships rather than a theoretical education within the framework of a school. The idea of a *Hebammenschule* was introduced by von Weber and must be viewed as yet another attempt to modernize the electress's initiatives.<sup>1132</sup>

Presenting her request to Pfinzing, the electress explained that among the deficiencies within the lands of her beloved lord and husbands, she had – with great compassion – noticed that many pregnant women, women in childbed, and the newborn children from all

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<sup>1129</sup> "... Nachdem itzig zeit ... grosser mangel an vorstendigen geschickt wehfrawen od heebammen fur fellet dardurch dan viel ehrlich Christlicher Schwangere weiber sampt iren fruchten offtmals gantz erbermlich vorterbt auch wohl gar vmb's leben kommen, Vnd vns aber die alte wehfraw so sich bey euch entholdet ... sehr geruhmet worden das sie zu solchen sachen gantz geschickt sein soll Als haben wir sie zu vns erfordern lassen vnnnd allerlej vnterredung mit ir gehalten, daraus wir vormerke das sie ... der ding gutten vorstandt vnd langwirige erfahrung habe ... Sie sich auch erbiethen thut etzliche weibspersonen so hir zu tuglich ... vleissig zuunterweisen vnd abzurichten ...", Anna to the town council in Zwickau", Dresden 10 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 78 b – 79 a. Already in May 1565 Anna requested that a midwife from Freiberg be sent to meet her. However, the exchange between Anna and the town council does not reveal the her intentions behind this initiative and she may simply have wanted to provide the help of this midwife to one of her "clients", see the letter from the town council in Freiberg to Anna, 27 May 1565, DrHSA Loc. 8529/3, p. 196 a.

<sup>1130</sup> Anna to the Council in Zwickau", Dresden 10 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 78 b – 79 a.

<sup>1131</sup> "... eine Hebammenschule ...", Sibylla Flügge (1998), pp. 93, 387 and 393; and Flügge's source Boesch (1900/1979), p. 9, where he repeats almost word for word the earlier account by von Weber (von Weber (1865), pp. 414-415).

<sup>1132</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 414-415

ranks of society had to endure unnecessary dangers. According to Anna, these problems were caused by “incompetence, unreliability, and rashness of the midwives” and resulted in deplorable neglect and harm. The shortage of competent midwives was particularly perilous when God allowed complicated births to occur. Out of Christian love and profound compassion with the victims of this regrettable state, Anna wished to improve the situation. She wrote, “as the female consort (*Landesfürstin*) we would like to improve these matters”.<sup>1133</sup> The electress explicitly linked the efforts to her office as female consort. Because Pfinzing was known as an honorable councilor who had contributed to the good order of his city’s midwifery, Anna was hoping that he could find a God-fearing, pious, modest and experienced midwife who would be willing to teach her Saxon colleagues. This would, in Anna’s words, be in “the interests of the commonwealth”.<sup>1134</sup>

Pfinzing did his best to recruit an experienced midwife for the Saxon electress but was unsuccessful: either the midwives felt they were too old to take on the duty, or they had husbands, children, or other obligations, which prohibited them from leaving Nuremberg.<sup>1135</sup> As a compensation for a midwife, Pfinzing sent the electress a detailed report on the organization of midwifery in Nuremberg.<sup>1136</sup> However, as it was discussed in relation to the production of recipes, a written account was an inadequate replacement for personal instructions and Anna pursued other opportunities for improving the Saxon midwifery.

In January 1573, Anna wrote to the administrator (*Schosser*) at Lauterstein. She explained that the old midwife in Olbernhau upon Anna’s earlier request had had several apprentices. Some of the midwife’s trainees had already been sent to Dresden and Anna had been content with these. Now Anna needed more midwives and, because the old midwife had promised to proceed with the education of others, the administrator was instructed to request that the midwife send one or two women “who she had taught and instructed [and] with which the women can be satisfactorily served in emergencies”. If the old midwife in Olbernhau was unable to provide these and if she was unwilling to take

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<sup>1133</sup> “... vngeschickligkait vnbesthandigkeit vnd vberailung der hebammen od wehfrauen ...” / “... Wann wir dan als die Landesfürstin solche mangel ... Im bessere vorsehung bringen woltenn ...”, Anna to Martin Pfinzing, Weidenhain 1 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 356 a, fol. 476 a – 477 a (original page no. fol. 57 a – 58 a).

<sup>1134</sup> “... dem gemeinen nutz zum besten ...”, Anna to Martin Pfinzing, Weidenhain 1 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 356 a, fol. 476 a – 477 a (original page no. fol. 57 a – 58 a).

<sup>1135</sup> Flügge (1998), p. 394. Pfinzing’s answer dated 2 Jan. 1571 is printed in Burckhard *Die deutschen Hebammenordnungen* (1912), pp. 173-177.

<sup>1136</sup> Flügge (1998), pp. 93-94 and 387 and Pfinzing’s reply to Anna, 2 Jan. 1571, printed in Burckhard *Die deutschen Hebammenordnungen* (1912), pp. 173-177.

more apprentices, Anna wanted her to be advised that she would be called to Dresden herself.<sup>1137</sup>

Given the recurring shortage of competent midwives it is remarkable that Anna apparently did not assign apprentices to “Mutter Merten”, the midwife who assisted her in all (it seems) of her fifteen deliveries. As summarized in chapter 5, “Mutter Merten’s” assistance was in high demand and Anna willingly shared her with the wives of high-ranking employees or Saxon nobles and the frequent requests for “Mutter Merten” doubtlessly contributed to Anna’s awareness of the shortage of midwives within the territory. The examples that were discussed in conjunction with the pregnancies of princely women in chapter 5 also show that Anna was consulted as an expert in her own right when problems arose. And it was not only Anna’s relatives who sought her advice; even the physician Caspar Peucer turned to the electress for help when one of his daughters experienced complications during a pregnancy and clearly considered her to be a capacity in the field.<sup>1138</sup>

Naturally, Anna’s own pregnancies and deliveries, as well as the knowledge she gained from the experiences of her closest relatives and friends, contributed significantly to her expertise. But the electress also sought information from other sources and both her and the larger electoral library contained a number of books and manuscripts on pregnancies and childbirth.<sup>1139</sup> Among Anna’s books was a copy of Eucharius Rösslin’s *The Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives*, one of the very first printed texts on the subject and a classic for centuries,<sup>1140</sup> and – as mentioned above – it seems that Anna (or her secretary) consulted this title when the letter to Martin Pfinzing was prepared. A second work of interest is Adam Lonitzer’s *Reformation, oder Ordnung für die Hebammen* (1573).<sup>1141</sup> A small note in the inventory of the library reveals that Anna asked to have this book

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<sup>1137</sup> “... die sie vnterwiesen vnd abgerichtet [hat] ... mit welches die weiber In nottsfallen, gnugsam vorsehen sey mochten ...” Anna to the administrator (*Schosser*) at Lauterstein”, Torgau 1 Jan. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 5 b.

<sup>1138</sup> Anna to Caspar Peucer, Schellenberg 7 Jan. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 194 a – b.

<sup>1139</sup> One section of the inventory of the elector’s library was titled “Schwangerer weiber vnterweisung”. It contained six titles (incling Rösslin’s and Lonitzer’s works), SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 72 b. In Anna’s library only Lonitzer’s *Reformation, oder Ordnung für die Hebammen*, (1573), (listed as entry no. 202 in SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a, Nr. 62) dealt exclusively with the subject, but several of the other medical texts contained one or more sections on the subject.

<sup>1140</sup> Rösslin’s work is discussed in detail by Wendy Arons in introduction to her English translation of Rösslin’s *Der Swangeren Frauen*, first published in 1513 (see Arons (1994)) and by Ortrun Riha and Ulrich Tröhler in the post-script to the German facsimile edition of Rösslin’s work (see Riha and Tröhler (1994)).

<sup>1141</sup> Entry no. 202 in the inventory of Anna’s library is “Reformation für die hebammen durch adam lonitzerum martinum. franckfurt am Maÿn 73. 4<sup>o</sup> vor leder vergult mit grüne benden”, SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I B, Vol. 24 a, Nr. 62, fol. 6 v, that is, Lonitzer’s *Reformation, oder Ordnung für die Hebammen* (1573).

transferred from the electoral library to her personal library in 1577.<sup>1142</sup> However, even if her active interest in this particular text can be documented, it was obviously not this title that inspired her to improve the training of the Saxon midwives as it was published more than a decade after Anna's first initiative to assign apprentices to the most experienced midwives she could find. Instead Anna's request for the book can be viewed as a confirmation of her continued concerns for the pregnant women in Saxony.

Nonetheless, Lonitzer's text deserves further attention, because the content of his prologue underlines the political dimensions of the electress's efforts. *Reformation, oder Ordnung für die Hebammen* was written at the request of Johannes Fichard, a member of the city council in Frankfurt am Main, and was intended as a point of departure for the reorganization of the midwifery in the city.<sup>1143</sup> As other texts related to the organization of a city, a territory, or a princely court,<sup>1144</sup> midwifery ordinances (*Hebammenordnung*) circulated between different parts of the Empire,<sup>1145</sup> and Lonitzer's work can be viewed as a synthesis of these, though he draws particularly extensively on the first printed and very influential ordinance from Regensburg (1552/1555).<sup>1146</sup> In the introduction to his work, Lonitzer presented the organization of midwifery as one of the prime duties of the authorities,

[Next to the organization of the Church and the good worldly government] I consider the highest and most necessary matter, to which a Christian authority must attend with particular diligence, to be the availability of God-fearing midwives.<sup>1147</sup>

With this phrase, the author of course wished to highlight the importance of his book but this would have failed if his potential readers did not agree with his point. Sybilla Flügge's analysis of several midwifery ordinances shows that the association between a good

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<sup>1142</sup> An unidentified hand has written "... hat Meine gndste fraw empangen den 18 Juny 77 zur Annaburg ..." by entry no. 1672 "Ordnung für die Hebammen oder Wehemütter ... durch Adam Lönizern 1573", see SLUB Bibl.-Arch. I Ba Vol. 20 (1574) Nr. 19, fol. 72 v.

<sup>1143</sup> Flügge (1998), pp. 463-464.

<sup>1144</sup> See Paravicini (1999), pp. 19-20. Several of the contributions to this volume *Höfe und Hofordnungen 1200-1600* touch upon the same aspect and the circulation of these texts is reflected in DrHSA Kop. 282 "Formularsammlung zum Kanzleigebrauch aus dem Besitz des Kammersekr. Hans Jenitz, darin brandenburgische, bayrische, fränkische, badische Ordnungen und Heiratsnoteln ...", though this does not contain ordinances concerning midwifery.

<sup>1145</sup> Flügge (1998), pp. 278-280, and her discussion of Lonitzer's work, pp. 463-491.

<sup>1146</sup> Lonitzer (1573), pp. Aij(4)-B(1). Regarding the ordinances from Regensburg, see Flügge (1998), pp. 440-462.

<sup>1147</sup> "... Derhalben achte ich / der höchste vnd nötigsten stück eines sein / welches ein Christliche Obrigkeit vor das erste / ne=ben versehenung des Kirchenampts / vnd weltlicher guter regierung / sonderlich wol bedencken / bestellen / vnd versehen solle / Nemlich daß mann Gottsfürch=tige erfame Amen habe", Lonitzer (1573), pp. Aij(3)-(4).

Christian government and orderly rules for the city's/territory's midwives already was firmly established by the mid-1500s.<sup>1148</sup> Flügge also concludes that this development implied that the midwives became increasingly dependent on the grace of the ruling *men*.<sup>1149</sup> However, although Lonitzer (and the authors of various other midwifery ordinances) attributed the responsibility for the midwifery to the *Haus- or Landesväter*, both the funeral sermons and the practices that are reflected in Anna's correspondence indicate that the female consort played an important role for the development of this sector.

However, the close connection between an orderly society and a Christian government recurs not only in the midwifery ordinances but throughout the increased legislation (*Policeyordnungen*) of early modern Germany. As discussed in chapter 1, the ideal of orderliness and the belief that it could be achieved from regulations and ordinances was a key element in early modern politics.<sup>1150</sup> In keeping with this, the comprehensive *Policeyordnungen* play a central role in theories of state-formation processes, including the contested theories/theses of social disciplining and confessionalization.<sup>1151</sup> The link between the midwifery ordinances and confessionalization appears especially pronounced because the regulations of midwifery often were included in the church ordinances. As one of the most prolific authors of Lutheran church ordinances, Bugenhagen paid extensive attention to the responsibilities of midwives, particularly with regard to the performance of emergency baptisms and the midwives' reliance on only theologically sound practices (that is, abstaining from all forms of "magic"). According to these regulations, the midwives were accountable to the secular authorities of towns, cities, and territories, but they received their most important "education" from the pastors. In the ecclesiastical statutes for Hamburg (1529), Bugenhagen even argued that a midwife could be considered a "servant of the church" (*eine Kirchendienerin*).<sup>1152</sup> The confessional principles of these texts were continued and elaborated in the later midwifery ordinances and, from the mid-1500s, increasing attention was also paid to the medical expertise of the midwives.<sup>1153</sup>

Anna's initiatives correspond closely to this development. When she asked Martin Pfinzing for help, her concerns centered on the well-being of the Saxon parturients and their

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<sup>1148</sup> This recurs throughout Flügge's analysis, but is discussed most explicitly in relation to the comprehensive 1549 *Policeyordnung* from Württemberg, see Flügge (1998), pp. 362-367.

<sup>1149</sup> Flügge (1998), p. 461.

<sup>1150</sup> For a discussion of "Polizei" as politics and political theory, see Maier (2003), pp. 569-579 and Knemeyer (1978).

<sup>1151</sup> See for example Reinhard (1977), pp. 226-252; Schilling (1981); Schilling (1988), pp. 1-45.

<sup>1152</sup> Burckhard *Die deutschen Hebammenordnungen* (1912), pp. 12-23; Flügge (1998), pp. 313-372.

<sup>1153</sup> Flügge (1998), pp. 440-462.

children and the unnecessary dangers they may face as a result of a midwife's ineptitude. The electress did ask Pfinzing to find a "God-fearing, upright, [and] experienced" midwife and stated that her wish to improve the current conditions resulted from her "Christian care [and] compassion", but her main argument was that the midwives' lack of capability too often represented a risk to the life of mother and child.<sup>1154</sup> While the limited attention to the confessional dimension may reflect that the electress took this more or less for granted and relied on Pfinzing's judgment as a good Lutheran, the greater emphasis she placed on the expertise of midwives must be ascribed both to the influence of contemporary midwifery ordinances and to Anna's experiences: by 1570, Anna had given birth to thirteen children and she was well informed about the experiences of other women both within Saxony and among her relatives. There is no doubt that the electress found inspiration in the developments of other territories but, at the same time, it should not be forgotten that her lived experiences conditioned – and gendered – her appropriation of these, the responsibilities she identified for herself as *Landesfürstin*, and, hence also, to the action she took.

#### **Gendered responsibilities for subjects, friends, and clients**

Anna's extensive production and wide distribution of medical remedies as well as her efforts to improve Saxon midwifery show that she considered these activities part of her vocation, her God-given office as *Landesmutter*.

Ruler and consort shared certain responsibilities and a functionalist interpretation could – mistakenly – conclude that the duty to provide health remedies resulted from the rank/office and that the same duty and its associated practices were gender-neutral. However, a closer look reveals, that this only holds true in the most abstract considerations of this part of the offices. Although men and women shared a commitment to medical/apothecarial arts, the associated knowledge was gender-specific and Anna (as well as other consorts) exchanged most of their recipes within female networks. The gendering of the medical knowledge becomes even more pronounced when attention is paid to the ways in which the remedies were produced and distributed to subjects, friends, and clients.

However, with the exception of the knowledge associated with childbearing and childbirth, one can find interactions and exchanges that involved both men and women.

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<sup>1154</sup> "... Gotforchtig from ... [und] ... erfahren Weib ..." / "... Christlich lieb ... [und] ... mitleiden ...", Anna to Martin Pfinzing, Weidenhain 1 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 356 a, fol. 476 a – 477 a (original page no. fol. 57 a – 58 a).



Anna, Dorothea of Mansfeld, Anna of Hohenlohe, and Anna's daughter Elisabeth had several recipes that originated from men. Most of these male "authors" were princes and nobles or physicians and apothecaries. The material also shows that Anna and other princely women under certain circumstances – when other methods had failed – were ready to consult with healers (male and female) who did not comply with the medical practices sanctioned by the theological authorities. But, because the electress knew that this represented a transgression and a potential danger, the contact to the more controversial practitioners had to be kept secret. Anna's simultaneous exchanges with "popular" healers, learned physicians, and the strongly gendered knowledge of the female body, pregnancies and childbirth indicate that she and her colleagues were important transmitters and agents for the exchanges between the co-existing medical traditions.

Anna's strong commitment to medicine and health remedies is often presented as something exceptional.<sup>1155</sup> Certainly, her interest and competencies were widely known and both colleagues and subjects frequently requested her advice or a concrete mixture. Nevertheless, one can find innumerable parallels between the electress and other high-ranking women: Dorothea of Mansfeld, Anna of Hohenlohe and her daughter-in-law, Sabina of Hessen-Kassel, Anna's own daughter Elisabeth, Anna of Bavaria, et cetera. It thus seems highly problematic to view the women's medical knowledge and apothecarial production as something exceptional. On the contrary, the women's medical interests were an integral part of the women's responsibilities in the early modern society and the acquisition of knowledge was dependent upon a pronounced collective and social dimension.

In closing, it must be stressed that Anna viewed the duty to be an expression of God's will. When she strove to fulfill her duty to care for relatives, subjects, neighbors, and friends, she acted upon God's command and out of Christian love and charity. Although God remained the only true physician and protector, "one must" – as Anna wrote to Dorothea of Mansfeld – "help friends and the poor". These observations demonstrate how strongly Anna identified with the prescriptions of the didactic texts that consistently stressed the urgency of charity and referred to Elisabeth of Thuringia as a role model.

As discussed in chapter 3, the view that women were more emotional than men meant that they were moved by compassion more frequently than men. It should not, however, be forgotten that when the women cared for subjects and friends, the very same acts reconfirmed the unequal relationship between the provider and the receiver. As

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<sup>1155</sup> Von Weber (1865); Sturmhoefel (1906); Sommerfeldt (1924).

authority implied the duty to protect, the very act of protecting inevitably reconfirmed the authority of the consort.

In an effort to fulfill her responsibilities as a caring, Christian authority, the female consort came to contribute to the development of early modern health care and thus to the early modern state formation process. In the Saxon case, this is most clearly visible in relation to midwifery. By virtue of her sex and her rank, Anna had access to both the knowledge and the administrative infrastructure that enabled her to act upon the severe shortcomings she identified in her and her husband's territory.

## Chapter 7

### “A Government of Grace”:

#### The Consort as Intercessor and Appeal Institution<sup>1156</sup>

Recalling the instructions presented to Dorothea of Denmark in the 1537 coronation, one of the central duties ascribed to the female consort was the role as intercessor. When Bugenhagen explained why Dorothea was not given a sword he also emphasized the might of her gender-specific resources: begging, scolding, and crying. With these means, the consort should serve the interests of her subjects vis-à-vis a range of authorities. According to Bugenhagen, the consort’s willingness to intercede on behalf of rich and poor alike was an integral part of the venerated government of grace. The importance of this duty was underlined by the fact that the queen was presented with these instructions immediately after the king received his ultimate symbol of authority: the sword. The ways in which the theologians of the sixteenth-century specified the practice of interceding as a central part of the consort’s duties, suggest that her status as mediator, intercessor, and appeal institution was an integral part of the greater legal system of an early modern territory rather than an informal channel that was played out “behind the scenes” as it sometimes is construed.

The great importance ascribed to the consort’s role as intercessor corresponds to the way in which the right to supplicate was safeguarded by ordinances throughout the estate-based societies. As Helmut Neuhaus has showed in his meticulous analysis of supplications in the Landgraviate of Hessen the right to supplicate was secured by increasing regulations during the sixteenth century. According to Neuhaus, two related motives lay behind the rulers’ protection of their subjects’ right to petition directly to him. First of all, it allowed the ruler to exercise directly the personal protection of his subjects, which was a crucial parameter in the assessment of his government. Secondly, because the supplications supplied the ruler with information about the management of his territory without mediations by local authorities, the accounts presented by his subjects served as an important control mechanism of the local authorities.<sup>1157</sup> Finally, the symbolic value of the ruler’s right to demonstrate grace should not be underestimated. For centuries, mercy was, in the words of Pauline Stafford, “a royal attribute and those associated with its exercise are

<sup>1156</sup> A earlier and abbreviated version of this chapter has been published as Arenfeldt (2005b).

<sup>1157</sup> Neuhaus (1978), pp. 115-116, 133-136, and 160-161; Neuhaus (1979), p. 92. The same point is reiterated by Michael Bregnsbo in his analysis of the supplications addressed to the Danish kings during the eighteenth century (Bregnsbo (1997), pp. 25-37 and 222-224).

associated with regality, none more so than the queen in her special position as intercessor throughout the middle ages".<sup>1158</sup>

Given the importance of supplications and intercessions, the ways in which the female consort managed and viewed this role deserves attention. Through an analysis of selected examples, this chapter seeks to provide an impression of how the role was managed and the degree to which Anna was conscious of and abided by the norms prescribed by the theologians.

### **Intercessions, supplications, and the selection of cases**

Hundreds of requests addressed to the Saxon electress have been preserved. The majority of these were concerned with financial or legal assistance and most were sent by members of the higher strata of society (nobles, burghers, and fellow princes) or by subjects with some connection to the princely household. Some people turned to the electress on their own behalf, others served as middle(wo-)men for their own clients.<sup>1159</sup> The sheer number of requests presented to the electress testifies to her strong presence among the Saxon population and to her extensive network outside of the territory. Due to the complex nature of the Holy Roman Empire, the selected cases include Saxon subjects and clients as well as female consorts from other territories.

Only very few requests sought an immediate solution from Anna. The large majority of supplicants sought to mobilize her as intercessor or they employed a more approachable mediator to approach the *Landesmutter* as yet another – and more powerful – intercessor. As Pauline Stafford has argued in her analysis of medieval queenship in England, “From the point of view of the supplicant, the intercessor is approachable, yet at the same time sufficiently a part of the mechanisms of power to be efficacious”.<sup>1160</sup> Sometimes however, it was necessary to use other intercessors to gain access to the consort and the multiple layers through which a request often was passed can be viewed as a reflection of the structure of the social and political configurations within which the female consort held a central role.

As alluring as it may seem to undertake a systematic study of the cases presented to Anna and their further development, this would not be a realistic undertaking. A systematic analysis of Anna’s interventions would have to include an examination of the enormous collections of financial and legal records from both the local and the central administration

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<sup>1158</sup> Stafford (1997b), p. 181.

<sup>1159</sup> See the numerous requests in DrHSA Loc. 8528/1, DrHSA Loc. 8529/1, and DrHSA Loc. 8532/3.

<sup>1160</sup> Stafford (1997a), pp. 17-18.

in Saxony as well as material from several other territories. The potential results of an investigation of such immense scale are unlikely to stand in a reasonable relationship to the time invested. Moreover, the quantitative overview that could be gained would have only relative relevancy to the central argument of this study focusing on the ways in which the consorts viewed their position and its political implications. Consequently, the women's perceptions of the effectiveness of their efforts are of greater interest than quantitative measures which could be obtained through a systematic study.

In keeping with the overall goal, the seven cases which here will be discussed, have been selected *not* because their development can be followed throughout the administrative or legal records, but because they bring to light different aspects of the consort's role as intercessor. The seven cases reveal different motives behind a consort's readiness (or reluctance) to intercede and they show the consort's awareness of both the limits and the possibilities of her position. In an attempt to present as wide a range as possible, the examples include: supplications and intercessions; cases confined to Saxony and others from outside the territory; requests presented by men as well as women; cases presented by high-ranking individuals and others presented by some of the weakest members of society. In four of the selected cases, Anna acquiesced and, in the remaining three, she refused the request, ignored the plea, or qualified her abilities and willingness to act. After a presentation of the seven individual examples and their contexts, they are discussed jointly with a view to understanding the consort's role as intercessor and the principles according to which the role was managed.

### **Accommodated requests**

When the four successful requests are examined, a distinction is made between the pleas presented by people Anna already knew (two examples) and the cases originating from supplicants with whom no previous contact to the electress seems to have existed.

The first of the four examples does not center on an individual case but on a series of requests presented to the electress by one of her closest friends and clients Anna, Countess of Hohenlohe. As mentioned above (chapter 2 and chapter 6), the communication between the two women can be documented from 1554 and until Anna's death (1585). During the first decade of their correspondence, the communications regarded mostly the exchange of ingredients and recipes for health remedies, but gradually the relationship deepened. When the countess lost her husband in 1568, Anna assured the widow protection, "We are and

remain at all times with grace and good will well-inclined towards You and Yours, on this you can rely without any doubts”.<sup>1161</sup>

This was not an empty promise. During the subsequent years the countess presented numerous requests for help and received various favors from Anna. Her sons were accepted in August’s service although he, in Anna’s words, “at the present is served almost excessively with esquires and adequately with other servants”.<sup>1162</sup> More significant help was provided when a serious conflict regarding territorial rights developed between the countess’s sons and Margrave George Friedrich of Brandenburg-Ansbach, a nephew of Anna and August. During this eight-year-long dispute Anna persistently supported the countess’s case to both August and the margrave, and she did not hesitate to inform the countess about August’s and her own efforts. In one letter she wrote,

In the answer from our heartily beloved lord and husband, You will see with what gracious diligence his beloved [August] is concerned with Your sons’ problem. [We] will appeal further that the councilors his beloved has assigned to this will employ all possible efforts in order to have these troublesome disputes completely settled.<sup>1163</sup>

Anna’s letters do not disclose the ultimate outcome of the case, but the gratitude expressed by the countess reveal her satisfaction and Anna could be pleased with her achievements as intercessor.<sup>1164</sup>

The Countess of Hohenlohe sought the electress’s help both in her own affairs and on behalf of others. The effectiveness of her mediation is visible in the answer Anna sent to the countess’s request for help on behalf of the heavily indebted heirs of the Franconian knight Albrecht von Rosenberg (1519-1572). Anna replied that although the late Rosenberg had not deserved that his heirs be met with willingness, she had “for the sake of *Your*

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<sup>1161</sup> “[Wir] seint vnnd bleiben ... euch [vnd den ewern] mit gnedigen vnd gunstigen willen alle Zeit gantz wohl genaigt[,] ... dar zu Ir euch vnZweifelig verlassen möget ...”, Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Dresden 11 Sep. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 115 b – 116 a.

<sup>1162</sup> “... S. L. [August] Itziger Zeitt, mit Jungen vhost vberflüssig vnd mit andern dienern zur nodturfft vorsehenn [ist] ...”, Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Torgau 26 Dec. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 1 a – 2 b.

<sup>1163</sup> “... Ir werdet aus vnsers hertzliebste h vnd Gemahels antwort ... vernemen mit waß gnedigsten vleiß S. L. [August] In Ewer sohne sachen lassen ab gelegen vnd befohlen sein. Wollen auch ... ferner ... anhalten helfen, das S. L. hir Zu verordente Rethe allen moglichen vleiß furwenden sollen damit die beschwerlichen Irrungen gantzlich mochten vertragen ... werden ...”, Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Dresden 30 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 365 b (original page no. 199 b).

<sup>1164</sup> The conflict is addressed in the following letters from Anna to the Countess of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 2 March 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 167 b – 168 a; Annaburg 29 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 197 a – 198 a; Dresden 27 May 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 310 b – 311 b (original page no. 144 b – 145 b); Plauen 16 June 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 315 a (original page no. 149 a); Annaburg 1 Feb. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 13 b – 14 a.

intercession” (my emphasis) managed to have their overdue payments postponed.<sup>1165</sup> But she also reminded the countess that Rosenberg’s heirs now and in the future should know to spare August and (implicitly) herself from such requests.<sup>1166</sup>

A closer look at Albrecht von Rosenberg’s biography suggests that the mediation by Anna of Hohenlohe was immensely important. In the most recent analysis of Rosenberg’s life, Helmut Neumaier concludes that August of Saxony was responsible for Rosenberg’s long imprisonment that led to his untimely death.<sup>1167</sup> A web of intricate connections and overlapping interests brought Rosenberg in close affiliation with the renowned Wilhelm von Grumbach (1503-1567) during the late 1550s. Through Grumbach, contact between Rosenberg and Duke Johann Friedrich of Saxony-Weimar developed and, in the early 1560s, Rosenberg entered Johann Friedrich’s service with 1,200 cavalymen.<sup>1168</sup> At the very same time, Johann Friedrich’s efforts to regain the electoral dignity and lands that his father had lost to the Albertines in 1547 culminated<sup>1169</sup> and the duke’s associates – including Rosenberg – were August’s most reviled enemies. Viewed in the context of these events, the successful intercessions of the Countess of Hohenlohe and the electress on behalf of Rosenberg’s heirs is remarkable and demonstrate how the consort and her network could obtain results that seem antithetical to the inclinations of her husband.<sup>1170</sup>

In return for the granted favors the electress continued to use the countess as a supplier of various goods. From the early 1570s, the countess also received increasingly frequent demands to visit Anna and her closest female relatives: the electress asked her to spend extended periods by her daughter Elisabeth in the Palatinate. When another troubled marriage, the one between Anna’s sister-in-law Sidonia and Erich of Braunschweig-Calenberg, resulted in a separation of “table and bed”, Hohenlohe was “encouraged” (that is, instructed or perhaps even ordered) to visit Sidonia.<sup>1171</sup>

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<sup>1165</sup> “... vmb Euer vorbit willen ...”, Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Torgau 29 April 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 34 a – b.

<sup>1166</sup> Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Torgau 29 April 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 34 a – b.

<sup>1167</sup> Neumaier (2001), pp. 115-118.

<sup>1168</sup> Neumaier (2001), pp. 106-109. For a broader interpretation of the Franconian knights and their “feuds”, see Zmora (1997).

<sup>1169</sup> Keller (2002), pp. 133-135.

<sup>1170</sup> It should be added that, in spite of this conflict, Anna and August maintained friendly relations with other members of the Rosenberg family: in 1561 they attended the wedding of Wilhelm of Rosenberg (1535-1592) and Sophie of Brandenburg (1541-1564, the youngest daughter of the Elector of Brandenburg) in Berlin, see Anna’s reference to the wedding of the “Herren von Rosenberg” in her letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Berlin 15 Dec. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 205 a – b, and her letter to her sister Dorothea of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Berlin 18 Dec. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 205 b – 206 a

<sup>1171</sup> Regarding Anna of Hohenlohe’s visits to Elisabeth in the Palatinate see for example: Anna to the Countess of Hohenlohe, Dresden 20 Dec. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 116 a – 117 b; Annaburg 22 Feb.

Contrary to what could be expected, the dynamic of reciprocity, which is so pronounced in the relationship between Anna of Saxony and Anna of Hohenlohe, was not the exclusive privilege of Anna's high-ranking friends. This appears from the second example that is to be outlined. In 1566, "Catharina, Nickel Jungling's wife" from the mining town Marienberg, turned to the electress for help. With a grieved heart Catharina explained to Anna that after having offended some members of the local town council, her husband had been taken to prison where he had already spent several days. She feared that he would not be released, "without a heavy fine or long-lasting imprisonment".<sup>1172</sup> At the time, Catharina and her sister were carrying out a commission of needlework for the electress, and Catharina employed what little bargaining power this granted her when she emphasized that she was so "distressed and dismayed" by her husband's incarceration that the requested work could not be completed by the date Anna expected it.<sup>1173</sup> Having heard Catharina's case, Anna addressed the judge and town council in Marienberg,

We graciously request that if the offence committed by the same Jungling is of a nature that allows mercy to be granted, You will – for the sake of our will – free him from imprisonment and fine.<sup>1174</sup>

Three weeks later Anna prepared a reminder for Catharina: the date by which the completed needlework should be delivered had passed and Catharina was ordered to appear in Dresden with the completed garments by the next Tuesday.<sup>1175</sup> Both Catharina's reference to a potential delay of the electress's commission and Anna's drafted reminder indicate that the work was important to the electress and thereby underlines the bargaining power it provided the supplicant. However, before the reminder could be sent, Anna received the completed needlework and her secretary added to the margin of the letter-book, "Has not been sent

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1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 161 b; Annaburg 29 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 197 a – 198 a; Torgau 5 Sep. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 244 a – 245 a; Dresden 22 May 1578, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 234 b – 236 a (original page no. 68 b – 70 a); Annaburg 8 March 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 284 a – b (original page no. 118 a – b). Regarding the visit to Sidonia see Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe 16 July 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 207 a – b. And regarding meetings between the electress and the countess, see Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Annaburg 10 July 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 74 b.

<sup>1172</sup> "... ohne schwöre geldt straff od langwiriger gefencklicher ..."; the quoted passages are not from Catharina Jungling's hand but from the summary of her request in Anna's letter to the judge and council in Marienberg issued Crottendorf 17 Aug. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 37 a – b.

<sup>1173</sup> "... bekommert vnd besturtzt ...", Anna to the judge and council in Marienberg, Crottendorf 17 Aug. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 37 a – b.

<sup>1174</sup> "... [Wir] begeren ... gnedigst wo gedachts Junglichs vrbrechung dermassen geschafft das ime gnad bewiesen werden kan[,] ir wollet ... inem ... des gefencknus [vnd geltstraff] vmb vnserwillen erlassen ...", Anna to the judge and council in Marienberg, Crottendorf 17 Aug. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 37 a – b.

<sup>1175</sup> Anna to Catharina Jungling, Freiberg 7 Sep. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 42 a.



because [Catharina] sent the work on the same day.”<sup>1176</sup> Catharina knew not only how to use her bargaining power but also the obligations she faced by employing it: in response to the electress’s goodwill she had to ensure the timely completion of Anna’s work. This series of exchanges was apparently successful and the subsequent summer Anna again commissioned work by Catharina.<sup>1177</sup>

The people who already had established a process of exchange with Anna are likely to have enjoyed an advantage when they needed her help. Yet, as the next two examples show, this did not mean that the common man or woman without any ties to the *Landesmutter* was left without a chance to appeal to her grace.

The third example again takes us to Marienberg. In 1573 the widow of Christoffer Fischer asked for Anna’s help. The town council had threatened to dispel her from the town, and the distressed widow could think of no reason why this drastic measure had been taken against her. Reacting upon the plea, Anna addressed the council,

We cannot imagine that You would expel her without sufficiently moving reasons. However, as she will know of no [such] motive, our gracious desire is that You will inform us of her circumstances and offence.<sup>1178</sup>

The tone of the electress’s letter is cautious: she does not demand a decision be overruled but asks merely that the reasoning behind it be explicated. Similar prudence characterized her request for the conditional release of Jungling (he should only be released if his offence was of a nature that allowed for a pardon). Whether this constituted a strategy or was a sincere expression of Anna’s reluctance to interfere with the law-enforcement, it corresponds exactly to the instructions presented to her mother in 1537. Bugenhagen and the later Saxon theologians emphasized the consort’s duty to intercede, but they also stressed that the same woman’s influence never was allowed to impede the execution of justice.

The final of the four examples of Anna’s goodwill relates to financial rather than legal support. During the spring of 1560, a young Dane appeared in Dresden and, by unknown measures, he gained access to Anna. The unnamed man asked that the electress please

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<sup>1176</sup> “Ist nit ausgang dan sie die arbeit desselbten tags vberschickt”, note in the margin by the letter from Anna to Catharina Jungling, Freiberg 7 Sep. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 42 a.

<sup>1177</sup> Anna to the Town Council of Marienberg, Dresden 18 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 93 b.

<sup>1178</sup> “... Nun wollen wir vns nicht versehen, das Ir sie ohne gnugsame bewegende vrsach vertreiben soltet. Weill sie aber von keiner vrsach wissen will So begeren wir gnedigst Ir wollet vnß Irer gelegenheit vnd verbrechung ... berichten ...”, Anna to the Council of Marienberg, Crottendorff 28 July 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 80 a. The deceased Christoffer Fischer was a *Kunststeiger* (that is, a supervisor in the mines of Marienberg, see *DfWB*, vol. 11, column 2728) and should not be mistaken with the contemporary theologian by the same name.

convince her brother, the Danish king, Frederik II, to grant him the necessary support that would enable him to attend the university in Copenhagen. As requested, Anna prepared a letter, which the young man could present to the king upon his return to Denmark,

The present [and] poor student from Odense has walked to [Saxony] from the Kingdom of Denmark and has asked us to intercede by Your Royal Dignity that he may be supported to study in Copenhagen. Because he says that he will study the Holy Scripture and [because] he has ran such a long way to us, we could not let him leave without solace. And is to Your Royal Dignity our sisterly plea that You will grant the poor pupil gracious help and [a] scholarship.<sup>1179</sup>

One passage of the quote deserves particular attention. Anna wrote to her brother that the supplicant “says” (that he will study theology), and in other cases, Anna used the term “to hear” a case.<sup>1180</sup> The regulations from sixteenth-century Hessen stipulates that a supplication addressed to the territorial ruler could be presented either in writing or verbally,<sup>1181</sup> and these examples demonstrate that the same practice was used when a subject wished to present his or her case to the Saxon electress.

Moreover, both this and the previous case show that the electress constituted an “appeal institution” that was available even to some of the most vulnerable members of society. As the other Danes who benefited from Anna’s support, the “poor student” had an advantage simply by being from her land of birth.<sup>1182</sup> But if Fischer’s widow had any comparable advantages, they do not appear from Anna’s archive. So how did she get in touch with Anna? The letter in which Anna asked the town council in Marienberg to reconsider the case was prepared in Crottendorf, a village approximately twenty-five

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<sup>1179</sup> “... Gegenwertiger armer Studentt von Odensee ist auß dem khonigreich Dennemarck anher gelauffen vnnd vnns vmb furschriften an E. K. W. gebeten, Das er von derselben zu Cophagen zum Studiren vorlegt werden möchtt[.] ... Weil er ... furgibt Er wolle In d heiligen schrift studiren vnd einen solchen weitten weck zu vnß herauß gelauffen[,] hab wir Imen nit trostloß ... weckkommen lassen[.] ... Vnnd ist ... an E. K. W. vnser F schwesterlich bitt Sie wolle sich gegen dem Armen schüler mitt gnedigister hulf vnnd vorlagk ... erZeigen ...”, Anna to Frederik II, Dresden 27 April 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 129 b. The example is summarized, though without any interpretation by von Weber (1865), pp. 409-410.

<sup>1180</sup> Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Dresden 22 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 105 a.

<sup>1181</sup> Neuhaus (1978), p. 135.

<sup>1182</sup> There are several other examples of how Anna made an effort to help Danes: in the summer of 1566, she interceded by Herman Simon, Count of Lippe, Spiegelberg, and Pymont (1532-1576) on behalf of the Dane Axel Brahe (1550-1616). The letter suggests that Frederik II of Denmark had asked his sister to intercede on behalf of Brahe. The sixteen-year-old Brahe had been imprisoned by the Count of Lippe after he had wounded a German nobleman who later died of his wounds. In the letter, Anna even writes that one of the reasons for her intercession is that, “... der gefangne brade aus dem Reich Dennemk burtig sein ...”, see Anna to Herman Simon, Count of Lippe, Spiegelberg, and Pymont, Stolpen 12 July 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 129 a – 129 b. See also Scheller (1966), pp. 48-49 where she refers to the supplications sent to Duchess Anna Maria of Prussia from her natal territory Braunschweig.

kilometers from Marienberg. Seven years earlier, when Anna had addressed the same town council on behalf of Nickel Jungling's wife she was also in Crottendorf and, two weeks prior (both in 1566 and 1573), she had passed through Marienberg.<sup>1183</sup> As demonstrated in both Danish and Hessian material, a ruler's temporary presence in a local community frequently elicited a series of supplications and the travels were part and parcel of government strategies.<sup>1184</sup> In a similar way, Anna's travels through the territory reinforced her presence among the subjects and facilitated the access to her for the subjects who may not have had an already established contact to the *Landesmutter*.

### **Rejections and qualified answers to requests**

The examples outlined above suggest that Anna was consistently accommodating in her responses to the subjects and friends who requested her help. But that was not the case. A plea could be rejected in several ways: the electress could issue a straightforward rejection, she could ignore a request, or she could qualify her support. Each of these three forms represents problems in an analysis. Anna rarely sent letters of rejection and the few that do exist show that a complete rejection equaled the loss of her favor. Although these rejections existed and deserve attention, it must be emphasized that they constituted rare exceptions. With regard to the pleas that were ignored, the situation is particularly difficult. Because the absence of an answer always can be a result of the transmission of the material, these examples are inevitably surrounded by uncertainty. The qualified answers are arguably the least problematic but, as it will appear, these were phrased with the utmost care. Great efforts were made to have a highly qualified answer appear as a generous and friendly offer to help.

The three examples of rejections included here represent all of the three types and have been chosen in recognition of these difficulties. The first is a very radical rejection of a request. The second example shows how a plea was presented to Anna by several prominent intercessors more than once, but – apparently – without the desired result. Given the above-mentioned uncertainty about the absence of a reply this case stands out, because Anna received at least four letters regarding the matter before she possibly took action. The

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<sup>1183</sup> Regarding 1566, see DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 36 a, letter dated "Marienberg 30 July". Regarding 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 72 a – 77 a, where the letters sent between 11 and 14 July 1573 all were issued in Marienberg.

<sup>1184</sup> Neuhaus (1978), p. 116; Krüger (1975); Krüger (1977). The same pattern can be detected in the government practice of Anna's brother Frederik II of Denmark. During his travels he was often presented with questions related to the local administration and law enforcement, see Arenfeldt (1999), p. 343.

third case serves a twofold purpose: it exemplifies the qualified answer and it brings attention to usages of gifts in relation to requests for help.

The first case is by far the most dramatic. Having been in relatively frequent contact with Margarethe Leuschnerin, the wife/widow of the apothecary/physician in Meissen, for at least three years,<sup>1185</sup> their interactions were brought to an end when Anna wrote,

You give us reason to cast you completely aside. For that reason we are returning your letter and request that in the future you will spare us from such and similar matters, or else it may not serve you well.<sup>1186</sup>

Although Anna addressed Margarethe Leuschnerin as “honorable and dear” and closed the letter with an assurance that she knew of no denigration of the widow, the message is clear. In order to understand why Anna took such drastic measures, the previous exchanges between Anna and Margarethe Leuschnerin must be examined.

The more frequent contact between the two women began in 1575, when Margarethe offered to treat Anna and August’s daughter (also called Anna) for her back or shoulder problems.<sup>1187</sup> Margarethe extended this offer as she presented three requests to the electress: (i) that Anna send her various remedies that could help cure her husband’s current illness; (ii) that her deceased brother’s debts to one of August’s councilors be written of; and (iii) that the electress intervene in a financial disagreement related to her husband’s investment in a mining enterprise. The remedies were willingly supplied but, having consulted with August regarding the other requests, Anna explained that nothing could be done regarding the remainder of her brother’s debts. Emphasizing that this was her final decision, she added, “and as we cannot obtain anything through the diligent effort

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<sup>1185</sup> The first trace of their communication is Margarethe Leuschnerin’s letter to Anna, Meissen 29 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, pp. 233 a – 237 a, in which Leuschnerin asked the electress for a range of favors. Anna replied, Annaburg 22 Feb. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 15 a – 16 b. However, already in 1568, Anna had had contact with Margarethe’s husband (Kop. 513, fol. 38 a). Altogether six letters from Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin survive (DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 15 a – 16 b; DrHSA Kop. 518 (1576), fol. 160 b (original page no. 8 b); DrHSA Kop. 518 (1576), fol. 162 a (original page no. 10 a); DrHSA Kop. 519 (1576), fol. 153 b; DrHSA Kop. 521 (1577), fol. 105 a; and DrHSA Kop. 521 (1577), fol. 138 a – b). However, these same letters contain information about – at least – two personal meetings of the correspondents. The letters from Margarethe Leuschnerin are preserved in: DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, pp. 233 a – 237 a (1575); and DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 69 a – 70 a (1575), 85 a – b (1576), 87 a – b (1576), 179 a – 182 a (1577).

<sup>1186</sup> “... [Du] gibest ... vrsach vns deiner ... gantzlich zuentschlahen[.] Schicken dir derhalben dein schreiben hirbej widerumb Zu Vnd begeren du wollest vns kunftig mit solch vnd dergleichen sachen verschonen, das es mochte dir sonst nicht Zum besten gereichen ...”, Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin (“die Doctorinn Christoff Leuschners witwe Zu Meissenn”), Dresden 22 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 138 a – b.

<sup>1187</sup> Leuschnerin explained in her letter how she had cured two other girls from back and shoulder problems/deformities, Margarethe Leuschnerin to Anna, Meissen 29 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, pp. 233 a – 237 a. See the brief mention of Margarethe Leuschnerin in chapter 6 above and von Weber (1865), pp. 427-428.

we employed, you will spare us the matter in the future". Anna also declined to intervene in the second matter, though she did advise Margarethe and her husband to be careful. Reliable sources had informed her that even if their partner Michel Feige was a fine miner, "he nevertheless is wicked in his head and supposedly a betrayer".<sup>1188</sup> Although two requests were rejected already in this – seemingly the – first exchange between the two, the tone of the letter testifies to the electress's goodwill towards Margarethe.

At the beginning of 1576 Margarethe Leuschnerin attempted the promised cure of the electress's daughter<sup>1189</sup> and, although it did not yield the expected result,<sup>1190</sup> the two women remained in contact. Margarethe's husband did not recover from his illness and died some time during 1577.<sup>1191</sup> In the fall of 1577, the recently widowed Margarethe turned to Anna for help and lamented at considerable length the immense difficulties she was encountering as a widow. After her husband's death, Margarethe had entered into a contract with an apothecary who was to continue the business of her late husband. The lessee, however, had not delivered the agreed payment and Margarethe begged Anna to make August intervene. Secondly, the widow asked for a loan of the considerable amount of 1,000 Thalers. She also begged to be given a chance to address the matter with the electress in person. If this latter request was met, she promised to share the details of her most treasured remedy (*Kunst*) with Anna.<sup>1192</sup>

Anna brought the matter to August's attention and, in her reply, she explained that the widow should prepare a supplication to the elector in which she explained the problems regarding the lessee of the apothecary. However, Margarethe could only expect August to consider the matter if she did not "clutter any other complaints [about the lessee of your apothecary] into the same [letter]".<sup>1193</sup> The widow's two other requests were declined: August could not provide her with a loan, not even with a (financial) consolation; and Anna did not have the time nor the opportunity to listen to the numerous complaints. However, the electress would like to know the details of Margarethe's remedy and

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<sup>1188</sup> "... vnd dieweil wir vber vnser angewandten vleis nicht erlangen können, wirst du vns künftiglich darmit auch ferner verschonen ..." / "... ein gutter Bergkman, das er doch in heubt Irre vnd ein Zeuckscher Mann sein soll ...", Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Annaburg 22 Feb. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 15 a – 16 b.

<sup>1189</sup> Margarethe Leuschnerin to Anna, Meissen 6 Feb. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 85 a – b.

<sup>1190</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 427-428.

<sup>1191</sup> Margarethe Leuschnerin to Anna, Dresden "sonntag nach g... 1577" [not legible; fall 1577], DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 179 a – 182 a.

<sup>1192</sup> Margarethe Leuschnerin to Anna, Dresden "sonntag nach g... 1577" [not legible; fall 1577], DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 179 a – 182 a.

<sup>1193</sup> "... solche deine Verschwörungen ... [regarding the lessee of your apothecary] ..., darinnen sonst keine ander sach mit eingemenget klagen wirst ...", Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Dresden 22 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 105 a.

instructed the widow to pass the secret formula to Anna's closer friend Barbara von Schönberg, who would subsequently pass it on to Anna.<sup>1194</sup>

While Anna did present the two concrete requests to August and sent detailed instructions as to how Margarethe may pursue his help, her reply to the widow reveals considerable irritation. The instruction that Margarethe could not to clutter other complaints into a supplication, Anna's refusal to meet with her, and the introduction of a "human shield" in the form of Barbara von Schönberg, give away her lack of enthusiasm. The combination of this reluctance and the electress's willingness to present the specific cases to August in spite of it, highlight the seriousness with which Anna manage her role as intercessor. Her decision on each request was based on its specific merits, not simply on her general (dis)-inclination towards the supplicant.

Although the electress's growing impatience with Margarethe had become apparent, it does not suffice as an explanation of the severe letter Anna sent the widow only three months later. The final loss of her *Landesmutter's* grace was caused by the next letter Margarethe sent. In spite of the electress's explicit statement that the widow should give the recipe to Barabara von Schönberg, she sent it directly to Anna. This disregard was an offence in its own right and Anna did not fail to make this known, "We had expected that you would not bother us further",<sup>1195</sup> she wrote. But this was not all. When Anna became familiar with the nature of Margarethe's remedy, she instantly withdrew whatever favor the widow hitherto had retained. Reacting to the recipe she had received, the electress replied, "from your letter, we understand what kind of ~~kunst~~ + *geugkelej* you are practicing".<sup>1196</sup> In the draft for the letter, Anna (or a secretary) first used the very general, but also ambiguous, expression art (*Kunst*) when she referred to Margarethe's medical knowledge and methods. Yet, this word was marked out and replaced with the strong and decidedly negative *Gaugkelei*. The sense of the term is not easily translated but comes close to sorcery and Luther frequently used the word always to refer to distortions of God's word and will.<sup>1197</sup> In other words, Margarethe's remedy transgressed the theologically sanctioned forms of the healings arts as discussed in chapter 6. Anna not only severed their

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<sup>1194</sup> Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Dresden 22 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 105 a.

<sup>1195</sup> "... Hetten vns ... versehen du soltest vns ferner ... vnangefecht gelassen ...", Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Dresden 22 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 138 a – b.

<sup>1196</sup> "... wir ... [verstehen] aus deinem ... schreiben ... mit was ~~kunst~~ + *geugkelej* du vmbgehest ...", Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Dresden 22 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 138 a – b.

<sup>1197</sup> See the entry "Gaukelei" see *DfWB*, vol. 4, column 1550.

contact, she returned the letter and issued a warning that she would know nothing about the matter, or else ... !<sup>1198</sup>

The strong reaction can be viewed as an expression of the fear associated with the potential power of Margarethe's questionable medical cure, which in turn prompted Anna to enforce the religious conventions of medicine. Even though Anna did not explicate the threat she presented, the example shows that the female consort could and did withdraw her grace when certain boundaries were overstepped. Yet, the same boundaries can only be identified when the transgressions were as severe as Margarethe Leuschnerin's. In the vast majority of cases, the electress's declinations took the form of not replying to a request, as it will be demonstrated next.

At the beginning of 1570, Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg, and her daughter, Duchess Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, simultaneously addressed Anna on behalf of Veronica von Rüdigersdorf in the Saxon town of Schkeuditz (between Halle and Leipzig). According to Hedwig and Elisabeth Magdalena's intercessions, Veronica's sister Brigitta had been a nun (a *Closter Jungfraw*) in the order of the Poor Clares in Seußlitz,<sup>1199</sup> but because Brigitta – in the words of Hedwig – had been “somewhat distorted in her mind”,<sup>1200</sup> she had been granted an annual donation/pension of forty Guilders from the ecclesiastical lands, that is (indirectly) from the Saxon Elector, when the Reformation was introduced. Brigitta had recently passed away, and Veronica humbly solicited that her sister's annual donation – “if [the same forty Guilders] have not yet have been promised to somebody else”<sup>1201</sup> – be transferred to her as a compensation for great efforts she had employed in the care of her sister and because she herself was an “old [and] haggard woman”.<sup>1202</sup>

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<sup>1198</sup> Anna to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Dresden 22 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 138 a – b.

<sup>1199</sup> Regarding the convent in Seußlitz (located between Meissen and Riesa), see Markus (1909) and Markus (1928-1931).

<sup>1200</sup> “... etwa an Irer sinne vorrucket ...”, Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree [2 Feb. 1570], DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 203 a – 204 a. The letter from Hedwig's daughter Elisabeth Magdalena, Duchess of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle to Anna, was prepared on the same day and also sent from Köln an der Spree, where she was visiting her mother, see Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle to Anna, Köln an der Spree, “Freitag nach Purificationis Marie” [2 Feb.] 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 213 a – 214 a. The content of the two letters is almost identical, though the letters were penned by different secretaries.

<sup>1201</sup> “... wan ... die gedachte vierzig gulden, Jerliche hebungk einer andern noch nicht wider vorliehen [sind]”, Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree [2 Feb. 1570], DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 203 a – 204 a.

<sup>1202</sup> “... Alte vorlebte fraw ...”, Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree [2 Feb. 1570], DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 203 a – 204 a; and Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle to Anna, Köln an der Spree, “Freitag nach Purificationis Marie” [2 Feb.] 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 213 a – 214 a.

When the two princesses addressed Anna, they stressed that they already had presented the case in writing to August. According to their letters, he had expressed his goodwill in a recent reply that had been sent from Küstrin, but he had also explained that the matter had to be finalized in Dresden.<sup>1203</sup> Therefore, Anna was asked to further the case of the honest and honorable Veronica.<sup>1204</sup>

After six months, the intercession that was sent to Anna still had not elicited the desired effect, and the two princesses repeated the plea.<sup>1205</sup> This time however, Hedwig added that if August,

is not in the territory, but by the announced Diet and, in order to prevent that the said forty Guilders that are due by the coming Michelmas are allocated to somebody else, we kindly solicit that Your Beloved, in the absence of Your beloved lord [and] husband will give gracious instructions, that the forty Guilders are allocated to the woman and will be paid without hindrance.<sup>1206</sup>

The added paragraph appears rather audacious and, given the explicit reference to the Diet that August was likely to attend, it seems as if Hedwig and Elisabeth Magdalena wanted the letters to arrive during his absence. The wording suggests that this timing was motivated by their assumption that Anna held greater authority during her husband's absence and that she would be more accommodating. In any event, the two intercessors did what they could to make sure that Veronica would receive her sister's pension by the fast approaching Michelmas and there is little doubt that the date of the payment also contributed to the timing of their letters.

In spite of her prominent supporters, it does not seem as if Veronica's request was ever acted upon. Anna did not write to Hedwig and Elisabeth Magdalena until January 1571 when she expressed her condolences upon the death of Hedwig's husband and

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<sup>1203</sup> Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree [2 Feb. 1570], DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 203 a–204 a.

<sup>1204</sup> Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree [2 Feb. 1570], DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 203 a–204 a; and Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle to Anna, Köln an der Spree, "Freitag nach Purificationis Marie" [2 Feb.] 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 213 a–214 a.

<sup>1205</sup> Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree 14 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 254 a–255 a; and Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle to Anna, Köln an der Spree 14 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 215 a–b.

<sup>1206</sup> "... nicht inner landes, sondern auf dem außgeschribenen Reichstage angezogen, vnd es demnoch an denne Ist, das die gemelte viertzig gulden ... vff ... kunfftige Michaelis felhafftigk sein sollen, vnd damit nun die nicht einen andern mogen zugeordent werden, So bitten wir Ingleichenn freuntlichen, E. L. wollen abwesens Ires geliebten herrn Gemahels, gnedigen beuelch gebenn, das der Frawen die vierzig gulden mogen zugeignet vnd vngehindert volgen ...", Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree 14 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 254 a–255 a.



Elisabeth Magdalena's father.<sup>1207</sup> One should of course be careful not to over-interpret the absence of a reply: it could simply have been lost or it could – at least theoretically – have been an autograph letter that has not been preserved in the letter-books,<sup>1208</sup> or Anna could have passed the request on to August or the relevant officials in Saxony. However, as demonstrated in Anna's the communications with Anna of Hohenlohe and her letters to Margarethe Leuschnerin, Anna usually notified a supplicant or intercessor about the progress of a case if she had passed it on to other authorities. But why would she have been unwilling to act in this case?

One can speculate that Anna may have been offended by the rather forceful approach in Hedwig's second intercession: not only did she reiterate a request that already had been presented to both Anna and August, she also sent it at a time when August was likely to be away and asked Anna to effectuate the decision during his absence.<sup>1209</sup> However, this interpretation does not explain why Anna left the first intercessions regarding the matter unattended to and the explanation must be sought elsewhere. The year 1570 was a busy year: the first seven months were dominated by preparations for the wedding of their eldest daughter Elisabeth, a two-week visit to Prague, and a three-week stay at Carlsbad. Yet, these activities did not prevent Anna from attending to other requests and more than 140 outgoing letters are preserved in her letter-books from the year.<sup>1210</sup> A brief excursion to the convent in Seußlitz provides a hint that may be of greater value.

As part of the Reformation in Albertine Saxony, the convent in Seußlitz was sequestrated in 1541. Veronica and Brigitte's names appear in the visitation records from 1540 and 1541, which provide noteworthy information. In 1540 Veronica had already spent twenty-seven years in the convent and she expressed hesitation to renounce the monastic life. Less is known about Brigitte, who only is mentioned in the 1541 visitation.<sup>1211</sup> As a part of the negotiations that preceded the sequestration, Duke Heinrich had already assured in 1541 that the women who remained in the convent would be looked after.<sup>1212</sup> The following year however, the abbess and nuns were informed that if their relatives would

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<sup>1207</sup> Anna to Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg and Anna to Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Chemnitz 12 Jan. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 197 b – 198 a and 198 b – 199 a.

<sup>1208</sup> It is, though, unlikely that an autograph letter should have been sent. In the correspondence between Anna and Hedwig and Elisabeth Magdalena, there is not a single reference to autograph letters and one does not find any of the common apologies for the usage of secretaries either.

<sup>1209</sup> August did not, however, attend the 1570 Diet in person.

<sup>1210</sup> The events during 1570 are documented in DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 100 a – 193 a.

<sup>1211</sup> Markus (1928-1931), pp. 200-204.

<sup>1212</sup> Markus (1928-1931), pp. 207-208.

welcome them back into the family, they were free to leave. The women who voluntarily agreed to leave would be granted an annual pension of thirty Guilders.<sup>1213</sup> All of the nuns remained at Seußnitz – though only for a short time. During the first months of 1543 approximately half of the nuns, including Veronica and probably Brigitta as well,<sup>1214</sup> left and accepted the offer of an annual pension 30 Guilders. The subsequent year the remaining nuns were forced to either leave or move to the already sequestered convent of Mühlberg. This rather drastic and sudden solution was a result of the mismanagement by the first post-Reformation administrator (*Amtmann*) at Seußnitz: Christopher von Rüdigersdorf, a brother or cousin of Veronica and Brigitte.<sup>1215</sup> After less than two years in the position, Christopher von Rüdigersdorf's debts had risen to a level that caused Duke Moritz to end their collaboration. Rüdigersdorf was accused of squandering more than 1,000 Guilders and he of course fell out of favor of the Saxon dukes. The subsequent year (1545), Seußnitz was sold to the Saxon Chancellor Simon Pistoris.

Could Christopher von Rüdigersdorf's misdeeds have been so severe that it discredited the entire family? It does not seem unlikely: the Saxon nobility was a small community and, only a month before Anna received the second intercessions on behalf of Veronica, she and August had visited Hartmann Pistoris at Seußnitz,<sup>1216</sup> a visit that could have refreshed their memory of the dispute.

Although Anna's motivations ultimately must remain open to speculation, the example retains its significance. Three aspects make it particularly interesting. First of all, it shows that the usage of powerful intercessors was no guarantee for the fulfillment of a plea. Secondly, the letters addressed to Anna on behalf of the supplicant highlight some of the ways in which a letter of request inevitably was shaped by a – more or less conscious – strategy.<sup>1217</sup> The information regarding Veronica's own pension was omitted, she was fashioned as an old haggard but upright woman, who had sacrificed much to care for her

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<sup>1213</sup> Markus (1928-1931), pp. 208-209.

<sup>1214</sup> Markus (1928-1931), pp. 215-216. The fact that her name only appears in one name list (1541) and in none of the more detailed visitation accounts could suggest that she already at this point was considered mentally incapacitated. Without her full faculties, Brigitta may be assumed to have followed her sister when she left the convent in 1543.

<sup>1215</sup> Regarding Christopher von Rüdigersdorf's appointment, see Markus (1928-1931), p. 210. Regrettably, the exact relationship between the Christopher von Rüdigersdorf and the two sisters cannot be determined. Rüdigersdorf was a noble family from Schlesien that became extinct in the sixteenth century (see Kneschke, vol. 7, pp. 616-617). Hence, it can be assumed that the last surviving members were closely related, a hypothesis that gains support from the fact that they all were associated with Seußnitz.

<sup>1216</sup> Anna's visit to Seußnitz appears from the letter she sent to Sabina of Brandenburg, dated "Seußnitz 19 July 1570", DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 156 a.

<sup>1217</sup> Davis (1987), particularly, pp. 111-114.

weak sister. Although this characterization originated with the supplicant, the intercessor accepted it and passed it on. Moreover, the explicit reference to August's potential absence and the request that Anna finalize the matter – possibly without his explicit approval – certainly originated from Hedwig. Anna's awareness of the strategies that were employed by supplicants (and intercessors) is revealed in an example from 1579. Having received another intercession from Elisabeth Magdalena, the electress advised her not to believe the story that had been presented to the duchess by Maritta Reuschin, another female supplicant from Saxony.<sup>1218</sup> Finally, the example demonstrates that a Saxon subject could use a female consort from a different territory to mediate contact to Anna. In other words, to Veronica, the Electress of Brandenburg was more approachable than her own *Landesmutter*.<sup>1219</sup>

Moving to the third example, the use of high-ranking intercessors is combined with the presentation of gifts. In 1571, the young Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia (1553-1618) asked for Anna's help. The Prussian duke and Anna were distantly related, but they had not exchanged letters prior to this.<sup>1220</sup> Suddenly, Albrecht Friedrich sent Anna a rich selection of amber, amber oil, and eland claws and asked that this generous gift be considered an expression of his "friendly inclination" towards her. Yet, it is difficult to view the gifts only as an expression of his friendly bearing towards Anna. In the very next sentence, Albrecht Friedrich continued with a plea that Anna intercede on behalf of Wolf von Kreytzen, one of his senior councilors,<sup>1221</sup> who risked losing the income from his properties in Saxony. The commander (*Hauptmann*) at Pleissenburg in Leipzig had claimed the right to the income of the very same land and, in an attempt to protect his servant/client, Albrecht Friedrich needed August's help. He thus solicited that Anna speak the case of the Prussian councilor by her husband.<sup>1222</sup>

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<sup>1218</sup> Anna to Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle, Annaburg 23 April. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 298 a (original page no. 132 a).

<sup>1219</sup> Although Hedwig's spelling of Veronica and Brigitta's last name "Ruderstorff", rather than Rüdigersdorf, could suggest that she had ties to the town of Rüdigersdorf located in the vicinity of Cologne an der Spree where Hedwig resided, this is not the case. As mentioned above, Rüdigersdorf was a noble family from Schlesien (see Kneschke, vol. 7, pp. 616-617).

<sup>1220</sup> The relationship between the two is two-fold: the most direct link existed between Albrecht Friedrich's elder half-brothers and -sisters. They were born in the first marriage of Albrecht Friedrich's father, Albrecht of Prussia and Dorothea of Denmark (1504-1547). Dorothea was a younger sister of Christian III and thus Anna's aunt. Secondly, Anna and Albrecht Friedrich were distantly related through his mother, Anna Maria of Braunschweig-Calenberg. Her grandmother was Elisabeth of Denmark (1485-1555) who married Joachim I of Brandenburg, whose uncle was Anna's grandfather, Frederik I of Denmark (1471-1533).

<sup>1221</sup> Albrecht Friedrich refers to Kreytzen as his "Rath Oberste vnd lieber getreuer, Wolff von Kreytzen". The Kreytzen family originated in Saxony but, from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the family established itself more firmly in Prussia, see Kneschke, vol. 5, pp. 286-287.

<sup>1222</sup> Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia to Anna, Königsberg 5 July 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 173 a – 174 a.

Anna thanked the duke for the gift and assured him that she greatly appreciated the objects, but she also informed him that,

Although we do not involve ourselves much in such legal matters and – in consideration of our limited understanding [of such] – let the law take its due course, we will nevertheless intercede by our heartily beloved lord and husband.<sup>1223</sup>

In this paragraph, Anna recapitulates the core of Bugenhagen's instructions as presented to Dorothea in the 1537 coronation. She should be willing to hear the pleas and to intercede, but was careful not to interfere with the due course of the law. When compared to the way in which Anna openly wrote about her much more persistent support to the Counts of Hohenlohe during their conflict with the Margrave of Brandenburg, the sincerity of the morally founded reservations she presented appears questionable. How is the discrepancy between the electress's expressions to be understood?

Several factors must be considered. First, the fact that this reply was sent to a man with whom Anna was only distantly acquainted may have caused Anna to present herself as an acquiescent woman who knew the boundaries within which she was supposed to act. In contrast, the accounts of her much more persistent pursuit of the interests of the Hohenlohe family were sent to a close female client (Anna of Hohenlohe) towards whom Anna could speak/write without the same degree of self-restraint. Secondly, it is crucial to remember that the commander of Pleissenburg was a Saxon nobleman. Albrecht Friedrich's request thereby forced Anna (and August) to prioritize their loyalty towards a local client on the one side and a colleague in a neighboring territory, on the other. Finally, by emphasizing the limited extent to which she could (and would) influence the case, she reduced the degree to which her own esteem would be challenged if the request could not be met. As it will be discussed further below, the acceptance of a case implied that the intercessor could have his or her position either reinforced or challenged. A successful mediation reconfirmed the status of an intercessor, but a rejection could be perceived as a challenge. By qualifying the support with reference to the moral prescriptions for appropriate female behavior, Anna guarded herself against that very risk. In this way, her acceptance of the gender-determined exclusion from a legal dispute conveniently enabled

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<sup>1223</sup> "... Wiewohl wir vnns vmb solche Rechtshandel wenig bckommern, Sondern vnser geringen vorstandes billich erachtenn dz dem Rechten sein freier lauff gelassen[,] So wollen wir doch ... bey vnserm hertzliebstem herren vnd Gemahl ... vorbitt thuenn, ...", Anna to Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia, Dresden 20 Aug. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 275 a – b.

her to maintain a comfortable distance from the matter – at least in appearance. Simultaneously, the honorable reasoning Anna provided in her reluctant reply as well as the good will she assured Albrecht Friedrich limited the degree to which he could take offence at her rejection. The intercessor's rank, the distant blood relationship between him and Anna, and even his lavish gifts did not suffice to recruit the electress as an unequivocal supporter of his councilor's case.

When the successful requests were discussed above, it was stressed that the mechanism of reciprocity was not an exclusive privilege of Anna's high-ranking friends. In a similar manner, the usage of gifts presented in conjunction with a request was not limited to princes and nobles. In November 1563, Catharina Wernerin from Zwickau addressed Anna to solicit for financial help. Not having much to offer the electress, but knowing that Anna appreciated recipes for health remedies (*Aller guter Kunstenen*), Catharina Wernerin presented her potential benefactor with a booklet containing the recipes for valuable remedies she had been taught by various experienced *doctoressen* ("female doctors") during the twenty-four years she herself had cared for the ill. Having emphasized her charity, the widow also accentuated her reading and writing knowledge of which the booklet was a proof: on seventy-six pages of highly varying paper quality, bound in green parchment, the old woman had penned the recipes.<sup>1224</sup> Although Wernerin's destiny remains unknown, the fine preservation of the booklet suggests that her efforts and the value of the recipes were appreciated – perhaps as much as the more lavish objects presented by Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia.

### **The female consort as intercessor**

In addition to Anna, three other princely women appear in the role of intercessor in the seven examples: Anna of Hohenlohe who interceded on behalf of both her sons and the heirs of Albrecht von Rosenberg; and Hedwig of Brandenburg and her daughter Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig, who jointly interceded on behalf of Veronica von Rüdigersdorf. Each had specific reasons for interceding and they all managed their role differently. Nevertheless, when the examples are viewed together, they reveal some

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<sup>1224</sup> SLUB Msc. B 201 "Katharina Wernerin, Wittfrau [in Zwickau], Püchlein, darinnen vil schöner bewerter kunst ist" (Medicamente). Mit Widmung an Kurfürstin Anna d. d. Montag nach Katharina Inij. [28. Nov. 1563]. 16. Jahrh. 37 Bl. Grün. Pgtbd. 4'. This could be the manuscript that is listed as no. 126 "Ein geschriebenes Arznei buch, in quarto grün Pergament" in the sixteenth-century inventory (compiled in the 1590?) of medical manuscripts in the electoral library, see SLUB Bibl.-arch. I Ba Vol. 26 Nr. 59. According to the inventory, this book had been removed from "... der alten Churfürstin Hochlöblichster Seliger gedechtnus Büchern ...".

common patterns that help specify the consort's position as intercessor. Although Anna of Saxony remains the center of attention, the other three female intercessors are also considered.

#### *Access to the consort*

Before a request reached the female consort, the petitioner had to find a way of accessing her. Access and proximity to a ruler have been emphasized as key parameters of power in court history and political history, and rank and offices are generally presented as the factors that determined when access was either granted or rejected.<sup>1225</sup> In the seven cases outlined above, Anna was approached by "high and low" as well as women and men. Nevertheless, certain groups were doubtlessly privileged over others. A distinction between "common" subjects and the "others" as well as between men and women is useful because it helps define not only when these categories mattered, but also where rank was a factor to be reckoned with.

When the early modern rulers safeguarded the subjects right to supplicate, the rank-specific privileges of access were – to a limited extent – circumvented.<sup>1226</sup> And, even if some qualifications are appropriate, it appears as if the Saxon population enjoyed a similar right and possibility to appeal to the *Landesmutter*. The frequent travels and changing residences of the electoral couple as well as Anna's regular communications with local administrators increased her presence among the population. As the example of Christoffer Fischer's widow suggests, this is likely to have facilitated the access for subjects in the Saxon villages and countryside. The familiarity with the electress and her interests also comes through in Catharina Wernerin's letter to Anna, in which she referred to the electress's interest in health remedies.

Nevertheless, it was doubtlessly easier for the people who already had some contact to the electress (Catharina Jungling and Margarethe Leuschnerin) to present their cases. It is striking however, that Veronica von Rüdigersdorf apparently had closer ties to the Electress of Brandenburg and her daughter than she had to the female consort of the territory in which she lived. The earlier conflict between Christopher von Rüdigersdorf and the Saxon dukes may perhaps explain her choice to use Hedwig and Elisabeth Magdalena as intercessors. If the family had fallen from favor, the mediation by a powerful intercessor

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<sup>1225</sup> Regarding access as a parameter of power at the court, see Asch (1995), pp. 243-266; Persson (1999), pp. 40-55.

<sup>1226</sup> See Neuhaus (1978); Neuhaus (1979); Bregnsbo (1997).

could have enhanced the chances for a positive reply – as it did when Anna of Hohenlohe interceded on behalf of Rosenberg's heirs. However, the efficacy of the intercessions will be discussed below.

In addition to the subjects in Saxony, the population of Anna's territory by birth had a privileged position and, as the findings of Rita Scheller demonstrate, this pattern was not unusual among the spouses of the territorial princes.<sup>1227</sup> Anna did maintain close contact to her territory by birth, and her willingness to act as protector of her parents' and brother's subjects appears clearly in the case when a Danish student gained access to her without having had any previous contact. It is even conceivable that Anna showed a greater readiness to act upon a request from a Dane in Saxony, simply because the same person would have been without his or her usual protectors (above all, his or her relatives).

With the exception of the Danish student, the requests presented to Anna by people from outside Saxony were all sent by the highest ranking members of society who presented requests on behalf of their relatives, subjects or clients: Hohenlohe asked for help for sons and for the heirs of Albrecht von Rosenberg, the Electress of Brandenburg and her daughter strove to help a Saxon noblewoman, and the Prussian duke interceded on behalf of his councilor. This suggests that when a person from outside Anna's territories (Saxony and Denmark) needed her support, access had to be obtained through the mediation of people of higher rank and preferably by someone who already had a personal bond to Anna. Hence, in this category, rank and personal contact mattered greatly for the ability to access the consort. Anna's network extended beyond the Saxon territory and across the Empire and Scandinavia and the vast extent of her contacts increased her accessibility – even if a person from a different territory required assistance to bring a case to her attention.

A look at the gender distribution reveals an interesting divergence with regard to the female consort and male rulers. Neuhaus and Bregnsbo have shown that women made up a maximum of 25% of the supplicants in both sixteenth-century Hessen and eighteenth-century Denmark.<sup>1228</sup> A simple count of Anna's outgoing letters shows that almost 70% of them were addressed to women,<sup>1229</sup> and there is no reason to believe that the distribution

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<sup>1227</sup> Scheller (1966), pp. 48-49 and 119-121.

<sup>1228</sup> Neuhaus (1978), p. 163; Bregnsbo (1997), pp. 104-109. Although Rita Scheller refrained from explicit considerations of an uneven representation of men and women among supplicants who wrote to the consorts at the Prussian court of the sixteenth century, the examples she provided suggest that women were at least as prevalent as men, see Scheller (1966), pp. 48-51 and 119-124.

<sup>1229</sup> See the quantitative overview of Anna's outgoing letters in chapter 2.

between men and women in the greater correspondence differed radically among the letters of requests. Although women (regardless of rank) were excluded from the most visible layer of the early modern legal system,<sup>1230</sup> the examples discussed above demonstrate that they were not left without possibilities to defend their own interests and those of their families and/or clients. The simple fact that Anna was in regular contact with many more women than men meant that women also had easier access to her as intercessor than men. The men she did correspond with were – with only few exceptions – confined to three categories: princes from other territories (including relatives); employees within Saxony (mostly noble men); and Protestant theologians. All of these can be assumed to have had the same access as any female relative, neighbor, or employee. However, Anna's male correspondents were likely to have been in equally close or closer contact with August and could have presented a supplication to him. In contrast, it seems likely that the women, be they neighboring consorts or servants from within Saxony, deemed the chances of a successful plea greater if it was presented to Anna, to whom they already had a bond.

Pauline Stafford had argued that the consort could bridge the gap between the powerless and the powerful.<sup>1231</sup> The high presence of women shows that the female consort not only bridged a gap between the powerless and the powerful, but that she also was able to link a female and a male sphere. This, however, does not imply that women were powerless and men powerful. As a woman she was accessible to other women, and as a princess she had access to both women and men at all levels of society. Thereby, the consort could acquire knowledge of the territory and the subjects that was not equally accessible to the ruler.

#### *Accommodation or rejection: Christian ideals and dynamics of reciprocity*

When a female consort was presented with a request, Christian prescriptions for good government, compassion, and generosity provided important guidance for the decision to either accommodate or reject a request. But the early modern societies were tied together by more than Christian ideals and the perpetual exchanges of material and symbolic goods with their implied obligation to reciprocate constituted powerful bonds both between individuals and between families as collective units. Because the ruler and consort generally held the greatest resources, they were also most profoundly affected by this

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<sup>1230</sup> Schorn-Schütte (1996b), pp. 97-101; Dilcher (1997), pp. 55-72, especially pp. 62-64; Kuehn (2001), pp. 97-115.

<sup>1231</sup> Stafford (1997a), pp. 17-18.



broadly defined economy.<sup>1232</sup> Hence, the behavior of a ruler or a consort was shaped by ideological considerations, considerations of capital accumulation (symbolic as well as material), and considerations of representation of authority (including the obligation to protect). At times these three aspects supplemented each other, while in other cases they were at odds.

Helmut Neuhaus argued that the supplications helped a ruler manage one of the central duties expected of him, namely the personal protection of his subjects. In chapter 3 it was demonstrated how this same duty to protect the subjects extended also to the female consort and how the duty was gendered: the very same “weaknesses” (the strength of her emotions) that excluded a woman from participation in the management of justice made her an apt defender of the needy.

Several examples suggest that Anna was aware of the moral-religious prescriptions for her role as intercessor and the gender-specific restrictions on her office. The first appears clearly in the cautious requests she sent to the town council in Marienberg and, of course, in the qualifications of her reply to Albrecht Friedrich. Yet, the care with which Anna investigated and considered the requests she received is even more explicit in a case that has not been presented above but deserves brief attention. In the reply Anna sent to her maternal aunt, the widowed Klara of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Gifhorn (1518-1576, born of Saxony-Lauenburg) and her daughter Klara of Anhalt (1550-1598) in 1571, she revealed how she acted upon the receipt of a request. The two female relatives had asked that Anna help to have a certain Krueger from the village Ursleben (close to Magdeburg) released from imprisonment. The electress replied,

[A]lthough the imprisoned [man] is unknown to us and [although] we do not know what he has done or where he is kept, we have nevertheless [and] upon diligent inquiries been informed that the said Krueger has lodged some robbers and knowingly gave them refuge and permitted the stolen goods were divided in his house.<sup>1233</sup>

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<sup>1232</sup> This point has (though without considerations of potential differences between ruler and consort) been emphasized by Lind (1996). See also Davis (2000), pp. 85-99, where she discusses the gifts presented to rulers and high-ranking officials. Finally, Ulf Christian Ewert’s recent discussion of the court as a *locus* of continual exchanges in the early modern society rightly emphasize that these exchanges included both material goods and services and that they at once reflected and contributed to the social and political structures of society (see Ewert (2004), pp. 55-75).

<sup>1233</sup> “... wiewohl vns des gefangenen nahme vnbekant Vielweniger gewüst was er verwürckt od wo er gefangen liege, So seint wir doch nach gehabter vleissiger erkundigung entlich berichtet word das ermelter krüger etzliche strassenreuber beherbergt vnd inen wissentliche vnterschleuff gegeben Auch die geraubt beutte in seinem hauß teilen lassen sollen”, Anna to Klara of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Gifhorn (1518-1576) and her daughter, Klara of Anhalt (1550-1598), Dresden 15 Nov. 1571, DrlISA Kop. 514, fol. 324 b.

The recommendation from the two distant relatives in Braunschweig was not sufficient to move Anna. Unfamiliar with the case, she carefully acquired the knowledge she deemed necessary for a decision and, ultimately she considered herself unfit to help, though – according to her reply – not because of the committed crime but because the offender was not imprisoned in Saxony.<sup>1234</sup>

Although in several instances Anna referred to the gender-specific limitations of her agency, one should be careful not to overestimate the structuring force of gender in these patterns of behavior. Even a male ruler had to handle his authority with prudence. When he received a supplication that contained a grievance directed at the local administration, it was common practice that the case was sent to a hearing by the very same administrative unit,<sup>1235</sup> and that was exactly the pattern Anna followed when she addressed the town council (and judge) in Marienberg. Moreover, Anna's references to her limited "understanding of the matter" in the letter to Albrecht Friedrich can be viewed as a strategic usage of a religiously defined principle that helped preserve the honor of both the duke and herself in spite her reply being qualified. But this does not necessarily imply that her respect for the same boundaries was disingenuous. Yet, when the same example is compared to her willingness to pursue the interests of Anna of Hohenlohe (and her sons) more persistently, it is clear that the interpretation of the religiously defined boundaries depended upon the specific case and its context.

Throughout her life, Anna received a steady stream of gifts and favors from subjects, rulers and consorts, friends and relatives, and more often than not, the gifts were given with the expectation that they be reciprocated. Before this is explored further, it must be stressed that the principle of reciprocity that fuelled the perpetual exchanges of gifts and favors was not *necessarily* at odds with the instructions for good Christian government. Both Natalie Zemon Davis and Wolfgang Reinhard have shown how the imperatives to give and care for the needy were viewed as ways in which the gifts from God could be reciprocated.<sup>1236</sup> Without much success, Protestant theology attempted to do away with the view that God's grace was obtained through good deeds (that is, the very principle that underlies this thought).<sup>1237</sup> An example from August of Saxony's life shows that even the strongest adherents of the Reformation felt the need to reciprocate God's generous gifts

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<sup>1234</sup> Anna to Klara of Braunschweig-Lüneburg- Gifhorn (1518-1576) and her daughter, Klara of Anhalt (1550-1598), Dresden 15 Nov. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 324 b.

<sup>1235</sup> Neuhaus (1978); Bregnsbo (1997).

<sup>1236</sup> Reinhard (1998); Reinhard (2004), pp. 269-271; Davis (2000), pp. 11-22.

<sup>1237</sup> Reinhard (2004), pp. 269-271.

with good deeds. When Anna gave birth to a son in 1554, August pardoned several prisoners and the decision to do so was explained as follows,

By the goodwill that the Almighty God has shown us by bestowing a young lord and heir upon our electorate and territories, we have again been moved to mercy[. Therefore] we have graciously granted that all the prisoners in our territories, who have been imprisoned before the [x] day of February, are to be set free.<sup>1238</sup>

In recognition of God's generosity, August was moved to compassion. This line of reasoning would imply that when Anna or August acted upon a request they may well have reciprocated a favor or a gift, but whenever they demonstrated generosity or compassion, it was also an acknowledgement of God's numerous and generous gifts to them. However, because the right to pardon criminals was an exclusive privilege of the prince, it also was a demonstration of the rights and duties that characterized their positions as ruler and consort.

While August (and perhaps Anna) clearly held this view on a very fundamental level, it is often difficult to identify the specific reasons for the couple's actions. Anna did refer to the giving of alms as a Christian deed when she asked her brother to help the student, but God is remarkably absent in the letters related to the outlined examples. There is often great weight placed on the fact that the supplicants were worthy of support, and this is usually demonstrated by references to their good Christian behavior: the young man wanted to study theology, Veronica von Rüdigersdorf is described as an upright old woman, her care for the frail sister is construed as an expression of Christian love, and Anna expected Catharina Jungling's husband to express his gratefulness by improving his conduct.<sup>1239</sup> These examples highlight that the consort's support was far from unconditional. Even in the Christian discourse, the bond between the subjects and a female consort consisted of more concrete and reciprocal duties. In order to be worthy of support, the supplicant had had to fulfill the duties as a subject. And when the ruling couple was fashioned as (foster-)parents of their subjects, the subjects were implicitly equated to children who had to be obedient, respectful, and grateful in return of their "parents'" protection.<sup>1240</sup> These exchanges were not perceived as favors or gifts, but as fundamental

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<sup>1238</sup> "Um der Gutthat Willen, die uns der allmächtige Gott ... erzeigt und einen jungen Herrn und Erben unseres Churfürstenthums und Lande bescheert hat, sind wir wiederum zur Barmherzigkeit bewegt worden und gnädigst gewilligt, daß alle Gefangene, so vor dem - Tage des Monats Februarii in Unserm Landen in ... Gefängniß eingezogen ... worden, ..., los und ledig sollen gelassen werden", quoted from von Weber (1865), p. 22

duties associated with an individual's place within the God-given social order. And because they were taken for granted, they surface almost only when the social interactions had gone wrong. Anna's harsh response to Margarethe Leuschnerin is a lucid example of this.

The receipt of a gift or favor (that is, the expression of generosity or friendship/compassion) was – generally speaking – only openly acknowledged when it exceeded that which was taken for granted. Thanking Albrecht Friedrich for the gifts he had sent, Anna assured him that she would make efforts to reciprocate – with gratitude and friendliness – the generosity he had shown.<sup>1241</sup> This phrase recurs in hundreds of the letters in Anna's correspondence.<sup>1242</sup> Once again, it is useful to view the formula as ritualized language that – as other rituals – prescribe as much as describe. Consequently, the phrase does not imply that Anna took action and performed the requested favor every time it was written in her letters. The formula can, however, be read as a summary of one of the driving forces in the early modern society. When Anna accepted gifts and favors, she incurred debts and with this phrase she recognized the receipt of a gift/favor and the associated obligation to return the efforts. In order to understand the political dimension of the consort's role as intercessor, this mechanism cannot be stressed enough, not least because it often is obscured in the sources. Discussing the image of the medieval queens Emma and Edith of England, Pauline Stafford shows that already in the chronicles of the twelfth century, the significance of queenly action was misrepresented when the queens' protection of subjects/clients is construed as pious wifely intercessions.

Intercession is itself reduced ... [i]t is taken out of the exercise of power and placed at a safe moral distance, feminized as a womanly virtue. ... Not only is the political context and significance of ... patronage lost in this image, so too is the reciprocity of which intercession is part. The gifts, service and loyalty which it commands

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<sup>1239</sup> She stated this in the letter to the Council of Marienberg, Crottendorf 17 Aug. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 37 a.

<sup>1240</sup> Ozement (1983); Van Dülmen (1990), pp. 38-55; Dürr (1995), pp. 54-141.

<sup>1241</sup> The electress used the phrase, "...Wollen ... vns beuleissigenn solche E. L. F. erzeigung hinwieder danckbarlich zuuorgleichenn vnd freundlich zubeschulden", Anna to Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia, Dresden 20 Aug. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 275 a – b.

<sup>1242</sup> For examples: Anna to Sophia of Toledo, the court mistress in Vienna, Dresden 9 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 1 a – b; Anna to her grandmother (Catharina of Saxony-Lauenburg (c. 1488-1563)), Weidenhain 26 Nov. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 22 a – b; Anna to Emilia, Margravine of Brandenburg-Ansbach (1516-91), Dresden 22 Dec. 1556, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 24 a; Anna to Dorothea, Countess of Mansfelt (1493-1578), Dresden 15 Jan. 1558, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 47 a; Anna to her mother, Dorothea of Denmark (1511-71), Dresden 28 July 1559, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 104 b – 105 a; and Anna to the Countess of Schwarzburg (probably Anna, the wife of Hans Günther, Count of Schwarzburg), Celle 12 Oct. 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 192 b.

are elided. ... By taking queenly actions out of political context, these chroniclers haven taken politics out of queenly action.<sup>1243</sup>

The continual exchanges and their in-built mechanism of reciprocity were characteristics of an established mode of communication: clientelism.<sup>1244</sup> This helps explain both the advantages enjoyed by the people who already had had (positive) interactions with the consort and why so many petitions addressed to the electress were sent through middle(wo-)men.<sup>1245</sup> Although this principle privileged those who were born of higher rank and thereby enjoyed easier access to the consort, the example of Nickel Jungling's wife suggests that only little was needed to initiate a process of exchange and that, once it was in place, rank may have mattered less than the continual efforts (and success) to reciprocate.

Drawing upon the classic work of Marcel Mauss and his critics, Natalie Zemon Davis has demonstrated the omnipresence of "gift/favor" exchanges in the early modern French political and legal system. She also showed how an intense discussion regarding the degree of obligation a subject could place upon the ruler unfolded in sixteenth-century France. Although the role of gifts and favors, according to Davis, represented a particularly great problem in the early modern French monarchy,<sup>1246</sup> there are similarities to the challenges faced by the female consort in neighboring Germany. If a supplicant fulfilled his or her duties, the ruler and consort were obliged to act.

However, although subjects, clients, and colleagues also used services, gifts, and promises of loyalty to negotiate the consort's support, the willingness of both parts (the consort/ruler and the supplicants/intercessors) was required if an exchange had to be perpetuated, and this granted Anna considerable power over both the supplicants and the intercessors who asked for her support. Even if an intercessor was an "equal", Anna was in an ascendant position that allowed her to decide if, when and even how a debt had to be repaid. While this observation testifies to the power held by the consort as intercessor, the qualified answer she sent to Albrecht Friedrich and her cautious letters to the town council in Marienberg reveal that she always had to manage her support and the resources she had at her disposal as a result of her office with prudence. Before this is examined further,

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<sup>1243</sup> Stafford (1997b), p. 150.

<sup>1244</sup> Rabaler (2004), pp. 41-63, particularly p. 45.

<sup>1245</sup> Among the numerous cases in which middlemen and -women appear see DrHSA Loc. 8528/1, pp. 5 a – 6 a and 31 a – b; DrHSA Loc. 8528/1, p. 31 a – b; DrHSA Loc. 8529/1, p. 283 a – b; DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 16 a – 17 a, 75 a – b, 121 a – b, 203 a – 204 a, 213 a – 214 a, 215 a – b, 220 a – 222 a, 254 a – 255 a, and of course the examples related to the Countess of Hohenlohe mentioned above.

<sup>1246</sup> Davis (2000), pp. 85-99.

it is necessary to consider how the roles of an intercessor resembled and differed from **that** of the supplicant.

So far, it has been taken for granted that intercessors and supplicants utilized **the** same forces of exchange and reciprocity. Yet, it has not been demonstrated exactly why **and** how this was possible. Again a formula from the letters can serve as a point of departure. The letters of intercession, both those sent by Anna and those addressed to her, were usually closed with the following formulae, “[We solicit that] Your Beloved will demonstrate **grace**, so that the honorable woman will sense that our intercession was fruitful”.<sup>1247</sup> Or, as Anna wrote to her brother, “And our plea is that You will provide the gracious help and stipend, so that he [the young student] will come to know that this, our intercession, which consoled him greatly, was fruitful”.<sup>1248</sup> In both variations of this formula the emphasis is transferred from the help to the needy to the efficacy of the intercessor’s plea. The intercessor asks the addressee to act upon the request in order to prove the value of his or her support. The shifted emphasis reveals that once a princely woman accepted to intercede, she placed something at risk. The willingness to intercede implies a readiness to protect the supplicant and is an expression of the intercessor’s interest in the continual bond to the supplicant. **But** it also could entail a test of the influence and power ascribed to the intercessor by the supplicant. Because, as mentioned above, an intercessor was chosen because he or she was considered close enough to the mechanisms of power to make a difference, the same influence and power would be reconfirmed if the request was met. However, if the request was rejected, the status of the intercessor was potentially challenged. This helps explain why Anna always was careful not to promise more than she could deliver.

An intercessor’s active pursuit of a case (Anna’s efforts on behalf of Hohenlohe, Hedwig and Elisabeth Magdalena’s repeated requests for Veronica von Rüdigerssdorf, as well as Albrecht Friedrich’s gifts when he asked for help for his councilor) can therefore be viewed as a measure to maintain both the specific relationship to the supplicant and his or

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<sup>1247</sup> “... E. L. wollen sich hierinnen mit gnaden erzaigenn[,] daß die Ehrliebenden frau vnsers Embssigenn vorbitt fruchtbar ... Empfundnen muge ...”, Elisabeth Magdalena of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle to Anna, Köln an der Spree 14 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 215 a – b. The same phrase recurs in the two letters from Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree [2 Feb. 1570], DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 203 a – 204 a; and Hedwig, Electress of Brandenburg to Anna of Saxony, Köln an der Spree 14 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/3, pp. 254 a – 255 a.

<sup>1248</sup> “... Vnnd ist ... vnser ... bitt Sie wolle sich ... mitt gnedigster hulff vnd vorlagk ... demassen erzeigen[,] Daß er [the young student] dieser vnser vorschrifft der er sich so hochgetrost fruchtbarlich gewissen muge ...”, Anna to Frederik II of Denmark, Dresden 27 April 1567, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 129 b. A similar phrase is used in Anna’s letter to Count Herman Simon zur Lippe, Spigelberg, vnd Permond, Stolpen 12 July 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 129 a – b.

her own reputation. In this way, the supplicant and intercessor both had something “at stake” and, although the supplicant was the most needy, the role as intercessor was the most complicated of the two because it entailed the simultaneous management of – at the very least – two personal bonds that were characterized by different modes of behavior.<sup>1249</sup> towards the supplicant the intercessor was a protector (or a patron) and toward the person to whom the request was passed on, the intercessor could be an equal, an inferior, or even a superior. If the potential challenge to the intercessor’s reputation should be avoided both bonds had to be negotiated carefully.

Here we return to the prudence with which the consort (or any frequently used intercessor) had to act. An intercessor did not manage the two bonds in a social vacuum and any request had to be considered in relation to all of the involved parts: the supplicant, the intercessor(s), and the authority/authorities to whom the request had to be passed on. Once more, a comparison between the request by Albrecht Friedrich and Anna of Hohenlohe’s intercession on behalf of Rosenberg’s heirs is useful to reveal these points. In the conflict between the Prussian councilor and the Saxon nobleman Anna was forced to prioritize her loyalty. If the case had remained confined to only these three participants, the task would probably have been relatively uncomplicated, but because Albrecht Friedrich – as a prince and distant relative – could place Anna under greater obligation, the negotiations of her relationships became more complicated and she answered both yes and no. While Albrecht Friedrich had only limited success when he attempted to further the case of his councilor, the very same principle yielded greater support when Anna of Hohenlohe spoke the case of Albrecht von Rosenberg’s heirs. The much closer personal relationship between the electress and the countess doubtlessly contributed to Anna’s greater efforts, but the outcome depended also upon the relationship between the intercessors (Anna and Anna of Hohenlohe) and Rosenberg’s creditors in Saxony. Consequently, the relationship between an intercessor and the ultimate addressee of a request also deserves attention.

If the relatively easy access to Anna constituted one precondition for her performance as intercessor, it was above all the persons and institutions she had access to that encouraged the supplicants to ask for her help. The female consort was frequently asked to present a plea to her husband, but the spouse was only one among a whole range of authorities she had access to. Next to August, Anna addressed local authorities (a town

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<sup>1249</sup> Lind (1996), pp. 123-147.

council and a judge), Rosenberg's creditors in Saxony (August and some of his councilors), as well as her brother in Denmark. In addition, Hedwig of Brandenburg, her daughter Elisabeth Magdalena, and Anna of Hohenlohe turned to another female consort for help, and Albrecht Friedrich used his dynastic connections to further the interests of his subject/client. Contrary to the *maitresse* and the favorite with whom the consort often is compared, the female consort did not obtain this "access" exclusively through the ruler's grace. Her rank (by birth as well as by marriage) and her status as God's selected authority secured her these rights and obliged her to use them in the service of her subjects and neighbors. The analysis of the consort's role as intercessor thus reveals that the foundation of her position was much broader than that of a *maitresse* or a favorite: next to her husband, the consort could draw upon a dynastic network and her status as a divinely sanctioned authority. Perhaps the most important result of the consort's status as an authority who was appointed by God was that it permitted her to reject a plea for help. Quoting a French source, Natalie Zemon Davis writes,

Some complain that they are not rewarded by the king according to their merit ... They should remember that the king holds his crown not from us, but from God and the ancient law of this kingdom ... We must not take it as an insult if he prefers others to us.<sup>1250</sup>

The female consorts at the German courts were subject to greater confines than the neighboring king in France. The sanctity the territorial rulers of Germany could claim was much more limited than in France, England and Spain, and her gender defined limits in relation to the involvement in the administration of the law. However, according to Luther's teachings on worldly authority, the consort was – as all other secular authorities – selected by God. Consequently, as intercessor, the consort was on a par or above the local authorities within the territory and her dynastic network enabled her to transgress the boundaries of the territory to a greater extent than the local authorities.<sup>1251</sup> But because the dynastic network depended on the management of multiple social relations, she had to negotiate this source of her power with great care.

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<sup>1250</sup> Davis (2000), p. 85

<sup>1251</sup> Pauline Stafford compares the medieval queens to other powers within the territories. While this is an accurate comparison for the cases that concerned the subjects, the particular situation of the Empire (partly unified by a common legal system) meant that the dynastic network was of greater importance in early modern Germany than medieval England (Stafford (1997b), p. 181). Regarding the particular importance of the consort's dynastic network within the legal system that tied the Holy Roman Empire together, see Wilson (2004), pp. 232-233.



Although Anna did acknowledge the boundaries within which she could operate, she maintained the status as much sought after intercessor. Yet, it is perhaps more accurate to conclude that she retained her influence *because* she accepted the limits and not in spite of it. Any overt attempt to challenge the norms would be viewed as defiance of God's authority and it instantly would have undermined her authority and thereby also her ability to mediate successfully between supplicants and other authorities.

The sheer frequency with which Anna was asked for assistance reveals that her role as appeal institution was widely known and her continued willingness to mediate can be interpreted as an indication that her interventions were effective. In one of her letters, it even comes through that her willingness to intervene was directly related to the efficacy of her word. When she sent Margarethe Leuschnerin the first rejection regarding her brother's debts, Anna instructed her not to bring up the question again because her efforts had proven ineffective. When she had unsuccessfully addressed the case, she was unwilling to do it again and this line of reasoning suggests that the goodwill she could draw upon by other authorities – whether they were relatives, neighbors, or “simply” administrators – had to be used “economically”.

If the consort's access to a range of authorities made her position differ from that of the *maitresse* and the favorite, so did the accessibility to her. She not only provided services for “friends”. Access to the *Landesmutter* was doubtlessly easier if a contact already existed, but Anna's correspondence reveals that the common subjects also could gain access and that their abilities to appeal to the consort in this case were improved by Anna's (and August's) frequent travels through the territory.

The consort's role as intercessor situated her in a powerful position that enabled her to shape the structure of patronage both within her territory and in the Empire at large. However, the analysis also reveals that – in keeping with the theological instructions – the Saxon electress managed this role with great care. Although extra efforts were made on behalf of the supplicants with whom Anna had close relations (as for example Anna of Hohenlohe), the mediation of powerful patrons did not necessary assure that a request would be acted upon. In each case, the electress considered the case and gathered the information she determined necessary to form her opinion. This is particularly clear when several requests were presented together and some were accommodated while others were denied, as was the case in the electress's replies to two of Margarethe Leuschenrin's letters. Anna's willingness to consider the case of Margarethe and to provide the widow with

detailed instructions concerning a supplication to August also shows that, although the electress was distancing herself from the widow, she considered it her duty to inform Margarethe of her possibilities.

In spite of the theological and social restrictions within which Anna of Saxony had to manage supplications and intercessions, the analysis confirms that a consort was expected to actively protect the interests of her subjects and neighbors when the need arose. Her role as intercessor or appeal institution was so widely acknowledged that it seems reasonable to conclude that it constituted an integral part of the greater social, political, and legal system in sixteenth-century Germany.

## Chapter 8

### A Mother of the Church

The Reformation of Albertine Saxony was formally introduced in 1539 and the ensuing transformations of the territory and Saxon society continued throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>1252</sup> The new Saxon church, or rather the *ecclesia*, comprised a range of institutions that had all been part of the Catholic Church prior to the Reformation: the actual church, the universities, the schools and the hospitals/poorhouses. In addition, the newly founded consistories quickly became important institutions within this domain of society.

The electress's role within the context of the new church has to be examined in relation to the wide range of the church. The didactic treatises and panegyric literature of the sixteenth century consistently presents the female consort as a mother (or wet-nurse) of the new territorial church. In this capacity the *Landesmutter* was not only expected to be an embodiment of personal piety, she also had to promote the true word of God and, according to Joachim Magdeburgius' mirror-of-princesses, this duty had to be fulfilled regardless of the dangers and expenses it represented. Just as the biblical queens of Arabia, the female consorts of the temporal world should be willing to sacrifice both money and gems for the construction of temples and the services of God's word.<sup>1253</sup> When the theologians praised a given consort for her deeds in relation to the church, they consistently emphasized the economic support of the clergy, the church and the schools. Albeit indirectly, they also made it clear that even if the entire population should benefit from the consort's generosity, compassion and grace, the church with its clergy and their families deserved extraordinary privileges/patronage (chapter 3).

When Karl von Weber wrote his biography of Anna and Saxony, he relied heavily upon the content of the funeral sermons that were held for the electress in 1585. Next to Anna's personal piety and support for the clergy and ecclesiastical buildings, he emphasized her concern for the moral soundness of the Saxon subjects,<sup>1254</sup> her contributions to the Saxon *Fürstenschulen* and her efforts to establish a school for girls.<sup>1255</sup> In his account of Anna's relationship to the church, von Weber supplemented the

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<sup>1252</sup> Keller (2002), pp. 126-141, 165-173 and 225-229

<sup>1253</sup> Magdeburg (1563), pp. B(5)8-C(2)1.

<sup>1254</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 418-422.

<sup>1255</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 402-410.

information from the funeral sermons with numerous examples from Anna's correspondence that demonstrate her support for the church and the schools. In his closing comments on the electress's relationship to the Saxon church, von Weber briefly discussed whether or not she interfered inappropriately in the confessional politics of Saxony. This discussion was prompted by von Weber's consultation of the documents that were confiscated/produced during the process against the so-called Crypto-Calvinist in the 1570s. 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 influence upon the government of both the territory and the church that was inappropriate for her as a woman.<sup>1256</sup> 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 and, with minor revisions, he reproduced the funeral sermons' characterization of her as a pious and generous *mater ecclesia* that complied with the seemingly straightforward prescriptions provided in the early modern literature.

A closer look at the consort's role as a mother of the church reveals that it contains profound ambiguities. The didactic texts of the sixteenth century (and von Weber) circumvented two important questions: (i) the exact nature of the *ecclesia* and its complicated relationship to the other two domains of life (*politia* and *oeconomia*) as well as the equally complex interrelations between the two regiments (or kingdoms) as defined by Luther; and (ii) the tension that existed between the exclusion of women from priesthood due to their purported intellectual inferiority and the prominent position ascribed to a *Landesmutter* within the church. A consort's activities in relation to the church must be viewed within the context of these two points.

The first point provides a tool with which some of the political dimensions of the consort's role as *Kirchenmutter* can be disclosed without the application of anachronistic concepts. Because the female consort was considered part of the secular authority, she could be held responsible for the dissemination of God's word and, as all other secular authorities, she was expected to promote the adherence to the moral principles of Christianity. This implied that the personal beliefs and piety of the consort (and her closest relatives) were of great political importance, and her ability to distinguish between what

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<sup>1256</sup> Peucer's allegations against Anna have been referred innumerable times. The best available account is Hans-Peter Hasse's recent analysis of Peucer's *Historia carcerum*, Hasse (2004).

was considered God's true word and the many competing interpretations was of crucial importance. 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 would need extensive theological knowledge to differentiate "truth" from distortions. This is where the second point comes into play: how did the female consort reflect upon the tension that existed between her gender-specific "inferiority" and her status as a "mother of the church"? How could she promote God's true word and prevent it from abuse if she – as a woman – was considered intellectually inferior?

In order to provide answers to these questions, the next two chapters examine the ways in which Anna of Saxony and her colleagues viewed and managed their responsibilities within the domain of the *ecclesia* and their partial exclusion from the numerous theological discussions of the 1560s and 1570s.

In this chapter Anna's views of the position of women in relation to the church and the Holy Scriptures are addressed and her actions as the Saxon *Kirchenmutter* are examined. Subsequently, the political implications of the consort's confession will be addressed in chapter 9. Because the Lutheran churches were defined by territorial boundaries, Anna was – in theory – "only" a mother of the Saxon church. However, as it will appear, a distinction between the consort's obligations towards the territorial church and the confessional/religious responsibilities Anna identified for herself in relation to her dynasties is misleading. If the consort's role in relation to the *ecclesia* is to be understood, the intersections between dynastic concerns and territorial policies have to be explored and this often necessitates an expansion of the geographical scope beyond the narrowly defined territorial churches. The wider geographical scope is also important because the territorial churches are complicated units of analysis. A precise and meaningful delineation of the very "young" territorial churches is illusive for a number of reasons. First, the development of the new church and the implementation of the associated practices and policies in most territories continued throughout the sixteenth century. Secondly, the close dynastic ties between the ruling Protestant dynasties and the frequent exchanges of prominent theologians meant that both members of the ruling dynasties as well as the most prominent theologians often influenced more than one territorial church. The difficulties inherent in the territorial church as a unit of analysis are compounded by the fact that the second half of the sixteenth century was dominated by far-reaching efforts to unite the gradually

emerging and competing forms of “Protestantism”. This brought the divergences between the different church ordinances to the surface and, although the disagreements were never reconciled, the numerous colloquiums of Protestant theologians and rulers facilitated an active exchange between the different territories. If the territorial church were to define the scope of an analysis, the ideological and institutional dimensions have to be kept separate. However, this would impede the close interaction between the two dimensions to be addressed and it may misrepresent the role of the secular authorities – including the consort – whose foremost duty was to make the ideological dimension manifest in their territories. In somewhat anachronistic terms, the secular authorities were to provide the institutional framework within which God’s word could be communicated and upheld.

In light of the prominence with which the consort’s duties related to the church are presented in both the sixteenth-century texts and the biographical works on Anna of Saxony, her letter-books contain remarkably few letters addressed to members of the clergy and their families. Von Weber maintained that Anna had a strong need to be in active contact with the church and its servants.<sup>1257</sup> However, only approximately 0.5% of the letters that are preserved in Anna’s letter-books were sent to the servants of the church or their immediate relatives.<sup>1258</sup> The addressees of these letters include Saxon pastors, court chaplains, superintendents, professors of theology and medicine, as well as secular administrators within the *ecclesia*.<sup>1259</sup> Next to these male addressees, the wives of two theologians (one of a Saxon parish priest and the wife of the influential theologian Jacob Andreae) and the widow of a Saxon court chaplain are represented. Although the material may seem meager, the preserved letters reveal important information about Anna’s relationships with the addressees and, when they are combined with the electress’s assertions regarding theology and the church in her letters she exchanged with female relatives, the contours of Anna as a “mother of the church” are revealed.

The relative scarcity of the electress’s correspondence can – at least in part – be attributed to the ambiguities that characterized women’s, and particularly the *Landesmutter*’s, position in relation to the church. As Heide Wunder has argued “‘smart’ wives did their part in making their role in the rulers’ politics

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<sup>1257</sup> Von Weber (1865), p. 361.

<sup>1258</sup> This figure is developed on the basis of the letters in DrHSA Kop. 509-527.

<sup>1259</sup> Specific examples will be provided throughout this chapter.

undetectable".<sup>1260</sup> Given the formal exclusion of women from priesthood and the inferior position they consistently were ascribed within the church, this observation has equal relevancy in this context. In order to examine the degree to which this may have conditioned Anna's behavior, the first goal is to determine how she looked upon these prescriptions. Subsequently, attention is turned to some of the ways in which Anna managed her role as a mother of the church: the examples include her concerns for general morals within the territory, and her support to the clergy (particularly the court chaplain), the schools and individual students.

### **Inferior but equal**

In chapter 5, Anna's reference to the idea that women and men had an equal share in God's kingdom was mentioned. She used this idea of the spiritual equality of the sexes as a consolation for the disappointment she considered herself to have caused August by delivering a daughter rather than a son.

The meaning of Anna's consolation is not straightforward. The passage at once reinforces and relativizes the inequality between the sexes while remaining within the legitimate discourse. It thereby touches upon the core of the ambiguities concerning the status ascribed to women in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Several scholars have demonstrated that Luther's statements on women are also highly inconsistent. While there is profound disagreement concerning the impact of the Reformation on the position of women, few would dispute that Luther and his contemporaries considered women to be intellectually inferior to men, and this was his explicitly stated reason for upholding women's exclusion from priesthood. In one of the passages in which he explained this, he distinguished between preaching and prophesying and stressed that women were free to do the latter,

There are certainly women and girls who are able to comfort others and teach true words, that is, who can explain Scripture and teach or console other people so that they will be well. This all counts as prophesying, not preaching. In the same way, a mother should teach her children and family.<sup>1261</sup>

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<sup>1260</sup> Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 159-160.

<sup>1261</sup> Luther's sermon on Joel 2 : 28 "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, your sons and your daughters shall prophecy" (1531), quoted from *Luther on Women*, ed. by Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003), pp. 61. For a similar statement in Luther's text on "Infiltrating and clandestine preachers" (1532), pp. 62-63 in *Luther on Women* (2003), pp. 62-63.

Hence, as long as women confined their teaching and interpretations of Scriptures within the “house”, these were fully legitimate activities. This, however, did not change the fact that women were considered inferior to men.

The purported inferiority of women was relativized by the spiritual equality of the sexes. The inequality of women and men did not imply that men were granted God’s salvation easier than women. The two sexes had equal access to God’s eternal and heavenly kingdom,<sup>1262</sup> and this was the argument Anna invoked as a consolation to Sabina of Brandenburg. This, however, was not the only way in which Anna made use of it. As the next example will show, she consciously employed the same argument to excuse those actions which she feared others might consider to be inappropriate transgressions of gender-specific boundaries.

During the Diet in Augsburg in 1566, the Saxon electoral couple became acquainted with the Archbishop of Salzburg, Johann Jacob von Khuen-Belasy (Archbishop 1560/61-1586). According to Anna’s subsequent account, August instructed her to provide the Archbishop with regular supplies of a potion and during the subsequent eighteen years she sent him annual deliveries of the *aqua vita*.<sup>1263</sup> In this way, Anna’s apothecarial undertakings were employed as a vehicle for further contact between the electoral couple and the Archbishop.

However, in the letter Anna sent to the Archbishop with the first supply of the *aqua vita*, she did not limit her generosity to health remedies. She also sent the Archbishop a copy of the German-Latin Bible that recently had been published by the professors in Wittenberg.<sup>1264</sup> This was not only a very impressive but also a rather audacious gift to a Catholic Archbishop, and Anna was aware of this. She wrote,

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<sup>1262</sup> See for example Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks’ introduction to *Luther on Women* (Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003), pp. 7-8) and the extracts from Luther’s *Lectures on Genesis, 1535*, in the same volume, pp. 25-26 and 175-177.

<sup>1263</sup> See Anna’s account in her letters to the Archbishop, Stolpen 3 Jan. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 174 b – 175 a, and Dresden 9 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 265 b – 266 a. The dispatches of *aqua vita* and other potions can be followed in Anna’s letters to the Archbishop of Salzburg: Dresden 13 June 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 37 a – b; Dresden 9 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 144 b; Dresden 23 Dec. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 191 a; Dresden 23 Dec. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 341 b – 342 a; Dresden 7 March 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 22 b – 23 a; Dresden 29 Jan. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 145 a – b; Dresden 13 April 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 168 b – 169 a; Annaburg 21 Jan 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 6 b; Annaburg 12 Nov. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 197 b (original page no. 45 b); Dresden 6 Jan. 1578, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 173 b (original page no. 7 b); Dresden 28 Dec. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 88 b – 89 a; Lichtenberg 13 Dec. 1582, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 86 a; Augustusburg 10 Dec. 1583, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 173 b – 164 a (original page no. 73 b – 74 a); and Dresden 29 Jan 1585, DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 21 b.

<sup>1264</sup> Presumably a copy of the 1565 edition of the *Biblia Germanicolatina* (1565) that contained Luther’s translation as well as the Latin vulgata text. Paul Eber, Georg Major, and Paul Krell were responsible for the edition.



Not considering how Your Beloved, as a highly learned member of the clergy, may find this to be appropriate of us, we are sending you a German-Latin Bible that recently has been prepared at our beloved lord and husband's University [in] Wittenberg. We friendly and diligently ask Your Beloved not only that You will not be offended but also [that You] for our sake will read this Bible, then You will doubtlessly find that we have the right Bible and the right understanding of it.<sup>1265</sup>

Ten months later, Anna was still awaiting the Archbishop's reply. Yet, his silence did not deter the electress, who sent a reminder in which she reiterated her wish for his response,

As we have sent Your Beloved a Bible and asked [that You] read it, we would like to know if Your Beloved has followed our request and whether [You] like the translation. We therefore kindly ask Your Beloved not have any reservations about telling us [that]. And [we ask You] to take this request from a woman kindly since Your Beloved knows that the woman also have part in the Kingdom of God.<sup>1266</sup>

The absence of a response from the Archbishop<sup>1267</sup> adds to the significance of this example, not least because the letters Anna later sent to him were restricted to polite greetings and the safer subject of gardening.<sup>1268</sup> The quoted passages reveal that the electress was aware of the potential offense her gesture could cause. In the first letter, she made no explicit reference to the gender-specific boundaries she may be considered to transgress and appears to have been more concerned with the confessional difference between the two. She wished the learned man to read the translated Bible in order for

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<sup>1265</sup> "... [Wir] schicken ... E.L. ... [vngeachtet wie es vns gegen E.L. als einer hochverstendigen Geistlich Person geZimen od gedeuetet werden mag] auch ein deutsch vnd Lateinische Biblia wie die neulich in vnsers hertzliebste herren vnd gemahels Vniuersitet Wittenberg Im druck vorfertigt Vnd bitten E.L. ... freundlich vnnd mit vleiß, sie wolle vnß solche ... nicht allein nicht verargen Sondern auch diese Biblia vmb vnserwillens durchlesen, So werden sie vngeZweifelt befinden ... Das wir doch der Rechte Biblia vnnd rechten verstand derselb haben ...", Anna to the Archbishop of Salzburg, Stolpen 3 Jan. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 174 b – 175 a. The passage in square brackets was added in the margin of the letter.

<sup>1266</sup> "... Nachdem wir ... EL ... eine Biblia ... vberschickt vnd gebethen die ... zulesenn, Wolten wir gerne wissen ob EL vnser bitt stadt finden lassen ... vnd wie die verdometschung derselben gefallen Bitten derwegen freuntlich EL wolle vnß daß zuberichten kein bedencken tragen. Vnd vnß solch weibisch ansinnen freuntlich zu guth halten, dan EL wissen das [gleichwohl] die weiber auch des Reich Gottes teilhaftig sein ...", Anna to the Archbishop of Salzburg, Dresden 9 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 265 b – 266 a. "Gleichwohl" was added in the margin of the letter.

<sup>1267</sup> More than two years passed before the communication between Anna and Johann Jacob resumed. The next preserved letter from Anna to the Archbishop is dated Dresden 13 June 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 37 a – b. Here she expressed gratitude for the greetings he had sent to her and her children in his recent letters to August.

<sup>1268</sup> The request for seeds was presented in her letters dated Dresden 7 March 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 22 b – 23 a, and Dresden 13 April 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 168 b – 169 a.

him to realize that she (and her fellow Protestant) adhered to the true word of God. Yet, she also realized that she it may not be appropriate for her to send the translation of the Bible to a learned, Catholic archbishop, though it remains unclear if this was due to her being a layperson, a Protestant, or a woman. In her subsequent reminder, however, attention is focused solely on the question of gender. After she assertively expressed her desire to know if the Archbishop had read the text, she stressed that he should have no reservations to express his opinion on these matters with her because, as he knew, women also had part in God's kingdom. In this way, Anna employed her theological knowledge to justify the fact that she, as a woman, presented such a request with reference to the spiritual equality of men and women.

One should not view this as a daring challenge to the established gender order and there are instances in which she did express her hesitation to involve herself too deeply in matters of theology. When Paul Eber and Christian Schütz were negotiating with the theologians from Ernestine Saxony in the late-1560s (this so-called Altenburg Colloquy is discussed further in chapter 9), they asked that Anna please convince August to recall them from the talks. While she did provide an elaborate answer, she did not address the theological questions they were discussing with their colleagues from Jena and Weimer and she added that the same subjects were of "such importance and subtleties that we, as a naïve [and] Christian princess, have reservations about engaging too extensively in [the discussions]" <sup>1269</sup>.

The electress was accustomed to speaking with some of the prominent theologians of Saxony and several of these, including court chaplains, enjoyed a high degree of confidentiality from the electress. It therefore seems reasonable to read her statements both to the Archbishop and to the two Saxon theologians as sincere expressions of her conviction, namely that she, in spite of her sex, could legitimately engage in a more general discussion with the Archbishop but, when it came to the subtleties that were being debated between different protestant theologians, she refrained from direct participation.

Considered together, the three examples show that the electress was acutely aware of and reflected upon the alleged inferiority of her sex. They also show that she was able to find consolation for the same supposed inferiority within the teachings of the

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<sup>1269</sup> "... d wichtigkeit vnd Subtiligkeit das vns als einer einfaltigen Christlichen furstin bedencklich vns fur vnser person daryn zu weit anzulassen ...", Anna to Paul Eber and Christian Schütz, Dresden 28 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 5 b – 6 a.

foremost theologians. This, however, did not rule out her attentiveness to the fact that others may disagree with the balance she attempted to strike.

In their work on Katharina Zell, Elisabeth of Braunschweig and a few other sixteenth-century women who had their pamphlets or books published in early modern Germany, Ulrike Zitzlsperger and Merry Wiesner-Hanks both argue that these women generally developed “religious justifications” and/or “‘explanatory’ self-images and references” in defense of their participation in theological disputes and/or simply to justify the publication of their texts.<sup>1270</sup> The tension that existed between their actions and the religious prescriptions that confined their teaching and interpretations of the Scripture to the “house” was so great that it could not be ignored. In both Anna’s communication with the Archbishop of Salzburg and her consolation to the Margravine of Brandenburg, her reference to the spiritual equality of women can be read as a religious justification. While the consolation to the Margravine appears as a justification of women’s worth in general, Anna used the same argument to justify her own actions in the letter to the Archbishop.

But the *Mater Ecclesia* of the sixteenth-century could develop other strategies that also remained within the legitimate discourse. Gabriele Jancke has shown how the common conception of the church as a household enabled the self-proclaimed *Kirchenmutter* Katharina Zell to claim authority both within this “household” and in society at large.<sup>1271</sup> The analogy between the household and the church, and thus between the *Hausmutter* and the *Kirchenmutter*, meant that the latter was not only permitted but obliged to participate in the government of the church.

As discussed in chapter 3, the normative literature that prescribed the consort’s role contained numerous changing conceptions of the house. When women, as Luther argued, were free to teach and interpret the scripture within the house and when the “house” or “household” could refer to the territory, the church, the actual princely household or even the dynasty, the female consort – as a “mother of the church” could with some legitimacy engage in the (theological) discussions within this particular household. Combined with Anna’s close contact with the court chaplains (see below), this helps explain her direct approach to the Archbishop of Salzburg. In spite of these

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<sup>1270</sup> Zitzlsperger (2003), p. 381; Wiesner-Hanks (1998), especially p. 146.

<sup>1271</sup> Jancke (1998), pp. 145-154. Jancke’s conclusions are supported by Anna Conrad’s argument that Zell considered herself a partner of the male theologians and that they also recognized her as such, see Conrad (1998).

factors, Anna – and other women who employed either religious justifications or explanatory self-images – were aware of the boundaries that defined the gender-specific position in relation to theology and the church, and this makes their continued and direct engagement with the subject all the more remarkable.

Anna's participation in the theological disputes that unfolded between the emerging and competing Protestant denominations during the late 1560s and the 1570s and the ways in which she legitimated her involvement will be discussed at greater length in chapter 9. First, however, it must be examined what Anna – and other female consorts – did in their capacity of mothers of the church. An analysis of Anna's actions in relation to and within the *ecclesia* reveals not only what she did and how she did it. It also shows, albeit indirectly, how she and other princely women defined this part of their office.

#### **Promoting morality and defending orderliness**

During the summer of 1568 Anna was informed that the unmarried sister-in-law of her gardener Nickel who lived with her sister and brother-in-law in Dresden “had been impregnated by a carpenter apprentice from Dresden”.<sup>1272</sup> In an attempt to conceal the scandal, the gardener and his wife had sent the pregnant woman to Bohemia where she had given birth. Subsequently she had returned to Saxony and both she and her child were now living with the grandmother of the newborn child in Marienberg. According to the rumors that reached Anna, the father of the illegitimate child was still in Dresden.

The electress was genuinely upset by the case. Not only did it disclose that a despicable moral offence had taken place in within her household (as a member of the gardener's household, the pregnant woman also belonged to the electress's greater household), the accounts Anna's received of the case also revealed that her court mistress long had known about the secret rumors concerning the scandal but had neglected to inform her mistress of the matter.<sup>1273</sup>

Anna instructed the house marshal Hans von Auerswalden to deal with the court mistress and to assist the chancellor Hieronymus Kiesewetter, whom August had instructed to conduct the investigation into the case. In order to determine, “Who [had] impregnated the woman, where he currently was to be found, where the indecency had

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<sup>1272</sup> “...von einen Schneidergesellen zu Dresden soll geschwengert worden ...”, Anna to Hans von Auerswalden, Colditz 20 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 89 a – 90 a.

<sup>1273</sup> Anna to Hans von Auerswalden, Colditz 20 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 89 a – 90 a.

taken place, and if the same person had been in our garden”, Auerswalden was instructed to interrogate the gardener and his wife. However, because Anna had been told that the gardener’s wife now was pregnant, the questioning of her had to be conducted with restraint.<sup>1274</sup>

The directions given to the house marshal suggest that Anna not only was outraged about the offence but that she also was worried about the potential moral pollution of her garden where she meticulously nurtured the herbs used in her apothecary. As Mary Douglas has argued, forbidden sexual practices are traditionally closely associated with moral pollution and, because locations, objects, and humans can carry the pollution, it could spread in a range of modes if not contained.<sup>1275</sup> In this respect Anna’s fears were real and the potential pollution may have had have implications for the usage of the garden and its yields.

The investigation revealed that there was no carpenter apprentice and more and more it appeared as if “Nickel Gardener” was the culprit.<sup>1276</sup> This suspicion increased when, a few weeks later, he disappeared. Again, Anna was directly involved in the handling of the case, and wrote to the court marshal,

[B]ecause it appears as if Nickel Gardener has killed himself in his despair, [we ask] you to search for him in all accessible places[, you shall] also instruct the executioner to secretly search for him and if he is located he must be disposed of.<sup>1277</sup>

Anna clearly believed the gardener to be dead. Hence, the second part of the quote should not be read as an instruction to kill him if he were to be found alive. As Vera Lind has shown in her study of suicide in early modern Schleswig-Holstein, it was common practice that the body of a person who had committed suicide was entrusted to the executioner and denied an honorable funeral,<sup>1278</sup> and Anna’s instructions to Auerswalden referred to this practice. Suicide, or as in German “self-murder”, was at

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<sup>1274</sup> “... Wer die dine geschwenger wo er itzo sej, vnd wo solche vnzucht begangen, ob derselb auch im vnserem garten gewesen sey ...”, Anna to Hans von Auerswalden, Colditz 20 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 89 a – 90 a. Unfortunately Auerswalden’s reply does not appear to have survived or, more likely, he reported it verbally, rather than in writing, to the electress.

<sup>1275</sup> Douglas (1966/2002), pp. 160-195. See also the introduction to the more controversial work by Barrington Moore, Jr.’s *Moral Purity and Persecution in History*, Moore (2000), pp. 3-12.

<sup>1276</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 420-421. Von Weber identified the gardener as Nickel Wendel.

<sup>1277</sup> “... Nachdem es sich auch fast dafür ansehen lesset, als mochte sich Nickel der Gertner in der verZweiffelung selbst vmbgebracht haben, So wollest Ja vleissig vberal in den ... offenen ortern des gleich ... durch den Scharf Richter in stiller geheim nach Ime such lassen vnd wo er befunden wegschaff lassen ...” Anna to Hans Auerswalden, Nossen 6 Aug. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 98 b – 99 a.

<sup>1278</sup> Lind (1999), pp. 33-34 and 340-345.

once a grave sin and a serious crime: already Augustine had argued that by taking one's own life God's will is usurped because only he has the right to determine when life comes to an end. This view prevailed also among the reformers and, according to Heinz Schilling, sins were subject to increased criminalization in Saxony (and several other territories) during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>1279</sup> Having been identified as the likely perpetrator in the recent case and subsequently committed suicide, Nickel Gardener was guilty of three of the most wicked acts and sins one could imagine: adultery, incest, and suicide. Even if the electress recognized that the suicide was the result of his despair, the crimes were of a caliber that excluded mercy. Throughout the devotional literature, it was stressed that adultery, fornication, and murder were crimes that never could be forgiven. The theological authorities instructed the consorts to act with force against any such terrible moral crime (chapter 3) and there are other examples that confirm Anna's compliance with these directives.<sup>1280</sup>

While the electress's involvement in this particular case is noteworthy because it reveals her efforts to uphold proper order and Christian morals, she acted within the "natural" domain of the "mistress of the house". A few years later, however, Anna's efforts to curb these sins were aimed at the territory at large.

In 1570 Anna wrote a remarkable letter to Caspar Peucer lamenting the increasing prevalence of "adultery and fornication in these territories".<sup>1281</sup> The letter does not reveal how the electress acquired this knowledge, though her reference to the praiseworthy work of the Consistory in Wittenberg suggests that this may have been her source. In any event, her active engagement with the matter is likely to have been encouraged by the recurring warnings about adultery in the devotional literature. On behalf of August, she instructed Peucer to think of ways in which this deplorable development could be reversed. She stressed that a solution had to be found in order to

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<sup>1279</sup> Regarding Augustine and the reformers view of suicide, see Watt (2001), pp. 67-92. Although Watt centers his discussion on Calvin's views of suicide, this reveals a very close dependence on Augustine's writings and given Luther's education and general reverence for Augustine, a similar view presumably prevailed in his writings. Regarding the increased criminalization of sins, see Schilling (1987).

<sup>1280</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 418-420.

<sup>1281</sup> "... Ehbruch vnnnd hurerej In diesen landen ...", Anna to Caspar Peuer, Dresden 22 March 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 219 b – 220 a. At the time, Peucer was employed as court physician, but he also supervised the Saxon schools in Meissen, Grimma and Pforta, and served as a trusted advisor to both August and Anna in a range of questions related to the government, see Wartenberg (2004), pp. 19-28.

liberate August's conscience and that the harsher punishment of these crimes was an expression of God's will.<sup>1282</sup>

Although Anna consistently phrased her letter to Peucer as an expression of August's will, her contemporary correspondence with the Wittenberger theologians Paul Krell reveals that she was more than an extension of her husband. During the spring of 1571, she requested that Paul Krell prepare a brief summary of Luther and Melancthon's teachings on the ways in which the secular authorities – within the limits of a Christian government – could impose stricter punishments against adultery and fornication. She also asked him to translate an unidentified treatise on the punishment of adultery from Latin into German. In June 1571, Krell delivered the desired texts and apologized profusely that any consideration of this difficult subject inevitably contained words that were unsuitable for chaste hearts and ears.<sup>1283</sup> In spite of the precarious nature of the subject, Anna engaged actively in what she considered a prime responsibility of a secular ruler and an integral part of a Christian government. Her involvement is particularly significant because the Saxon *Constitutiones* from 1572 contained new laws on marriage and adultery. The increased control of sexual behavior was an integral part of the Reformation ideology and during the latter half of the sixteenth century new legislation was passed throughout the Protestant territories in an attempt to instill Christian discipline in the subjects.<sup>1284</sup> The correspondence between Anna, on the one side, and Peucer and Krell, on the other, demonstrates that Anna took active part in the development of these legal measures within Saxony.

Upholding and promoting good Christian morality implied more than the prevention of crimes and, correspondingly, Anna acted not only in response to criminal acts. In 1573 she addressed the Superintendent and Council in St. Annaberg and explained that she had received a humble request from Margaretha Krechin in St. Annaberg who complained that she had been denied the right to have her child baptized. Along with the Krechin's letter, Anna had received a second letter in which several women from St. Annaberg expressed their support for Krechin's case. The electress now wanted to know if the Superintendent and Council had had valid reason to refuse the baptism of the child. She also instructed the Council to confer with all of

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<sup>1282</sup> Anna to Caspar Peucer, Dresden 22 March 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 219 b – 220 a. See also von Weber (1865), pp. 421-422.

<sup>1283</sup> Von Weber (1865), p. 422. Regarding Krell's apologies for the expressions in the text see the considerations on "ritualisierte Gestik" by Sabean (1996).

<sup>1284</sup> Harrington (1995), pp. 118-166 and 215-271.

the women who were listed as supporters in the second letter in order to verify that their names had been used with their knowledge and good will. Once the requested information was collected, the electress wanted a written account of “all aspects of this matter”.<sup>1285</sup>

Recalling Anna’s management of her role as intercessor in legal and financial matters (chapter 7), this case follows the exact same pattern as two of the cases discussed there: a female supplicant turns to the electress when she is in the geographical vicinity of the supplicant’s home. Anna then addresses the local authorities; in this case both the Town Council and the Superintendent who was responsible for the church within the area. Yet, she does not ask that a decision be changed, but simply that the reasoning behind it be explained to her. In this case, Anna’s approach appears particularly cautious, not least as a result of her doubts concerning the authenticity of the support behind Margaretha Krechin. But in spite of this, she acts as the guardian of the woman and her unbaptized child and requests that the case be reexamined.

The authorities refusal to baptize the child was a serious matter. In the comprehensive articles regarding the order within the Saxon church it was stressed that, “No priest is allowed to let the children suffer for the sins of its parents by delaying or refusing to perform the holy baptism”.<sup>1286</sup> If an illegitimate child was brought to the baptism – and in spite of the sparse information, it seems likely that this was the case with Margaretha Krechin’s child<sup>1287</sup> – the pastor was instructed not to enter into long disputes about the father of the child, “[but] rather baptize the child upon request, and inform the authorities who will investigate and punish [the offence] according to our ordinances”.<sup>1288</sup> These instructions suggest how the authorities wanted the common priest to remain outside of the enforcement of the law. To the priests, the importance of the child’s inclusion in the

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<sup>1285</sup> “... allen vmbstende die gelegenheit ...”, Anna to the Superintendent and Council of St. Annaberg, Crottendorf 2 July 1573, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 88 a.

<sup>1286</sup> “... ES sol auch kein Pfarrer ... / die jungen kinderlein / vmb jhrer Eltern sünde ... willen / mit der heiligen Tauffe aufzizhen / oder aber aller ding vngetaufft ... lassen,” quoted from *General Articul unnd gemeiner bericht* (1580), p. Eijj(3). This however, is an almost verbatim repetition of the 1557 articles *General Articul* (1557), pp. Bij(1)-(2).

<sup>1287</sup> This conclusion results from three observations: (i) if she was married, her husband is likely to have sent the supplication; (ii) contrary to other examples in which a woman turned to the electress with a supplication (see chapter 7), Anna does not refer to Krechin’s husband even once; and finally (iii) both the religious authorities and the secular authorities were involved. According to the *General Articul* from both 1557 and 1580, the religious authorities were obliged to refer cases of immoral sexual behavior to the secular authorities.

<sup>1288</sup> “... sondern auff begeren das kind alsbald tauffen / vnd der Obrigkeit solches vermelden / welche sich / vermög vnserer Policye ordnung / darauff der gebür wird mit nottürftigem nachfragen vnd straffen zuuerhalten wissen...”. Quoted from *General Articul unnd gemeiner bericht* (1580), p. Eijj(3). This, however, is an almost verbatim repetition of the 1557 articles *General Articul* (1557), pp. Bij(1)-(2)



church and its future salvation had to be greater than the persecution of a potential offender that should be handled by the appropriate authorities (presumably the Consistories). But the instructions also show that this division of duties between the priests and the authorities proved problematic, which was confirmed by Krechin's appeal to Anna and the electress's subsequent letter to both the theological and secular authorities in St. Annaberg.

Although it was unusual that Anna was asked to intervene in matters concerning the distribution of the sacraments, Margaretha Krechin's appeal was not unique. A later case reveals that more prominent Saxon subjects also viewed Anna as an authority who was capable of rectifying malpractices within the territorial church.

In 1579 the Leipziger professor of philosophy and medicine Simone Simoni turned to Anna with a complaint regarding a similar experience. Simoni explained that Nikolaus Selnecker had refused to baptize his daughter when Simoni and his wife had brought their infant daughter to the baptism. According to Simoni, Selnecker had scolded the parents and justified his refusal with the fact that the parents had called upon more Godparents than allowed. As the parents were sent home with an unbaptized child, an unnamed priest later performed the sacrament in their home.<sup>1289</sup>

Anna was very discontented to hear that such a taxing and unnecessary dispute could occur between the most learned of her and her husband's subjects and servants, especially because the dispute concerned the most revered sacrament of the baptism. According to the electress, the matter could have been avoided, if only both parts had demonstrated "Christian love and sensible modesty". In spite of the blame she placed on both parts, Anna nevertheless tried to console the physician. She explained how he could calm his wife who had fallen ill as a result of her ensuing worries: because the child subsequently had been baptized at home, the parents had no need to worry and, when the child grew older, she too would understand that the children of high-born often were baptized at home.<sup>1290</sup> Hence, neither the soul of the child nor the reputation of the family had been endangered or damaged by the episode.

Anna's reply is interesting because she gracefully diverted attention from Selnecker. Having emphasized that both parts were culpable, she toned down the consequences of the unfortunate event and focused on the fact that the child had been baptized. At first sight it seems that both Selnecker's behavior and Anna's response to

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<sup>1289</sup> Anna to Simone Simoni, Glücksburg 5 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 353 b – 354 b.

<sup>1290</sup> "... Christliche liebe vnd vnufftige bescheidenheit ...", Anna to Simone Simoni, Glücksburg 5 Nov. 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 353 b – 354 b.

the complaint must be read in the context of the sumptuary laws that were strictly enforced in most Protestant territories during the sixteenth century and in relation to a rather troubled relationship between Selnecker and Simoni. The 1557 *General Articul* regarding the Saxon church stipulated that no more than three godparents were permitted and that nobody would be granted an exception. It did not, however, specify any sanctions in case this limit was not respected.<sup>1291</sup> When an expanded version of the *General Articul* was issued in 1580 this had been changed and the new articles stipulated that a fine of one hundred Guilders would be imposed if anyone brought more than three godparents for the baptism of their child.<sup>1292</sup> This development of the articles shows that Selnecker and Simoni may have found themselves within grey zones. Simoni had not complied with the articles, but Selnecker's refusal to baptize the child could be construed as punishment of the child for the sins of the parents. As Anna wrote, neither of the two had demonstrated the good Christian behavior she had expected of them. Even so does not appear to have addressed the incident with Selnecker. This, combined with her reply's diversion from Selnecker, confirms the grace he is supposed to have enjoyed from the electress (the electress's relationship to Selnecker will be addressed below).

Simoni's complaint is interesting not simply because he turned to Anna for help. His account also reveals that even the most senior theologians – in spite of the prescriptions in the *General Articul* – were ready to impose sanctions for what they considered inappropriate behavior by the baptismal font. However, when Anna – in contrast to the appeal from Margaretha Krechin – chose not to intervene in this case, it may have been because she was aware of the deeper conflict that already existed between involved parties. The subsequent year, Selnecker supposedly denounced Simoni as a Crypto-Calvinist to August, who then expelled the physician and philosopher from his territory. This way, the chronicler maintained, Selnecker succeeded in getting rid of one of his “long-term” enemies.<sup>1293</sup>

Regardless of the source of the conflict, the inability of two learned men to solve the conflict exposed the imprecision of the existing articles. The 1577 visitations of the churches are likely to have revealed similar cases and thereby informed the revisions. But in addition, Anna would have had ample opportunity to relate her experience and

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<sup>1291</sup> *General Articul* (1557), pp. Bij(1)-(2).

<sup>1292</sup> *General Articul* (1580), pp. Eijj(3)-(4).

<sup>1293</sup> Wustmann (1905), pp. 36-37.

knowledge to the authorities – including Selnecker, who by this time was the leading theologian of Albertine Saxony and is likely to have been consulted before the new articles were printed in 1580.

It is remarkable that with regard to both the promotion of morality and the internal order of the church one can find links between the cases in which Anna became involved and the legislative development of Saxony. Her request that Peucer should think of ways in which the prevalence of adultery could be lessened is especially significant in this respect, because it shows that she pushed for improvements of the problems she became aware of. Even so, the electress's influence on the legislations in these domains remains nothing more than a hypothesis. The legislation grew from religious ideas and ideals that were commonly shared by both secular and theological authorities and this complicates greatly any attempt to identify those who initiated specific regulations. However, the examples discussed here do show that Anna represented and actively defended the Christian ideals that shaped the legislations when she was confronted with appeals from Saxon subjects. The examples also reveal that the subjects – from a single mother in St. Annaberg to a professor in Leipzig – considered the electress, in spite of her gender, to be a legitimate and capable authority also in matters relating to the church. Anna's own actions, her request to Peucer as well as her inquiry by the authorities in St. Annaberg, show that she shared this view. The examples also suggest that she aspired to fulfill the foremost duty of a secular authority: the subjects' adherence to God's word in their actions.

### **The electress and the Saxon schools**

Although historians disagree on the extent to which education proved a successful tool for an improved Christian discipline, there is agreement on the paramount importance ascribed to education by the reformers.<sup>1294</sup> Next to the transformation of God's word in legislation, improved education was advocated as the most important tool with which the authorities could promote God's word.

Although Karl von Weber emphasized Anna's support for the Saxon schools, her correspondence provides limited evidence in support of this tribute. When she

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<sup>1294</sup> Strauss (1978) remains the classic study of education in the reformation era. Yet, his work has been subject to extensive critique, see for example the discussion in Susan Karant-Nunn's analysis of the historiography on pre-university education in early modern Germany, Karant-Nunn (1990). For a gendered perspective on the importance of education in the Reformation ideology, see Westphal (1996).

occasionally corresponded with the employees at the three *Fürstenschulen* it was often in relation to practical matters: a request for plants she needed for her medical remedies;<sup>1295</sup> the recruitment of servants for her household;<sup>1296</sup> or deliveries of cherries from the garden by the school in Meissen.<sup>1297</sup> Yet, in a few cases, Anna did take the initiative to enhance the possibilities of education within Saxony and, in several cases, she contributed to the education of individuals. The goal of this section is provide an impression of how and why she went about this.

In the late 1570s, Anna asked Hans Harrer to recruit a woman who could serve as mistress for the girls' school she wished to establish. Harrer turned to Konrad Roth, one of his contacts from Augsburg,<sup>1298</sup> who previously had recruited female employees for the Saxon electress, and explained that,

[H]er Electoral grace [Anna] intends to provide for and educate several young girls, who [she wants] to be taught sewing, cooking and other house work, with a view to recruiting servants for her Electoral Grace from them. Her Electoral Grace will assign a location within her land, so that [the girls] can be there as in a convent. For this purpose her Electoral Grace has instructed me to inform and ask Your Honorable if You could find and recruit for her Electoral Grace with a woman who knows how to manage such affairs.<sup>1299</sup>

The electress's plan appears as a continuation of the so-called "sewing schools" that had been in place for centuries in several German territories.<sup>1300</sup> However, in contrast to these schools that had traditionally been closely linked to the Catholic church, Harrer stressed that the potential schoolmistress should be an adherent of the Augsburg

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<sup>1295</sup> Anna to the administrator (*Vorwalter*) of the school in Meissen, Dresden 25 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 97 – 98 a.

<sup>1296</sup> Anna to "Andres Weber[,] verwaltem In der Pforta", Glücksburg 16 Sep. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 189 b – 190 a (original page no. 37 b – 38 a), and Dresden 17 Dec. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 198 b (original page no. 46 b).

<sup>1297</sup> Anna to the administrator (*Vorwalter*) of the school in Meissen, Annaburg 22 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, Kop. 35 a.

<sup>1298</sup> Konrad Roth was a somewhat questionable merchant who also was involved in various commercial projects in Saxony. However, when this letter was sent, he also was a member of the town council in Augsburg. See the brief summary of Roth's biography in Behringer (2003), pp. 140 (footnote 387) and pp. 146-149.

<sup>1299</sup> "... nach dem ihre Churf g bedacht sein, etzliche Junge Megdlein zuunderhalten vnd aufzihen zulassen, die mit Nehen kochen vnd anderer hausarbeitt vnderweiset vnd gelert werden sollen, dar zu ihre Churf g einen ortt in derselben Landen verordnen wollen, das sie dar inne als wie in einem Closter sein werden, damit ... ihre churf G von denselben leutt haben mogen ... Als haben ihre Churf g mir befohlen EE zuuermelden vnd zuersuchen Ob ihr ihrer Churf G nach ein solches weib, die mit dergleichen hendeln vmbezugehen wuste, aus richten vnd zu wegen bringen mochtet ...", Hans Harrer to Conrad Roth, Dresden 10 May 1579, DrHSA Loc. 12022, vol. I: *Copial-Buch ... Herrn Kammermeisters Hansen Harrers ...* (1578-1580), fol. 82 b – 84 a. See also Müller (1894), p. 73.

<sup>1300</sup> Nickus Moore (1987), pp. 123-126.

Confession, and the treasurer's account of Anna's intentions reveal that she was motivated more by her needs for apt servants than by concerns for the education and piety of the Saxon population as was stressed by the theologians.<sup>1301</sup> Regrettably, Konrad Roth disappears from Harrer's correspondence after this reference to the girls' school,<sup>1302</sup> and there is no further trace of Anna's involvement in this venture.

When Anna shared her plans for a new girls' school with Harrer, several Saxon towns and villages already had functioning girls' schools and the electress had at least some knowledge of how they were operating. Yet, there is only one instance in which Anna interfered in the internal matters of these schools. One of the first Saxon schools for girls was established by the Town Council of Zwickau in 1526 and, according to the visitations of 1533 and 1577, it was running smoothly.<sup>1303</sup> In 1574 Anna addressed the Town Council there and recommended Ursula Hemmigin, the widow of a former pastor in Rochlitz, as a schoolmistress. The electress wanted to reward the widow for the faithful service of her late husband and because Ursula originally was from Zwickau and greatly desired the post, Anna was pleased to further the widow by way of this office.<sup>1304</sup>

As in the previous case, the sources do not indicate that Anna's involvement in the Saxon schools was motivated by ambitions to improve the Saxon educational system. Rather, her recommendation for Ursula Hemmingin sought to help the widow and not the school. That said, the specifications of the widow's qualities (her husband's faithful service in the Saxon church and her association with Zwickau) suggest that the recommendation was considered within the context of the ideals that guided the education of the female pupils in Zwickau and the electress's straightforward request to the local authorities who were responsible for the daily running of the school shows that she viewed herself as an authority who legitimately could assert her will within this domain of society.

When attention is shifted from the education of girls to the education of boys within Saxony, these patterns remain unaltered. While her correspondence does not reveal one single case in which she supported the Saxon schools at large, there are

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<sup>1301</sup> Westphal (1996); Conrad (1996); Dürr (1996).

<sup>1302</sup> After his bankruptcy in 1580, Roth fled to Switzerland and disguised his disappearance as a suicide. See Behringer (2003), pp. 140, footnote 387, and pp. 146-149.

<sup>1303</sup> Richter (1930), pp. 37-40. Karant-Nunn (1982), pp. 19-21.

<sup>1304</sup> "... Schulmeisterin In die magdlein Schul zu Zwickaw ...", Anna to the Town Council of Zwickau, Mutzschen 29 July 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 211 a.

countless examples of her support for individuals, though these are all associated with the three Saxon *Fürstenschulen* (in Meissen, Pforta and Grimma),<sup>1305</sup> and not with the ordinary schools of villages and/or towns. The three *Fürstenschulen* enjoyed a good reputation throughout the Protestant territories,<sup>1306</sup> and Anna's relatives often asked her to facilitate the acceptance of a particular pupil in one of the schools.

Through the 1560s and until her death, Anna's mother again and again interceded by Anna on behalf of various servants who wished to have their sons accepted in the Saxon *Fürstenschulen*. As a result the two consorts made sure that the following could attend school in Saxony: the son of Dorothea's physician Cornelius Hamsfort; the son of Joachim Müller, a councilor in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel; and the son of Lukas Backmeister, Dorothea's former chaplain who also had served as preceptor of Anna's youngest brothers and subsequently appointed professor in Rostock.<sup>1307</sup> By similar means, Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin managed to have the son of one of her husband's administrators accepted into the school in Meissen in 1571.<sup>1308</sup>

A recommendation from one of Anna's close relatives doubtlessly eased a pupil's entry into the school. But it was not always necessary and the electress was also prepared to reject the requests of even her relatives. Hence, in 1583 Lucas Backmeister had a second son accepted in the school in Meissen – apparently without the help of an intercessor.<sup>1309</sup> In contrast, Anna was unable to accommodate a request from Dorothea Susanna in Weimar in December 1569. Having consulted with August, Anna informed the duchess that, although exceptions had been made in the past, the schools were open only to young men from Electoral Saxony.<sup>1310</sup> While Anna's rejection of Dorothea Susanna's request may have been caused by the tension that developed between the

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<sup>1305</sup> The schools offered a six-year course that was intended as a preparation for further education at the universities. However, in contrast to the Latin schools in most towns, the *Fürstenschulen* were under the direct patronage of the prince (and the estates). According to the ordinance for the schools only Saxon subjects could attend the *Fürstenschulen*, each Saxon town had the right to a certain number of seats (some with full scholarships) and approximately one-third of the seats were reserved for members of Saxon nobility. However, exceptions to the rules were common. Regarding the Catholic predecessors to the three schools, their re-organization in 1543 and their role and reputation in the sixteenth century, see Arnhardt and Reinerts (2002), pp. 22-66.

<sup>1306</sup> Arnhardt and Reinerts (2002), pp. 22-66.

<sup>1307</sup> Regarding Hamsfort and Müller's sons: Dorothea to Anna, Kolding 8 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 8 a – b; and regarding Backmeister's son: Dorothea to Anna, without date [March 1571?], DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 123 a – b.

<sup>1308</sup> Anna to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, Schellenberg 7 Jan. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 193 a – 194 a

<sup>1309</sup> Anna to Lukas Backmeister, Annaburg 23 June 1583, DrHSA Kop. 524, fol. 142 b – 143 a (original page no. 55 b – 56 a).

<sup>1310</sup> Anna to Dorothea Susanna, Dresden 31 Dec. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 98 a – b.

Ernestine and Albertine Wettins after the Colloquy of Altenburg (see chapter 9), her reference to the demands of the Saxon estates cannot be dismissed. In theory, the Saxon subjects enjoyed an exclusive right to attend the schools and it is not unlikely that the frequent exceptions made by the ruling couple caused objections. Only two years prior to this, Anna had rejected an intercession from her mother with a similar reference to the rules that guided the stipends at the Saxon universities: Anna's younger brother Magnus had asked Dorothea to inquire by the electress if the son of one of his councilors in Livonia could be granted a stipend to complete his studies in Wittenberg. The young man was already a student there but, due to developments in Livonia, the father no longer could afford the expenses associated with his son's studies.<sup>1311</sup> Anna replied that, "no students are given stipends without the usual obligations".<sup>1312</sup> According to the directives in the Saxon ordinances regarding the church, universities, schools and related institutions the stipends were reserved for young men who later would serve the Saxon church and/or administration,<sup>1313</sup> and because the young Livonian student presumably was expected to return to Livonia upon the completion of his studies the electress did not hesitate to decline the appeal – even though it had originated from her brother and mother.

Even if these examples emphasize the importance others attributed to the Saxon schools and universities, there are no indications that she was concerned with the workings of the schools, nor with the conditions of the employees within these institutions. The examples suggest that the electress's actions here were motivated more by dynastic and personal interests (the maintenance of her network by reciprocating favors or accumulating goodwill from relatives and/or clients) than anything else. In addition, the rejections she sent to both Dorothea Susanna and Magnus suggest that her (and August's) abilities to exert influence could be limited by the demands of the Saxon estates. Regrettably, the sources do not reveal if the distance that appears to have existed between the electress and the educational institutions in the territory was conditioned by her gender. That gender did play a role appears only when Anna considered founding a school for girls. In light of the motives behind this initiative (her

<sup>1311</sup> Dorothea to Anna, Arnsbock 14 Oct. 1566 and the enclosed copy of the letter from Magnus to Dorothea, no date given [Sep.-Oct. 1566], DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 332 a – 333 a

<sup>1312</sup> "... keinem Studenten einig Stipendium ausserhalb der gewohlichen ... verpflichtung ... geben werden", Anna to Dorothea, Stolpen 2 Nov. 1566, DrHSA Loc. 8501/5, pp. 334 a – b

<sup>1313</sup> *Des Durchlauchtigsten ... Herrn Augusten, Hertzogen zu Sachsen ... Ordnung, wie es in seiner Churf. G. Landen, bey den Kirchen, mit der lehr und Ceremonien ...* (1580), pp. CCI-CCXXIX, particularly pp. CCI-CCVII.

desire for apt servants) it is unlikely that she would have considered a similar initiative for the education of boys.

### **The consort's participation in the appointments within the *ecclesia***

Scholars have often discussed just how far the princes' control of the new territorial churches extended, especially the degree to which they could determine the appointments for the offices within the church.<sup>1314</sup> In his analysis of Melancthon's contribution to the ideological foundation of the new territorial church in Albertine Saxony, Ralph Keen has argued that the worldly rulers in these texts were granted even greater control of the church than Luther had suggested in his writings.<sup>1315</sup> In spite of these recurring questions, it remains unexamined if and how the secular rulers' greater influence on the church extended to female consorts. The goal of this section is to examine the degree to which the consorts could and did influence the appointments within the church, the universities and the schools.

It was rare that Anna openly attempted to influence the allocation of an office within the Saxon church and schools and, in the few cases that can be found, her intercessions were concerned with "lower" offices. When the position as sexton (*Küster*) in Torgau became available,<sup>1316</sup> one of Anna's long-term employees Barbara Moserin asked the electress to promote the application of her son-in-law. As requested, Anna addressed the superintendent Kaspar Heidenreich and, although she was unfamiliar with the applicant, she requested that, "If he is able to manage the position without problems, we graciously request that You will favor him over others and employ him".<sup>1317</sup>

Anna's rather cautious, but nevertheless clear, recommendation for the candidate must be read in light of the *General Articul* concerning the order of the Saxon church. Already in the 1557 articles, it was specified how a sexton should be recruited and these instructions were repeated almost verbatim in the 1580 articles: he was to be elected by the judge, the eldest men of the parish, and the priest. Subsequently, he had to be

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<sup>1314</sup> See for example Karant-Nunn (1979); Schwarz Lausten (1987); Wartenberg (1988); Koch (1989).

<sup>1315</sup> Keen (1991) and Keen (1997).

<sup>1316</sup> According to the *General Articul* (1557) the sexton (*Küster*) had to teach the catechism to the children of the village on Sundays and one other day of the week, p. Hi(2). Regarding the sexton's responsibilities, see also Richter (1930), pp. 34-36.

<sup>1317</sup> "... Wofern er ... solche Custerej ohne ergernuß vorsehen kan, So begeren wir gnedigst Ir wollet Inen vmb vnsertwillen vor andern vorZubefurdern vnd annehmen ...", Anna to Kaspar Heidenreich, Superintendent in Torgau, Gommern 24 June 1581, DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 149 a (original page no. 36 a).



examined by the consistory and/or the superintendent and, if found competent, he could be confirmed for the office. No lower church office could be allocated to a candidate who had not been approved by the parish priest with whom he would be working.<sup>1318</sup> The fact that Anna turned to the superintendent suggests knowledge of the selection process and decision-making. This, however, raises questions about the actual influence of the parish priest upon the choice of his assistant(s).

Ten years previously, Anna had contacted Kasper Eberhard, one of the theologians in the consistory in Meissen, and asked that he make all possible efforts to protect the organist Peter whose continued service was currently being questioned. And, as Barbara Moserin asked for help on behalf of her son-in-law, it was the organist's mother, also a servant of the electress, who had asked Anna to take on this cause.<sup>1319</sup>

Although the two examples are isolated cases and concern only "lower" church offices, they demonstrate how the employees within Anna's household perceived the electress to have a considerable say in these matters. As argued in chapter 7, Anna's willingness to intercede is also likely to have depended upon her own assessment of whether or not her word could be efficacious.

However, the direct requests for offices were but one way in which a female consort could make her presence felt within the *ecclesia*. In 1577 the widowed pastor of Radis Joachim Rueln was granted permission to marry a woman from Anna's household. Anna not only had had to approve the marriage, she and August also organized the wedding, the groom's transport to the ceremony at Annaburg, and additionally, the electress provided him with cloth for a new gown and two Thalers for the cost of having it made.<sup>1320</sup> Again there is but only this single example that testifies to this practice, presumably an indication that it was relatively rare that the women in Anna's household married into the Saxon clergy. Nevertheless, Rueln's marriage shows that this constituted one way in which Anna's network came to encompass not only princes and nobles, but also the theologians of the territory.

The direct ties between Anna and the "common" parish priests in Saxony appear most frequently in the context of practical matters: the pastor in Obernhau, Jacob Girbich provided Anna with herbs; the pastor in Schneeberg recruited one (or, perhaps two) female

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<sup>1318</sup> *General Articul* (1557), pp Gijj(4)-Hi(2). These rules are repeated almost verbatim in the 1580 articles, pp. Sijj(3)-Tijj(1).

<sup>1319</sup> Anna to Kasper Eberhard, Dresden 26 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 515, fol. 39 a.

<sup>1320</sup> Anna to Joachim Rueln, Pastor in Radis, Annaburg 26 June 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 68 a – b.

cooks for Anna; and the pastor in Salza and his wife mediated the contact between the electress and a woman who had agreed to enter the service of the electress in Brandenburg.<sup>1321</sup> While these examples at first may appear to be insignificant, they do show that electress viewed the parish priests as reliable mediators between herself and the members of the local communities. As servants of the church, they were servants of the prince and his wife, and in this capacity they owed obedience in return for protection.

If Anna's correspondence suggests that support for the servants within the Saxon *ecclesia* was remarkably moderate, there was one particular way in which she could at once further the careers of the Saxon theologians and maintain her dynastic network. Von Weber mentioned that Anna frequently helped other princesses recruit priests from Saxony: in 1571, she sent a priest to Katharina of Brandenburg-Küstrin, the following year Elisabeth of Mecklenburg as for Anna's help with the recruitment of a new superintendent for Schwerin, and in 1575 the electress assisted Barbara von Liegnitz-Brieg with the recruitment of a theologian.<sup>1322</sup> However, two other similar cases deserve attention because they reveal just how well informed Anna was about the theologians within her territory.

Already in 1567 Elisabeth of Mecklenburg asked Ann to recommend a suitable priest. Elisabeth's active involvement in both this case and the example from 1572 that was discussed by von Weber is significant in its own right but, in addition, Anna's reply demonstrates her detailed knowledge of at least the leading Saxon theologians and their family connections. The electress proposed that Elisabeth select for 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".<sup>1323</sup> While Elisabeth was grateful for the suggestion, she and her husband opted for 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 was at the center of an intense dispute throughout the Protestant territories during the 1550s and 1560s.<sup>1324</sup> Although Anna ultimately was unable to provide

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<sup>1321</sup> Anna to Jacob Girbich, Pastor in Obernhau, Glückburg 22 Sep. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 49 a – b; Anna to the pastor in Schneeberg, Neustadt an der Orla 12 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 98 b; and Anna to the pastor in Salza and his wife, Schwarzberg 26 Aug. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 246

<sup>1322</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 361-362. Regarding Katharina von Brandenburg-Küstrin, see Anna's letters to her, Dresden 18 April 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 230 a – 231 a, and Stolpen 12 Aug. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 272 b – 273 a.

<sup>1323</sup> "... keine sonderliche gnade zu redder ...", Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 20 Sep. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 251 b – 253 a.

<sup>1324</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 18 Oct. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 270 a – b. The objections of the theologians in Mecklenburg against Major's teaching on the importance of good deeds was address most explicitly in Anna's letter to Elisabeth, Dresden 27 Jan. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 6 b – 8 a.

a theologian for Elisabeth, the duchess nevertheless turned to Anna for help when a new superintendent was needed in Schwerin five years later. Moreover, even if Anna's proposed candidate was rejected, both Elisabeth's request and Anna's answer show that the electress had a general awareness of the career paths and family connections of the more prominent theologians in Saxony.

The second example relates to the territories that belonged to the Lords of Schönburg, who in 1570 needed a new pastor for their core possession, the imperial fief of Glauchau.<sup>1325</sup> As the recruitment for this office met with obstacles, the Lady of Schönburg and Anna got involved. Dorothea von Schönburg wrote to Anna concerning the Superintendent in Schneeberg Andrea Praetorius, to whom she and her husband had offered the post as pastor in their core possessions.<sup>1326</sup> 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, 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 subsequently was approved, Praetorius was allowed to accept the office he had been offered by the *Lady and Lord of Schönburg*.<sup>1327</sup> When Anna wrote to inform Dorothea von Schönburg about this decision 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",<sup>1328</sup> thereby emphasizing her participation in the selection of Praetorius.

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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 rather pragmatic stance, "... Wir wissen Goth lob aus Gottes gnaden, worauff wir vnsern glauben vnd vertrauen 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 diesen Zeit nicht sehr erleiden noch verbeith, dar zu wir doch verpfleichtet sein, das derselben leider sonst nicht viell gesehe noch gesehen werdenn ..." (Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 27 Jan. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 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 the good deeds, see Kolb (1976). Hamm (1986) discusses the importance and variations of the doctrine of justification throughout the Reformation.

<sup>1325</sup> The remainder of the possessions held by the Lords of Schönburg were Saxon fiefs, see *Sachsen. Handbuch der historischen Stätten* (1965/ 1990), pp. 324-325. The example discussed here is significant because it shows how the composite nature of the Schönburg-possession and their Lutheran confession forced them to negotiate with the Saxon elector even in matters that concerned their imperial fiefs.

<sup>1326</sup> Anna to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 28 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 169 b – 170 a.

<sup>1327</sup> Anna to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 28 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 169 b – 170 a.

<sup>1328</sup> "... gedachter Pretorus, wie Ewer herr vnd Ir ... Lust vnd willen zu PfareAmbt zu Glaucha ...". Anna to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 28 Aug. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 169 b – 170 a.

The examples discussed by von Weber and the two additional cases mentioned here leave no doubt that the consorts participated actively in the recruitment of theologians for the territorial churches. The frequency with which the involvement of other consorts appear in Anna's correspondence is likely to be a result of 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 theologians. More importantly, in relation to the question being pursued here, is the fact that the recurrent participation of other consorts also makes it probable that Anna was involved when theologians were appointed within the Saxon church. Yet, her involvement in these selections may well have been verbal and thus absent from the correspondence.

When the female consorts participated in the selection of superintendents and pastors for the greater church, their involvement was presumably greater when a court chaplain was selected. While the material remains silent on this aspect, it does provide an impression of the relationship between the consorts and the court chaplains, and this will be addressed in the next section.

### **Patronage of individual theologians**

In the previous section Anna's recommendations of particular theologians for offices in other territories were addressed, though only with a view to assessing the consorts' ability to influence appointments within the church at large. However, the same recommendations can also be considered as one of the ways in which she could serve as a patron of individual theologians and this role deserves further attention.

Among the theologians with whom Anna corresponded, those who were or had been court chaplains – either in Saxony or in Denmark – stand out: she sent more letters to these men than to other group of theologians. Yet, in the context of her vast correspondence, her written exchanges with the chaplains are few. This, however, should not be interpreted as an indication of a distance between Anna and the theologians within the electoral household. The chaplains' pastoral duties within the princely household implied a constant presence by the prince and/or consort,<sup>1329</sup> and the relative scarcity of written exchanges between Anna and the court chaplains is more

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<sup>1329</sup> Ambrosius Keulen accompanied the electoral family to the Diet in Augsburg 1566, see Anna to Hans Grantz, "Hofffurier itzo zu Augsburg", Dresden 16 Jan. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 80 a – b; Philipp Wagner accompanied the electoral couple during their visit to Denmark in 1572, see Sturmhoefel (1906), p. 106. See also the examples below regarding Paul Noviomagus, the Danish court chaplain, who accompanied Dorothea of Denmark to Saxony on more occasions.

likely to reflect physical proximity and frequent verbal communications as opposed to distance and this is confirmed by several references to the court chaplains in Anna's exchanges with relatives and friends. In light of the close relationships that often existed between the consort and the court chaplains, this group of theologians figures prominently in the discussion below.

Nikolaus Selnecker, who served as court chaplain and tutor of the electoral children in Albertine Saxony from the late 1550s to the mid-1560s,<sup>1330</sup> is the theologian who is most prominently present in Anna's correspondence.<sup>1331</sup> Their correspondence spans the period from 1562 to 1584 and confirms the findings of earlier research: that he continued to enjoy the favor of the electress after he in 1565 lost his position in her and August's household as a result of his support for a theologian who had criticized aspects of courtly/noble life. After his dismissal from Dresden, Selnecker became Professor in Jena (1565-1568). Subsequently, he was back in Saxony for approximately two years, but as a result of harsh accusations from the theologians in Wittenberg he again left the electorate and became *Generalsuperintendent* in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. Parallel to his service in Wolfenbüttel, he also was in charge of the reorganization of the church in Oldenburg. In 1573 he returned to Saxony and was appointed Professor in Leipzig the following year. Throughout this rather turbulent career he repeatedly turned to Anna for support and his appointment as Professor in Leipzig is widely considered to be a result of Anna's influence.<sup>1332</sup> Before this question is discussed further, the development of Anna's relationship to Selnecker deserves attention.

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<sup>1330</sup> Hasse (1995), pp. 94.

<sup>1331</sup> The following list of letters exchanged between Anna and Nikolaus Selnecker does not claim to be exhaustive. It is developed on the basis of the content of DrHSA Kop. 509-527 and selected volumes of Anna's incoming letters, the so-called *Handschriften*. It must be assumed that other letters exchanged between the two have been preserved in other parts of the Saxon archives (see for example the references in Hasse (1995), particularly p. 95, footnotes 11, 12, 17). Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Frankfurt a. M. 7 Oct. 1562, Kop. 511, fol. 61 a; Dresden 13 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 27 b; Mühberg 18 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 91 b – 92 a; Annaburg 19 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 168 a (original page no. 16 a); Dresden 11 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 134 a – b; Dresden 10 May 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 306 b (original page no. 140 b); Annaburg 12 Jan. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 4 b. Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, without date [mid-1560s], DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 48 a; Leipzig 22 July 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, p. 54 a – b; Dresden 9 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 53 a – b; Gandersheim 28 Nov. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 56 a – b; Leipzig 5 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 55 a – b; Dresden 15 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 31 a – b; Leipzig 7 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 193 a – b; Leipzig 3 March 1579, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, p. 267 a; Leipzig 28 March 1582, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, pp. 10 a – 12 a; Leipzig 25 Sep. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, p. 22 a (original page no. 145 a).

<sup>1332</sup> See the overview of Nikolaus Selnecker's career in Hasse (1995), pp. 94-96.

During his approximately seven years in the electoral household, Selnecker was at once court chaplain and preceptor to the princely children. The importance of the latter part of his responsibilities must be emphasized, because it brought him into close contact with both Anna and the children. Already from the early 1560s, he skillfully employed this contact to enhance the favor of the electress. In 1562, as he was preparing the publication of his interpretations of several Psalms,<sup>1333</sup> he asked Anna's permission to dedicate the same work to her and kept her informed of the progress of the work.<sup>1334</sup> Three years later, he published a collection of biblical quotes that were intended to strengthen the readers' beliefs and serve as a guide to life in the temporal world.<sup>1335</sup> This work was dedicated to Anna and August's eldest daughter Elisabeth, and Selnecker presented Anna with a copy of it.<sup>1336</sup> During Selnecker's years in Jena, he did not dedicate work 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,<sup>1337</sup> two years later he dedicated the first edition of *Historica narratio et oratio* to Duke Christian,<sup>1338</sup> 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.<sup>1339</sup>

It was not unusual that 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,<sup>1340</sup> shortly after his appointment as professor in Wittenberg,<sup>1341</sup> and presented Anna with a three copies of the book.<sup>1342</sup> Hieronymus Weller, Philipp Wagner, and Christoffer Fischer and Johannes Schütz, also dedicated and presented their publications to the electress.<sup>1343</sup>

<sup>1333</sup> Presumably the first volume of his three-volume interpretation of David's Psalms, published between 1563 and 1565, Selnecker (1563-1565). It has not yet been verified if this work was dedicated to Anna.

<sup>1334</sup> Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Frankfurt a. M. 7 Oct. 1562, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 61 a.

<sup>1335</sup> Selnecker (1565).

<sup>1336</sup> Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 13 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 27 b.

<sup>1337</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Gandersheim 28 Nov. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 56 a – b.

<sup>1338</sup> Hasse (1995), pp. 99-103; Selnecker (1575); and Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Leipzig 5 Jan. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 55 a – b.

<sup>1339</sup> Selnecker (1580); Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Annaburg 12 Jan. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 4 b.

<sup>1340</sup> Habermann (1574). See also Hufschmidt (2001), pp. 105-106, where she summarizes the content and wide circulation of the book among noble women.

<sup>1341</sup> Regarding Habermann's biography see *NDB*, vol. 1, p. 467.

<sup>1342</sup> Anna to Johann Habermann, Annaburg 24 Dec. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 253 b – 254 a.

<sup>1343</sup> Anna to Hieronymus Weller, Senftenberg 9 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 145 a – b; Anna to Philipp Wagner, Bockendorf 30 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 92 b – 93 a; Anna to Christoffer Fischer, Augustsburg 3 Jan. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 132 a (original page no. 1 a); Anna to Johannes Schütz, Augustsburg 24 Jan. 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 7 a.

However, while this was a common practice, the number of works Selnecker dedicated to Anna and her children is remarkable and is likely to be a result of his former role as chaplain as well as preceptor. In any event, it testifies to a close relationship between the theologian and the electoral family.

When Anna received the works, she often expressed her appreciation with financial remuneration. Hence, she sent the Wittenberger theologian Johann Habermann ten Thalers as a testimony of Anna's "most gracious inclination" towards him upon the receipt of the three copies of his prayer book,<sup>1344</sup> 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.<sup>1345</sup> 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.<sup>1346</sup> Although these two rewards to Selnecker are the only ones recorded in Anna's letter-books, the regularity with which she expressed her appreciation in this way indicates that he also may have received payments for the other two works he dedicated to her and Duke Christian, respectively.

This form of literary patronage appears as the most significant way in which Anna supported the Saxon clergy,<sup>1347</sup> and her reply to Selnecker in 1562 that he should not send his interpretation of the psalms to the printer before she and August had approved its content, suggests that her support was given to works that complied both with her wishes and with the confessional policies of the territory.<sup>1348</sup>

But Anna's support for Selnecker went beyond literary patronage. Encouraged by the electress's already granted 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.<sup>1349</sup> Towards the end of 1573, he asked her not only to further his

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<sup>1344</sup> "... zu bezeugung vnser gnedigst neigung ...", Anna to Johann Habermann, Annaburg 24 Dec. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 253 b – 254 a.

<sup>1345</sup> Weller (1566); Anna to Hieronymus Weller, Senftenberg 9 Oct. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 145 a – b.

<sup>1346</sup> Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 13 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 27 b and Annaburg 12 Jan. 1580, DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 4 b.

<sup>1347</sup> The genre of dedications in the sixteenth century has been analyzed by Schottenloher (1953); see Fox (1989), pp. 11-24 for a general, but insightful discussion of the dynamics of literary patronage in early modern England. Magdalena Drexler has examined aspects of the female consorts' patronage of theologians in early modern Brandenburg and Germany (see Drexler (2002/2003), pp. 366-406).

<sup>1348</sup> See Hasse (2000) for an in-depth analysis of confessionalization and censorship.

<sup>1349</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Leipzig 22 July 1568, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 54 a – b.

appointment in Leipzig (more on this below), but also to make sure that his semi-annual salary would be at least 300 Thalers.<sup>1350</sup> 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 he needed for its extensive repair.<sup>1351</sup>

Selnecker was not the only theologian who turned to Anna with explicit requests for money. Referring to an earlier assurance from the electress, another of Anna's favored theologians, Hieronymus Weller turned to Anna with a similar – though more modest – request for a “small bequest” during the Christmas of 1569.<sup>1352</sup>

Regrettably, Anna's replies to these requests are unknown, but the recurrences, combined with Weller's reference to the electress's promise and Selnecker's praise of Anna's generosity in his letter from 1582, suggest that she did indeed provide at least some of the help they asked for. Yet, when Selnecker earlier in his career (1565) asked Anna to intercede on his behalf in order to have his debt of 50 Thalers to August's chamber cancelled, she declined the request because his earlier attempts to have the debt cancelled had been declined by August.<sup>1353</sup> While this shows that not all requests were met, it also reveals that Anna considered them carefully. Moreover, the fact that she volunteered an explanation for declining the request can be read as an indication that she usually responded positively.

In the mid-1570s another service was added to the range of exchange that tied Selnecker and Anna together. Anna had, in the late 1560s, already accepted the responsibility for the education of a young nobleman from Denmark, Corfitz Grubbe, whose relatives she considered herself indebted to. Grubbe was first “in the house” of Elias Vogel, a local administrator in and later mayor of Dresden,<sup>1354</sup> he then attended the school in Pforta, and between 1575 and 1577 he was living with Selnecker and being tutored by him.<sup>1355</sup> As the numerous book dedications to Anna and her children,

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<sup>1350</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Gandersheim 28 Nov. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 56 a – b.

<sup>1351</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Leipzig 28 March 1582, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, pp. 10 a – 12 a.

<sup>1352</sup> Hieronymus Weller to Anna, Freiberg, Christmas 1569, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 49 a – 50 a. It remains unknown if Anna accommodated this request from Weller.

<sup>1353</sup> Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 13 June 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 27 b.

<sup>1354</sup> Regarding Vogel's biography see the funeral sermon by Balthasar Meisner (1597).

<sup>1355</sup> Regarding Corfitz Grubbe's early education, see Anna's letters to the principal (*Rector*) of the school in Pforta, Dresden 13 March 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 23 b – 24 a, and Dresden 11 Feb. 1574, DrHSA Kop.



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 her own children. Throughout Grubbe's years in Saxony she monitored his progress closely and this reinforced the trust that already existed between her and Selnecker.<sup>1356</sup>

Selnecker's dependency on and trust in Anna was considerable, as were his efforts to ensure her continued favor. In 1573 rumors circulated that Selnecker was sympathetic towards the teachings of Flacius Illyricus. When Selnecker became aware of these accusations, he immediately denied and argued against them in a letter to Anna.<sup>1357</sup> 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 such loss of favor.<sup>1358</sup> Finally, in 1584, when he again was accused of false teaching, he wrote a letter and begged her not to believe such malicious rumors.<sup>1359</sup> Both these examples and the previously mentioned inquiries regarding various forms of financial/material support suggest that Selnecker habitually used Anna as a broker between himself and the elector and this testifies to his greater trust in her support than in August.

In light of Anna's extensive patronage of Selnecker, there can be little doubt that she was one of his supporters when he obtained the professorate in Leipzig in 1574. Indeed, in November 1573, Selnecker explicitly asked her to intercede by August in support of the appointment and the conditions for his service.<sup>1360</sup> There is no trace of Anna's response or actions in this respect: among the approximately 500 drafts for

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517, fol. 150 a as well as the reply from the principal, Pforta 3 Feb. 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, pp. 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, fol. 159 a, and Lindemann to Anna, Leipzig 16 March 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, pp. 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, fol. 134 a – b. See also Grubbe's letter to Anna, Leipzig 9 Sep. [1577], DrHSA Loc. 8534/2, pp. 180 a – b. After his return to Denmark (presumably in the early 1580s), Grubbe served as secretary in the German Chancellery in Denmark (1584-1591), see "Frederik II's of Formynderstyrelsens Hof og Regeringspersonale", p. 188.

Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Mühlberg 18 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 91 b – 92 a; Annaburg 19 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 168 a (original page no. 16 a); and Dresden 11 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 134 a – b. In 1575, Anna requested that Selnecker bring Grubbe with him on his planned trip to Celle, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 91 b – 92 a in order to grant him that experience.

<sup>1356</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Dresden 15 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 31 a – b; Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Mühlberg 18 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 91 b – 92 a; Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Annaburg 19 April 1576, DrHSA Kop. 518, fol. 168 a (original page no. 16 a); Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Leipzig 7 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/4, pp. 193 a – 194 a; and Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 11 Dec. 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 134 a – b.

<sup>1357</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Dresden 9 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 53 a – b.

<sup>1358</sup> Anna to Nikolaus Selnecker, Dresden 10 May 1579, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 306 b (original page no. 140 b).

<sup>1359</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Leipzig 25 Sep. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, p. 22 a (original page no. 145 a)

<sup>1360</sup> Nikolaus Selnecker to Anna, Gandersheim 28 Nov. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 56 a – b.

letters prepared in Anna's name that have been preserved from 1573 and 1574, Selnecker's name does not appear once.<sup>1361</sup> The absence of a reference should not, however, be read as a proof that the electress was not involved. If she did exercise her influence, it happened – most likely – by way of the spoken word and this implies that the consort's potential influence on the distribution of higher offices within the *ecclesia* only can be disclosed indirectly, that is, either in other sources that refer to her influence and/or made probable on the basis of a meticulous reconstruction of her relationship between her and the candidate she may have furthered. Finally, Heide Wunder's argument that "smart wives" often concealed their influence has to be kept in mind. This gains significance when Anna's explicit recommendations for people in lower church offices, as discussed above, are compared to the absence of clear references to potential support for Selnecker in 1573/1574. This hypothesis implies that the consort would be exposed to criticism if she attempted to influence the distribution of the higher offices within the *ecclesia*.

The correspondence between Anna and Selnecker leave no doubt that he enjoyed extensive support from the electress. Their exchanges also reveal that it was his service in the electoral household that brought him under her protection, and this observation raises the questions regarding the consort's interactions with other court chaplains.

#### *The consort and the court chaplains*

There are several cases which confirm that the chaplains were the sources to whom the consorts turned for moral support and advice on a range of questions.

During the summer of 1568 when Anna was residing at Torgau, her court mistress Catharina Kleinin, who was responsible for the youngest children who remained in Dresden, informed Anna that there the children's *Nachwächterin* ("night watcher") was experiencing "fantasies and histories". The electress encouraged Kleinin to be patient with the "poor old woman" and instructed to her consult with Doctor Neefen who could provide the woman with a remedy that would strengthen her head (presumably her mind). But the court mistress should also "instruct the court chaplains to console [and] teach the poor old woman in order disperse of such fantasies".<sup>1362</sup>

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<sup>1361</sup> DrHSA Kop. 516 and Kop. 517.

<sup>1362</sup> "... den Hoffpredigern ... anzeigen lassen das sie die arme alte frau trosten vnterrichten vnd von solcher fantasy ab..ßen ...", Anna to Catharina Kleinin, Torgau 7 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 80 b – 81 a.

Anna also turned to her chaplains and the leading theologians of the territory with her own worries. When she worried that her daughter Elisabeth may be subject to dangerous influences in the Zwinglian/Calvinist Palatinate, she consulted with Philipp Wagner and enclosed written instructions from him with her own letter to Elisabeth.<sup>1363</sup> Two years later, Anna informed Johann Stössel that he could send his instructions (*Trostschrift*) to Elisabeth by way of her court chaplain.<sup>1364</sup> The content of the two texts is unknown, but given Anna's own admonitions to her daughter and the daughter's court mistress, it seems likely that Wagner's text focused on the correct Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist. This topic had dominated the preceding marriage negotiations and it recurred throughout Elisabeth's troubled marriage (see chapter 9). Stössel's text, on the other hand, was referred to as a *Trostschrift*, and was presumably a collection of biblical quotes that were intended to provide consolation for the difficulties with which humans were faced in this worldly life.

It can be assumed that the electress also turned to her chaplains upon the death of her children. When Alexander died at the age of eleven, Anna expressed her grief to Johann Niederstätter, the leading theologian in Freiberg,<sup>1365</sup> and to a number of relatives.<sup>1366</sup> In light of these letters and the ways in which she conferred with the court chaplains regarding other worries, it would have been highly unlikely if she did not turn to the same for support when she was grieving the loss of her children. The close relationship between the princely children and the court chaplains also supports this assumption.

As Selnecker, other court chaplains also served as preceptors for the princely children or were in other ways given responsibility for the children when Anna and August left their children in Dresden during their own travels. Hence, Christian Schütz sent reports on the well-being of the children in 1567,<sup>1367</sup> 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 Wagner to provide a

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<sup>1363</sup> Anna to Elisabeth's court mistress Anna von Wolfersdorf, Dresden 20 May 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 238 a – 239 a.

<sup>1364</sup> Anna to Johann Stössel, Heldburg 7 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 94 a

<sup>1365</sup> Von Weber (1865), p. 22.

<sup>1366</sup> See for examples Anna's letters to Wolf of Anhalt, Dresden 10 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 47 b – 48 a; to Sabina of Brandenburg, Dresden 11 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 48 a – b; to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 12 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 48 b – 49 a, and Torgau 21 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 49 a – b; and to Dorothea of Denmark, Torgau 22 Oct. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 50 a – 51 b.

<sup>1367</sup> Anna to Christian Schütz, Grimmenstein 21 April 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 211 a – b

catechism within which the “alphabet and the syllables” were at the beginning.<sup>1368</sup> Anna’s own education was also guided by the theologians who were 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.<sup>1369</sup> Her later exchanges with one of his successors Paul Noviomagus, court chaplain and preceptor of her brother Magnus from the mid-1540s,<sup>1370</sup> suggests that Anna already before her marriage also had developed a close personal relationship to him.

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 requests an update regarding another, even more secret but unspecified “subject in question”.<sup>1371</sup> 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. Anna also employed Noviomagus (as well as her the dowager queen’s 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 – that already had been postponed several times – during the coming summer. In an attempt to make sure that this would happen she asked Noviomagus,

We graciously request that if you discern that Her Grace [Dorothea] not is inclined to [undertake] the trip or finds reasons that hinder it, You will as far as it is possible remind her and appeal to her that Her Grace will pay us a motherly visit this summer.<sup>1372</sup>

She also stressed that both the chaplain and the physician should be prepared to accompany the Dowager Queen on the trip.

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<sup>1368</sup> Anna to Philipp Wagner, Bockendorf 30 July 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 92 b – 93 a.

<sup>1369</sup> See the article on Tileman van Hussen, see *DBL* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., vol. 6 (1980), pp. 616-617.

<sup>1370</sup> See the article on Paul Noviomagus *DBL* 1<sup>st</sup> ed. vol. 12 (1898), pp. 329-330.

<sup>1371</sup> Anna to Paul Noviomagus, Dresden 15 Feb. 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 119 a – b.

<sup>1372</sup> “ ... So begeren wir ... gantz gnedig an euch do Ir vermercken wurdet das Ire gnaden ... nit allerding dartzu genaigt oder derselben sonst allerlej bedencken zu vorhinderung dieser raise furfallen mochten, Ir wollet ... so viell an euch vnd muglich befurdern erinnern vnnnd anhalten helffen, das Ire gnad vns disen sommer ... mütterlich besuchen moge ...”, Anna to Paul Noviomagus and Cornelius Hamsfort, Dresden 20 April 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 127 a – b.

Whether it was the result of Noviomagus and Hamsfort's influence or not, Dorothea (as well as the chaplain and the physician) arrived in Saxony at the beginning of September 1560 and stayed until the end of November.<sup>1373</sup> Approximately one year later, the electress asked the chaplain and the physician to again accompany her mother on the planned trip to Saxony,<sup>1374</sup> and circumstances suggest that they all returned to Saxony for a visit in 1561.<sup>1375</sup>

When Anna attempted to influence her mother through the court chaplain it can only be read as an indication that he – as well as the physician – were among her closest employees. Anna knew both men personally and she evidently believed that her mother would listen to their advice. Noviomagus was also indebted not only to Dorothea but also to Anna and August: as Hamsfort's sons (see above), one and perhaps two of Noviomagus' sons attended the renowned school in Meissen during the 1560s,<sup>1376</sup> a privilege they doubtlessly obtained via Anna and her mother.

The most unequivocal expression 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.<sup>1377</sup> 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 the widow and her children. But Anna's support for the widow

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<sup>1373</sup> Anna refers to her arrival in a letter dated Dresden 8 Sep. 1560, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 143-144, and writing to her mother from Dresden 10 Dec. 1560, she expresses her assumption that her mother has arrived home safely, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 151 a – b.

<sup>1374</sup> Anna to Dorothea, Dresden 26 March 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 163 a – b and Anna to Paul Noviomagus and Cornelius Hamsfort, Dresden 26 March 1561, DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 167 a.

<sup>1375</sup> Although there are no direct references to Dorothea's visit, the letters she sent during the last ten days of May 1561 were dated at "Dorgia" [Torgau], and Anna too resided at Torgau during this period. 1 May 1561 Dorothea informed her eldest son Frederik II that they (her and her entourage) had arrived safely to Flensburg and would continue their trip the subsequent day. 22 June 1561 Dorothea wrote to Frederik II and told that her daughter Dorothea and Duke Christian (Anna's son) had arrived safely to Segeberg, i.e. they were on their way from Saxony to Kolding. See "Samling af Dronning Dorotheas Breve ...", letter no. 47-50, dated btw. 1 May and 22 June 1561, pp. 103-106. Regarding Anna's residence at Torgau between 23 April and 27 May 1561, see DrHSA Kop. 509, fol. 172 a – 175 b. Duke Christian stayed with his grandmother in Kolding from June 1561 until the summer of 1563 (regarding Christian's trip to Denmark see Dorothea to Frederik II, Segeberg 22 June 1561, letter no. 50 in "Samling af Dronning Dorotheas Breve"; regarding his return to Saxony see Anna to Dorothea, Dresden 16 May 1563, DrHSA Kop. 511, fol. 91 a – 92 a). The fact that Christian was to travel with Dorothea and her entourage from Saxony to Kolding makes it all the more plausible that both Hamsfort and Noviomagus accompanied the dowager queen to ensure the best protection of the prince.

<sup>1376</sup> Von Weber (1865), pp. 403-406, von Weber did not, however, identify the two boys correctly. See also Dorothea's brief reference to Noviomagus' sons in the Saxon schools in her letter to Anna, Kolding 7 Feb. 1567, DrHSA Loc. 8533/5, pp. 8 a – b.

<sup>1377</sup> Keul's last name appears as Claviger in Hasse (2000), pp. According to Zeißler (1856), p. 15, Keul served as court chaplain from c. 1558.

extended beyond the consoling words. In closing, she promised the widow protection, “with regard to the livelihood of you and your children, we will always keep you in gracious protection and support. So you can free yourself of this worry”.<sup>1378</sup> The explicit promise to protect and support the widow is remarkable and may have implied that 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 Ambrosy [from her female burden] and bestowed upon them a young daughter”.<sup>1379</sup>

During the fifteen years that followed Keul’s death, there is only one trace of the contact between Anna and the widowed Susanna,<sup>1380</sup> 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.<sup>1381</sup> 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 daughter and support them until they have their trousseau and can be provided for [that is, get married] in order to let you feel that we intend to let you and your children benefit from blessed husband’s faithful service. We also [will ensure] that your sons will be given good opportunities.<sup>1382</sup>

Hence, Anna 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

<sup>1378</sup> “... vnsem gewesenn trewen hoffprediger vnd sehlsorger” and “... waß dan dich vnnd deines kindes [versorgung] belangt wollen wir dich vnnd sie altzeit Im gnedigstenn befehl vnnd furderung haben. Derwegen du dich dieser sorg auch entschlahen magest ...”, Anna to “Susanna Magistrj Ambrosy Keulen nach gelass Witwe zu Dresd”, 19 April 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 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, pp. 253 a – 255 a.

<sup>1379</sup> “... das d Almechtig Goth vnser hoffpredigers Magisterj Ambrosy weib heut dato gnedigklich entbund vnd sie mit einer Jungen tochter ... begabt hatt”, Anna to Dorothea von Schönburg, Dresden 15 Sep. 1565, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 45 b.

<sup>1380</sup> While residing at Annaburg in the fall of 1579, Anna requested Susanna Keul’s presence, see Anna’s letter to the Town Council in Freiberg, Annaburg 12 Oct. 1579, Kop. 521, fol. 340 a (original page no. 174 a).

<sup>1381</sup> “Susanna Magri Ambrosy Keills hinterlassenen Wittbe” to Anna, Freiberg 23 Oct. 1582, DrHSA Loc. 8537/7, pp. 61 a – 62 a (original page no. 34 a – 35 a).

<sup>1382</sup> “... [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, domit du zuspuren das wir gemeint sein [dich vnd deine kinder] Ires Mannes ... seligen getreue dienst geniessen zulassen[,] auch deine sohne sonst desto besser vnterbracht werden möge ...”, Anna to “Magisteri Ambrosy Keulß nachgelassene Withwe zu Freiberg”, Lichtenberg 4 Nov. 1582, DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 78 b – 79 b.

Anna replied to the widow as well as the reference to her earlier assurance underline the sincerity of the electress's promises.

All of the examples discussed above reveal that the court chaplains and their families lived in close contact with the female consort. 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 until the end of the Thirty Years War, Sommer maintains, the court chaplains in Electoral Saxony gained almost all the rights associated with the later office of the territorial bishops ("quasi-landesbischöfliche Rechte").<sup>1383</sup> Although Sommer focuses his analysis on the first half of the seventeenth century, the Saxon court chaplains did not gain their exceptionally privileged status suddenly. Their powerful position developed gradually and, corresponding to this, Hans-Peter Hasse also ascribes considerable influence on the confessional stance of the territory to the court chaplains in his analysis of censorship and confessionalization in the 1560s-1570s.<sup>1384</sup>

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 escapes the attention of the historian who is forced to rely on the written accounts. If however, the Saxon chaplains indeed enjoyed *quasi-landesbischöfliche Rechte*, it implies that the consort is likely to have been privy to the most important aspects of and decisionmaking within the church administration. The relatively sparse reflection of these subjects in Anna's correspondence should not be taken to imply that she did not engage with these subjects. Rather, the physical proximity of the court chaplains at enabled her to engage – inconspicuously – in these questions. In chapter 9 it will be demonstrated that when the leading theologians were unable to communicate verbally with Anna, both she and they addressed the questions concerning the confessional stance of the territory in writing.

### **Confessional patronage and the duties of a Christian consort**

As the *Kirchenmutter* in Saxony, Anna was expected to be a generous supporter of the church and its servant as well as an embodiment and active promoter of Christian

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<sup>1383</sup> Sommer (1995), pp. 316-317.

<sup>1384</sup> Hasse (2000), pp. 213-214 and 304-332.

morals and ideals. In her management of this role, these ideals were transformed to support for individuals. The most visible support was her literary patronage of several theologians or intercessions/recommendations for people who sought positions within the Saxon church. Most recipients were (former) servants and/or their relatives or servants of her relatives.

The isolated reference to the electress's plans for a girls' school is significant both because it appears as the only case in which she planned an institution (rather than supported individuals/families) and because it dealt with the education of girls. The explicit reference to the confession of the desired schoolmistress for the planned school emphasizes how closely the ideals of the household and the housekeeping were linked to religious prescriptions and reveals Anna's desire and efforts to see this maintained.

As the didactic literature prescribed, her duty to protect the subjects entailed the protection of their souls and in order to facilitate this, the clergy required extensive support. The ultimate responsibility of the secular authorities including the female consort regarded the promotion of God's word (that is primarily their subjects' adherence to the Ten Commandments). In an attempt to fulfill this duty, the authorities had two main tools: legislation and improved education. Anna's request to Caspar Peucer regarding the worrying prevalence of adultery confirms her participation in the development and implementation of the religiously informed legislation. In contrast, Anna does not appear to have played an active role in the government of the schools within the territory.

Although Anna's support to the church and the wider *ecclesia* predominantly took the form of patronage of individuals/families, the significance should not be underestimated. As demonstrated by Hans-Peter Hasse, the patronage of specific works and/or theologians was an important component of the Lutheran confessionalization of Saxony.<sup>1385</sup> By way of her support to Selnecker, Weller, Habermann and other theologians, the electress contributed to the dissemination of the "true" word of God. Hence, through her patronage Anna could influence both the various institutions within the *ecclesia* (schools, parishes, and universities) and the confessional stance of the territory. In addition, though arguably to a lesser degree, her recommendations of specific theologians for positions outside of Saxony enabled her to influence the composition of the clergy in other Protestant territories.

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<sup>1385</sup> Hasse (2000), particularly his conclusion pp. 375-382.



While the consort could, by way of her patronage, exercise considerable influence over the church, her position as a “mother of the church” was characterized by a pronounced tension between her gender on the one side and her status as a secular authority on the other. The theologians left no doubt that the consort constituted an integral part of the worldly authorities and in this capacity she had a responsibility to ensure that her subjects heard and adhered to God’s word. Hence, the consort’s involvement in the matters of the church raised questions not only about the appropriate order of the genders, it also touched upon Luther’s doctrine of the Two Regiments and the extent to which the worldly authorities were accountable to God for their government. Both aspects made the consort’s role as *Kirchenmutter* a hazardous terrain which she would have to negotiate with care. Anna’s appeal to Peucer concerned the need to act against the moral offences within Saxony, shows that she identified for herself – as a secular authority – a responsibility for the dissemination of God’s word and the adherence to Christian morals within Saxony. Nevertheless, the electress also was aware of gender-specific norms she was expected to adhere to. This was most clearly expressed in the “religious justification” for her actions, which she expressed in the letter to the Archbishop of Salzburg. This, combined with her directness towards him, reveal that tension also can be located between her partial exclusion from theological discussions and her daily contact to several theologians within the princely household. Her close relationship to the court chaplains (and, of course, to her husband) not only meant that she was presumably included in the considerations pertaining to the government of the church. The same contact also conditioned her behavior towards other learned men. Hence, although she was acutely aware of the gender-specific limits that defined her role in relation to theological discussions, the familiarity with these learned men meant that she was used to and thus felt comfortable addressing theological questions with them.

In contrast to the prominent role that the female consort is often ascribed as a patron of ecclesiastical building projects,<sup>1386</sup> Anna’s correspondence does not suggest that this constituted an important part of the responsibilities she identified for herself as *Kirchenmutter*. According to von Weber, the Annakirche in Dresden was named after Anna. He also stressed that the electress supported the construction of a new church in

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<sup>1386</sup> See for example Oresko (2004), pp. 41-43; Bryant (2004), pp. 93-95; and Watanabe-O’Kelly (2004).

Stolpen and the decoration of the church in Zerst.<sup>1387</sup> In spite of these examples and an isolated exchange with Lucas Cranach the Younger regarding the commissioned works for the chapels in Annaburg and Augustusburg (that is, in the chapels of the two residences with which the electoral couple considered themselves most closely associated, hence the names) and, at least, two portraits<sup>1388</sup> (presumably also for the rebuilt residences), this form of patronage appears marginal in the case of the Saxon electress.

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<sup>1387</sup> Von Weber (1865), p. 361.

<sup>1388</sup> Lucas Cranach to Anna, Wittenberg 25 May 1573, Loc. 8534/2, pp. 118 a – b, and Anna to Lucas Cranach, Annaburg 24 Oct. 1573, Kop. 517, fol. 118 a – b.

## Chapter 9

### The Consort and the Theological-Dynastic Disputes

The continuing theological disputes that dominated the second half of the sixteenth century implied that the consorts' display of confession-specific forms of piety became highly political. Because the theologians ascribed great power to prayers and because this was projected onto the consorts as "pillars of prayer" they became active defenders of the "true" faith. However, when a consort's prayers were perceived to influence the well-being of the church, it not only meant that her beliefs and practices were immensely important, but also that the boundary between her religious practices and her direct (and in the views of her contemporaries, inappropriate) interferences in matters of the church was blurred. The same boundary was challenged further by the frequent and complex intersections of confessional and dynastic tensions.

Departing from these observations, the goal of this chapter is to show just how important the confessional stance of princely women could be in the context of the disputes of the latter half of the sixteenth century. During the 1570s, Anna and August's daughter Elisabeth became the subject of an open struggle between her parents and the dynasty she had married into: both parties wanted to ensure her confessional and dynastic allegiance. Elisabeth's increasingly difficult situation had a direct impact on Anna's confessional stance and the ways in which she acted on the basis of her beliefs. In order to grasp the political implications of these developments, the religious beliefs of both women must be considered. With the exception of the works by August Kluckhohn and Friedrich von Bezold (published in the late nineteenth century) the marriage between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir has received very limited attention in the vast literature on the confessional developments within the Empire during the sixteenth century. Whereas Kluckhohn and von Bezold viewed the tragic development of the marriage as a reflection of the greater confessional debates,<sup>1389</sup> Anna's correspondence shows that it also was a matrix within which tensions were born. Hence, by way of the marriage, Anna and Elisabeth's personal beliefs came to influence the confessional developments of the two most important Protestant territories of the latter half of the sixteenth-century and, albeit indirectly, the confessional developments of the Empire at large.

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<sup>1389</sup> Kluckhohn (1874) and von Bezold (1879).

One of the most dramatic episodes in the heated conflicts between the competing branches of Protestantism was the so-called “fall of the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists” in 1574. Consequently, the crisis of the Saxon Philippism during the 1560s-1570s has been the subject of numerous studies and the electress often figures prominently in the accounts.<sup>1390</sup> While the nineteenth-century biographies of Anna tended to lament her assumed involvement in the brutal treatment of the Crypto-Calvinists,<sup>1391</sup> the theologians who authored the funeral sermons held upon her death praised both Anna and August for the force with which they eradicated any deviations from Luther’s teachings.<sup>1392</sup> While the electress’s correspondence confirm that she was an active participant in the theological discussions, a re-examination of her confessional stance during the 1560s and 1570s also shows that the historiography oversimplifies reality when it classifies Anna as a strict Gnesio-Lutheran.<sup>1393</sup>

When the confessional developments in Saxony during the 1560s and 1570s are viewed in light of the dramatic marital conflicts between Anna and August’s daughter Elisabeth and Johann Casimir of the Palatinate, the paramount importance ascribed to Elisabeth’s confession by “both of her dynasties” is revealed. Moreover, the development of the marriage suggests that this had a direct impact upon both Anna’s personal stance in the confessional disputes and the much-debated “fall of the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists” in 1574. The same approach reveals that the electress changed her religious stance considerably between the mid-1560s and the early 1570s and that her increased theological awareness during this period was prompted by two interrelated dynastic developments: the relationship between the Albertine and the Ernestine Wettins and the relationship between the Albertine Wettins and the Wittelsbach dynasty in the Palatinate. Finally, the analysis shows that Anna was able to re-fashion

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<sup>1390</sup> See Wustmann (1905); Kolb (1977); Koch (1986); Koch (1992); Hasse (2000); Bruning (2004); and Hasse (2004).

<sup>1391</sup> See for example von Weber (1865), p. 380, “Ihre [Anna’s] Unversöhnlichkeit [towards Pecuer] bleibt ein trüber Fleck auf dem sonst so reinen Bilde”.

<sup>1392</sup> See especially the funeral sermon by Nikolaus Selnecker, printed as the first sermon in the second part of *Sechs und Vierzig Leichpredigten* (1588), pp. 8-9. Similar accounts recur in the third sermon by Martin Mirus, pp. 60-62 & 69; the ninth sermon by Johann Habermann, p. 193, and in the twelfth sermon by Johann Wintzer, pp. 254-255.

<sup>1393</sup> For characteristics of Anna and Elisabeth as “fanatical Lutherans” and/or Gnesio-Lutherans, see Kluckhohn (1874), p. 145; von Bezold (1879); and Press (1970), pp. 268-269. In spite of the problems inherent in the terms “Crypto-Calvinists”, “Philippists”, “Gnesio-Lutherans” and “Flacians”, they will be employed in the following. The two most conspicuous problems are: (1) the changing content attributed to the terms which imply that any distinction between “Crypto-Calvinism” and “Philippism”, on the one side, and “Gnesio-Lutherans” and “Flacians”, on the other, will depend upon interpretations; and (2) the fact that all terms often are implied to characterize a given individual without considerations of the possible changes in the individual’s belief. Both Kolb (1977) and Koch (1986) discuss the terms critically.

theological questions as dynastic questions, thereby creating a context within which women could legitimately discuss theological questions in spite of the intellectual inferiority that was ascribed to them.

The contact between the Albertine Wettins and the Wittelsbachs in the Palatinate intensified during the late 1560s and the friendship was sealed with the marriage of Anna and August's eldest daughter Elisabeth and Johann Casimir of the Palatinate in 1570. Due to the already existing dynastic ties between the Wittelsbach and the Ernestine Wettins (Johann Casimir's older sisters Elisabeth and Dorothea Susanna were married to Johann Friedrich and Johann Wilhelm of Saxony-Weimar, respectively) this marriage also marked a change in the ties between Electoral Saxony and their Ernestine cousins and between the Wittelsbachs and the Ernestine Wettins.

The decision to situate Anna's responses to the theological disputes within this dynastic context reflects the connections the electress made in her letters. When she addressed the theological developments, it was usually in relation to the personal beliefs of herself or her closest relatives or it was done in letters to her closest female relatives. However, as it will appear, a stronger focus on the dynastic background for Anna and Elisabeth's perceptions of the confessional developments in Saxony and the Palatinate brings to light several aspects that alter the established narratives of these historical processes and disclose one of the most significant arguments with which a woman could justify her involvement in a confessional dispute. However, before the two women's involvement in and reactions to these developments can be addressed a brief chronological overview of the main developments is necessary.

#### **Overview: The fall of the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists**

By way of rank, economic superiority, and the authority over the University of Wittenberg (the ideological center of the Reformation and the Protestant territories), the Saxon rulers and their consorts held and recognized a particular responsibility for Protestantism. When the new faith was subject to repeated threats of fragmentation during the 1560s and 1570s they responded with a fervent and persistent ambition to bring about the basis for unity: the development and recognition of the "Formula of Concord" (signed by several Protestant rulers in 1577 and published in Saxony 1580). In retrospect, the difficult path towards the "Book of Concord" can be followed from

the late 1550s and during following three decades the confessional stance of Electoral Saxony underwent drastic changes.

There is widespread agreement that the theological position of the electorate after Melancthon's death in 1560 became increasingly fraught with internal contradictions and struggles. A series of theological questions were at play in the disputes, but the main issue was related to the teachings on Christ's real or symbolic presence in the Eucharist.<sup>1394</sup>

When the confessional stance of the Palatinate was subject to intense debate during the diet in 1566, Friedrich III, Elector Palatine, enjoyed significant support from August who consistently argued that the Protestantism of the Palatinate, despite various deviations from Luther's teachings, should enjoy the recognition that was established in the Peace of Augsburg. In spite of the overt Saxon support for the Palatinate at the Diet of 1566, one should be careful not to overestimate the friendliness of the relations between Electoral Saxony and the Palatinate at this point. Because Friedrich III was the father-in-law of August's archenemy, the Ernestine Duke Johann Friedrich II of Saxony, the trust between the two electors and their closest relatives could develop only slowly and both Saxony and the Palatinate had to walk a fine line between dynastic obligations and their confessional policies/ambitions. Nevertheless, the 1566 Diet marked a concerted effort of rapprochement between the two territories and their ruling dynasties. Two years later the negotiations concerning a marriage between Elisabeth of Saxony and Johann Casimir of the Palatinate were initiated. However, the Saxon support for the Zwinglian/Calvinist Heidelberger Catechism (published 1565 and disputed during the Diet in 1566)<sup>1395</sup> and the ensuing marriage negotiations between the two ruling houses revived a range of disputes between the different Protestant branches, especially those related to the disagreements over the understanding of the Eucharist that had divided the competing Protestant factions since the 1520s.<sup>1396</sup>

The developments in Ernestine Saxony (Saxony-Weimar) compounded the difficulties. Upon Johann Friedrich's imprisonment in 1567, the government of the territory passed to his younger brother Johann Wilhelm, who took an increasingly strict

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<sup>1394</sup> Kolb (1977); Koch (1986); Koch (1992); Kolb (1999); Karant-Nunn (1997), particularly pp. 119-124.

<sup>1395</sup> Thompson (1954) provides a concise overview of the confessional development in the Palatinate during the 1550s and 1560s and discusses the sources that were used by Friedrich III and his theologians. Although Thompson's focus is on the Palatine Church Order (1563), he also addresses the relationship between this document and the Catechism from 1565.

<sup>1396</sup> These developments will be discussed at greater length below.

Lutheran stance towards both Friedrich III in the Palatinate and Albertine Saxony. Johann Wilhelm's theologians accused their colleagues in Wittenberg of distorting Luther's teachings and being Crypto-Calvinists. During the fall of 1568 August managed to convince Johann Wilhelm that the theologians of the two "Saxonies" should come together in a colloquium in an attempt to reach a compromise. However, the Altenburger Colloquy (October 1568 to March 1569) had the opposite effect. Subsequently, the theologians around Matthias Flacius Illyricus at the University of Jena attacked their colleagues in Wittenberg and within the electoral household with increased intensity.<sup>1397</sup>

The publication of a new catechism by the theologians in Wittenberg (1571) elicited new accusations about Crypto-Calvinism within Electoral Saxony and sparked a brief internal dispute between the theologians within the Albertine territories. Yet, the theologians managed to convince their prince that their interpretation did not differ from Luther's own words.<sup>1398</sup> Calm was restored, though not for long. In 1572, Georg Listhenius was appointed court chaplain in the electoral household and shortly thereafter a severe dispute developed between him and his senior colleague Christian Schütz.<sup>1399</sup>

In March 1573, Duke Johann Wilhelm in Weimar died and August gained control over Ernestine Saxony as the guardian of the minor heir. As one of the first steps, the elector sought to rid the neighboring territory of the "Flacian" theologians who had repeatedly criticized his management of the church. The theologians who refused to sign the *Consensus Dresdensis* (October 1571), in which the Wittenberger theologians defined the "true" understanding of the Eucharist, were simply expelled from the territory. While this process of restoring the true teachings in Ernestine Saxony was underway, an anonymously published account of the conflicting interpretations of the Eucharist appeared: the *Exegesis perspicua & ferme integra controuersiae de Sacra Coena* (1574). This caused renewed doubts concerning the teachings promoted by the Wittenberg theologians.<sup>1400</sup> Around the same time, Georg Listhenius accidentally intercepted a letter that Johann Stössel, the superintendent in Pirna, had sent to Christian Schütz, and this letter enabled Listhenius to convince August that the two

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<sup>1397</sup> Koch (1986) provides a concise summary of these developments. Hasse (2000) discusses the outcome of the colloquy in relation to the subsequent ban on "Flacian books" in Electoral Saxony, pp. 71-83.

<sup>1398</sup> Regarding the 1571 catechism, see Wustmann (1905), pp. 4-5; and Hasse (2000), pp. 83-110.

<sup>1399</sup> Wustmann (1905), pp. 5-6.

<sup>1400</sup> Wustmann (1905), pp. 5-13; and Hasse (2000), pp. 140-152. [Cureus] *Exegesis perspicua* (1574).

correspondents were plotting the secret introduction of Calvinism to Saxony. The elector ordered a search of Stössel's house and the confiscated material revealed that several of Anna and August's most trusted confidants, including Caspar Peucer and Georg Cracow (August's negotiator in the marriage agreement between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir), were so-called Crypto-Calvinists and during the subsequent years brutal actions were taken against the accused.<sup>1401</sup> Meanwhile the confessional stance of Electoral Saxony was radically altered and – ironically – came to resemble the position of the Gnesio-Lutherans in Ernestine Saxony.

When Anna's reactions to these events are examined below, particular attention will be paid to the ways in which the beliefs held by herself, her daughter, and other relatives shaped the developments.

#### **Anna of Saxony and the rapprochement between Saxony and the Palatinate**

Although Anna corresponded with both Friedrich III and his first wife Maria from the early 1560s, there is no evidence to suggest that she influenced the Saxon stance during the Diet in Augsburg in 1566. The earliest preserved letter from Anna to a member of the electoral family in the Palatinate was addressed to the Electress Palatine in April 1561 and its contents reveal that they had first met only a short time prior.<sup>1402</sup> Just before the Diet in 1566, the contact between the ruling families of the two electorates intensified. During the spring of 1566 Friedrich III visited Leipzig, though this time his wife remained with her daughters in Weimar.<sup>1403</sup> Immediately upon Friedrich's departure from Leipzig, his relationship with Anna was reinforced by the exchange of recipes for health remedies, an exchange that indicates some degree of trust (see chapter 6).<sup>1404</sup>

However, even if the contact between Anna and the electoral couple of the Palatinate gradually intensified around the mid-1560s, the confessional questions are not addressed in any of the letters exchanged between them. Even when Anna, after her safe return from the Augsburg, sent a long summary of the Diet to her mother, the confessional questions that had figured prominently during the discussions at the Diet

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<sup>1401</sup> See the references provided in the more detailed account below.

<sup>1402</sup> Anna to Maria, Electress Palatine, Dresden 30 April 1561, DrHSA, Kop. 509, fol. 168 a – b.

<sup>1403</sup> Anna to Maria, Electress Palatine, Zwickau 3 March 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 98 b – 99 a.

<sup>1404</sup> Anna to Friedrich III, Elector Palatine, Leipzig 2 Feb. 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 88 b – 89 a, and Kluckhohn's comment in *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. I, pp. 667-668, footnote 2.



were absent.<sup>1405</sup> Only after the marriage negotiations between Saxony and the Palatinate were well underway in 1568 does the subject enter into Anna's correspondence. Hence, it was by way of a dynastic question (Elisabeth's potential marriage) that the electress became involved in the confessional disputes.

Before Anna's reactions to the prospect of a marriage between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir can be addressed, the background for the marriage negotiations must be outlined. The first point to be emphasized is that the marriage negotiations between the Palatinate and Electoral Saxony were initiated as soon as the dynastic context allowed it. Already in 1566 Johann Casimir suggested himself as a prospective husband to Elisabeth, but August rejected the offer. His rejection is likely to have been motivated both by the diverging confessional stance of the two territories and because of the severe hostility that characterized his relationship to Johann Casimir's brothers-in-law. As mentioned above, Johann Friedrich was a son-in-law of Friedrich III and the correspondence between the elector Palatine and his daughter and Saxon son-in-law was frequent and confidential.<sup>1406</sup> However, after August had defeated the Ernestines during the spring of 1567,<sup>1407</sup> a window of opportunity was created. When Johann Friedrich was transferred to the Emperor's custody (1567), his younger brother Johann Wilhelm took over the government of Saxony-Weimar and both he and August expressed the desire to reconcile the two branches of their dynasty. The attempts to reconcile the differences between the two "Saxonies" continued until March 1569 when the colloquy in Altenburg was dissolved without the desired agreement. However, from the spring of 1567 until March 1569, the hopes for a reconciliation were kept alive and all three parties (the Albertines, the Ernestines, and the Wittelbacher) remained on good terms. It was during this time that the marriage between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir was settled; the engagement took place on 26 November 1568 and the couple was married on 4 June 1570.<sup>1408</sup>

The negotiations that preceded the engagement focused on two points: Elisabeth's material and confessional security. Of these two aspects, the confessional difference between Johann Casimir and Elisabeth represented the greatest obstacle. Johann

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<sup>1405</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 10 June 1566, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 117 a – 120 a.

<sup>1406</sup> See Kluckhohn's introduction to *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, p. XLII and the numerous letters exchanged between Friedrich III and his daughters and sons-in-law in Ernestine Saxony.

<sup>1407</sup> Regarding the defeat of Johann Friedrich of Saxony in 1567, see Keller (2002), pp. 133-135.

<sup>1408</sup> *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 226-231; and Anna's notification of the engagement to Dorothea Susanna in Weimar, Dresden 26 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 136 a – b.

Casimir's religious stance was not entirely clear, but it was widely assumed that he shared his father's Zwinglian/Calvinist beliefs. With the experience Anna and August had gained from their attempted marriage mediations between Bavaria and Denmark (Duchess Maria and King Frederik II, see chapter 4), the electoral couple insisted that Johann Casimir sign a declaration in which he confirmed his accord with the understanding of the Eucharist as defined in the Augsburg Confession. Johann Casimir did as requested and, in the same declaration, he guaranteed Elisabeth's freedom to practice her religion and agreed that a Lutheran chaplain was assigned to her future household in the Palatinate.<sup>1409</sup> However, even after all of this, the concerns persisted.

Although the negotiations started – at the latest – in June 1568,<sup>1410</sup> there is no trace of the subject in Anna's letter-books until the engagement was official. As late as June 1568, Elisabeth of Mecklenburg informed Anna that rumors about a conflict between Saxony and the Palatinate (presumably in relation to German involvement in the French Wars of Religion) were circulating. Anna replied, "we know – praised be God – only that his beloved [August] is in friendly agreement and on good terms with the Count Palatine, Elector [Friedrich III] and his beloved son, the Count Palatine Casimir".<sup>1411</sup> Anna did not mention a word about the marriage negotiations to her most trusted confidante.

Finally, on 19 November, only a week before the engagement was made official, Anna revealed to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg that Johann Casimir had arrived in Saxony in order to accompany August on a hunt<sup>1412</sup> and, on 26 November, Anna notified Dorothea Susanna in Weimar that August on this very day,

[U]pon the friendly and Christian appeal of the highborn prince Your Beloved friendly and beloved brother the Count Palatine Casimir has promised our friendly and beloved daughter Elisabeth in marriage [to him]. May the almighty God, and founder of the Holy estate of marriage, grant his blessings to his marriage [so that it will] enhance and preserve the friendship [between] [the dynasties] and benefit and

<sup>1409</sup> Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 85-98; Kluckhohn's commentary in *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 226-231, and von Bezold's introduction to *Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir*, vol. I, pp. 41-44.

<sup>1410</sup> *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 226-227; von Bezold's introduction to *Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir*, vol. I, pp. 41-44; and DrHSA Loc. 9977/29 "Pfaltzgrauen Johan Casimiren zc ... ansuchen ... vmb Fräulein Elisabeth Herzoginn zu Saxenn zc. Belangende. 1568".

<sup>1411</sup> "... wir wissen Goth lob nicht anders dan S.L. [August] stehen mit dem Pfaltzgraffen Friederich Churf vnd S.L. Sohne Pfaltzgrauen Casimir In freuntlicher einigkait vnd gar guttem vertrauen ...", Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 3 June 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 62 a – 63 b.

<sup>1412</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 19 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 133 b – 134 a.

[ensure/contribute to] the salvation of both [of the involved] persons.<sup>1413</sup>

On the same day, Anna also apologized to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg by relating that Johann Casimir's constant presence prevented her from replying to her latest letter.

This "sudden" appearance of Johann Casimir in Anna's letters to the Duchesses of Mecklenburg and Saxony-Weimar suggests that they already had corresponded about the ongoing negotiations.<sup>1414</sup> This interpretation is supported by the fact that Anna did confer with other relatives prior to the final agreement of the engagement. In October 1568, Frederik II expressed his unconditional support for the union and the Danish dowager queen also expressed her approval, albeit with some reservations concerning the spiritual safety of her granddaughter.<sup>1415</sup>

However, a week after the official engagement, Anna sent several notifications: to her mother; to her sister-in-law, Sidonia in Braunschweig,<sup>1416</sup> to Landgrave Wilhelm of Hessen and his wife,<sup>1417</sup> and to Caspar Peucer.<sup>1418</sup> The letter to Dorothea in Denmark is particularly interesting as Anna elaborated on the final agreement. Johann Casimir had declared,

[Both] verbally and in writing, his agreement with the religion and particularly the articles concerning the holy sacrament of the altar, in a way that both his beloved [August] and we as well as our court chaplains consider it sufficient.<sup>1419</sup>

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<sup>1413</sup> "... heut dato dem hochgebornen fursten E.L. freuntlichen geliebten brudern Pfaltz/grauff Casimirn vff desselbten lieb freuntlich Christlich suchen ... vnser freuntliche geliebte tochter ... Elisabeth heut dato ehlich zuuormahelen F versproch[.] ... Der Almechtig Goth, vnnd annfencliche Stiffter des heiligen ehestandes wolle seinem Gotlichen segen darzu geben das diese heirat ... Zu vermehring bestendiger ... freuntschaft vnd Wohlfart vnnd beiden Personenen zu Ire seligkait geraiche ...", Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 26 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 136 a – b.

<sup>1414</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 26 Nov. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 136 b.

<sup>1415</sup> Frederik II of Denmark to Anna, Roskilde 26 Oct. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 9970/30, p. 28. In her letter, dated Kolding 8 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 9977/30, pp. 29-30, Dorothea of Denmark refers to an earlier (lost?) letter in which she had expressed her reservations.

<sup>1416</sup> Anna to Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, Dresden 7 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 139 b – 141 a.

<sup>1417</sup> Anna to Wilhelm of Hessen, Dresden 7 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 141 a – b, and Anna to Sabina of Hessen, Dresden 7 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 142 b – 143 a.

<sup>1418</sup> Anna to Caspar Peucer, Dresden 7 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 141 b – 142 b.

<sup>1419</sup> "... sich auch d Religion vnnd sondlich des Artikuls halben von dem heiligen ... Sacrament des Altars muntlich vnd In schrifften dermassen erkleret, das SL vnnd wir auch vnser hoffprediger ... [fur] gut genuge haben ...", Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 2 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 138 b – 139 b. The declaration to which Anna refers is preserved in DrHSA Loc. 9970/30, pp. 37-39 and pp. 40-41. In DrHSA Loc. 9970/30, p. 35 reference is made to the consultation with "den herf[n] hoftheologe M Philippa vnd M Johanne" regarding the Eucharist. This was presumably Philipp Wagner and – perhaps – Johann Stössel or an unidentified "M. Triller" mentioned by Zeibler (1856), p. 15. During the negotiations, Paul Eber (the foremost theologian of Saxony) sent Anna a ten-page autograph report on the implications of a bi-confessional marriage. Unfortunately, the report is undated, see DrHSA Loc. 9970/30, pp. 17 a – 22 b (p. 22 b is

Almost all of the letters of notification contained similar references to Johann Casimir's declaration of his accord with the understanding of the Eucharist as defined in the Augsburg Confession. These frequent references to the confessional preconditions of the engagement indicate that the negotiations intensified Anna's awareness of the divergences between the different branches of Protestantism. However, in the letter to her mother, Anna also expressed a degree of skepticism about the sincerity of Johann Casimir's declaration. She wrote that August, she herself and the chaplains were satisfied with his declaration "if the mouth corresponds to the convictions in his heart".<sup>1420</sup> These subtle misgivings were not, however, revealed in any of the other notifications Anna sent to relatives and friends upon the engagement.

Anna doubts increased the concerns of Dorothea, who replied that,

The only [aspect] of the mentioned marriage that is disagreeable to us is the religion[. A]s your beloved has understood from us, we are reluctant to give our children in such dangers, because the Palatinate is, as it is commonly know, not of our confession.<sup>1421</sup>

However, Dorothea would seek consolation in the holy example of Monica, the mother of Augustine. In the same way as Monica who made her husband and mother-in-law accept the Christian faith, Dorothea wrote, "your beloved daughter can with the help of God and instructions from your beloved and your Lord [August] do much good in the matters of religion".<sup>1422</sup> In this last sentence, Dorothea construes her granddaughter as a proxy through which Anna and August could win back the Palatinate for the "right" beliefs.

In accordance with the influence princely women had on the marriage of their closest relatives (see chapter 4), the letter from Dorothea was preserved with the extensive documents that were produced during the course of the marriage negotiations, including the final marriage contract.<sup>1423</sup> What is of particular interest here is that it

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particularly relevant because it reveals that the report was addressed to Anna). Anna's consultation with the theologians is discussed by Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 88-97.

<sup>1420</sup> Anna to Dorothea of Denmark, Dresden 2 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 138 b – 139 b.

<sup>1421</sup> "... Was vns aber in abbermelte Heirat misfellig ... Ist allein die Religion wie dein L vor der Zeit von vns ... verstanden, das wir vnserer kinder vngern in solchen gefarlicheit geben wolten dan die Pfaltz ist wie meniglichen bewust nit vnsern bekentnus ... Also auch kan DL dochter mit gots hiff vnd durch deiner L vnd Ires Herren anweisung auch vil guts in religions sach schaffen ...", Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 8 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 9977/30, pp. 29-30.

<sup>1422</sup> Dorothea of Denmark to Anna, Kolding 8 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Loc. 9977/30, pp. 29-30.

<sup>1423</sup> See DrHSA Loc. 9977/30 "Heiratß-Handlung zwüschem Pfaltzgrauen Johann Casimim zc Vnd Frälein Elisabeth ... belangende. 1568-1570."

shows how the intersection between the confessional disputes within the Empire and a princely marriage inevitably brought the women into the discussion on theological questions.

With Dorothea's repeated warnings in mind Anna took all possible precautions in order to protect her daughter from the distorted teachings and thereby to secure her spiritual safety. Once Elisabeth had married and moved to the Palatinate, Anna abided by the dowager queen's instructions and guided the young Elisabeth in an attempt to win over her husband – and possibly his relatives – to the true faith. These instructions and the development of the marriage will be explored further below.

At this point Anna's few comments on and reactions to the marriage of her daughter have to be considered in relation to the electress's own confessional stance. Drawing upon the narratives that were developed by Kluckhohn and von Bezold, who only paid attention to the developments in Saxony after the marriage of Elisabeth and Johann Casimir, Anna is – as mentioned above – generally characterized as a strict Lutheran. However, this projection of her later convictions onto the late 1560s does not correspond to the content of the sources and one should not jump to the conclusion that Anna at this point was particularly “Lutheran” rather than “Philippist”.

The efforts made by August, his councilors and the Saxon theologians reveal that the concerns about the confessional difference between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir were treated with seriousness throughout Saxony. Nothing suggests that Anna, at this point, was less “Philippist” than her husband, his councilors, or even her brother in Denmark. On the contrary, her reactions to the “Flacians” in Ernestine Saxony reveal her misgivings towards the foremost group of Gnesio-Lutherans throughout the 1560s. This deserves further attention because it clearly demonstrates that the marriage of Elisabeth and Johann Casimir played a significant part in the confessional developments of the 1570s.

### **Anna of Saxony and the “Flacians”**

Writing to Anna of Hohenlohe in 1567, Anna referred to the “Illirische” preachers as “inflammatory and belligerent”. According to the electress, Flacius Illyricus and his supporters had only had ill intentions and wanted to cause conflicts among the

Protestants.<sup>1424</sup> A few months later, Anna updated Elisabeth of Mecklenburg on the most recent developments of the disagreement with the “Flacians” regarding the doctrine of justification and the role of good deeds. She then enclosed Georg Major’s most recent work on the subject with which the “Flacians” now seemed to be content.<sup>1425</sup>

In spite of Anna’s close scrutiny of and harsh comments about the “Flacians” she encouraged the theologians from Wittenberg to seek a compromise with the “Flacians” from Ernestine Saxony during the planned colloquy in Altenburg. Yet, she had no doubt that the theologians from Electoral Saxony were the ones who held the “true understanding”. In December, when the talks in Altenburg already had been underway for two to three months, but showed few signs of a constructive outcome, Paul Eber, the most senior theologian from Albertine Saxony reported the difficulties to the electress, who replied,

Concerning the colloquy, we regrettably and with considerable worries understand that there are few hopes for a Christian accord and that the other part is unwilling to yield from their conceited and unfounded beliefs. Yet, we trust that You will know to conduct yourself in a way that [ensures that] You with good reasons and conscience cannot be accused of having sought anything but God’s honor, the true understanding of his Holy word, and Christian accord.<sup>1426</sup>

Although Anna encouraged Eber to seek “Christian accord”, there is no reason to doubt that she believed that the “Flacians” were the source of the difficulties.

One month later, Anna received a second report from Altenburg. It was sent jointly by Paul Eber and the court chaplain Christian Schütz, and they begged Anna to convince August that he should recall them from the meeting.<sup>1427</sup> However, rather than furthering their request, she replied that August was hesitant to recall them without “sufficient reason” because this could expose him to accusations that he was

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<sup>1424</sup> “Auffrurische [vnd] friedhessige”, Anna to Anna of Hohenlohe, Geyer 23 July 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 241 a–242 a.

<sup>1425</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 20 Sep. 1567, DrHSA Kop. 512, fol. 251 b–253 a. However, as mentioned in chapter 6, the theologians in Mecklenburg also objected to Major’s work.

<sup>1426</sup> “... Waß dan das ... Colloquiem anlangt, Vernehmen wir ... gantz vngerne vnd nicht mit geringer bekommernus, das wenig hoffnung zu ... Christlicher vergleichung sej vnd das andertheil von Irem eins mals eingebildeten vngegründten wahn gar nichts weichen wölle[.] Wir seint aber d zuuorsicht Ir werdet euch ... dermassen zuuorhalten wissen, das euch mit gutten grunde vnd gewissen, nicht konne zugemessen werden Als hettet Ir Ichtwas anders, dan Gottes ehre rechten verstand seines heiligen worts, vnd Christliche einigkait gemeint vnd gesucht. ...”, Anna to Paul Eber, Dresden 22 Dec. 1568, DrHSA Kop. 513, fol. 148 a–b.

<sup>1427</sup> Paul Eber and Christian Schütz to Anna, Altenburg 23 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Loc. 8533/1, pp. 42 a–46 a.

responsible for the lack of results. Rather, because August had organized the colloquy out of a peace-loving and good-hearted Christian disposition and with the noble intention of furthering God's honor and accord within the church, Anna instructed them overcome their current reservations by means of Christian serenity. She – of course – would include them in her prayers and ask that God stand by them.<sup>1428</sup> There is no reason to question the sincerity of Anna's reply. While she expresses sympathy for the theologians, the electoral couple's commitment to an agreement remained strong, though not unconditional: if the "Flacians" continued to reject the proposals from the Wittenberger theologians in a way that left no doubts about their unwillingness for an agreement, Eber and Schütz would be recalled.

Anna's support for the Wittenberger theologians remained strong even after the colloquy was dissolved, and she unequivocally placed the blame for the continued disagreements within the Protestant territories on the theologians from Jena and Weimar. This stance was expressed in her correspondence with Duchess Dorothea Susanna in Weimar, with whom she had been in frequent and confidential communication since the mid-1560s. During the period of attempted reconciliation between the Ernestines and Albertines, the correspondence between Anna and Dorothea Susanna intensified.<sup>1429</sup> During the first months after the Altenburger Colloquy had been dissolved, the two women continued to engage in friendly exchanges. However, the theologians from the two territories continued their discussions in print and in an increasingly harsh tone. One defamation followed the next, and Anna observed the development closely.<sup>1430</sup> By the spring of 1570 the tension spilled into the correspondence between Anna and Dorothea Susanna. In March 1570 Anna informed the duchess that a reliable sources had told August,

[T]hat his beloved [August] is subject to increasingly wicked disregard and denigration by the court chaplains and people of Your Beloved lord and husband. And, although Your Beloved [Johann Wilhelm] hears this himself or is told about it by peace-loving and good-hearted people, [he] will not admit it or excuses and defends

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<sup>1428</sup> Anna to Paul Eber and Christian Schütz, Dresden 28 Jan. 1569, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 5 b – 6 a.

<sup>1429</sup> The drafts for eleven letters from Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar survive from 1567 and twelve from 1568, see DrHSA Kop. 512-513. In comparison, the drafts for seven letters from 1565, nine from 1566, and nine from 1569 have been preserved, see DrHSA Kop. 512 and 514.

<sup>1430</sup> She had several of the prints in her library, see for example entry no. 149 and no. 210: no. 149 is *Endlicher Bericht und Erklerung der Theologen beider Universiteten, Leipzig und Wittemberg...* (Wittemberg, 1570) and no. 210 is: *Warhafftiger bericht und kurtze Warnung der Theologen, beider Universitet Leipzig und Wittemberg ...* (Leipzig, 1570).

his theologians, which upsets his beloved [August] even more. We fear that if this is not brought to an end, his beloved will be moved to impatience and nothing good will follow from this. Because Your Beloved [husband] previously has declared to his beloved [that his stance] is quite different and [because] we know that You are genuinely inclined to a true friendship, we cannot refrain from informing you of this with friendliness and in confidence. We ask You friendly and sisterly not to let the close kinship and friendship [between us] again be brought to an end by haughty, belligerent, [and] selfish people.<sup>1431</sup>

In her reply to Anna's warning and admonition, Dorothea Susanna took refuge in her gender and replied that it was inappropriate for women to discuss matters of theology.<sup>1432</sup> This however, did not satisfy Anna who swiftly "de-theologized" the subject matter and presented it as a question of dynastic loyalty and neighborly love. In her next – and very extensive – letter to Dorothea Susanna, Anna explained,

[A]s Your Beloved considers our well-intended caution to be a question of religion, [we must make clear] that we, because of our female gender, [consider it] as dangerous as Your Beloved to interfere in such (with the exception of our own Christian conscience and confession). However, in our caution we only mentioned the unfriendly defamations which, without reasons, have been directed and allowed against our beloved lord and the universities, churches, and schools in his beloved's [August's] territories. This we cannot consider a question of religion, but [view it] instead as a deliberate malice through which haughty people in the pursuit of their own interests are willing to cause danger to Your Beloved's lord [and] husband, as this also is regarded by other pious, good-hearted, and virtuous people. For that reason, and in consideration of our friendship and sisterly understanding, we asked loyally and friendly that such dangerous quandary that carries all kinds of perils should be brought to an end.<sup>1433</sup>

<sup>1431</sup> "... das SL von EL geliebt herren vnd Gemahls hoffPredigern vnd leuten ... je leng je mehr sehr vbel gedacht vnnnd nachgередet wirdet[.] vnd ob gleich Ire liebd solchs selbst horen od von friedliebende guthertigen leuten berichtet werden, Sollen Ire L doch dasselbig ... nicht gestehen wollen od aber Ire Prediger noch darzu entschuldigen vnd vertreten. Welchs SL ... vmb so viel desto mehr zu gemuth gehet[.] do auch dauon nicht abgelassen werden solte, Besorgen wir es mochte SL in die lenge zu vngedult bewegen vnd nichts guts doraus ervolgen[.] Weil dan Ire L sich gegen SL fur d Zeit viel anders erkleret Vnnnd wir EL zu erhaltung ... rechter freuntschfft treulich genaigt wissen, So haben wir nicht vnterlassen können EL solchs freuntlich vnd In guttem vertrauen zuormelden[.] Freuntlich vnd schwesterlich bittend EL wolle die nahe bluts verwantnus vnd ... freuntschaft durch etzlich ehrgeitzig friedhessig eigenutziger Personen wille ... nicht wid zerrutten lassen ...", Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 28 March 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 128 b – 129 a.

<sup>1432</sup> See Dorothea Susanna's reply, dated Weimar 13 April 1570, DrHSA Loc. 8531/4, pp. 118-123 (a copy of Anna's letter is bound with this).

<sup>1433</sup> "... das ... EL vnserer ... Wohlmeinliche erInnerung vor einen Religionsach Anziehen, Achten wir vnns nicht weniger als EL vnserm weiblichen stande nach, ... In solche streittige Religionsachsen



Although Anna reassured the Duchess that her warning grew out of a sincere concern for the preservation of their friendship, she left little doubt about the seriousness of the matter: Johann Wilhelm had to realize that his theologians were causing danger and distorting reality but if he “did not hear with healthy ears and became blind with seeing eyes, and allowed black to be made of white”, she could do nothing but commend the matter to God.<sup>1434</sup> When Anna paraphrased Matthew 13, 10-18, she indirectly alleged that Johann Wilhelm did not understand God’s word with his heart and therefore was not a true believer.<sup>1435</sup> If Johann Wilhelm did not change the current behavior of his theologians, the electress did not wish to continue her correspondence with Dorothea Susanna because, although she knew that August was inclined towards peace, his patience had limits and he would not allow himself to be trampled upon nor to be proclaimed a Turk or a tyrant.<sup>1436</sup>

Finally, Anna enclosed the most recent declaration regarding the confessional stance in Electoral Saxony as proof that August defended the true understanding of God’s word within his church and his schools and asked Dorothea Susanna to take the time to have the declarations read to her.<sup>1437</sup> Hence, although the conflict – according to Anna – was *not* about theology, she nevertheless enclosed a theological pamphlet with the letter! Whereas Anna used the intersection between confessional questions and

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(ausserhalb vnser Christlichen gewissens vnd ... bekantnus.) gefehrlicher weiß einzulassen[.] Wir haben aber in ... vnser erinnerungs schrift nur des vnfreundlichen ... schmeuens ... erwehnet so bißhero wider vnsern hertzliebsten herren ... SL lande Vniuersiteten Kirchen vnd Schulen, vnuerschuldet ergangen vnd gestattet worden, Welches wir vor keine Religionssach Achten können, sonder vielmehr vor eine fürsetzliche mutwillige zunöttigung dardurch vnruhige ehrgeitzige Leutte vmb Ires nutz ... willen, vff EL gelibet herren Gemahels gefahr gerne vrsach ... wollen, Ansehen[.] Wie es dan auch sonst vonn Gotseligenn Guthertizgen frommen Leutten gleichergesstaldt darfur gehalt wirdt[.] Vvnd darfur haben wir vnser ... freundschaft vnd schwesterlichen verstandtnus nach treulich vnd freundlich gebethen ... das solche gefehrliche weiterung die Allerhandt besorgnus auff sich tregt, mochte verhuttet werden ...”, Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 2 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 140 b – 142 a.

<sup>1434</sup> Anna to Dorothea Susanna Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 2 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 140 b – 142 a.

<sup>1435</sup> See the text in *Biblia: das ist: Die gantze Heilige Schiff: Deudsch* (1545/2003-2004), vol. 2, pp. 1991-1992.

<sup>1436</sup> “... Wan nun EL geliebter herr vnd Gemahl vber diß alles mit gesundten ohren nicht horen vnd mit sehende Augen blindt werdenn, vnd Ir aus weiß schwartz machen lassen wollen, So müssen wir es entlich auch dem lieben Got befehlenn Seint auch nicht bedacht vnns derhalben mit EL ferner in wechselschriifte einzulassen dan ob wir wohl vnsern hertzliebsten herren vnd Gemahl zum fride geneigt wissen, So lassen doch SL darumb auch nicht gerne mit fussen vber sich lauffen, od wie einen Turcken vnd Tirannen außbruffen ...”, Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 2 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 140 b – 142 a.

<sup>1437</sup> Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 2 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 140 b – 142 a. The text Anna enclosed was presumably *Endlicher Bericht und Erklerung der Theologen beider Universiteten, Leipzig und Wittenberg ...* (1570).

dynastic ties to legitimize her participation in the theological dispute, Dorothea Susanna employed the theological prescription regarding women's exclusion from theology to justify her refusal to engage in the matter. But in spite of Anna's re-classification of the questions in dispute, she failed to achieve the desired aim: with the exception of a brief and formal letter of good wishes upon the birth of a son, this was the last letter Anna sent to the Duchess in Weimar for more than four years.<sup>1438</sup> During this confrontation with Dorothea Susanna, Anna remained convinced that her and her husband's theologians presented the true faith and she defended August, herself and the theologians vehemently.

When the correspondence between Anna and Dorothea Susanna resumed in 1574 it was at first characterized by a greater formality; no references were made to their previous conflict and until the late 1570s they avoided the subject of religion altogether.<sup>1439</sup> Several factors brought the subject back into their exchanges during the last years of the 1570s: August's role as guardian for Dorothea Susanna's children and her sons' temporary service/upbringing in August's household; the confessional developments that had made both territories committed to the "Formula of Concord";

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<sup>1438</sup> The brief letter was sent from Marburg 27 May 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 148 b, that is while Anna, August, and Elisabeth were en route to Elisabeth's wedding in Heidelberg. The next (preserved) letter from Anna to Dorothea Susanna was dated Annaburg 30 Nov. 1574, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 247 a; the subject is the future government of Ernestine Saxony upon the death of Johann Wilhelm. In her analysis of the letters written by the English noblewoman Lady Brilliana Harley (1598-1643), Jacqueline Eales has demonstrated that Lady Brilliana used a similar strategy of re-defining certain political/religious topics in order to legitimize her involvement; see Eales (2001), pp. 143-158.

<sup>1439</sup> In 1575 Anna explicitly declined to discuss religion with Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, though subsequently she – of course – reassured the duchess that both she and August were proper Lutherans, see her letter dated Annaburg 22 July 1575, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 55 a – 56 a. Anna's letters to Dorothea Susanna are preserved in the following letter-books: **from 1574**: DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 247 a, 248 a – b, 253 a – b; **from 1575-1576**: DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 17 b – 18 a, 20 b – 21 a, 55 a – 56 a, 152 b – 153 b, 165 a – b, 240 b – 241 a, 250 b – 251 a, 263 b; **from 1576**: DrHSA Kop. 518, 197 b (original page no. 45 b), 207 a (original page no. 55 a); **from 1577-1579**: DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 3 b – 4 a (1577), fol. 84 b – 85 a (original page no. 7 a – b), 152 a – b (original page no. 76 a – b) (1578), 267 a – b (original page no. 91 a – b) (1579) and DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 16 b – 17 a, 24 b – 25 a, 39 a – b, 61 b – 62 a, 129 a – b, 139 (1577), 201 b (original page no. 35 b), 217 a (original page no. 51 a), 242 b – 243 a (original page no. 76 b – 77 a), 244 a – b (original page no. 78 a – b) (1578), 304 a – b (original page no. 138 a – b) (1579); **from 1580**: DrHSA Kop. 523, fol. 22, 41 (523/1580); **from 1581**: DrHSA Kop. 522, fol. 152 b – 153 b (original page no. 60 b – 61 b), 159 a – b (original page no. 67 a – b), 178 b – 179 a (original page no. 86 b – 87 a); **from 1582-1583**: DrHSA Kop. 524, fol. 41 b – 42 a, 49 b – 50 b, 58 b – 59 a, 69 a – b (1582), 114 b – 115 a (original page no. 27 b – 28 a), 117 a – b (original page no. 30 a – b), 144 b – 145 a (57 b – 58 a), 151 b – 152 a (original page no. 64 b – 65 a) (1583) and DrHSA Kop. 525, fol. 81 a - b (1582), 95 a – b (original page no. 5 a – b), 112 a (original page no. 22 a), 118 b – 119 b (28 b – 29 b), 126 a – b (original page no. 36 a – b) (1583); **from 1584**: DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 9 b – 10 b, 12 b – 13 a, 24 a – 25 a, 36 b – 38 a, 70 b – 71 a, 77 a - b, 91 a - b, 129 b – 130 a. And finally, **from 1585**: DrHSA Kop. 527, fol. 9 a – 10 a, 15 a – b, 103 b – 104 a, 105 b – 106 b, 106 b – 107 a, 124 b – 125 a, 159 a – 160 a. The majority of the letters from Dorothea Susanna's letters to Anna are bound in: DrHSA, Loc. 8531/4 "Frauen Dorothea Susanna ... zu Sachsen ... Briefe an die Churfürtin zu Sachsen 1567-1578" and Loc. 8537/2 "Herzog Johann Wilhelms zu Sachsen hinterlassenen Witben zu Weimar Schreiebn an die Churfürstin zu Sachsen 1578-1585".

and, by the 1580s, shared concerns about Anna's daughter and Dorothea Susanna's sister-in-law Elisabeth, as well as the confessional developments in the Electorate Palatine that placed Elisabeth (and Dorothea Susanna's natal territory) in danger.

However, already by 1574 the confessional stance of Electoral Saxony had changed radically. In one of the letters confiscated during the 1574 process against the so-called Crypto-Calvinists in Saxony, Casper Peucer allegedly outlined the strategy that if only he and his fellow Crypto-Calvinists could win over Anna, they would ultimately be sure of August's support. In other letters, Peucer and his "accomplices" referred to the "gynecocracy" (or *Weiberregiment*) that prevailed within the electoral household with great disdain.<sup>1440</sup> Peucer's allegations that Anna was "in charge" have been referred to in numerous studies and, with these in mind, Anna's perception of and contributions to the developments of the early 1570s demand attention. This, however, must be considered in conjunction with Elisabeth's increasingly difficult situation in the Palatinate.

#### **The electress and the Palatinate, 1570-1573**

As demonstrated by Gustav Wustman the increased contact with the Palatinate, and particularly Johann Casimir's insistence that there was no significant difference between the understanding of the Eucharist as defined in the Heidelberger Catechism and the Wittenberger Catechism, spurred August to critically question his own theologians. A few months after the publication of the new Wittenberger Catechism in 1571, the elector asked his theologians to provide a concise account of the true understanding of the Lord's Supper. As in the previous years, Anna followed the development closely and informed Elisabeth of Mecklenburg that August had asked that all the theologians from his two universities meet with all the superintendents of the territory in order to clarify the matter. This way, all accusations and suspicions concerning Zwinglian/Calvinist leanings of Electoral Saxony could finally be put to rest.<sup>1441</sup> The meeting resulted in the *Consensus Dresdensis*, a treatise in which the

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<sup>1440</sup> This reference has been mentioned innumerable times, see Zeißler (1856), von Weber (1865), Wustmann (1905), Sturmhoefel (1906), Hasse (2000), pp. 250-259, and Hasse (2004), p. 137. Heide Wunder touches briefly on this but with critical considerations of the case in Wunder (1992/1998), pp. 159-161.

<sup>1441</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 15 Oct. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 300 b.

theologians reiterated their view of the Eucharist, and with this text the trust between the theologians and the electoral couple was restored.<sup>1442</sup>

However, having read the “Dresdener Consens”, Johann Casimir maintained that he, his father, and their theologians all agreed with its content. This – possibly well-intended – assurance from the son-in-law prompted August to demand yet another account from his own theologians in which they specified the exact differences between the Heidelberger Catechism and the “Dresdener Consens”.<sup>1443</sup> This brought about new disagreements within the electorate and both of the two fronts were presented in the electoral household (by the court chaplains Christian Schütz and Georg Listhenius).<sup>1444</sup> The continued “interest” of Friedrich III and Johann Casimir in the confessional development of Saxony reinforced the tensions and must be understood within the context of Elisabeth’s situation within the Palatinate.

The happiness that seems to have characterized the first months of the marriage between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir proved to be short-lived. If the Protestant theologians frequently disagreed on the understanding of the Eucharist, they all concurred on the paramount importance of marriage and husbandly authority within this institution. The “housefather” was to govern and be obeyed and he was responsible for the maintenance of order and true faith within his house and owed protection to the members of his household.<sup>1445</sup> The wife was to be pious and obedient, but in a bi-confessional marriage these ideals were not easily reconcilable and Elisabeth soon came to realize the conflicts inherent in her new role. When she expressed her concerns to her mother, Anna recommended that, “Your Beloved [Elisabeth] show his beloved [Johann Casimir] obedience in all wordly matters”.<sup>1446</sup> From the very beginning of the marriage, Anna repeatedly stressed the importance of Elisabeth’s adherence to the “right” beliefs. Ten months after the wedding, she instructed her daughter,

[C]oncerning the true Christian religion in which Your Beloved thank God has been brought up and the right understanding of the most worthy sacrament [of the Lord’s Supper], Your Beloved must diligently pray to the faithful God that he at all times will keep Your

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<sup>1442</sup> Hasse (2000), pp. 111-119, particularly p. 112, footnote 176.

<sup>1443</sup> Johann Casimir to August, Heidelberg 19 Dec. 1571, *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 438-439 and Kluckhohn notes to this letter.

<sup>1444</sup> Wustmann (1905), p. 5.

<sup>1445</sup> See for example Ozment (1983); Roper (1989); and Harrington (1995). For a more specific discussion of the authority of a “Hausvater” in bi-confessional marriage, see Freist (2002).

<sup>1446</sup> “... So mag DL ... SL [Johann Casimir] ... in Zeitlichen sachenn ... gehorsame volge laisten ...”, Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 19 May 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 236 b – 237b.

Beloved to this, so that Your Beloved never defer from it for the sake of pleasing people in this word. If Your Beloved would do that in order to obtain human favor, it must be feared that God would turn from Your Beloved and transform all existing favor, friendliness, and good will into dissension, bitterness, and hatred.<sup>1447</sup>

And with her letter, Anna also enclosed an admonition from the court chaplain Philipp Wagner.<sup>1448</sup> The surprising divide between worldly and religious matters that Anna presented here was envisioned as a solution. But instead the blurred boundary that separated the two domains gave rise to continual conflicts.

In the view of Anna, August, and Elisabeth, the marriage agreement exempted the young princess from Johann Casimir's authority in all religious matters and, as the above-quoted passage reveals, Anna made it clear to Elisabeth that the grace and protection she enjoyed from her parents was conditional upon her continued Lutheran confession.<sup>1449</sup> In practice the arrangement meant that Elisabeth was forced to negotiate between two overlapping and conflicting sources of authority (her husband and her parents), neither of which she could please fully.

Elisabeth shared her everyday life with Johann Casimir (and, at times, with his father and stepmother). However, out of a concern for her daughter's spiritual safety and in order to make sure that Elisabeth behaved as a virtuous woman, Anna ensured that she received frequent and detailed accounts of her daughter's behavior. The electress selected her daughter's Saxon court mistresses and the women were expected to send reports about Elisabeth's behavior to Anna.<sup>1450</sup> These frequent accounts were supplemented by information from Johann Casimir and his closest relatives.<sup>1451</sup> The

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<sup>1447</sup> "... Wass aber die wahre Christliche Religion, darin DL Got lob erzogen, vnd den Rechten gebrauch d hochwürdigen Sacrament anlangt, Wolle DL den getrewen Goth ... mit vleiss bitten das er DL beständig darbej woll erhalten, damit DL keinen [mensch] auff erden zu gefallen dar von mochten weichen[. D]an wo DL solchs thun wurden, menschliche gunst dardurch zuerhalten ... So were ... zubesorgen das Goth auch von DL weichen vnd alle verhafte gunst freuntlickeit vnd gutten willen im vnainigkaitt bitterkait vnd hass wenden ...", Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 19 May 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 236 b – 237b.

<sup>1448</sup> Anna refers to this admonition in her letter to Elisabeth's court mistress, Anna von Wolfersdorf, Dresden 20 May 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 238 a – 239 a.

<sup>1449</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, 21 Nov. 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 327 b.

<sup>1450</sup> A late example of Elisabeth's request to receive women from Saxony can be found in her letter to Anna, 16 March 1585, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 264. Only few of the reports sent by the court mistresses have survived. The earliest is from Anna von Wolfersdorf to Anna, dated July 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 96-97. However, Anna's letter books reveal that a regular correspondence already was in place earlier, see her letter to Anna von Wolfersdorf, Dresden 5 March 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 211 a – 212 a, in which it appears that the court mistress kept Anna informed about all details, including where she slept and who prepared her bed. During the following years, the court mistresses sent reports to Anna almost every month, and more frequently when Elisabeth was ill or pregnant.

<sup>1451</sup> See for example the references in the following letters: Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine Eilenburg 11 Oct. 1570, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 179 a – 179 b; Elisabeth, Countess Palatine to Anna, Gernersheim 31 Oct.

servants from Saxony were doubtlessly sent to help and support Elisabeth, but they also came to represent her parents' continued authority and control. By referring to the accounts and revealing her detailed knowledge of Elisabeth's behavior in the letters,<sup>1452</sup> Anna enforced her presence and authority over her daughter.

Anna's concerns about her daughter's spiritual safety were amplified both by the emerging difficulties between Johann Casimir and Elisabeth and as a result of the continued Palatinian intrusion in the developments within Saxony. When Friedrich III gained knowledge of the disputes between Christian Schütz and Georg Listheniushenius during the summer of 1572 he addressed this subject in a very audacious letter to the electress. He wrote,

[A]s I have come to know that all kinds of disputes and misunderstanding regarding questions of religion and beliefs are taking place in Your Beloved's lord [and husband's] territories and also at his beloved's court, I considered it essential and appropriate for me as a loyal friend to send you a faithful [and] friendly caution to Your Beloved [by] recounting what happened in a similar manner to me and my late, beloved wife approximately twelve years ago.<sup>1453</sup>

When Friedrich referred to his and his late wife's experiences twelve years ago, he was comparing the current situation in Saxony to the introduction of the Heidelberger Catechism in the Palatinate in 1565, that is to the introduction of the fiercely contested Zwinglian/Calvinist elements of the new church ordinance and his first wife's reluctance to accept it.<sup>1454</sup>

Anna answered immediately and resolutely that she knew of no disputes or misunderstandings regarding religion in Saxony except for the fact that Friedrich's councilors and some "non-Saxon" theologians recently would have liked to bring about a dispute concerning the Eucharist. Nobody, she stressed, would be allowed to teach anything that differed from Luther's view of the Eucharist as defined in the Augsburg

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1570, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, p. 38; Amalia, Electress Palatine to Anna of Saxony, Heidelberg 26 Jan. 1571 and 17 March 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 56 and 74, and Friedrich III to Anna, 17 March 1571, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, p. 72.

<sup>1452</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Dresden 6 March 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 212 a – b.

<sup>1453</sup> "... nachdem ich in ... erfahrung komme, das in E. L. geliebten hern gemahels ... landen, vornhemlich auch an S. L. hofläger in religions vnd glaubens sachen allerhandt stritt und missvorstand sich sollen ereygen, so hab ichs nitt allayn vor ayne nothdurfft, sondern auch dafür gehalten, das es mir als aynem trewen freund gebüren wolte, E. L. zur trewen und freundlichen vermahnun und warnung zuvormelden, was vor ungeferlich 12 jarn in ebenmessigem fall mir und weylundt meyner .. Geliebten gemahelin seligen widerfahren ...", autograph letter from Friedrich III to Anna, 6 June 1572, *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 461-463.

<sup>1454</sup> Regarding the resistance of Friedrich's first wife Maria to her husband's Zwinglian/Calvinist orientation, see Kluckhohn's introduction to *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. I, pp. XLVIII-L.

Confession within Saxony. If it ever occurred, it would be the result of secret schemes developed by foreign theologians. However, with the help of God, these plots would be diverted and bring nothing, she assured the Elector Palatine.<sup>1455</sup> And if Friedrich still had not understood this rather direct statement, Anna went on to say that – contrary to the suggestion of his misguided analogy – there were no similarities between the situation in the Palatinate in 1565 and the current disputes in Saxony. Rather, she and August were in complete agreement “not only in matters of religion and particularly regarding the articles on the Holy Eucharist, but also in all other matters”.<sup>1456</sup> Anna ended the discussion of the subject with the direct request that in the future Friedrich should, “refrain from taxing and challenging us in matters of religion and faith [and] in [matters pertaining to] our conscience”.<sup>1457</sup>

Friedrich’s letter had given Anna serious reasons to worry both about her daughter and about the threat of dangerous interferences from the Palatinate in the confessional practices of Saxony. Yet, this did not encumber the confidentiality that characterized her relationship to Johann Casimir. Only two days before Anna prepared the resolute reply to Friedrich III, she sent a long letter to Elisabeth and its contents suggest that Johann Casimir enjoyed greater favor from Anna than did her own daughter. During their recent meeting in Kassel, Johann Casimir had complained to Anna about Elisabeth’s “stubbornness and obstinacy”.<sup>1458</sup> Anna was deeply shaken by his account and it had made her realize that the marriage was burdened by much greater difficulties than what she had been made to believe in earlier accounts from the Palatinate. According to the letter Anna sent Elisabeth from Kassel, she had wanted to inform August of their daughter’s vices, but Johann Casimir had persuaded her to grant his wife another chance before involving her father. If however, Elisabeth did not improve her behavior, Anna threatened to inform August and this would have consequences: “[he would] turn all fatherly favor and inclination from Your

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<sup>1455</sup> Anna to Friedrich III, Kassel 18 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 77 a – 78 b.

<sup>1456</sup> “... nicht allein Inn Religionssachenn furnemblich aber vom dem Artickull deß heyligenn Nachtmals, Sondern auch Im allenn andern sachen freundlich Einig ... [sind] ...”, Anna to Friedrich III of the Palatinate, Kassel 18 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 77 a – 78 b.

<sup>1457</sup> “... E L wollen vnns Inn Religion vndt Glaubens sachenn, Inn vnserem Gewissen, nicht Irre machenn noch anfechtenn ...”, Anna to Friedrich III, Kassel 18 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 77 a – 78 b.

<sup>1458</sup> “... Eigensinnigkeit vndt Harttmutigkeitt ...”, Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Kassel 18 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 75 b – 77 a.

Beloved”.<sup>1459</sup> In closing, Anna reiterated the instructions she had given her daughter when she first was informed of the difficulties between her and Johann Casimir (in May 1571 and with greater force in January 1572).<sup>1460</sup> Elisabeth owed her husband, his parents, and other relatives friendliness and obedience. In return Johann Casimir promised to allow Elisabeth to practice her religion without any obstacles or challenges.<sup>1461</sup>

After Anna’s altercations with both the Elector Palatine and Elisabeth, the subject of religion disappeared from her exchanges with the Elector Palatine, and Johann Casimir’s complaints about Elisabeth ceased, though this “improvement” of the situation proved to be temporary. During the spring of 1573, Johann Casimir noted in his diary that an increasing distance had developed between Saxony and the Palatinate, and he placed the blame for this development on Anna.<sup>1462</sup> If Johann Casimir’s perception was accurate, Anna managed to conceal her influence and the letters she sent to her son-in-law continued to express friendliness and trust.<sup>1463</sup> This, however, changed suddenly as a result of a small note Elisabeth enclosed with a letter to her mother in August 1573.

Elisabeth wrote,

I beg Your Grace, for the will of God, not to reveal that I have written this to the [my] mother and lady, my lord does not know that I have written it. I beg Your Grace once again that You will not reveal me, if so I will be in difficulties, they find that I write too much to Your Grace. I would have written it to Your Grace sooner but no possibility has transpired, my lord is not here [now,] or else I could not have written it because my lord seals all my letters.<sup>1464</sup>

The information Elisabeth so urgently needed to share with her mother related to the baptism of the child she was expecting. Johann Casimir and his parents insisted that the child be baptized by one of the Palatinian pastors, a desire that of course conflicted with

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<sup>1459</sup> “... alle väterliche gunst vndt Neigung vonn DL abwenden ...”, Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Kassel 18 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 75 b – 77 a.

<sup>1460</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 19 May 1571, DrHSA Kop. 514, fol. 236 b – 237 b, and Dresden 8 Jan. 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 3 a – 4 b.

<sup>1461</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Kassel 18 June 1572, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 75 b – 77 a.

<sup>1462</sup> Von Bezold’s introduction to *Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir*, vol. I, pp. 93-96.

<sup>1463</sup> See the analysis of Elisabeth and Johann Casimir’s correspondence with Anna in Arenfeldt (2004).

<sup>1464</sup> “... ich bitte EG vmb gottes willen sie wollen mich nicht melten das ichs der frawmutter geschriben haben den mein herr nicht weis das ichs ... geschriben habe[.] ... ich bitte EG nochmals sie wolten mich nicht melten den mirs sunsten vbel gehen wird[.] sie meinen sunsten ich schreibe EG zu viel[.] ... ich hettes lengst EG gerne geschriben so hats die gelegenheit nicht zutragen wollen[.] ... mein herr [ist] nicht hir ... sunsten hette ichs auch nicht kunen thun den mein herr mir alle meine schreiben selber zu mach ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, without date (Aug. 1573), DrHSA, Loc. 8532/4, p. 236.



Elisabeth and her parents' beliefs. Moreover, it went against their understanding of the agreement that had been reached between them and Johann Casimir prior to the wedding. The small note thus proved Elisabeth's willingness to defend her (and her parents') confession and this increased Anna's trust in her daughter. At the same time, it of course represented a challenge to the trust that thus far had existed between Anna and Johann Casimir.

Once Anna had received her daughter's cry for help, she immediately addressed her son-in-law. Without revealing that Elisabeth had passed on the information about the planned baptism, the electress expressed her accord that Elisabeth would give birth in Heidelberg but asked that,

You will allow the dear child to be baptized by the chaplain we have assigned to Your Beloved [Elisabeth] and according to the practice of our Electoral church according to which both You [and Your Beloved] are baptized.<sup>1465</sup>

The reply that followed from Johann Casimir (though only after it was clear that the child was still-born) was anything but friendly. He made it clear that Elisabeth's Lutheran chaplain would *not* have performed the sacrament if the child had lived. He also enclosed a printed version of the section on baptism from the Palatinate's Church Ordinance in order to let his mother-in-law understand "how the baptism is performed in this territorial church, which without doubt in its core is like or not against [the Saxon church]".<sup>1466</sup>

Next to the Eucharist, baptism was the main source of disputes between Lutheran and Reformed theologians. In the Lutheran understanding, exorcism was essential to the child's salvation, whereas the Reformed theologians viewed the exorcism as a dangerous continuance of Catholic practices and beliefs.<sup>1467</sup> Although the marriage agreement stipulated that Elisabeth's children and the members of her household

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<sup>1465</sup> "... Sie wolle das liebe kindlein durch den Predicant welchen wir Irer L. ... zu geordent nach der mass vnd geratheit In vnsern Churflich kirche brauchlich darinne auch beide EL getaufft worden gleicher gestalt auch tauffen lassen ...", Anna to Johan Casimir, Zwickau 25 Aug. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 93 b – 94 a.

<sup>1466</sup> "... wie es in dieses Lands kirche mitt dem Christlichen tauffe gehalten werde ... Welcher ohne Zweifel dem Ihrigen ... gebraucht in der substans gleich oder ir nitt zuwider ist ....", Johann Casimir, Count Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 29 Sep. 1573, DrHSA Loc. 8532/4, pp. 240-244. The same day he wrote to August, but this letter has a more subdued tone, see DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 163.

<sup>1467</sup> Karant-Nunn (1997), pp. 43-71; Nischan (1987), pp. 31-52; Goeters (1986), pp. 44-59, especially pp. 52-53. Goeters stresses that the question of exorcism not only was debated between Reformed and Lutherans, but that diverging views also existed within the Lutheran community. At the given time, however, the Saxon Church Ordinance included exorcism as part of the baptism and, as Nischan points out, it caused intense disputes when Christian I later removed it from the Ordinance.

publicly could receive the Eucharist according to Saxon practice,<sup>1468</sup> it did not specify how the children were to be baptized. Christoph Ehem and Georg Cracow, the Palatinian and Saxon councilors who had been responsible for the marriage negotiations in 1568, discussed the appropriate performance of this sacrament in their correspondence three months after the wedding had been celebrated,<sup>1469</sup> and this exchange indicates that they may have been unaware of the diverging practices of this sacrament during the earlier marriage negotiations.

Once again, it was by way of the intersection of dynastic and confessional considerations that Anna became an active participant in a theological debate. Her concerns for Elisabeth and the unborn grandchild were doubtlessly combined with a fear that the inappropriate baptism of the grandchild could damage the reputation of her, her husband, and their territory.

The sensitive question of baptism resurfaced during all of Elisabeth's subsequent pregnancies. In 1576, Elisabeth gave birth to a daughter while Johann Casimir was leading his troops in support of the French Huguenots. Elisabeth resided in Kaiserslautern and was surrounded almost exclusively by fellow Lutherans from Saxony.<sup>1470</sup> Shortly after the delivery, her court mistress prepared a letter to Anna and informed the electress that Elisabeth, only two hours after the birth, had asked her chaplain to baptize the newborn girl.<sup>1471</sup> A few days later Elisabeth shared her thoughts about this decision with her father, "[O]ur dear God arranged it so well that I delivered [the child] before my lord returned [and, because of this,] I had the child baptized so agreeably".<sup>1472</sup>

Upon his return from France Johann Casimir questioned his wife about the decision and Elisabeth recounted their conversation to her mother, "I said that the child was weak but [he] did not believe it and was doubting [it,] but I remained by my

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<sup>1468</sup> Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 88-91.

<sup>1469</sup> Christoph Ehem to Georg Cracow, Speyer 5 Aug. 1570, *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 403-405.

<sup>1470</sup> Johann Casimir returned to Kaiserslautern 6 Aug. 1576. The daughter Maria was born 26 July. Letter from Anna of Hohenlohe to Anna of Saxony, Kaiserslautern 25 Aug. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 98, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, 26 Aug. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 99. The presence of Saxon noblemen and women can be followed in the letters from early July to September 1576.

<sup>1471</sup> Margaretha von Schlenitz to Anna, Kaiserslautern, 27 July 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 89-90.

<sup>1472</sup> "... vnser herr gott hatts so fein gemacht das ich bin niderkomen ehr mein herr ist wider komen das ich das kind habe so fein dauffen lassen ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, Kaiserlautern 5 Aug. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 95.

account that the child had been weak".<sup>1473</sup> Presumably without knowing it, Elisabeth actually emphasized the confessional difference between her and her husband when she explained why the daughter had been baptized so soon: only Lutherans had maintained the practice of emergency baptism.<sup>1474</sup> Not only did the reasoning behind the emergency baptism contradict the core of the Zwinglian/Calvinist understanding of this sacrament, the actual ritual was also at fundamental variance with the instructions presented by Zwingli and Calvin, who insisted that the sacrament should be performed before the gathered congregation and in the presence of the child's father.<sup>1475</sup>

Although only a few years prior to this event, Anna had repeatedly instructed Elisabeth to submit herself to the authority of her husband, the electress was delighted about the news. In spite of Elisabeth's openhearted account of her disobedience, Anna replied,

[W]ith a rejoiced motherly heart we have understood that the merciful, dear God has released Your Beloved [from Your female burden] and bestowed upon Your Beloved a young daughter and that the dear child shortly after [its birth] received the Holy, Christian baptism. All this provides us a heartfelt and profound happiness and [we] humbly thank the faithful dear God. But [we are particularly happy to hear] that the dear child received the Holy Christian baptism in time.<sup>1476</sup>

This later example is included only to demonstrate the extent to which Elisabeth guarded her rights over her children's confession and that her parents by then supported her in spite of the inevitable violations of the ideals she was to aspire to in her role as wife. Two years later and after the birth of another daughter, who she did not manage to have baptized according to her beliefs, Elisabeth summarized her feelings to her

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<sup>1473</sup> "... ich [habe] gesagt das das kind sei schwach gewesen aber mein her hatts nicht gelauben wollen vnd ist ein wenig wunderlich gewesen ... aber ich bestendig bliben auff meiner rede das das kind sei schwach gewesen ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 26 Aug. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 99

<sup>1474</sup> Karant-Nunn (1997), p. 60.

<sup>1475</sup> Karant-Nunn (2001), pp. 160-161.

<sup>1476</sup> "... Wir haben ... mit erfreueten mütterlichen hertz vernommen das der Barmhertzig guttig got DL ... gnediglich entbund Vnd DL eine Junge Tochter ... bescheret, das auch ... d libe Kindtlein balt hernach mit der heilig Christlich Tauff vorsehen ...[,] an Welchen allen wir ein besonder hertzliche hohe freude entpf vnd sagen dem getreuen liben Gott ... demutigen danck[,] ... Sonderlich aber das das libe kindtlein zeitlich mit der heilig Christlich tauff vorsehen ...", Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Annaburg 10 Sep. 1576, DrHSA Kop. 519, fol. 245.

mother, “Your Grace cannot believe how much it hurts when one cannot have one’s children baptized correctly, it causes great pain and heartfelt worries.”<sup>1477</sup>

The performance of the exorcism as part of the baptism was a matter of greatest importance to Elisabeth and her parents, and already in 1573 the diverging views of the baptism held by Lutherans and Zwinglians caused the relationship between Saxony and the Palatinate to deteriorate further. However, before it came to this outright hostility between Elisabeth and her parents, on the one side, and Johann Casimir and his father, on the other, the developments in Saxony had been radical and the Palatinate continued to play a significant role in the decisions of the electoral couple in Saxony.

### **The revelation of the Crypto-Calvinists, 1573-1574**

During the winter 1573-1574 Elisabeth and Johann Casimir paid their first visit to Saxony since the wedding in 1570. The visit took place only a few months after the above-mentioned exchanges regarding the baptism of the couple’s expected child and the tension that had developed between Johann Casimir and his parents-in-law during the fall intensified during his time in Saxony. Shortly after Johann Casimir and Elisabeth’s departure from Saxony the process against the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists was initiated.<sup>1478</sup> But what was the relationship these two events? This question is all the more interesting in the light of Hans-Peter Hasse’s recent assessment that the available and competing theories regarding the causes of the dramatic events in Saxony remain unsatisfactory, and because none of these theories take the confrontation between Johann Casimir and his parents-in-law into consideration.<sup>1479</sup>

From the very beginning of the young couple’s visit the tension was unmistakable: on 5 November 1573 Johann Casimir arrived in Saxony though, as Anna explained to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, to her great surprise and resentment, her son-in-law came without Elisabeth. This concerned the electress who, according to her own account, asked August to request that Johann Casimir immediately make arrangements for Elisabeth to join him.<sup>1480</sup> Once they both had arrived in Saxony, the electoral couple

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<sup>1477</sup> “... EG glaubens nicht wie es einen wehe thut ... wen einem die kinder nicht ... echt gedauft werden[,] es thut einen grossen wehe vnd bekummern einen von hertzen ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, without date (early May 1578), DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 143.

<sup>1478</sup> The most detailed chronologies of the events are provided by Calinich (1866); Kluckhohn (1867); Wustmann (1905). Hasse (2004) offers a concise summary focused on Peucer’s fate.

<sup>1479</sup> Hasse (2004), p. 137.

<sup>1480</sup> Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Augustusburg 1 Dec. 1573, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 132 a – 133 b; Kluckhohn’s commentary to the letter from August to Friedrich III, Annaburg 8 Nov. 1573, *Briefe Friedrich*

gave them a tutorial in conjugal happiness. According to the electoral couple, the marriage would develop positively only if Johann Casimir respected his wife's religion and spent more time with her (that is, less time with his father), whereas Elisabeth should avoid Heidelberg and her parents-in-law as much as possible.

The young Count Palatinate did not respond to the instructions positively. Shortly before the departure from Saxony, Johann Casimir told his parents-in-law that his father had forced him into the marriage. Although he soon withdrew this claim and attributed his outburst to intoxication,<sup>1481</sup> the damage was done, and Anna and August's concerns for their daughter were greatly amplified. Shortly after Elisabeth and Johann Casimir's departure, Anna explained to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, "if we sooner had know as much as we know now, we would have left this marriage undone".<sup>1482</sup>

A few months later, August sent a delegate to the Palatinate in order to address the difficulties in the young couple's marriage with Friedrich III. The main points regarded Johann Casimir's "husbandly duty" to live with his wife and Elisabeth's right to practice her confession without any obstacles. The Elector Palatine replied that given his age and ailments, he needed Johann Casimir to assist him in the government of the territory. He was, however, willing to move the residence of the young couple from Kaiserslautern to a place in closer proximity to Heidelberg. This reply would not have pleased Anna and August, who wanted their daughter and son-in-law to be as far away from Friedrich's dangerous influence as possible. Regarding the confessional question, Friedrich's answer was less accommodating: he simply informed August that Elisabeth had met no obstacles whatsoever to the practice of her confession and that questions related to the subject only had been addressed when Elisabeth had brought up the subject with her damnations of other beliefs.<sup>1483</sup>

Friedrich's account did not correspond to what Elisabeth had told her parents and it confirmed Anna's doubts that August's attempt to improve Elisabeth's situation

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*des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 607-608; and von Bezold's introduction to *Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir*, vol. I, pp. 128-129 and 134-135.

<sup>1481</sup> See Kluckhohn's interpretation of the conflict between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir in *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 659-662. However, as Heide Wunder argued in her introduction to *Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung* (2003) it is not at all an unlikely possibility that sons, particularly younger sons, were subject to the similar pressures as daughters with regard to their marriages, see Wunder (2003), p. 18.

<sup>1482</sup> "... do wir auch zuuorn so viel als itzo gewust hetten, mochte solche heirat wohl nachblieben sein ...", Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Dresden 3 March 1574, DrHSA Kop. 516, fol. 123 a - b.

<sup>1483</sup> Friedrich III's answer to the questions presented by August's delegate, Count von Linar, dated Heidelberg 8 May 1574, *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 658-659.

would prove futile.<sup>1484</sup> Nevertheless, Elisabeth soon described an improvement to her mother, “since then, they had left me alone with my religion”,<sup>1485</sup> she wrote six weeks after the departure of the Saxon delegate. Soon, though, her family-in-law not only ceased to address her confession, they left her alone altogether, and this was a clear manifestation of their dislike for her. Elisabeth described the situation in the following terms,

“[T]hey behave towards me as if I were a stranger / I am not a daughter here / my lord [and husband]’s parents do not ask about me, they still behave as if I do not belong to them”.<sup>1486</sup>

Because the confessional difference exempted Elisabeth from a fundamental dimension of the authority held by the male members of her “new” dynasty, she could not be part of it: the combination of the parties strong confessional and dynastic identities prohibited a common ground on which the marriage could be founded. In contrast, the same constellation meant that Elisabeth’s ties to her own parents were strengthened.

However, the accounts from Elisabeth were all sent after the “clear out” of the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists during the summer of 1574, a development that contributed to the further deterioration of her position within her “new” dynasty. With these developments, August (and Anna) made it clear to Johann Casimir and Friedrich III that the marriage would not contribute to winning over Electoral Saxony for their branch of Protestantism. August and Anna, on the other hand, had also come to understand that there was little hope that Johann Casimir would accept his wife’s beliefs. Until that point, Anna had followed the instructions provided by her mother, namely that – if well guided by her parents – Elisabeth could do much good for the religion.

This realization, combined with the publication of *Exegesis perspicua* and Georg Listhenius’s interception of the letter from Johann Stössel to Christian Schütz in which Stössel and Schütz revealed their wish to introduce Zwinglian/Calvinist practices to Saxony, marked the beginning of significant change. The subsequent search of Stössel’s house revealed that Caspar Peucer and Georg Cracow were the main forces behind this

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<sup>1484</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Salza 12 June 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, p. 197.

<sup>1485</sup> “... mich haben sie der seither wohl zu friden gelassen mit meiner relion ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 26 June 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 1

<sup>1486</sup> “... man stellt sich gleich gegen mir als wen ich fremd were ... “ / “... ich bin nicht dochter hir ...” / “... meinen herren eltern die fragen nichts nach mir[,] sie thue noch so gegen mir als wen ich in nicht zu gehort ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 12 Nov. 1574, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 226; Heidelberg 13 July 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 17; and Kaiserslautern 27 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 21.

“conspiracy”.<sup>1487</sup> Peucer and Cracow were two of the most trusted advisors to the electoral couple: Cracow had been their chief representative during the 1568 marriage negotiations with the Palatinate and Peucer was the godfather of one of the electoral children.

The four main culprits (Cracow, Peucer, Schütz, and Stössel) were imprisoned, and August called for a Saxon Diet in order to determine the further sanctions against them. He also arranged a meeting of the foremost theologians of the territory and instructed them to examine the articles on the Eucharist as defined in the *Consensus Dresdensis* and revise them where needed.<sup>1488</sup>

Throughout these turbulent spring months Anna’s letter-books are silent on the matter. Finally, in June, as the meeting of the Saxon theologians in Torgau was approaching its end, the electress informed Elisabeth of Mecklenburg about the developments,

What concerns the theologians, then Your Beloved knows how long the ones in Wittenberg have been suspected of being Calvinists or Zwinglians. They, however, would under no circumstances admit [to this and] have verbally and in writing confirmed [that they are not.] But, by way of the Almighty, his beloved [August] has obtained some letters which – with the advice of his councilors – have given his beloved reason to incarcerate several persons including our court chaplain Master Christian, Doctor Stösseln, Doctor Crakowen, and Doctor Peucer. [The letters show] that it unfortunately is much too true [and], in this scheme, they were given considerable help and support from the Palatinians and their theologians.<sup>1489</sup>

Hence, according to Anna, the culprits had long been under suspicion but, because they had repeatedly assured their prince that their views did not differ from the Augsburg Confession, no action had been taken against them until tangible proof was produced in the form of the letters. The reference to the Palatinate in the quote deserves particular attention: to the electress – and her sources – there was no doubt that the theologians in the Palatinate had been involved. A Palatinian connection seems all the more likely

<sup>1487</sup> Wustmann (1905), pp. 12-13.

<sup>1488</sup> Wustmann, (1905) pp. 13-16.

<sup>1489</sup> “ ... Was dann die Theologen anlangett, wissen EL wie lange Zeit die zur Wittenberg ... im vordacht gewesen, ds sie Caluinisch od Zwinglisch wehren, welchs sie aber ... keines wegs gestendigk sondern mundtlich vnd im schriffen zum höchsten vorwaret ... [.] Es seindt aber SL durch schikung des Allmechtige vnlangst hindter etliche brief kommen, daraus SL verursacht, etzliche Personen als v hofprediger Magister Christianum D Stösseln, d Crakowen vnd D Peutzern mit rath andern SL Rethe Im vorstrickung zulassen, bei welchen man souiel briff ... funden, das es leider allzuwahr [ist] ... Im solchen furhaben seindt sie von dem Pfaltzischen vnd Ihren Theologen nicht wenigk gereicht vnd gesterkt worden ...”, Anna to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, Weissenfels 7 June 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 193 b – 195 a.

when the Crypto-Calvinists' (particularly Peucer and Cracow's) claim regarding Anna's influence is compared to Johann Casimir's note in his diary (as mentioned above) that Anna was to be blamed for the growing distance between the Palatinate and Saxony.

Anna's letter to Elisabeth of Mecklenburg reveals her detailed knowledge about the development, but it does *not*, as it is usually suggested, expose her personal involvement in the matter. However, if Anna truly was the driving force behind the persecutions, the chronology of the events suggests that she was motivated more by her daughter's misery (that is, by sincere worries about her daughter's well-being, including her salvation and by questions of dynastic honor) than by narrowly defined theological concerns. The change in Anna's convictions, that is her increasingly strict Lutheran (rather than Philippist stance) resulted from her daughter's experiences and the related confrontations with Friedrich III of the Palatinate and Johann Casimir. The profound mistrust of the Elector Palatine and the fear that he was scheming with senior councilors and theologians in Saxony at once contributed to the strong reaction and persecution of the Crypto-Calvinists and added to the electoral couple's Lutheran orthodoxy that resulted from the confrontations with the Elector Palatine and his advisors during the early 1570s. Until 1571, both August and Anna appear as convinced Philippists, who were more likely to compromise with the Zwinglian/Calvinist Palatinate than with the Gnesio-Lutherans of Ernestine Saxony.

#### **Dynastic struggle over a princely woman's conscience**

Corresponding to the connections Anna saw between the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists and the Palatinate, she also recognized that the offensive against the Saxon theologians and councilors had immediate implications for her daughter in the Palatinate and urged Elisabeth's court chaplain Bartholomeus Hoffmann to refrain from all unnecessary disputes.<sup>1490</sup> But Elisabeth was delighted to hear about her father's success against the *Zwinger*. Yet, she also informed her mother that Johann Casimir and Friedrich III, as it was to be expected, had received the news with profound misgivings. Finally, she confirmed the suspicion that the Palatinate was involved by warning her father not to let

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<sup>1490</sup> Anna to Bartholomeus Hoffman, Salza 12 June 1574, DrHSA Kop. 517, fol. 197 b – 198 a.



go of the imprisoned men, because her father-in-law would be only too content if they could be brought to his territory.<sup>1491</sup>

From the mid-1570s, Elisabeth became the subject of an open, confessional conflict between the two territories and, in her capacity as mother, Anna played a prominent and legitimate role in this dynastic-confessional row: as Volker Press stated on the basis of Kluckhohn and von Bezold's work, Elisabeth consistently denounced her husband and parents-in-law to the electoral couple in Saxony. Press (and his predecessors) also characterized both Elisabeth and Anna as fanatic Lutherans and Elisabeth as intellectually limited.<sup>1492</sup>

As convenient as this characterization may have been for Kluckhohn's eulogy of Friedrich III, it is not warranted. While it is true that Elisabeth sent detailed accounts of her experiences to her parents, and especially to Anna, she was subject to tremendous pressures. Until 1576, this came especially from her parents-in-law but subsequently Johann Casimir created severe obstacles for her religious practices. Her own parents sustained their support for her, though this was also accompanied by tight control. In the following, some of Anna and Elisabeth's reflections are outlined with a view to demonstrating how they both influenced the confessional policies of the two crucially important Protestant territories of the Empire.

In June 1575, Elisabeth and Johann Casimir paid a visit to Wilhelm of Hessen-Kassel and, during their stay in Kassel, the landgrave and Elisabeth engaged in a heated discussion about Luther. In keeping with her usual routine, Elisabeth summarized the events in a letter to her mother. According to her account, the landgrave had opened the conversation about Luther and had referred to him as a "rogue" (*Schelm*) who had convinced his father that he could take two wives.<sup>1493</sup> Elisabeth defended Luther the best she could: the Lutherans were not to be blamed for his fathers doings and, had Luther still been alive, nobody would dare to open their mouth against him. But the discussion went on,

[The landgrave said that] he had his [Luther's] own text and he wanted to show it to me. I said I did not wish to see it, but he said that I had to see it and confined me in the room, gave it to me [and

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<sup>1491</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, [end of May] 1574, *Briefe Friedrich des Frommen*, vol. II, pp. 662-666.

<sup>1492</sup> Press (1970), pp. 268-269 and Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 98-99.

<sup>1493</sup> Regarding the bigamy of Philipp I of Hessen, see the numerous work listed in *Philippsbibliographie. Bibliographie Philipp der Großmütige*, section 3: "Familie und Dynastie" [http://www.hgl.de/philipp\\_inhalt.html#BibFamilie](http://www.hgl.de/philipp_inhalt.html#BibFamilie).

told me] to read it. I said I did not want to read it and my lord [and husband] was there and another Zwinglian doctor and they helped much to disparage Doctor Luther and said that we hold him as an idol, that he is our god. [Then the landgrave] had the doctor read [the text] in order for me to hear it, but I did not listen to it. But in the end, the landgrave felt sorry and asked me to forgive it. The Zwinglians think nothing of Luther, when they speak of adultery, they say he held the marriage as a Lutheran.<sup>1494</sup>

This incident proved to be only the beginning of Elisabeth's greater difficulties.

During the subsequent months, she repeatedly complained about her father-in-law and his advisors to her parents. Johann Casimir's older brother Ludwig, who was the heir to the electoral dignity, had remained Lutheran, and the tensions also influenced the relationship between Ludwig and his father. In July, Elisabeth informed her parents that a military intervention in Ludwig's temporary territory Amberg may be underway with the aim of forcing Ludwig's acceptance of the Zwinglian teachings,

[M]ost beloved mother, I fear they will start a war and my lord [and husband] will take part. The Elector will invade the town of Amberg because it will not turn Zwinglian, may the faithful God support Duke Ludwig and protect him from all evil and console him and grant him fortitude.<sup>1495</sup>

A few weeks later, Elisabeth told Anna that Friedrich III continued to treat her with hostility. Having spent two weeks with her parents-in-law, Friedrich had not spoken a single word to her. The humiliation reached its peak when Elisabeth, during the celebrations of a noble couple's wedding and upon Johann Casimir's encouragement, had asked her father-in-law for a dance, and the elector refused her request.<sup>1496</sup>

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<sup>1494</sup> "... er ... hette seine eignen handschriff ... [und] ... er wolte mir das schreiben wissen[,] da sagt ich begertte es nicht zu sehen[,] sagt er ich must es sehen vnd verspert mich in die stuben ... vnd gabe es mir ich solle es lessen[,] sagte ich wolte es nicht lessen[,] vnd mein herr war darbei vnd sundern noch ein zwingels docker vnd die helffen rettlich auff den doktor lutter schelten vnd sagten mir hiltten fur einen abe gott er were vnser gott[,] ... vnd lis den doktor laut lessen das ichs horen solle aber ich horte nicht darauf ... [.] ... aber doch letzlich war es in [der Landgraf] leit vnd bat mich vmb verzeihung ...[,] ... die zwingeler halten von Lutter gar nichts ... wen man von ein ehe bruch retet so spricht man er hatt die ehe gehalten auff lutterische ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 2 July 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 14-15.

<sup>1495</sup> "... hetzliebe frawmutter ... ich furchte man wird ... an krig anfangen vnd mein herr wird sich dar zu gebrauchen lassen den der churfurst will die stat amberg vberziehen lassen[,] ... die stat amberg wil nicht zwingels werden ... der trewe gott sterke hertzog Ludwig vnd behutte in fur allen vbel vnd trosten ... vnd verleihe in gedult...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 2 July 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 14-15.

<sup>1496</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 13 July 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 17.

The confessional developments in Saxony and the ruling couple's increasing intolerance of any deviance from a strictly Lutheran Protestantism caused worries in the Palatinate, and Elisabeth was often held accountable for the confessional stance of her parents. During the summer of 1575, she explained to her mother,

[T]he Elector has come to know that Your Grace really detests the Zwinglians. This angers him so very much, and [he says] my lord [and] father tolerates the Papists and Jews in his territory, then why can he not tolerate those who confess to my lord [and] father's religion[. And he says] it is a minor point and asks why we insist so firmly about the Lord's Supper. They say they agree with us in all articles, only in this small article do they disagree with us. They often confront me with this.<sup>1497</sup>

As the tensions between Saxony and the Palatinate grew, Johann Casimir spent longer and longer periods with his father in Heidelberg, while Elisabeth lived more or less isolated in Kaiserslautern.<sup>1498</sup> In the fall of 1575 he informed her that he again would lead his troops in support of the French Huguenots.<sup>1499</sup> In Elisabeth's account of her attempts to change Johann Casimir's mind, she instantly placed the blame on his father's theologians and councilors and was appalled by their usage of the religion as a legitimizing cause,

[M]y lord [and husband] only starts the war in order to create a great name for us and to pursue our own profit through it. We call upon the religion but unfortunately – God have mercy – they only act as if they would force God to be on their side. Oh most beloved mother, they will follow no good advice from friends, only what the clerics and the doctors say.<sup>1500</sup>

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<sup>1497</sup> "... der curfurst hatt erfahren das EG die zwigeler so hassen[.] das verdreust in so gar sehr[.] vnd spricht mein herr vater leit doch die pabisten vnd iuden in seinen land[.] warvmb man dan die nicht leid die sich doch zu meiner herren vatter religion bekennen ... vnd sprechen es ist ein gringer punct ... warvmb wir den so hart vber den nacht mahl haltten[.] sie sprechen in allen ardikelen sei sie mit vns eins[.] on in die kleine ardikel sein sie nicht mit vns ein[.] das werffen sie mir off fur ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 28 July 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 18.

<sup>1498</sup> See for example Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, Kaiserslautern 27 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 266, and her letter to Anna, same date, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 21/2.

<sup>1499</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 16 Oct. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 22; Johann Casimir, Count Palatine, to August, Heidelberg 8 Nov. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8514/7, p. 13; Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, Heidelberg 12 Nov. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 257; and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 12 Nov. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 26-27.

<sup>1500</sup> "... den krig fangen mein herr nur darumbd an das wir einen grossen namen dadurch krigen mogen vnd das wir vnsern eigen brofit dardurch suchen[.] wir nemen vns der religion an aber leider gott erbarme es ... sie thun nichts anders den wen sie gott zwingen wollen das gott auff irr seitten sein muste ...[.] ach hertzlibeste frawemutter ... man will keiner freunde gutten rat folgen[.] on alles was dir pfaffen vnd die dockter sagen ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 12 Nov. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 26-27.

In the passage, Elisabeth oscillates between identifying and distancing herself from her “new” dynasty. In the first sentence, she uses the words “our” and “we”, but in expressing her contempt for her husband and father-in-law’s (ab-)use of God’s name, she replaced the “we” with an “they”, thereby highlighting her independence of their acts and, implicitly, reinforcing the bond to her parents.

In spite of his continual absences, Johann Casimir exercised firm control over his wife. The most immediate manifestations of this were recurring obstacles for her correspondence with her parents,<sup>1501</sup> but upon his departure for France, Johann Casimir made his disregard for his now pregnant wife even clearer by removing almost all of the servants from their joint household.<sup>1502</sup> Having been refused the possibility to visit Saxony again, Elisabeth asked her parents for help in the form of a Saxon councilor who could reside with her and defend her interests against her parents-in-law during Johann Casimir’s absence. Anna and August complied and the electress also requested that Anna of Hohenlohe travel to Elisabeth and remain there as long as she possibly could.<sup>1503</sup> Although Elisabeth was most grateful for this support,<sup>1504</sup> it did not deter Johann Casimir and Friedrich III.

In March 1576, Johann Casimir and his father informed Elisabeth that they would determine her affection towards them by her ability to convince August that he should support their military intervention in France. Elisabeth did ask for her father’s help to the Protestants in the French Wars of Religion, though perhaps not as forcefully as Johann Casimir had wished. She wrote to Anna, “I beg Your Grace, if it is not against Your Grace’s will, that Your Grace will ask my lord [and] father that he please will do something for my sake”.<sup>1505</sup> However, Elisabeth also utilized her husband’s need for August’s support to re-negotiate her own situation and thereby obtained his permission to visit her parents. Yet, her advanced pregnancy prevented her from traveling and she instead asked for Johann Casimir’s assurance that she could remain in Kaiserslautern

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<sup>1501</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, 27 Sep. 1575, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 266, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 5 Jan. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 28

<sup>1502</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 5 Jan. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 28

<sup>1503</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 15 Jan. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 30, and the Saxon councilor David von Hirschfeldt to Anna, Kaiserslautern, 20 Feb. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 43-45.

<sup>1504</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, Kaiserslautern 6 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 292

<sup>1505</sup> “... ich bitte EG wens nicht wider EG were das doch EG meinen herren vater bitte das mein hervatter doc etwass dar bei thun wolle vmb meinet willen ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 24 March 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 50

(rather than travel to Heidelberg) for her approaching delivery.<sup>1506</sup> This was granted and, as revealed above, she gave birth to a daughter, who she immediately had baptized by her Lutheran chaplain.

The death of Friedrich III in 1576 brought about temporary optimism in Saxony. When the Lutheran Ludwig came to power, Elisabeth and her parents saw a renewed chance to win over Johann Casimir for the "right" beliefs.<sup>1507</sup> But their hopes were soon destroyed. Less than two months after the elector's death, Elisabeth complained to her mother that, "my lord [and husband] is now so firmly Zwinglian as he has never been in his life, I have no solace anymore",<sup>1508</sup> and during the following year, his convictions were expressed in actions.

The year 1577 was dominated by intense disputes between Ludwig and Johann Casimir regarding the division of the territory and its confession.<sup>1509</sup> As Ludwig dismissed his father's councilors, Johann Casimir accepted them into his service<sup>1510</sup> and, in Elisabeth's view, they did nothing but harm to her husband, who followed all of their instructions. A couple of times, she even hinted that if only these people were removed from Johann Casimir's vicinity he might become Lutheran.<sup>1511</sup>

Meanwhile, the first decisions taken by the new elector eased Elisabeth's practice of her beliefs. According to Ludwig, his own and Elisabeth's chaplains were now to preach in the chapel at the residence in Heidelberg, and he ordered the Zwinglian priests (*zwinlichserpfaffe*), who were favored by Johann Casimir and the widowed electress, to perform their services in the chambers. However, because the new elector spent only brief periods in Heidelberg, Johann Casimir issued conflicting orders and their father's theologians continued preach in the chapel.<sup>1512</sup>

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<sup>1506</sup> Copy of letter from Johann Casimir, Count Palatine to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, 24 March 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 66; Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 6 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, fol. 59; Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 10 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, fol. 65; Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 13 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, fol. 68; Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, Kaiserslautern 18 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 295, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 18 May 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 69.

<sup>1507</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, Heidelberg 8 Dec. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 344.

<sup>1508</sup> "... mein herr [ist] itzo so hart zwinlich als er sein leben lang noch nicht gewessen ist[,] ich habe itzo kein drost ... mehr ...", Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 10 Dec. 1576, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 108.

<sup>1509</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to August, 6 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8514/4, p. 345, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Durlach 6 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, fol. 109. See also von Bezold's account in the introduction to *Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir*, vol. I, pp. 195-197 and 207-208.

<sup>1510</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Neustadt 2 Sep. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 123.

<sup>1511</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Durlach 6 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 109, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 3 April 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 115.

<sup>1512</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Durlach 6 Jan. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 109.

The Saxon electress advised her daughter not to mingle in the conflict between the brothers.<sup>1513</sup> Nevertheless, when Elisabeth reported back to her parents that she abided by the instructions and that she was on better terms with her husband, Anna instantly worried about her daughter's confession. While she was happy to hear about Johann Casimir's friendliness towards his wife, she warned that Elisabeth should be aware that he may try to use their improved relationship to bring her to his, "distorted Calvinist convictions".<sup>1514</sup> But Anna's worries were in vain and soon the tensions between the couple resurfaced.

During the disputes between Johann Casimir and Ludwig, Elisabeth's – already limited – affection for her husband declined and her sympathy for Ludwig and his wife continued to grow. Although she made efforts to conceal her bias from Johann Casimir, he is likely to have found out about this through his continued control over her letters.<sup>1515</sup>

When Elisabeth towards the end of 1577 complained about her husband's increased control of her correspondence, Anna formalized the secret exchanges she and Elisabeth occasionally had conducted during the past three to four years. She explained to Elisabeth that,

[W]e intend to send at least one of our messengers to you every month and always to send with him a confidential enclosure, Your Beloved can allow your lord [and husband] to read the common letter [we send,] but the other [you must] take good care of and burn after reading it as Your Beloved also must do with this letter.<sup>1516</sup>

Over the next six years, their exchanges followed this pattern.<sup>1517</sup> When the double correspondence was brought to an end in February 1583, it was the result of Elisabeth's

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<sup>1513</sup> Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Annaburg 5 March 1577, DrHSA Kop. 521, fol. 37 a – b, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 3 April 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 115.

<sup>1514</sup> "... Irrige Caluinische mainung ...", Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Annaburg 5 July 1577, DrHSA Kop. 520, fol. 23 b – 24 a.

<sup>1515</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Neustadt 2 Sep. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 123. See also the later passage from Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, "... der churfurst sampt seinen L gemahl haben ein christliches mit leid mitt mir vnd haben mir gar viel ehr beweist vnd mir alles geutes erzeugt ich werde wen ich gen heidelberg kom in 3 dagen aber nicht konen von in komen darvmb bitte ich EG als meine hertzallerlibeste frawmutter sie wollen gnedig mit mir zufriden sein ...", Neustadt 7 Aug. 1578, Loc. 8535/2, fol. 154

<sup>1516</sup> "... [wir] seint ... bedacht hin... alle Monat zum wenigsten einen eigenen bothen bey dich zu haben vnd ime alwege ein vortraulich neben schreiben mittzugeben, auff das ... .. gemeine schreiben D.L. herren wohl lesen lassen aber das andert in gutter acht haben vnd nach verlasung verbrennen möge wie dan D.L. diesen schreiben auch also thun wolle ...", Anna to Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, Dresden 25 Oct. 1577, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, pp. 126-127.

<sup>1517</sup> Further details about the double correspondence are provided in Arenfeldt (2004).

decision because she considered it to represent an increasingly great danger to herself. On 7 February 1583 she wrote two letters to her mother: one “common letter”, which Johann Casimir most probably read before it was sealed and a second, longer and – presumably – secret letter. The content of the first is limited to an inquiry about the health of her relatives in Saxony, news about the Saxon employees in her household, including a request for a new court mistress, and information about her and Johann Casimir’s current itinerary.<sup>1518</sup> In the second letter she explained to her mother that she had commended her “heavy cross” (that is, her marital difficulties) to God and had asked the Almighty to stop her from writing about it to her parents – and anyone else. She presented two reasons for this decision. First, her accounts did not help her situation. In contrast, writing about her difficulties caused bitterness toward both her parents and her husband and it intensified the strife between the two parties competing for her loyalty. Second, Johann Casimir’s repeated warnings that he would intercept the messengers who carried her letters to Saxony caused concern. She therefore asked for her parents’ forgiveness for the fact that she no longer would write to them as frequently as she had done previously. She also reminded Anna that she had followed her and August’s wish when she had married Johann Casimir and, in light of this obedience, she asked that they would continue to pray for her and begged them to keep her in their hearts.<sup>1519</sup>

The development leading to Elisabeth to this resignation was Johann Casimir’s intense “Zwinglianization/Calvinization” of his new territories. In February 1578 Ludwig and Johann Casimir finally reached an agreement – mediated by Elisabeth – concerning the division of their father’s territories.<sup>1520</sup> Once Johann Casimir had established his authority in the districts he had gained, he immediately employed his new power to criminalize Lutheranism. Elisabeth wrote to Anna that, “my lord [and husband] has prohibited – with the [threat] of death penalty – anyone from the town and

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<sup>1518</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 7 Feb. 1583, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 232.

<sup>1519</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 7 Feb. 1583, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 233. Regarding the second of the two letters dated 7 Feb. 1583 see also Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 143-144. However, Kluckhohn does not discuss the fact that two letters were sent on the same day. Although Kluckhohn refers to the secret correspondence between the two women (p. 111), he nevertheless concludes that the inconsistencies in Elisabeth’s accounts of her situation are testimonies to her mental instability (see for example pp. 143-144).

<sup>1520</sup> Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Neustadt 9 Feb. 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 135, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 11 March 78, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 138; see also Press (1970), p. 302-303.

the court to come to my church”.<sup>1521</sup> A few months later Johann Casimir entered the war in the Netherlands and, with this decision, he further alienated his wife and her parents.<sup>1522</sup>

With Ludwig’s death in November 1583, Elisabeth’s difficulties again increased. As the guardian of his nephew Friedrich (IV), Johann Casimir came to govern the entire Palatinate and implemented anti-Lutheran policies throughout the territory.<sup>1523</sup> By 1584 the situation had reached an extreme: with the exception of Elisabeth’s chaplain, all Lutheran theologians were expelled and, although Elisabeth was the godmother of her Lutheran nephew, Johann Casimir forced the young Friedrich away from her in order to raise him in his own confession.

During the spring of 1584, Elisabeth expressed her despair to her Lutheran sister-in-law, Dorothea Susanna in Weimar. By this time, the confidentiality between the two Saxon consorts had been re-established, and Dorothea Susanna immediately passed the information on to Anna.<sup>1524</sup> Two months later, Dorothea Susanna sent a more detailed account about the developments in the Palatinate to the electress and, according to this, Johann Casimir had dismissed all theologians who did not share his Calvinist views and,

[L]ast Sunday, his beloved [Johann Casimir] brought the young lord [Friedrich (IV), the son of Ludwig] to his Calvinist sermon with force even though the young lord – with crying eyes – and his court master and preceptor fervently begged against it.<sup>1525</sup>

Their pleas were granted no consideration by Johann Casimir and, according to Dorothea Susanna’s sources, the young boy had cried throughout the sermon. The Duchess was greatly upset that, “the young princely, delicate and innocent blood” was being forced to such a seductive religion and that “the surreptitious poison of the

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<sup>1521</sup> “... mein herr ... hat bei leibes straff lassen ein gebott ausgehen das keiner nicht aus der stat noch von hoffgesinde sol in meine kirche komen ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 11 March 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 138, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, without date/place (early May 1578), DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 142.

<sup>1522</sup> Elisabeth Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 19 June 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 149, and Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Kaiserslautern 26 June 1578, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 150.

<sup>1523</sup> Von Bezold (1874) and Press (1970), pp. 299-341.

<sup>1524</sup> Anna to Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Dresden 21 March 1584, DrHSA Kop. 526, fol. 24 a – 25 a.

<sup>1525</sup> “... vnd haben S.L. am nächst verschienenen Sonntag ... das junge Herrlein [Ludwig’s son and heir, Friedrich] mit Gewalt in S.L. calvinische Predigt geführt, ungeachtet daß das Herrlein mit weinende Augen sowohl auch sein Hofmeister und Präceptor zum heftigsten dafür gebeten ...”, Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar to Anna, 12 May 1584. Quoted from von Weber (1865), pp. 382-383.



sacramentarian beliefs” was imposed upon him in his youth.<sup>1526</sup> Dorothea Susanna begged Anna to make August to intervene and, during 1584 and 1585, August and several other Lutheran princes did make repeated – but unsuccessful – attempts to challenge Johann Casimir’s confessional policies.<sup>1527</sup>

During the summer of 1584, Johann Casimir and Elisabeth visited Saxony. Once again the electoral couple’s efforts to mend the relationship between their daughter and son-in-law proved futile and, a few months later, Elisabeth informed her parents just how far Johann Casimir had gone,

[T]he developments concerning the religion here are pitiful. All preachers have been dismissed and [they] have taken my Fritz [Friedrich (IV)] [away] so that he is not at all allowed to come to me [so that] I - contrary to what I had promised his virtuous parents – cannot teach him anymore, God have mercy. I hope from my heart that the dear God will forgive me and will consider this with mercy grace. The young lady [Christine, Elisabeth’s niece] is still going with me in the church, but I do not know for how long.<sup>1528</sup>

As August Kluckhohn argued, Johann Casimir’s aggressive confessionalization of his territory, possibly combined with Anna and August’s recognition that their failing health would soon prevent them from protecting their daughter, prompted them to inquire by their court chaplain if the irreconcilable religious differences between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir were cause for divorce. Referring to Paul’s letter to the Corinthians I, 7, the theologians answered with a no. Rather, Elisabeth was reminded that it was her Christian (Lutheran) duty to make all efforts to bring her husband to the true word of God.<sup>1529</sup> Although several princes were subsequently mobilized to put

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<sup>1526</sup> / “... daß das junge fürstliche, zarte und unschuldige Blut zu einer verführerischen Religion gedrunge worden und also das subtile Gift des sacramentarischen Schwarms in seiner Jugend durch Zwang bekommen soll ...”, Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar to Anna, 12 May 1584. Quoted from von Weber (1865), pp. 382-383.

<sup>1527</sup> See the summary in Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 144-152 and Press (1986), pp. 107-108. In his earlier work Press made a brief reference to the resistance against Johann Casimir’s religious reforms, see Press (1970), pp. 324-325. Yet, Press does not mention August, although the elector was in frequent contact with Johann Casimir’s co-guardians and other Lutheran princes regarding the developments. The course of events from November 1583 until August’s death appears from *Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir*, vol. II., pp. 174-351.

<sup>1528</sup> “... [es] geht ... hir mit der religion erbarmlich zu[,] alle prediger seint abegeschafft[,] ... vnd haben mir meinen fritz auch genummen das er gar nicht mehr darf zu mir gehen das ich in nicht mehr vermanen kan welchs ich seine frume elter viel anders habe zu gesagt[,] nu gott mus es barmen[,] ich wunsche mir von herten das der libe gott mich wol erlössen vnd mich mitt gnaden darvon nemen ... [.] das frelein [Elisabeth’s niece] geht mit mir noch in die kirche nicht weis ich wie lang ...”, Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to Anna, Heidelberg 6 Oct. 1584, DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 255. See also Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 144-145.

<sup>1529</sup> Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 146-147, and von Bezold (1879), pp. 3-26.

pressure on Johann Casimir, he continued the established line and blamed Elisabeth for his political difficulties.<sup>1530</sup>

Some time during the late spring of 1585, Elisabeth succeeded in dispatching yet another cry for help to an unidentified addressee, “my lord [and husband] will take lady Christina and my Dorothea completely away from me and have them go in his church”. She begged the addressee to bring the news to her parents in order to obtain their help.<sup>1531</sup> The addressee did as requested,<sup>1532</sup> though there was little more her parents could do. By the early 1580s the “Second Reformation” was underway in several territories.<sup>1533</sup> Johann Casimir’s enjoyed growing support from other princes for his confessional policies and the allies of Anna and August were increasingly unwilling to intervene in the internal government of another territory. When Anna and August both died during the next year, Elisabeth’s resistance against Johann Casimir’s pressure lost its strength.

Kluckhohn blamed the “cold-hearted” and “selfish” August for Elisabeth’s difficulties. However, as Anna and Elisabeth’s letters reveal, the developments looked differently from their point of view. After August’s death Elisabeth made efforts to gain support from her brother Christian and her uncle, the Danish King, but both were unwilling to act against Johann Casimir.<sup>1534</sup>

Four years later Elisabeth died and after her death rumors circulated that she had committed adultery and that her death was the result of a poisoning orchestrated by Johann Casimir. According to official accounts Elisabeth accepted her husband’s confession shortly before she died and the funeral was performed by one of her

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<sup>1530</sup> Kluckhohn (1874), pp. 147-156, and von Bezold (1879), p. 7.

<sup>1531</sup> “... es ist ... im werck ... das mein herr freilein Christia vnd mein doridea mir wil nemen vnd in seine kirche gehen lassen vnd sie gantz vnd iar von mir zihen wil ...”, Autograph note from Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, to an unidentified “Herr Padel”, without date [April 1585?], DrHSA Loc. 8535/2, p. 267.

<sup>1532</sup> This appears from the fact that the letter is bound with Elisabeth’s letter to Anna in DrHSA Loc. 8535/2 (p. 267).

<sup>1533</sup> See the contributions to *Die reformierte Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland – Das Problem der “Zweiten Reformation”* (1986).

<sup>1534</sup> Regarding Elisabeth’s unsuccessful request for help from her brother, Christian I of Saxony, see von Bezold (1879), p. 5. The contact between Johann Casimir, Count Palatine, and Christian I is discussed by Press (1970), pp. 341-342, and Blaschke (1986), p. 93. Elisabeth’s attempt to gain the support of Frederik II of Denmark has passed unnoticed. Yet, three letters (dated 30 Nov. 1583, 4 Dec. 1586 and 22 May 1587) from Elisabeth to her uncle are preserved in RA, TKUA pk. 37-1. The content of the letter from 1583 reveals that this was the first letter she ever sent to Frederik. She emphasized their dynastic ties, expressed her loyalty and her hopes for future contact. This however, does not appear to have happened until she, in 1586, again initiated a correspondence. Neither of the three letters contains details about Elisabeth’s difficulties but when she expressed her loyalty towards her Danish relatives, she implicitly asked for the same from the addressee. For a detailed analysis of Frederik II’s stance in the confessional disputes, during the period 1570-1589, see Lockhardt (2004).

husband's Reformed theologians.<sup>1535</sup> Her controversial biography is underlined by the fact that no funeral sermon was printed upon her death.<sup>1536</sup>

The brief outline of Elisabeth's marriage and Anna's continual involvement in defense of her daughter's freedom to practice her religion leaves little doubt that the confessional developments of the sixteenth century are strongly reflected in the marriage of Elisabeth and Johann Casimir. However, when the focus is shifted from the male members of the two dynasties to Elisabeth and Anna, it becomes clear that the marriage did more than mirror the developments of the Protestant cause, as the nineteenth-century historians proposed. The conflicts between the Albertine Wettins and the Wittelsbachs in the Palatinate intensified because of the bi-confessional marriage that tied them together and because each party attempted to win over the other for their branch of Protestantism by way of this marriage. Hence, in the marriage between Elisabeth and Johann Casimir new tensions arose and, because of the confessional difference between the involved dynasties and their continual struggle about the confession of Elisabeth and her children, every conflict between the spouses was inevitably situated in a religious context. As a result, the tragic marriage influenced the Saxon confessional stance and, Anna and Elisabeth's actions indirectly came to shape the contemporary confessional developments, especially the Saxon aspirations to unify the Protestant territories. However, as the Saxon stance after the early 1570s became increasingly intolerant of any deviations from Luther's own teachings, the Formula of Concord caused greater discord.

### **Confessional conflicts or gynecocracy**

This aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate that the great significance of the personal beliefs of a female consort. As a protector of the "true" religion, the church, and the clergy, the beliefs of the female consort inevitably had implications that exceeded her personal salvation. Because her prayers were a force to be reckoned with (see chapters 3 and 8) and because this force was used to further the causes that influenced the entire territory and the greater Protestant cause, it was crucial that it was

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<sup>1535</sup> Von Bezold (1879), pp. 3-26.

<sup>1536</sup> In spite of an extensive search, no funeral sermon for Elisabeth could be located. The *Gesamtkatalog deutschsprachiger Leichenpredigten (GESA)* (<http://www.uni-marburg.de/fpmr/html/db/gesainfo.html>) as well as the collections in Dresden, Wolfenbüttel, Munich, and Copenhagen have been consulted.

done according to all the “right” prescriptions and that the consort followed all of the appropriate religious prescriptions.

However, as this account of Anna’s confessional development from the 1560s to the 1570s has revealed, the consort’s beliefs were not “simply” related to her status as a “pillar of prayer”. The Saxon electress participated actively in the theological discussions that shaped Protestantism during the 1560s and 1570s. The force of her opinion is instantly visible in the exchanges with Paul Eber and Christian Schütz during the colloquy in Altenburg. The fact that Eber and Schütz turned to Anna during these talks suggests that the theological authorities may also have consulted with the electress in other situations and that – as the established historiography suggests – they may have attempted to use her and her influence on August to preserve the religious teachings they considered to be true. While Anna expressed reluctance to comment on the theological details that separated the two parties during the colloquy in Altenburg, she did not hesitate to articulate her wish that a compromise be achieved between the “Flacians” and the Wittenberger theologians.

Although the electress’s vast correspondence remains quiet on her exact involvement in the persecution of the Saxon “Crypto-Calvinists”, the exchanges with Eber and Schütz reveal that she had previously been intimately involved in the matters of the Saxon church. Anna’s alleged participation in the events of 1574 is further corroborated when the confessional developments of Electoral Saxony are examined in conjunction with dynastic developments during the same time period.

During the seven years from 1567 and 1573 one can observe great turbulence in the electress’s confessional stance. During this brief period, she moved from disdain for the “Flacians” towards a desire to resolve the tension during the colloquy, back to increased antagonism in 1570, and finally, from around 1573, she came to share the stricter Lutheran teachings that previously had caused the conflict between “her and August’s” Philippist theologians and those from in Ernestine Saxony. During the same seven years, she also moved from a reconciliatory approach towards the Zwinglian/Calvinist Palatinate to a profound fear and hatred of Calvinism. At first sight, the developments appear to fit neatly into the category of “confessional developments” that – above all – were shaped by the disputes concerning the Lord’s Supper. Yet, any attempt to separate the confessional changes from dynastic developments would in this instance be futile and misleading. Although Anna followed

the theological discussions closely, her correspondence indicates that her interest in the disputes, and hence also her changes of opinion, were intrinsically linked to dynastic considerations.

Between 1567 and 1570 Anna appears to have shared the prevailing hope that Protestantism could be united under the content of the Augsburg Confession, and she thus supported all efforts to bring both Ernestine Saxony and the Palatinate closer to her and August's territory. However, as the "Flacian" defamations of August and his confessional stance prevailed in Saxony-Weimar, the electress severed ties to Dorothea Susanna. Yet, according to Anna, this was not the result of a confessional disagreement. Her decision to end the correspondence with the duchess should instead be attributed to Johann Wilhelm's failure to comply with the obligations inherent in the (distant) kinship between the two rulers. Even if Anna re-classified the cause of her decision as a "dynastic" question, the insults of August were all related to his acceptance of the teachings on the Eucharist presented by the theological authorities in Wittenberg. Consequently, the electress's decision to end the correspondence with Dorothea Susanna may well have given rise to renewed hopes in the Palatinate that was governed by the duchess's father, Friedrich III.

The Elector Palatine was eager to bring Electoral Saxony closer to the Heidelberger Cathecism and, although August and Anna maintained that they followed Luther's own teachings, the declarations presented by the Saxon theologians gave rise to increasing concerns. Particularly, Friedrich III and Johann Casimir's insistence that the Lord's Supper as defined in the "Dresdener Consens" (1571) did not differ from the electoral couple's and their theologians' understanding and the simultaneous conflicts between different chaplains in the electoral household prompted the ruling couple to request further explanations from the Wittenberger theologians.

Friedrich III's almost simultaneous insinuation in a letter to Anna, that Electoral Saxony was on the verge of accepting Zwingli's/Calvin's teachings shook the electress. Friedrich III and Johann Casimir clearly considered Anna's influence on Saxony's confessional policies significant, even before 1574. The continual Palatinian meddling in Saxon developments, combined with the danger that the salvation of her unborn grandchild may be in danger (because it potentially would be baptized by a Zwinglian/Calvinist pastor), considerably increased the electress's theological awareness. The concern was so great that she potentially played a significant role in the

persecution of the Saxon Crypto-Calvinists – though her letters do not reveal what her exact involvement may have been.

In the discussion above, when claims are made that Anna's involvement in the confessional disputes generally were motivated by dynastic considerations rather than narrowly defined theological questions, the latter term ("theological questions" or the above-used "theological awareness") should, by no means, be equated with religiosity. There is no doubt that her beliefs were significant motivating factors and her concerns about Elisabeth's, her grandchildren's, and her own salvation, appear as genuine fears that were rooted in her profound religious beliefs.

After 1574, the electress indeed appears as a strict Lutheran and, by doing her utmost to ensure that her daughter also remained in the "true" faith, Anna contributed to greater confessional developments. During the late 1570s and 1580s, the struggle over Elisabeth's confessional allegiance radicalized the stance of the two most important Protestant dynasties and the marriage that had been intended as a remedy against the fragmentation of Protestantism proved to reinforce the fronts. Under these circumstances, the personal beliefs of both Anna and Elisabeth were obviously highly politicized and, as long as the disputes concerning the rights beliefs could be considered to be of immediate dynastic relevance or to be directly related to the women's own salvation, the consorts could freely participate – and they did so in numerous instances.

The intrinsic linkages and overlaps between dynasties and territories could serve to legitimize the women extensive involvement in confessional conflicts, as Anna did in her exchanges with Dorothea Susanna. However, the women could also – as Dorothea Susanna did – use the alleged inferiority of their gender to circumvent undesirable discussions. Therefore, the confrontation between the two consorts demonstrate that the women were able to develop strategies that allowed them to transgress the gender-specific boundaries; however, the very same boundaries simultaneously could be strategically invoked by the women themselves.

But the connections between dynasty and territory, combined with the individuals strong dynastic embeddedness, also meant that what we today may consider to be one of the most personal dimensions of an individual's life – (ir-)religious beliefs – were of immediate and considerable political significance in the lives of early modern female consorts. Neither Anna nor Elisabeth chose their prominent roles in the confessional disputes between the Palatinate and Saxony. While their actions contributed to the

escalation of the conflict, they were nevertheless motivated by legitimate concerns for Elisabeth's salvation. But even if the two women ended up in the middle of the confessional conflicts "by default" (that is, as a result of the intersecting dynastic and confessional interests) and although, according to the didactic and devotional treatises, a female consort was obliged to further the "true" word of God, this did not imply that those around them were willing or able to look beyond the prevailing view that women should not participate in theological discussions and the government of territories. Therefore, it was only to be expected that Anna's involvement gave rise to the charge of a *Weiberregiment* in Saxony – even if her actions could be justified and can be explained by her motherly concerns and the responsibilities she considered herself to have as the female consort and mother of the church. Similar allegations were subsequently made against Anna's daughter-in-law Sophie, Electress of Saxony (1568-1622) and against Anna, Electress of Brandenburg (1576-1625).<sup>1537</sup> In all three cases, the claims that the consort exercised too much power were expressed in the context of confessional disputes and, in each instance, the women were considered staunch defendants of Luther's teachings. In addition to shaping the confessional developments of the 1570s, Anna's actions and the accusations of gynecocracy that it elicited, became a topos in the *Querelle des femmes* during the decades of the "Second Reformation" in the Protestant territories.<sup>1538</sup>

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<sup>1537</sup> Drexl (2002/2003), pp. 384-388 and 407-430.

<sup>1538</sup> Drexl (2002/2003), pp. 431-438. Regarding the "Second Reformation" as a category, see Schilling (1986).





## Conclusions

The analysis of the Anna of Saxony's management of her office as female consort has demonstrated that both she and her correspondents considered her to be intrinsically linked to the early modern political system. As stated in the introduction, political history has traditionally been defined as the developments of the state and the field has resisted the integration of gender as a category of analysis. However, even if this narrowly conceived definition of politics is taken as a point of departure, it cannot be overlooked that princely women, and particularly the wives of territorial rulers, were active political agents. They were expected to safeguard the interests of their two dynasties and to fulfill specific duties in the government of the territories under their authority. Born into one ruling dynasty and a member of another by marriage, a princely woman was part and parcel of the most important political institution of the sixteenth century. The consort's dynastic embeddedness as well as her office as *Landesmutter* entailed rights and responsibilities, but it also politicized almost all aspects of her life: marriage, reproductive capacity, as well as religious beliefs and practices. Although the analysis has centered on only a few select ways in which a consort participated in early modern politics, the findings highlight that the women's office and actions must be included if an adequate understanding of the early modern dynastic state is to be developed.

At the beginning of the analysis it was argued that the consort's position in the "field of power" (as defined by Bourdieu) can be conceptualized as the sum of her relative position within three domains that together constituted the basis of the early modern dynastic state: the dynasty, the territory, and the church (see chapter 1). However, it was also stressed that while each of these domains can be distinguished, they cannot be separated, and the consort's position was also shaped by the intricate connections that existed between the same domains. Hence, in order to summarize the political role of the female consort, several issues must be addressed. First, the consort's position within each of the three domains must be recapitulated. In doing so, particular attention will be paid to the relative structuring force of gender and rank within the dynasty, the territory, and the church. Subsequently, the overlaps between the three domains and the consort's ability to transfer resources between them will be discussed with a view to defining the foundations of her political role, the boundaries within which she had to manage the responsibilities inherent in her office, and the gendering of early modern politics.

*The consort's position within the dynasty*

The correspondence of Anna of Saxon shows that she played an active role within both of her dynasties. She used her position within and between two dynasties to the benefit of both lineages by mediating financial and political support and by pursuing marriage alliances she considered desirable for both of her dynasties. In her capacity as mediator, Anna of Saxony provided her husband with significant financial and political support in conjunction with his succession and, during her brother's war in the 1560s, she actively sought to ensure the continued loyalty of her husband towards his brother-in-law. In order to successfully mediate resources between her natal and her conjugal dynasties, she at once had to maintain an active belonging to her native dynasty and to integrate herself successfully into her husband's lineage. When the interests of individual relatives were compatible with the best interests of the dynasty, she was equally ready to accommodate and defend these, though if an individual's interests posed a potential challenge to the interests of the dynasty and its other members, she strongly resisted it.

The consort's role as mediator between her dynasties underlines the importance of looking beyond the legally defined, agnatic structures of society and examining the ways in which women contributed to the realization of the potential benefits that had motivated their marriages. Nonetheless, the narrow definition of the lineage had implications for the consort's life. Hence, one of her foremost duties was to give birth to the legitimate heir of her "new" dynasty. In conjunction with her marriage, a princely woman was introduced to the gender-specific knowledge on pregnancies and childbirth, thereby creating an increased awareness of the key role she had for the future of her new dynasty and its territories. Once a princely woman had married, her closest relatives monitored her body closely and any sign of a desired pregnancy received ample attention. When a pregnancy was considered relatively certain, the hopes for an heir were soon made explicit. The pressure to deliver and heir was considerable and, although the women found consolation in the religious teachings that emphasized God's role as the provider of all children and the spiritual equality of the two sexes, the women were nevertheless willing to go to great lengths to fulfill their duty to deliver an heir – even if this implied the assistance of theologically questionable medical practices.

In the interactions between the princely women and the relatives in her natal dynasty, the hierarchies established by rank and gender frequently proved subordinate to

the roles that were defined by age, familial relations, and experience. While Anna always addressed her parents and her brothers with deference, her gender did not stop her from expressing her views and asserting her will. She skillfully negotiated the authority of her parents and, after 1559, also the authority Frederik II could claim as the head of Anna's natal dynasty. The electress expected to be consulted on decisions within the Oldenburg dynasty and her relatives acknowledged their duty to confer with her on a range of decisions that influenced the name and honor of the entire family. If her rights to be included in the decisions of her natal relatives were not respected, Anna was ready to address her brother's councilors and to act covertly in an attempt to assert her will.

However, even if gender rarely excluded Anna of Saxony from participation in dynastic questions, her interactions with relatives were inevitably conditioned by the gender-specific trajectory of her life and the double dynastic affiliation she successfully developed after her wedding. It was by way of her new position in Saxony that she was able to provide her relatives in Denmark with everything from desirable herbals for her mother to the initial contact to families of potential brides for her brothers. Without her simultaneous and gender-specific position within two dynasties and two territories, this would not have been possible.

Anna's position and her responsibilities within her new dynasty were also shaped by her gender. The gendering of the consort's duty to deliver an heir is obvious and the importance of this duty was accentuated further by the prevailing – and gendered – anatomical understanding of the male and female body that ascribed the full responsibility for reproduction to the female body. Because of the immense political importance of the presence of an heir, mothers were empowered by their children and particularly by their sons. In their capacity as mothers of the future heir to their “new” dynasty, they were incorporated into the future of the lineage. Although the duty to deliver an heir was of prime importance, this does not imply that a consort was by definition a failure if she did not fulfill it. The presence or absence of an heir conditioned the women's life but, because most princely women could draw on a range of other resources, it should not be viewed as a determinant of their status.

#### *The consort's responsibilities within the territory*

The consort's gender-specific knowledge of pregnancies and childbirths was of service beyond the dynasty. Combined with her extensive medical knowledge and apothecarial

production, Anna of Saxony placed this knowledge at the service of her and her husband's subjects. The electress's medical and apothecarial interests were much more than quaint hobbies: her continual consultations with other princely women and a range of medical practitioners underline the determination with which she sought to fulfill what the religious authorities defined as an integral responsibility of her office. In keeping with the instructions from the same authorities, she made special efforts to alleviate the dangers represented by epidemics and paid particular attention to the pregnant women and women in childbed. Anna of Saxony closely followed the development and increased regulations of midwifery in other German territories and cities; on the basis of these developments, she personally monitored the education of Saxon midwives and strove to improve the services available to the Saxon subject. In retrospect, the electress's proactive engagement with the Saxon midwifery appears as an integral part of the state-formation process and the increased centralization of an early modern territory.

The second responsibility of the consort vis-à-vis her subjects that has been examined in this analysis was her duty to intercede on their behalf and to defend the so-called "government of grace". Although the theological authorities stressed that the alleged inferiority of the female sex disqualified the female consort from participation in the execution of justice, they elaborated on her duty to defend the interests of the weak and to promote grace. The instructions they presented to the consort at once stressed her duty to be compassionate and the limits within which she could exercise this role. Examining the requests that were presented to Anna of Saxony and her responses to the supplications/intercessions she received, it is clear that she, as well as her subjects, clients, and neighbors, recognized that she was able to exercise considerable influence in both legal and financial matters. The analysis also revealed that the supplicants recognized that the consort could exercise this influence not simply on her husband, but also on a range of other secular authorities within Saxony and the Empire at large. This widespread recognition of the consort's role as intercessor suggests that she constituted a well-known and integral part of the greater legal system. Correspondingly, Anna of Saxony took her responsibility as a promoter of grace very seriously. Requests were considered carefully and the electress made an effort to gather information about each specific case. When she replied to a supplication or presented an intercession on behalf of a supplicant to other authorities, she frequently acknowledged the gender-specific boundaries within which she was expected to serve her subjects and clients. However, by making explicit references to

the same boundaries, Anna could implicitly contend that her interference in the execution of justice was legitimate. In other cases, a reference to the gender-specific boundaries could serve as a legitimate reason for declining to act upon a request.

In the normative literature, the consort's gender had considerable impact on the definition of her responsibilities within the territory. According to the Lutheran theologians, it was her perceived gender-specific weaknesses that excluded her from the government of the *politia*. However, because she was fit to govern the house and because the common analogy between the house and the territory, the boundaries of her involvement in the matters of the territory were negotiable. Similarly, the consort's exclusion from the execution of justice was explained with reference to women's alleged propensity to act emotionally. Yet, it was the very same (perceived) weakness that could – if employed appropriately – qualify her as intercessor. The consort's gender also played a decisive role in defining her responsibilities for the ill and women in childbed. Just as a good mistress of the house was obliged to care for all members of her household, the maternal responsibilities of the consort extended to the subjects within the entire territory and obliged her to tend to their medical needs. And it was her own gendered body, that is, the reproductive capacity of her own body, combined with her elevated rank that at once qualified her and obliged her to act as a guardian of pregnant women.

The normative prescriptions influenced the practices of the consorts as these are reflected in Anna's correspondence. Both she and other consorts were acutely aware of the gender order and its inherent prescriptions for appropriate female behavior but, although gender shaped their responsibilities, it was not a determinant. The consort's rank-specific position within the political order implied that she was an active participant in the government of the territory, but the areas within which she was involved were shaped by the prevailing view of women as emotional, compassionate, and caring mothers. However, within these areas, the Saxon electress had the freedom to draw upon the institutional infrastructure of the territory and she was recognized as an authority who had access to and was capable of influencing other secular authorities – both officials in Saxony and neighboring rulers in other principalities.

#### *The consort's responsibilities for the church*

The consort's position as a mother of the church was complicated by the double nature of the church as a temporal and an eternal institution. In relation to the temporal institution –

in the case of the Saxon electress the territorially defined church – the role as *Kirchenmutter* implied a range of duties. The term *Kirchenmutter* implicitly construes the church as a household and thus alludes to the responsibilities of a *Hausmutter*: she had to promote the Christian teachings by supporting the church, its associated institutions, and all members of this “household” (the clergy). However, the consort’s duties within the temporal church were intrinsically linked to her service to the true and eternal work of God. Only by adhering to the “truth” could she promote its dissemination by way of patronage and, at the same time, conferring patronage was an integral part of her duty as a Christian believer. The double nature of the church thus implied that the consort’s personal beliefs as well as her distribution of patronage for the clergy were highly politicized, and this politicization of her beliefs was intensified by the recurring theological disputes that dominated the sixteenth century.

Although the territorial ruler was the head of the new Lutheran churches, both he and his wife were subject to God’s will and word. As the experts on the Holy Scriptures, it was the responsibility of the clergy to ensure that the government was conducted in accordance with God’s will and it is widely acknowledged that the desired collaboration between secular authorities and the clergy left the hierarchical relationship between secular and religious authorities somewhat ambiguous. The ambiguity was even greater in relation to the female consort because she, due to the perceived intellectual inferiority of her sex, was considered incapable of comprehending the intricacies of theological debates. Nonetheless, she was obliged to promote the true word of God and support the church and its servants. In addition, she could legitimately defend her own *true* beliefs and practices, and she was obligated to intervene if her husband or other secular authorities took measures that deviated from God’s word.

In accordance with the prescriptions for her office, Anna of Saxony made efforts to promote God’s word and Christian morals in the territory. Her support for the church primarily took the form of patronage of individual members of the clergy, though she also attempted to found a girls’ school. In addition, increasing concerns about the amorality within the territory prompted her to intervene and encourage the development of stronger measures against it. While it is rare to find examples that suggest Anna may have influenced the appointments within the Saxon church, her exchanges with other consorts reveal that they often were intimately involved in the selection of both superintendents and other clergy. In light of the examples from Mecklenburg and Liegnitz, it thus seems likely

that Anna was also consulted in the discussions that preceded the appointment of clergy in Saxony. This presumption is supported by the close contact between the electress and the leading Saxon theologians. In spite of the alleged intellectual inferiority of women, Paul Eber and Christian Schütz conferred with Anna during the important Colloquy in Altenburg. Whether or not the electress was – as alleged – responsible for the harsh treatment of the so-called Crypto-Calvinists, there are numerous indications that Anna, both before and after 1574, exercised a certain influence on the confessional stance of Saxony.

The complex position of the consort within the *ecclesia* can be viewed as a fundamental tension between rank and gender: rank obliged her to perform certain duties, whereas the alleged gender-specific inferiority rendered it impossible for her to fulfill these without overstepping the boundaries within which a woman's actions ought to be limited. As a mother of the church, the consort's own beliefs inevitably came to shape the church and, although the normative sources ignored this ambiguity, Anna and her contemporaries could not fail to note the immense political importance of the consorts' religious beliefs. Gender rarely appears as a force that excluded the Saxon electress from participation in exchanges concerning the church and confessional stance of Saxony. Nevertheless, she did make reference to her sex and the inferiority this was understood to confer on her in several cases. These references testify to her awareness of the limits it could define and they suggest that she – in the particular cases – felt a need to justify her actions. The justification was most commonly found in the understanding that, although women may be intellectually inferior to men, the two sexes were spiritually on a par.

The intrinsic connections that linked the early modern dynasties, their territories, and the territorially defined churches meant that the politically charged, confessional disputes gained a pronounced dynastic dimension, which can be observed in the relationship between the Albertine Wettins and the House of Wittelsbach in the Palatinate. Although this was a contributing factor to the politicization of the consort's beliefs, it also granted her an argument with which she could legitimize her interventions. Anna used this to justify her continued efforts to resolve the conflict between the theologians in Ernestine Saxony and her and August's territory and, as the mother of the endangered Elisabeth in the Palatinate, the electress considered herself obliged and entitled to guard the future salvation – that is, the true beliefs – of her daughter and grandchildren.

These observations on the consort's ability to justify her actions by reclassifying the subject matter, raise issues that will be addressed in the second part of the concluding discussion. In the following, the overlaps between the dynasty, territory, and church, and the consort's ability to transfer resources between the three domains will be discussed with a view to defining the foundations of her political role and the boundaries within which her actions had to be confined.

### *The political role of the female consort*

Because of their sex, female consorts were supposedly excluded from the execution of justice, the government of the territory, and the intricacies of theological discussions. However, as a result of rank and dynastic embeddedness, the consorts often became involved in the management of the territories and the church. The gender-specific boundaries that purportedly excluded women from certain responsibilities were blurred further by the frequent analogies between the household, the territory, and the church. The double meaning and elastic definition of the "house" implied that the extent of the consort's authority and obligations was frequently subject to interpretation and negotiation. The overlaps between the domains, the elastic definition of the house, and, hence, the negotiable boundaries that defined what a woman should and should not do also meant that certain "grey zones" existed within which a consort's participation could at once be challenged and defended. Thus, while the analysis reveals that gender-specific boundaries excluded the female consort from certain aspects of the government of a territory, it also has been demonstrated that the women were often compelled to and/or able to circumvent these. At other times, consorts could strategically employ the alleged inferiority of their sex and their exclusion from certain domains of government to avoid undesirable confrontations and to decline requests from clients, neighbors, or relatives.

Whether a female consort became involved in a question within one of the "grey zones" (as for example a confessional dispute that at once entailed a theological and a dynastic dimension) by default or actively and knowingly transgressed the boundaries within which a woman's actions were expected to be confined, this must be understood in the context of the overlaps and intricate connections that existed between the dynasty, the household/territory, and the church.

However, the very same overlaps enabled the consorts to transfer resources (or in the terminology of Bourdieu, *capital*) and legitimation for their actions from one domain to



another. When the Saxon electress redefined her confrontation with Dorothea Susanna in Saxony-Weimar from a theological to a dynastic matter, she created space within which she could legitimately continue to express her views. In this way, she employed the overlaps between the church, the territory, and the dynasty to circumvent the gender-specific boundaries Dorothea Susanna had invoked in order to evade the unpleasant exchange. As Alison Wall concluded in her analysis of the letters that were written by the noblewomen in sixteenth-century England “the women knew their place” but “ they did not necessarily keep it”.<sup>1539</sup> This was also the case for the female consorts in the Protestant territories of sixteenth-century Germany and the negotiable boundaries between the family, the territory, and the church helped them justify actions that may have been perceived as extraordinary and/or inappropriate for a woman. At times, the transfer of resources was the result of conscious efforts but, more often than not, it seems to have happened almost “inadvertently”. In order to articulate this more precisely, the foundations of the consort’s political role first have to be specified.

A consort’s status was not simply derived from her husband’s status as a ruling prince, as Bugenhagen suggested in the 1537 coronation in Copenhagen. While a princely woman gained the office as *Landesmutter* by way of her marriage and her husband’s position within an agnatic lineage, there were two other significant components that contributed fundamentally to her status and authority: her own dynastic background and the fact that she, as a secular authority in a Lutheran territory, was viewed as appointed by God.

The women who became female consorts in the Protestant territories of sixteenth-century Germany were born into the highest stratum of society. Their dynastic belonging granted them significant social capital that was employed when potential spouses were selected and enhanced when marriages with men of equally prominent descent were arranged. Hence, Anna’s dynastic background was an implicit precondition for her position as *Landesmutter* and her dynastic network continued to be a source of power throughout her life. Secondly, as the coronation of Anna’s parents reveals, the female consort was a full-fledged secular authority and – as Luther taught in his treatise *On Secular Authority* and Bugenhagen reiterated in the 1537 coronation – all secular authorities were appointed by God. In other words, God invested the female consort with authority.

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<sup>1539</sup> Wall (2001), p. 90.

In addition to these three tangible sources of the consort's position, the management of her office allowed her to develop social capital outside of her dynasties. In order to fulfill her daily duties, the consort came into contact with to a wide range of local authorities within both the secular administration of the principality and the new territorially defined church. And her duties were not confined within the borders of the territory: as the foremost, female representative of the territory vis-à-vis neighbors (that is, other ruling princes and consorts), she developed a vast network throughout the Empire and, in the case of Anna of Saxony, her continued contact to Denmark included the correspondence with several members of the territorial nobility from her "home". In this respect, the broad and composite network that is reflected in the correspondence of the Saxon electress can be viewed as a result of her office and its inherent rights and obligations. However, her extensive network also enhanced her power because it enabled her to obtain and mediate favors between different groups and individuals. The consort's ability to mobilize specific resources (whether specific material goods or symbolic resources) by way of her extensive network made her an attractive acquaintance and patron.

Although the consort's network can be viewed as resulting from the duties inherent in her office, the extensive social capital had to be managed wisely. As discussed most explicitly in conjunction with the notion of dynastic capital (chapter 4) and in the analysis of the consort's role as intercessor (chapter 7), the Saxon electress could not freely transfer resources she had access to. Her mediations of favors and resources were subject to the limits the theologians defined for good government (above all by the frequently reiterated duty to protect the needy rather than only the mighty), by the gender-specific norms, and by the fundamental dynamic of reciprocity that ideally characterized all social relations. Hence, when Anna interceded on behalf of subjects and clients, she was utilizing her composite network and reinforcing the social relations to the person for whom the case was presented. The same dynamics was often at play when a female consort decided to further the career of an employee/servant from the princely household or the territorial church. If the possibilities in one territory were exhausted, alternative opportunities could often be found in other territories by way of the dynastic networks. It was exactly the consort's composite social capital that made her an ideal intercessor. Subject and clients turned to the electress not only in questions that were confined within the Saxon borders and, similarly, neighbors and/or clients from outside Saxony, appealed to her for help in cases that required the attention of Saxon authorities. Yet, when acting as intercessor, the consort also

had to navigate within the gender-specific boundaries that shaped her office and, although her office and rank assured her access to the authorities she addressed, she had to be careful not to infringe on the due course of justice. Hence, when furthering the requests of friends, clients, and subjects, the Saxon electress often transferred resources between the different domains that have structured the analysis.

If the social capital outside the territory represented an important source of power to the Saxon electress, she also used her position as the *Landesmutter* of Saxony to the benefit of both relatives and clients from outside the territory. This was particularly pronounced during her brother's war against Sweden, but it also was the electress's position in Saxony that enabled her to accommodate the requests Anna's mother sent on behalf of her chaplain who wished his sons to attend schools in Saxony, and it was by way of her status in both Saxony and the Empire at large that the electress could contribute to her brothers' education and mediate their marriages. When Anna went to great lengths to defend and promote the interests of her closest relatives, she was doubtlessly motivated by sincere care for them, but she was also employing the resources she had access to as consort in Saxony *and* investing in her own dynastic capital, that is, her ability to draw on the assistance of the same relatives if necessary in the future. However, the greater the support that Anna was able to provide to her natal dynasty and its members, the stronger the ties she was able to develop to them. Along with these ties came not only the prospect of being able to draw upon relatives, but also a greater sense of entitlement that was manifest when she was (and especially when she was *not*) consulted in matters pertaining to the name and honor of the family at large.

Although all social relations were fuelled by the dynamic of reciprocity, the consort's closest relatives constituted a reliable base of support, even if she was unable to reciprocate with other favors. Because married women continued to be members of their natal dynasties, their relatives were obliged to defend her interests in her new dynasty and territory. As Anna of Saxony made clear in conjunction with her brother's marriage, a misalliance would damage the entire family. Similarly, if a female relative was disrespected, it could reflect badly upon her relatives. Although Anna's daughter Elisabeth ultimately remained in the Palatinate, the electress ardently pursued a solution to her daughter's difficulties. She and August even attempted to obtain a divorce for Elisabeth, but both ruler and consort had to succumb to the verdict of the Saxon theologians who concluded that this would go against the word of God. Similarly and with greater success,

the electress continued to actively support the case of her sister-in-law, Sidonia of Braunschweig-Calenberg, until her marriage was brought to an end by Sidonia's return to Saxony. Hence, as long as a female consort maintained active ties to her natal dynasty, her position in her new family and their territories could be reinforced by support from them.

Whether in desperate defense of their personal religious beliefs and marital rights (as Elisabeth and Sidonia) or in more ambitious attempts to promote the specific interests of one of her dynasties (as Anna), princely women actively reinforced their position within their territory and their dynasties by transferring resources between the two domains.

It was the consort's simultaneous belonging and prominent position within the dynasty, the territory, and the church, and her ability to transfer resources between these three domains that constituted the foundation for her political role. While this enabled and obliged her to participate actively in a range of political-administrative duties, it also politicized almost every aspect of her life. Yet, it was also the same broader foundation of her power that made her political position differ so fundamentally from the position of the favorite and the *maitresse*. In contrast to the favorite and the *maitresse* whose position and ability to act depended exclusively on the favor of the prince, the consort could draw upon the extensive resources represented by her dynastic network and thereby reinforce her position as *Landes-* and *Kirchenmutter*. Finally, God himself had appointed her as well as her husband to serve as secular authorities and the collectively shared beliefs in the divine sanctioning of the political order granted the consort the greatest possible legitimacy to act.

#### *Gendering early modern politics*

When the obvious political dimensions of the consort's office until recently have been overlooked and left unexamined, it may be attributed to the considerable difference that can be detected between the normative sources and the practices revealed by the correspondence of the Saxon Electress. The theologians who were compelled to define the office of the female consort were quick to exclude her from the *politia* and Bugenhagen explained at length how the gender-specific weaknesses of Dorothea excluded her from judicial power. A cursory reading of the normative sources is likely to focus on the explicit exclusions rather than paying attention to the subtle ways in which the theologians struggled to reconcile the tension they recognized between a consort's rank and gender. The crucial tool with which this tension could be alleviated was the elastic definition of the "house". The house or household could refer to anything from the consort's *Frauenzimmer*

(ladies' quarters at the court) to the entire territory. By employing the analogy between the house(-hold) and the territory, the women's participation in the government of the territory could be presented as legitimate. As Nikolaus Selnecker wrote fifteen years after Anna's death, the mistress of the house was a co-ruler of the house and, correspondingly, the consort was the co-ruler of the territory – even if her active contributions to the developments within the territory (legal as well as institutional) were centered in specific and gendered domains of the dynastic state.

Consequently, the inclusion of the female consorts into a political history of the early modern dynastic states in Germany does not mean that men's and women's political responsibilities and activities were the same. As Barbara Harris stressed in her seminal article on women and politics in Tudor England, women had access to the world of early Tudor politics but they did not play the same role as men.<sup>1540</sup> The analysis of the political role of Anna of Saxony demonstrates the electress's continual participation in matters pertaining to the dynasties and territories; however, it also confirms that rulers and female consorts played different political roles in sixteenth-century Germany. While there were overlaps between male- and female-gendered political responsibilities, particularly within the dynasties, other domains were strongly gendered. Nevertheless, both the male- and the female-gendered contributions were of crucial importance to the survival of the dynastic states. The most clearly gendered responsibilities were warfare and childbearing, but even if warfare was the domain of men and childbearing the responsibility of women, warfare also had consequences for women and childbearing for men. Although an effort has been made to cover the breadth of the consort's responsibilities and the broad foundation of her authority, there are of course numerous questions that remain unanswered. For example, further analysis could focus on how the consorts responded to military conflicts and the impact of such conflicts upon the duties expected of the women. In order to further examine the ways in which the consort could shape the inner-territorial social structures of both her natal territory and the territory of her and her husband, it also would be of interest to examine systematically the consort's patronage of noble families. Finally, I hope the findings of this analysis will enable me to compare the ways in which Anna's and August's actions and offices overlapped – and differed – in particular situations in future research.

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<sup>1540</sup> Harris (1990), p. 260.

However, as August's correspondence is even more extensive than his wife's,<sup>1541</sup> this will require extensive archival research.

In spite of the unanswered questions, this analysis has demonstrated that both the female consorts and their contemporaries attributed great significance to the princely women's participation in the pursuit and defense of dynastic interests, in the protection of subjects and clients, and in the promotion of the "true" word of God. However, the structure of the early modern dynastic states and the nature of the consort's office meant that she was not only expected to fulfill defined responsibilities in the dynasty and the territory, but it also implied that she was – in blood, body, and spirit – part and parcel of the political reality.

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<sup>1541</sup> See the overview of August's correspondence provided by Wieland Held (Held (1999), pp. 237-244).

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- Loc. 8538/1 "Sachsen, Hertzog Christians und S. Fürstl. Gndl. Gemahlin Schreiben and die Churfürstin zu Sachsen 1583-1585"
- Loc. 8537/2 "Herzog Johann Wilhelms zu Sachsen hinterlassenen Wittben zu Weimar Schreiben an die Churfürstin zu Sachsen 1578-1585"
- Loc. 8538/7 "Herzog Erich zu Braunschweig gemahls Schreiben and die Churfürstin zu Sachsen 1571-1574"



- Loc. 8539/8 "Sachsen, Churfürst Augusten Schreiben an S. Churf. G: herrn Sohn, Herzog Christianen zu Sachsen 1577-1585, *Nota*: Auch schreiben Annas, seiner Mutter"

*Misc. material from "Geheimes Archiv"*

- Loc. 8679/9 "Der Churfürstin Annen Hoff- und Haushaltungs-sachen bel. ao. 1578"
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- Loc. 9970/26 "Prinzeßin Elisabeth, Pfaltzgraff Johan Casimirs Tochter Absterben bel. 1580 item b. dessen todtgebohren Tochter 1585 item dessen todtgebohren Kindts 1584"
- Loc. 9970/30 "Heiratß-Handlung zwüschem Pfaltzgrauen Johann Casimir ze vnd Frälein Elisabeth ... belangende 1568-1570"
- Loc. 9976/4 "Schriften betreffende die Verenderung der Religion in der Pfaltz, so durch Pfaltzgraff Johann Casimir fürgenommen worden. Anno 1584-1585"
- Loc. 9977/29 "Pfaltzgrauen Johan Casimiren ze ... ansuchen ... vmb Fräulein Elisabeth Herzoginn zu Saxenn ze. Belangende. 1568"
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- Loc. 12022 (vol. I) "Copial-Buch ... Herrn Kammermeisters Hansen Harrers", 1578-1580

**Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen**

*TKUA Speciel Del / Tyskland. A I Brevveksling mellem Fyrstehusene*

- Pk. 37-1 "Pfalz. Brevveksling mellem Fyrstehusene, 1535 og 1559-1589. Breve, til dels med Bilag, fra Kurfyrsterne Otto Heinrich af Pfalz, Frederik III og Ludvig VI af Pfalz-Simmern samt Pfaltzgreverne Frederik II af Pfalz og Richter og Johan Casimir af Pfalz-Simmern og sidstnævntes Gemalinde Elisabeth til Christian III og Frederik II"
- Pk. 40-3 "Sachsen. Brevveksling mellem Fyrstehusene 1546-1551. Breve, til dels med Bilag, fra Hertuginde Catharina, Kurfyrst Moritz og Kurfyrst August til Christian III"
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- Pk. 40-10 "Sachsen. Brevveksling mellem Fyrstehusene 1549-1585. Breve, til dels med Bilag, fra Kurfyrstinde Anna til Medlemmer af det danske Kongehus og til Caspar Paselick"

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- . Msc. B 201 “Wernerin, Katharina, Wittfrau (in Zwickau), Püchlein, darinnen vil schöner bewerter kunst ist (Medicamente). Mit Widmung an Kurfürstin Anna d. d. Montag nach Katharina lxij. [28. Nov. 1563], Elect. 710
- . Msc. C 294 “1548. Edlich guet ertzeney den Frauen”, Elect. 417 [Although the binding is marked “AKZS 1571”, the content of the manuscript reveals that it was written in 1548]
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- . *Biblia: das ist: Die gantze Heilige Schiff: Deudsch* (1545/2003-2004), translated by Martin Luther, published in Wittenberg, 1545 [Letzte zu Luthers Lebzeiten erschienene Ausgabe], ed. by Hans Volz (and Heinz Blanke and Friedrich Kur), 2 vols. Edition Lempertz (Bonn, 2003-2004)
- . Brunschwig, Hieronymus (1539) *Thesaurus pauperum: Ein firtreflich und volkomne Haußapoteck gmeyner gebreuchlicher artzeney. zu jeden leihs gebrechenn ...* (Frankfurt a. M : Egenolff, 1539), HAB call no. A: 46.5 Med. (2)
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- . *Endlicher Bericht und Erklerung der Theologen beider Universiteten. Leipzig und Wittemberg, ... belangend die Lere, so gemelte Universiteten und Kirchen von anfang der Augspurgischen Confession bis auff diese zeit, laut und vermüge derselben, in allen Artickeln gleichförmig, eintrechtig und bestendig gefüret haben, aber der sie auch durch hülf des allmechtigen Gottes gedencken fest zu halten. Mit angehengter Christlicher Erinnerung und Warnung, an alle frome Christen, von den streittigen Artickeln, so Flacius Illyricus mit seinem Anhang nu lange zeit her vielfeltig, mutwillig und unauffhörlich erregt, und dadurch die Kirchen Gottes in Deudschland jemerlich verunruhiget, betrübt und zerrüttet hat,* published by the universities in Leipzig and Wittenberg (Wittenberg : Hans Luft, 1570), HAB call no. S: Alv.: Eh 147 (1)
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