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# 1

## The Lutheran Legacy: The Albertine Electors and Protestant Court Culture

Seven of the eight Electors of Saxony whose reigns are covered in this book were Lutherans. The exception is the last, Friedrich August I, who converted to Catholicism in 1697 in order to be elected King of Poland as August II. Court culture in Dresden until the end of the seventeenth century, therefore, was distinctively Lutheran and this manifested itself in architecture, art, music, theatre and court festivals. But, as we shall see, it did not do so uniformly throughout the period, for confessional and political factors demanded different emphases at different periods.

### **The Electoral burial chapel at Freiberg**

When a Lutheran Elector of Saxony died, his body was taken in solemn procession from Dresden, his capital city, to the little town of Freiberg in the Erzgebirge some 52 km to the south-west.<sup>1</sup> There he was interred in St. Mary's Cathedral ('Dom St. Marien'), in the burial chapel of the Albertine Dukes of Saxony, an astonishing work of Italianate Mannerist interior design, which bears witness to central Lutheran beliefs and confirms the political claims of the Albertines.

Freiberg today is a picturesque town of some 50,000 inhabitants with many buildings from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Its wealth and importance in earlier times were due to the discovery of silver ore in the vicinity in 1168. Tin began to be mined in the region in 1230. Indeed, 'Erzgebirge' means 'Ore Mountains'. This was the basis for the wealth of the Saxon dukes and the prosperity of their territory. Freiberg became the first so-called 'free mining town' ('freie Bergstadt') in the

Empire, free because anyone who found a seam of ore was allowed to mine it, provided they paid their dues to the duke. Silver production decreased at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries but, with new discoveries of silver ore elsewhere in the Erzgebirge, there was a second boom period after 1470. Indeed, between 1524 and 1550, new technology enabled the income of the Albertines from the Freiberg mines to increase fivefold, to reach a highpoint in 1572.<sup>2</sup> Freiberg was declared the administrative centre of the Saxon mining industry in 1542.

Cobalt began to be mined in the area in 1556 and iron was another important raw material. Significant new silver deposits were found in 1662 near Johanngeorgenstadt, a town founded in 1654, and the amounts of silver extracted at St Anna near Freiberg in 1690 were so large that a huge commemorative medal was struck, depicting in realistic detail the aqueduct and the inner workings of the mine<sup>3</sup> (Figure 2). As Ekkehard Henschke has shown, the Dukes functioned as entrepreneurs throughout the early modern period and kept control of the mines through their investment.<sup>4</sup> They were the ones whose capital employed the workers and built the machinery that was necessary to bring the ore to the surface and to process and transport it. They were therefore also the ones who reaped the rewards. The ordinary miners, liable to be laid off at any time, worked for a wage, which, as Henschke has demonstrated for the neighbouring region of the Harz Mountains, declined in real terms between 1546 and 1624.<sup>5</sup>

The presence of these minerals attracted related industries to the Erzgebirge. The Saxon mint was situated in Freiberg until 1556 when it was moved to Dresden, a dyeing works based on cobalt was founded in the same year in Oberschlema. Armourers had already established themselves in Freiberg in 1381 and silversmiths even earlier in the same century, though the first guild in Freiberg is not attested until 1466.<sup>6</sup> Glass-making was another important related industry. Vitriol and sulphur processing began near Geyer in 1581. A brass foundry opened in 1603 at Rodewisch. As late as 1700 kaolin, the basis for the important porcelain industry of the eighteenth century, was found at Aue near Schneeberg in the Erzgebirge. The documents in the 'Geheimes Archiv' in the Hauptstaatsarchiv in Dresden filed under the heading 'Bergwercks-Sachen' (Mining Matters) illustrate the full range of the mining and related interests of the Electors. Not only are there papers relating to 37 different silver, tin, lead and copper mines and one gold mine, but also to smelting works, to brass and iron foundries as well as to processing plants for saltpetre, sulphur, alum, salt, cobalt, arsenic and lime. We see



August and in his and his successors' preoccupation with alchemy. It is no accident that it was in Saxony in 1565 that the first geological museum in the world was founded by Johann Kentmann (1518–74). He was a doctor who had first been in practice in Meissen but who spent the last twenty years of his life in Torgau, where he began to collect and classify the minerals of the region.<sup>8</sup> In 1565 his treatise *Nomenclaturae Rerum fossilium quae in Misnia praecipue et in allis quoque regionibus inveniuntur* appeared with an illustration of his Cabinet of Minerals, showing the numbered drawers in which he stored them. In 1575 the architect and designer Giovanni Maria Nosseni (1544–1620), originally from Lugano, arrived in Dresden. Elector August commissioned him to look for marble in Saxony in that year. Nosseni also found alabaster, serpentine and jade. In a similar fashion, Johann Georg II commissioned his architect Wolf Caspar von Klengel to undertake geological exploration in 1656–59.<sup>9</sup> Klengel found amethysts, agates, garnets and topaz. Friedrich August I set the scientist Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus the same task in 1696.

The House of Wettin, whose ruling dukes became Electors in 1423, had divided its territory into two in 1485 in the so-called Leipzig Partition ('Leipziger Teilung'). According to this, the Ernestines, descendants of Elector Ernst (1441–86), retained control of Torgau, Wittenberg, Gotha, Coburg, Jena, the Vogtland and Weimar, which they made their capital city. The cadet branch, descendants of Ernst's brother Duke Albrecht (1443–1500) and therefore known as Albertines, kept the territories of Meissen and Thuringia, with such cities as Dresden, Chemnitz and Freiberg and, in the west, Leipzig. As the mention of Wittenberg shows, it was the Ernestines who were the protectors of Luther and it was their territory that could claim to be the cradle of the Reformation. The Albertine lands did not become Lutheran until 1539, when Duke Heinrich (1473–1541) introduced the Reformation on his accession. He is the first of the Albertines to be buried in the cathedral in Freiberg in 1541, after a reign of only two years.

Duke Heinrich's choice of Freiberg was a natural one: he had been born there, he had lived there for more than thirty years, his sons and successors were born there. It was only during his brief reign that he lived in his official residence in Dresden. Furthermore, the cathedral in Meissen, where his predecessors had been buried, was still Catholic, making it ineligible as the burial place of a Lutheran prince. The cathedral had been rebuilt after a fire and therefore largely dates to the years 1484–1509. Even without the burial chapel it is a remarkable building, decorated with large carved and painted wooden figures of the apostles

and of the wise and foolish virgins attached to the pillars of the nave, and with two striking carved stone pulpits.

It was Duke Heinrich's son Moritz (1521–53) who won the Electorship of Saxony for the Albertines, a title they kept in perpetuity, acquiring at the same time a large tranche of Ernestine land including Wittenberg and Torgau. Having fought with his fellow Protestant princes in the Schmalkaldic League, Moritz changed sides and supported the Emperor Charles V against the league in 1545, defeating his cousin the Ernestine Elector Johann Friedrich at the battle of Mühlberg in 1547, with strong Imperial assistance.<sup>10</sup> Moritz changed sides again, fighting against the Emperor on behalf of the Protestants in 1552. He forced the Emperor to sign the Treaty of Passau, which ultimately brought about the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, thus assuring the legal rights of Protestants within the Empire. It was Moritz who made Dresden the capital city of the Albertines and the focus of its court. He was killed at the battle of Sievershausen in 1553, fighting this time against Albrecht Alcibiades of Brandenburg-Kulmbach, a former ally.

Moritz had no male heirs, a circumstance that led the Ernestines to hope for the restoration of the Electorship to them. However, he was succeeded by his brother August, and it is with him that our story properly begins. August's 33-year reign established Dresden as a cultural centre, enlarged the Duchy and laid the foundations for all subsequent developments until the eighteenth century. In the early years of his reign August had to secure his claim to the Electorship, which he did in the Treaty of Naumburg in 1554. He made his new security visible in the first great artistic commission of his reign, the monument to his brother in Freiberg Cathedral.<sup>11</sup>

Moritz, like August, had been born in Freiberg and was the first Elector to be buried in the cathedral there. Two years after Moritz's death August commissioned the brothers Benedetto and Gabriele Thola, artists from Brescia in the service of Moritz since 1550, to design an imposing free-standing tomb for his brother (Figure 3). Elector August commissioned the Lübeck goldsmith Hans Wessel to carry out the design and he in turn passed the commission to the Antwerp sculptor Antonius van Zerrouen, who made the monument in Antwerp and shipped it from Hamburg down the Elbe to Dresden.<sup>12</sup> An enormous two-storey marble structure in black and white is set on a stepped plinth. It is decorated with twenty plaques bearing Latin inscriptions, with twelve allegorical female figures sitting on the steps of the monument and twenty-eight warriors in classical costume standing round the second storey, holding coats of arms of the Saxon territories. This



*Figure 3.* Monument to Moritz, Elector of Saxony, Freiberg Cathedral. Deutsche Fotothek (Nowak).

impressive structure carries a platform resting on the back of eight bronze griffons, taking the height of the monument up to some five metres. On this platform is a life-size alabaster sculpture of Elector Moritz in full armour, shouldering his sword, kneeling in front of the cross in an attitude of eternal adoration. He is represented here as the soldier for Christ, the man whose military service for the Emperor won the Electoral dignity for the Albertines. Ten of the twenty inscriptions on the plaques underline the faithful service of Moritz, his family and his brother August to the Emperor. That Moritz was killed fighting against the Emperor is glossed over.<sup>13</sup>



*Figure 4.* Electoral burial chapel in Freiberg Cathedral. The monument to Moritz is on the left. Deutsche Fotothek (Möbius).

In 1563 the monument to Moritz was placed behind the altar at the entrance to the choir, dominating the space. Some twenty years later, in 1585, on the death of Anna of Denmark, his wife of thirty-seven years, and after ten of August's children had been buried in the cathedral, August decided to turn the choir area into an official family burial chapel (Figure 4). The space was more or less fixed, for plans to pull down the choir and rebuild it completely were declared too expensive. Giovanni Maria Nosseni, the architect mentioned above in connection

with the investigation of mineral deposits in Saxony, was given the task of creating something new within a long narrow area illuminated by six large windows. The result is one of the most surprising church interiors in the Empire, vibrant with life and colour, packed with religious and political significance. Nosseni began work on the burial chapel in October 1586, a month before August's death. It was therefore left to his son and successor, Christian I, and, after his short reign from 1586 to 1591, to the regent, Friedrich Wilhelm of Saxony-Weimar, to carry the project to completion in 1594.

Christian I sent Nosseni to Italy in 1588, notably to Florence, to hire Italian artists. Wolfgang May regards this visit as producing a strong Florentine influence on all of Nosseni's subsequent work in Saxony.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, he sees the Freiberg burial chapel as having been decisively influenced by Michelangelo's New Sacristy in San Lorenzo, Florence. The sculptor Giovanni da Bologna recommended Carlo di Cesare, his colleague at the Medici court, and Carlo arrived in Freiberg in 1590. He had worked on designs for the wedding festivities of Francesco de' Medici and Johanna of Austria in 1566 and probably on the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence under Vasari.<sup>15</sup> He therefore brought knowledge of Italian styles and techniques to Saxony. He produced a number of other sculptures for the Dresden court, but his work for the burial chapel was the most extensive. His contribution to it was essential. He created the figure of Christ Triumphant behind the altar, a bronze crucifix for the altar and the figures of John the Baptist and St Paul pointing towards it, four figures representing the cardinal virtues, eight larger than life-size Old Testament prophets, almost eighty putti in alabaster, bronze and plaster and, most dominant of all, life-size kneeling bronzes of the most important of the Albertines to be buried in the chapel to date: Duke Heinrich of Saxony and his wife Katharina of Mecklenburg, their son Elector August and his wife Anna of Denmark and August's son Elector Christian I (Figure 5). (In 1660 the reigning Elector, Johann Georg II, completed the group of six figures by commissioning a bronze of his father Johann Georg I by Pietro Boselli.) All the figures face the altar and the crucifix, the women kneeling, their hands joined in prayer, the men echoing the representation of Elector Moritz on his cenotaph described above – in full armour, shouldering a sword, in an attitude of eternal adoration.

These figures are set in niches of red and green marble, flanked by Corinthian columns and surmounted by coats of arms. Huge figures of prophets loom over them and the upper part of the walls and the ceiling are covered in a riot of painted stucco with putti in various attitudes



Figure 5. Kneeling figure of Christian I in the Electoral burial chapel in Freiberg Cathedral by Carlo di Cesare. Bronze. Deutsche Fotothek (Möbius).

holding musical instruments. The whole rises to the ceiling which, in a mix of painting and three-dimensional figures, depicts Christ coming in judgment and majesty accompanied by the Archangel Michael, the Weigher of Souls (Figure 6). These are both enormous figures, some 2.5 metres in length but foreshortened by the height at which they are placed. They are surrounded by cherubs' heads and putti blowing long, three-dimensional trumpets while other putti carry the nails, the crown of thorns, the cross, the ladder, the sponge soaked in vinegar and the pillar on which Christ was scourged. The crucified Christ depicted on



*Figure 6.* Christ coming in Judgment on the ceiling of the Electoral burial chapel in Freiberg Cathedral by Carlo di Cesare. Stucco. Deutsche Fotothek (Seifert).

the altar, the risen Christ above the altar outlined against the window behind, and Christ in judgement on the ceiling together sum up the Lutheran belief in the next life and the triumph over death that is vouchsafed to those who are justified by faith.

The chapel is simultaneously a statement of the Albertines' claim to the Electorship, exemplified by the date 1566 carved on the sword carried by the figure of Elector August. This was the year in which Johann Friedrich II, the rival Ernestine claimant for the Electorship and son of

the Johann Friedrich defeated at the Battle of Mühlberg, was outlawed on the accession of Maximilian II as Holy Roman Emperor. At his first Imperial Diet in Augsburg Maximilian publicly invested August with the office of Imperial High Marshall ('Reichserzmarschall') and with the Electorship of Saxony.<sup>16</sup> August had a special sword made to commemorate this event and had himself depicted shouldering it in a portrait by Zacharias Wehme, his court painter, in 1586. The portrait, now in the Armoury in Dresden (Inv. Nr. H 208), shows him in full armour.<sup>17</sup> The figure of August's son Christian I, represented in one of the life-size figures kneeling in the burial chapel, underlines the succession of the electoral title into the next generation.

There was another reason for including Christian in the group: to allay suspicion that he had formally converted to Calvinism. His *rapprochement* with Calvinism goes back to his father Elector August. In the 1560s and early 1570s August had favoured those followers of Melanchthon known as Philippists rather than hard-line Lutherans. His most trusted adviser, Dr Georg Craco, and his personal physician, Caspar Peucer, were close adherents of Melanchthon. He used the Huguenot sympathiser Hubert Languet, who had moved from France to Wittenberg to sit at the feet of Melanchthon, as his informant and diplomatic representative abroad between 1559 and 1577, maintaining a constant correspondence with him during that time.<sup>18</sup> August's chaplain, Christian Schütz, leaned very strongly towards Calvinism.<sup>19</sup> In 1570 August gave his daughter Elisabeth in marriage to the Calvinist Johann Casimir, brother of Friedrich, Elector Palatine. But August clearly thought the drift had gone far enough. In 1574 he cracked down on the Philippists and threw Craco, Peucer and Schütz into prison. Craco died there the next year under torture. Peucer was not released until 1586; while Christian did not pardon Schütz until 1587.

But August had made Schütz his son Christian's tutor and Schütz's influence was clearly a lasting one. After his twenty-first birthday in 1581 Christian had been gradually eased into government by his father. When he was given further responsibility in 1584, August assigned Dr Nikolaus Krell, a man with clear Calvinist leanings, to be his son's special adviser. When Christian came to power, Krell was made a Privy Councillor and in 1589 Chancellor, thus more or less fulfilling the function of a prime minister. Though Christian once said in a play on his own name that he was neither Calvinist nor Flacian (an adherent of Flacius Illyricus) but Christian, he was clearly moving towards Calvinism. During his short reign of six years, he made it possible for Calvinists to take up posts at Saxon universities, began to reorganise the Lutheran



*Figure 7.* Zacharias Wehme, Christian I and his family, 1591. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden. Inv. No. MO 1951. Deutsche Fotothek (Steuerlein).

Church in Saxony, allowed Calvinist books to be sold in Leipzig and decreed that exorcism should no longer form part of the baptism service – a move away from Lutheran doctrine.<sup>20</sup> In religious matters it seems he was gradually becoming estranged from his wife, Sophie, Margravine of Brandenburg, although an official portrait belies this. Zacharias Wehme painted Christian, Sophie and their seven children towards the end of the reign in 1591 in an ecclesiastical setting (Figure 7). They are all kneeling with hands joined in prayer in what appears to be a chapel lined with statues of the saints and under a crucifix, the three boys on their father's left, the four girls on their mother's right. Here the Elector, his consort and their children are presented as the epitome of the devout Lutheran family.

Had he lived, Christian might have made Saxony a Calvinist territory according to the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* and the whole course of history might have been altered. But he died suddenly in 1591 and the Regent, Friedrich Wilhelm of Saxony-Weimar, removed Calvinists from positions of authority with great severity. Krell was held in the fortress of Königstein for ten years until his execution in 1601. Christian's death thus prevented the 'second Reformation' from taking place. So sudden was his death and so opportune for the hard-line Lutherans that there were even rumours that he had been poisoned.<sup>21</sup> His father-in-law, Johann Georg, Elector of Brandenburg, advanced these rumours in May 1592 as a good reason for completing the burial chapel in Freiberg. To inter Christian there in a magnificent space, in whose planning he had taken such an interest, would demonstrate that there was nothing suspicious about his death.<sup>22</sup> It is clearly part of the political programme of the chapel that the effigy of Duke Heinrich, the Albertine who introduced the Reformation to the Albertine territories, should be nearest to the altar, on which John the Baptist and the Apostle Paul point to the crucified Christ. It is only when one knows of Christian's wavering allegiance to Lutheranism that one understands that the central Lutheran message, conveyed by the depiction of Christ's triumph and judgement, that faith at the moment of death rather than correct conduct during life is what counts, is also political in this context.

Orthodox Lutheranism was restored and the Albertines held to it for the next century. They continued to make marriage alliances with other Protestant houses such as Denmark (Christian II and Johann Georg III), Württemberg (Johann Georg I's first wife), Brandenburg (Johann Georg I's second wife) and Brandenburg-Bayreuth (Johann Georg II and Friedrich August I). But they remained stubbornly loyal to the Catholic Habsburg Emperor, something that was a huge disappointment to their fellow Protestant princes throughout the Empire, particularly in the early decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>23</sup> Neither Christian II nor Johann Georg I saw their Protestantism as a reason to break faith with the Emperor. Their role as Electors, indeed as the premier secular Electors in the Empire, took precedence over their personal beliefs. Had they joined the Protestant Union, for instance, Johann Georg I, rather than Friedrich of the Palatinate, might have become King of Bohemia, and might indeed have been elected Emperor.

Later Albertines liked to have themselves depicted in a manner similar to that of the figures in the burial chapel and on the monument to Elector Moritz. In 1660, as we have seen, the arch image-maker Elector



*Figure 8.* Johann Heinrich Böhme the Elder, Johann Georg II. 1674. Alabaster. Wooden frame. 131 cm in height. Skulpturensammlung, Dresden. Inv. No. ZV 3227.

Johann Georg II had an effigy of his father by Pietro Boselli placed in the burial chapel. In 1674 he had himself portrayed by his court sculptor Johann Heinrich Böhme the Elder (1636–79) in a striking alabaster relief (Figure 8).<sup>24</sup> Wearing full armour, with his Electoral hat and sword at his feet and clothed in an ermine mantle, we see the Elector on one knee with clasped hands raised to shoulder height in a church. He is gazing raptly over his right shoulder at rays of light on which Latin, Hebrew and Greek letters spell out Old Testament passages. The figure of Faith stands in a niche above and behind him. Allowing for the Baroque details – the drawn curtain, the tension of the Elector’s dramatic pose with his right leg extended stiffly in front of him, the turn of the head, the heavy wig and the way he seems to be placed on a stage – Johann Georg is depicted in the same attitude of eternal adoration as the figures of his forebears in Freiberg.



Figure 9. Medal commemorating the inauguration of the chapel in Moritzburg Castle. Johann Georg II kneels before the altar. 1672. Tenzel, *Saxonia numismatica*. Tab. 58, No. 1.

One of Johann Georg II's many architectural commissions was a new chapel in his hunting lodge of Moritzburg outside Dresden, designed by his chief architect, Wolf Caspar von Klengel (1630–91). The foundation stone was laid in 1661 but the chapel was not consecrated until 24 June 1672, the Feast of St John and therefore the name-day of the Elector. To commemorate the consecration Johann Georg II had a medal struck by Ernst Caspar Dürr depicting him on the obverse kneeling alone in front of the altar (Figure 9). He is dressed in his Electoral robes with the Electoral hat and sword on the ground beside him. The inscription reads: 'Herr ich habe lieb die Staedte Deines Hauses und den Ort da Deine Ehre wohnet. Ps.26.v.8' (Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth). On the reverse we see Johann Georg II's motto 'sursum deorsum' and the word 'Jehovah' in Hebrew characters emitting rays of light. Beneath that is an obelisk crowned with a helmet and bearing Johann Georg's monogram. Behind it is a sword and a palm branch crossed. The inscription round the rim reads: 'Im Glauben Herr Zu Stehen Gieb Crafft und Bestaendge Christen-Lieb' (Lord, give me strength to stand firm in faith and steadfast Christian love). The initial letters of this inscription correspond to the initial letters of 'Johann Georg Herzog zu Sachsen, Gülich, Cleve und

Berg Churfürst' – Johann Georg, Duke of Saxony, Gülich, Cleves and Berg, Elector.<sup>25</sup> Johann Georg is stating that his Lutheran faith is an essential component of his identity as Elector.

On his accession in 1657 he had laid down the religious feasts that were to be kept throughout the year and the relevant document in the Dresden archive shows how numerous they were.<sup>26</sup> We expect the feasts of Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost to be celebrated. In addition, however, there is the first Sunday of Advent, the Feasts of the Annunciation, the Ascension, St Michael, the Purification of Our Lady, the Visitation, Epiphany, John the Baptist and Mary Magdalen. There are also nine Apostles' Days, the Conversion of St Paul and the Feast of St Martin. This protocol remained in force until 1721.

### **Sectarian tournaments**

A more ephemeral way of presenting a prevailing ideology is by means of the court festival. In the sixteenth century this meant first and foremost the tournament, which until around 1570 consisted predominantly of the joust or tilt, with the running at the ring or the quintain becoming more prominent thereafter.<sup>27</sup> It was usual for the contestants to parade through the streets of the city before the tournament, each accompanied by lance bearers, footmen, musicians and grooms leading the horses they would ride in the contest. Such groups were usually costumed and each was often accompanied by an elaborate float or festival car picking up the theme of costumes. Such a group was called an 'invention', though the Dresden sources often use the term 'part' (variously spelled 'Part', 'Partt' and 'Parth').

In the climate of sectarian division described above, it is not surprising to find the tournament articulating confessional tensions. In 1574, for instance, the year that marked a decisive change in Elector August's policies of tolerance towards other shades of religious opinion, the running at the ring held on 2 February as part of the carnival celebrations has a number of inventions with a pronounced religious content.<sup>28</sup> One such depicts David and Goliath. The giant Goliath is holding a club and a huge shield and is followed by a group of footmen, one bearing the giant's head on a pole and four others his enormous sword, his club, his shield and his helmet respectively. The hero of the encounter, the champion of True Religion against the Philistine, David, is played by none other than Elector August himself.<sup>29</sup> The theme of the cohorts of the Lord vanquishing the forces of Darkness is again presented in the same running at the ring by means of two other inventions: the winged

Archangel Michael bearing a sword, followed by four angels, leads a fire-spitting Devil captive; and Samson and the lion accompany the Whore of Babylon who is shown riding a seven-headed Hydra.<sup>30</sup> These scenes are reminiscent of some of the illustrations in Protestant Bibles. These biblical episodes of struggle between Good and Evil must be seen in the context of the mockery of monks and nuns, drawing perhaps on the depictions in polemical broadsheets, which we find in two other inventions in this running at the ring. There is a nun riding backwards on a horse disguised as a ram in one group, and in another we have a monk carrying twin babies, both implying unchastity, and two nuns wearing fool's bells on their heads. It is not difficult to relate these five inventions to the confessional difficulties in Dresden in the same year.<sup>31</sup>

Explicit anti-popish satire is to be found again in the running at the ring to celebrate the wedding of Christian I and Sophie, Margravine of Brandenburg in April 1582. The seventeenth invention presented a monk on horseback, while in the twentieth Rudolf von Bünau appeared as the Pope, with the Archangel Michael holding a huge flaming torch with the vanquished Hydra twining round his horse.<sup>32</sup> The Pope is thus presented as the adversary of the angelic warrior. On 2 March 1584 Christian I organised a running at the ring which also included a sectarian jibe: a group of Franciscan monks and the captive Pope with two cardinals holding prayer books.<sup>33</sup> In the running at the ring on 5, 6 and 7 June 1587 to celebrate the christening of Sophie, daughter of Christian I, the Archangel Michael again appears, standing on horseback holding a drawn sword and leading in chains a lion and a gryphon. In front of him is the Pope with two Cardinals.<sup>34</sup> In January 1591 for the christening of his daughter Dorothea, the running at the ring includes at least one invention of a group of monks.<sup>35</sup> Almost a generation later, the same point is made in a tournament for the carnival of 1609. A manuscript tournament book by Daniel Bretschneider relating to this event records a group with a monk and two bishops and another (the sixteenth) with a fox, a fool, a pope and a nun.<sup>36</sup> Bretschneider depicted a similar group in the design for one of his sledges in 1602 (Figure 10).

In these later events we also see gentler representations of biblical events without the sectarian animus. For the christening of Dorothea held in January 1591 and thus shortly after Christmas, the twelfth group presents the Three Magi following the star, coming to do homage, one might imagine, to the new-born Saxon duchess. The tournament of 1609 had a float which depicted Adam and Eve naked under a tree. In September 1614, for the christening of August of Saxony-Weissenfels,



Figure 10. Daniel Bretschneider the Elder, Design for a sledge. 1602. SLUB. Mscr.Dresd.B 104.

Adam and Eve are depicted in the Garden of Eden on a much larger scale.<sup>37</sup> On this occasion there were two floats both showing the Garden: on the first God could be seen creating Eve out of the naked sleeping Adam's side and on the second the apple tree with the snake wound round the trunk. Georg Petzold's rhymed account of the christening also describes a depiction of Elijah in the Fiery Chariot.<sup>38</sup> These inventions bring us much closer to the dramatic presentation of biblical stories which was so central to Lutheran culture and which are examined in the next two sections through the musical genre of the 'historia' and the dramatic genre of the biblical play.

### **Lutheran sacred music – the 'historia'**

One of the most enduring legacies of Lutheranism in Dresden is its church music. Music was of great importance to Luther himself, not just as part of church services but as integral to daily Christian living.<sup>39</sup> He regarded music as a gift from God – 'donum et creatura Dei' – to be practised by man. Again and again, in the Prefaces to the *September-testament* (1522), the *Wittenberger Gesangbuch* (1524) and the *Bapstsches Gesangbuch* (1545) and in his *Table Talk*, Luther stresses how the Bible must be proclaimed through music as well as through the sermon, 'singen und sagen' (singing and proclaiming) being his characteristic

phrase. Other early Reformers such as Bugenhagen and Melanchthon also lent their authority to this idea.

When Elector Moritz established his court at Dresden, one of his earliest actions in the cultural field was the foundation in 1548 of a court choir to perform sacred music, the so-called 'Churfürstliche Cantorey'. This was kept separate from the Italian musicians who played for secular occasions, the 'Welsche Music'. The 'Cantorey' consisted of boy trebles, male singers and one or two organists<sup>40</sup> in accordance with the new tenets governing church music laid down by Luther himself in collaboration with Johann Walther the Elder (1496–1570). Walther, who had previously served the Ernestine Electors at Torgau and who had known and worked with Luther since 1524, moved to Dresden in 1548 and became the new choir's first conductor. If his early importance resided in his collection of Lutheran choral works, the *Geystliches gesangk Buch-leyen* published in 1525, his later significance is based on the manner in which he organised ecclesiastical music at the Dresden court and in the traditions which he laid down for his successors.<sup>41</sup>

Adequate coverage of Lutheran church music in Dresden is beyond the scope of this book.<sup>42</sup> Space permits me to discuss only one of the genres of church music invented and developed at court – the 'historia'. Lutheran music is remarkable for the range of forms it generated to promulgate the Scriptures – the hymn, the chorale, the cantata, the oratorio. The 'historia' is another such genre and can serve as a paradigm of the way in which Lutheran music was created and nurtured at the Dresden court over a period of at least 150 years.

The 'historia' was originally a dramatic reading of a Gospel passage as part of a church service. As a musical genre it is a setting of a biblical episode and a precursor of the oratorio. Johann Walther the Elder can be said to have created it.<sup>43</sup> There are three types of 'historia': settings of the events of Christ's Passion; settings of the Easter or Resurrection story; and settings of the Christmas story. The oldest type is the Passion 'historia' and we have settings by Walther himself of the Passions according to Matthew and John in the so-called Torgau Walther Manuscript. This is the inception of the genre.

The oldest surviving example of the Easter or Resurrection 'historia' can also be dated to a very early period (1560–65) in the life of the Dresden Cantorey, for it was composed by the tenor Jacob Haupt, a member of the Cantorey under Walther. The next important Easter 'historia' known to us, 'Die aufferstehung Jesu Christi, auss den vier Evangelien' (The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Four Gospels) was composed by Walther's second successor, the first Italian *kapellmeister* in Dresden,

Antonio Scandello (1517–80). The text for this ‘historia’, based on Bugenhagen’s ‘Evangelienharmonie’, was used again in 1623 by Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672) when he composed his ‘historia’ with the title ‘Der Frölichen und Siegreichen Aufferstehung unsers einigen Erlösers und Seligmachers Jesu Christi’ (The Joyous and Victorious Resurrection of our Sole Saviour and Redeemer) in Dresden. This is the first ‘historia’ with orchestral accompaniment and is characteristic of the development of the genre towards ever greater musical elaboration. Schütz uses three choirs, for instance, and eight-part vocal harmony.

Rogier Michael (c.1552–after 1619), Netherlandish *kapellmeister* at the Dresden court from 1587 to 1619 and Schütz’s immediate predecessor, created the Christmas ‘historia’. The manuscript of two such works by him from the year 1602, ‘Die Empfängnis unsers Herrn Jesu Christi’ and ‘Die Geburt unseres Herrn Jesu Christi’ (The Conception of our Lord Jesus Christ), has survived and bears a dedication in the hand of the then court preacher, Polycarp Leyser.

Lutheran biblical drama came into being as a new genre in the same post-Reformation period, but it concentrated on episodes from the Old Testament and on parables from the New. It therefore turned its back on the old miracle and mystery plays of the Middle Ages which had dramatised the Christmas and Easter stories. The ‘historia’ fills precisely this gap. Although as a form it cannot be called a drama in the narrowest sense of the word, it inhabits an area between the church and the theatre, and its purpose is not narrowly ecclesiastical. The full title of Schütz’s Easter ‘historia’ of 1623 makes this clear: ‘Historia der frölichen und Siegreichen Aufferstehung unsers einigen Erlösers und Seligmachers Jesu Christi, In Fürstlichen Capellen oder Zimmern umb die Osterliche zeit zu geistlicher Christlicher Recreation füglichen zugebrauchen, In die Music ubersetzet Durch Henrich Schützen Churf. Sächs. Durchlauchtigkeit Capellmeistern’ (‘Historia’ of the Joyful and Victorious Resurrection of our Sole Saviour Jesus Christ, to be Performed in Princely Chapels or Apartments at Eastertide for the Purposes of Christian Spiritual Recreation. Set to Music by Heinrich Schütz, *kapellmeister* to His Grace the Elector of Saxony). The work may, therefore, be performed for the prince in his chapel – that is, in an ecclesiastical space – but is equally suited to performance in a secular space – the prince’s apartments. It is not part of a church service but serves the spiritual recreation of the faithful. Its purpose is therefore not very different from that of the biblical dramas considered in the next section.

During the more than fifty years of his association with the Dresden court, broken up by sojourns in Italy (1628–29), Copenhagen (1633–35

and 1642–44), Hanover and Hildesheim (1639–1641) and Braunschweig (1644–45), Schütz continued to write Lutheran church music in great quantity. Examples are the so-called ‘Becker Psalter’ first published in 1629 and revised and enlarged in 1661, the *Cantiones sacrae* (Sacred Songs, 1625), the *Symphoniae sacrae* (Sacred Symphonies, 1629, 1647 and 1650), the *Musicalische Exequien* (Funeral Music, 1636), the *Geistliche Concerte* (Sacred Concerti, 1636–39) and the *Zwölf Geistliche Gesänge* (Twelve Sacred Songs, 1657). But, in his old age, at a period when he was spending more and more time in Weissenfels rather than Dresden, he returned to the genre of the ‘historia’. In 1660 his Christmas ‘historia’, ‘Historia der freuden- und Gnadenreichen Geburt Gottes und Marien Sohns Jesu Christi’ (‘Historia’ of the Joyful Birth, Full of Grace, of Jesus Christ, Son of God and of Mary) was performed in Dresden on Christmas Day. This composition was printed in 1664 and Schütz himself pointed out in the Preface that it was musically so elaborate that it could be performed only by well equipped princely chapels. The ‘historia’ is now all but an oratorio. On Good Friday, 24 March 1665, a Passion by Schütz based on the Gospel of St John, ‘Historia dess Leidens und Sterbens . . . Jesu Christi aus dem Evangelisten S Johanno’ (‘Historia’ of the Suffering and Death . . . of Jesus Christ taken from John’s Gospel) was performed in Dresden. At Eastertide in April 1666 the court heard a series of three Passion ‘historias’ by Schütz. That taken from the Gospel of St Matthew was performed on 1 April, that from Luke on 8 April and that from John on 13 April.<sup>44</sup>

This flourishing of the genre in the hands of the ageing Schütz did not spell the end of the form by any means. ‘Historias’ continued to be composed and performed at the Dresden court, just as Lutheran music in general was encouraged at this period. (Johann Georg II, who came to the throne in 1657, composed sacred music himself and more works of Lutheran church music were written during his reign than at any other time.) In the second half of the seventeenth century, for instance, many of the Dresden court *kapellmeister* composed ‘historias’ – Christoph Bernhard (1628–92) in 1663, Marco Gioseppe Peranda (c.1625–75) in 1668, Johann Möller in 1676, Johann Wilhelm Furchheim in 1677 and Nikolaus Adam Strungk (1640–1700) in 1690, though in many cases the scores have been lost. The continuity and astonishing longevity of the form is documented by the fact that the text of Scandello’s Resurrection ‘historia’ from before 1580 was reprinted in a collection of texts published in 1745 in a reworking by O.S. Harnisch from 1621.<sup>45</sup> Thus, in the century and a half from the establishment of the ‘Cantorey’ until the conversion of the Elector to Catholicism in 1697, we see how a local

tradition, established in accordance with Lutheran principles, is carried on at court regardless of whether the *kapellmeister* is Netherlandish, as in the early days, Italian, as later became common, or German. The high quality of the compositions and the prestige of the Elector ensured that this tradition then spread to other Protestant territories in the Empire, where 'historias' continued to be performed well into the eighteenth century. This is particularly true of the courts of Weissenfels, Zeitz, Altenburg and Gotha, though 'historias' are also to be found in neighbouring Breslau.

Related to the 'historia' is another musical genre which dramatised Bible stories, the so-called 'actus musicus'. This came into being in the seventeenth century as part of the academic celebrations held on various formal occasions during the year in Lutheran grammar schools and presents such typical Lutheran New Testament stories as the parables of Dives and Lazarus and the Prodigal Son. The earliest work in this genre which has come down to us deals with the first of these topics. It is Fromm's *Actus musicus de Divite et Lazaro* (1649). Georg Calmbach's *Actus musicus de filio perduto* (before 1677) is another characteristic example. These works are known to us from the same geographical area as the 'historia' and are one step nearer to the most dramatic genre to present the Bible to the faithful, Lutheran biblical drama.

## **Biblical drama**

Luther lent his authority to the notion that a specifically Protestant spoken drama in the vernacular was to be encouraged for the benefit of the faithful. He advocated taking its themes from the Scriptures, particularly the stories of Tobias, Esther, Susanna, Daniel and Judith. Two Saxon cities, Wittenberg and Zwickau, played a central role in the creation and dissemination of this type of drama. Wittenberg had an importance all its own, with its associations with Luther and other leading Reformers, its university and its publishing industry. Zwickau, in the south-west of Saxony, was the second Saxon city to have a printing press (from 1523) and the printer Wolfgang Meyerpeck was particularly important for the printing of biblical plays up to 1550 when he moved to Freiberg.<sup>46</sup> These plays then spread outwards from this heartland to other parts of Saxony and into neighbouring territories such as Magdeburg and the Lausitz. In addition to the Old Testament stories sanctioned by Luther, biblical drama also presented New Testament parables such as those of the Prodigal Son or of Dives and Lazarus and certain favourite episodes such as the story of Herod. A related type of drama

aims to inculcate correct social behaviour according to Lutheran ideals, particularly within the family – obedience in children and observance of gender roles in marriage being two of the most important. Given the sudden upsurge of such drama from the 1530s on, we are not surprised to find it making an impact on the Dresden court during the sixteenth century. That it should still form part of court celebrations until the death of Johann Georg II in 1680 alongside Italian opera and French-influenced *ballet de cour* is far more surprising and constitutes one of the peculiarities of court culture in Dresden.

It seems highly likely that biblical drama was performed in Dresden at least from the beginning of August's reign in 1553, if not before. The first indication that it was popular at this time is the number of texts listed in the first inventory of the Electoral Library compiled in 1574.<sup>47</sup> At this date the library was kept in Annaburg, the summer residence of the dukes, near Torgau to the north-west of Dresden. It was very much the private library of Elector August, with German works predominating and always listed before the Latin ones (this is discussed more fully in chapter 3 below).<sup>48</sup> What is interesting in the present connection is that, under the heading of 'Theologia', after a whole collection of Bibles, catechisms, pamphlets, sermons and works by Luther, comes a list of fifteen religious dramatic works.

The list begins with plays dealing with episodes from the new Testament: 'Tragedia von Johannis Baptistæ entheuptung' (The Tragedy of the Beheading of John the Baptist), 'Comedia von der offenbarung des waren Messie unnd wie Herodes die unschuldigen kindlein hat toten lassen' (The Comedy of the Revelation of the True Messiah and Herod's Massacre of the Innocents) and 'Comedia oder Tragedia von Juda Ischariote dorinnen ein schrecklich Exempel meer wider gewissen sündigt' (Comedy or Tragedy of Judas Ischariot, in which there is another terrible example of sins against the conscience). The last-named is most probably Johann Chryseus's translation into German of Naogeorg's Latin play *Judas Ischariotes, Tragoedia nova et sacra* which first appeared in Basel in 1552. The list continues with 'Schöner Comedien und Tragedien zwölf aus heiliger göttlicher Schrifft unnd historien' (Twelve Pleasant Biblical Comedies and Tragedies), which is surely Sebastian Wild's collection of the same name published in Augsburg in 1566. The next play mentioned, 'Haustafell. Ein geistlich spiel von den fürnembsten stenden der menschen auff erden' (Model Household. A Religious Play about the Highest Estates on Earth) is likely to be the work by Johann Schuward published in Eisleben in 1565.<sup>49</sup> The next title in the inventory so far eludes identification: 'Comedia wie Got aus fürbit des herrn

Jesu Christi erste Eltern Adam und Evam zu gnaden aufgenommen hatt' (Comedy about how God pardoned Adam and Eve on the Intercession of Jesus Christ), followed by 'Haman die schöne unnd sehr trostliche histori Hester reim unnd spielweis' (Haman. The Beautiful and Most Consoling History of Esther in a Metrical Drama), which is most probably the translation by Johann Chryseus of Naogeorg's Latin play *Hamanus tragoedia nova*, which appeared in Wittenberg published by V. Creutzer in 1546.<sup>50</sup> Next comes 'Das gulden Kalb ein spiel aus der historia des 32. Capittels im andern Buch Moisi' (The Golden Calf from Moses Chapter 32), which can be identified as Heinrich Raetel's *Eine neue geistliche Action, die Histori vom Gulden Kalb Aaronis auss dem 32 Cap. Des andern Buchs Mose*, published by Ambrosius Fritsch in Görlitz in 1573.<sup>51</sup> 'Ein andächtigt spiel wie Abraham seinen Sohn Isac aufopfern solte. Und von austreibung der magd Agar auch von Vertreibung Sodoms und Gomorre' (A Pious Play of how Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac. Also of how Hagar was driven out and of the expulsion of Sodom and Gomorrha) corresponds to the title of a play by Jakob Frey.<sup>52</sup> 'Comedia vom Reichen mann unnd Lasaro' (A Comedy of the Rich Man and Lazarus) could be either of the two plays on the Dives and Lazarus theme by Johann Krüginger, published in Zwickau in 1543 and in Dresden in 1555 respectively. 'Tragedia der Irdisch Pilgerer genandt' (The Tragedy of the Earthly Pilgrim)<sup>53</sup> is surely Johannes Heros's *Tragedia Der jrdisch Pilgerer genandt*, published in Nürnberg in 1562. 'Tragedi oder Schauspiel der Kaufman genant darinnen die Apostolische und Babstische Lehre für augen gestellt wirt' (The Tragedy or Drama called The Merchant, in which the Apostolic and Papist Teaching is Presented) is likely to be Naogeorg's *Mercator* in German translation. 'Comedia vonn dem letzten tage des Jüngsten gerichts wie unns derselbe gar nahe fur der tühren dadurch zur buß zubereiten' (Comedy of the Last Day of Judgment and how close this is, so that we should repent) is possibly the work by Philipp Agricola published in Frankfurt an der Oder in 1573, while 'Comedia vom Kinderzucht mit figuren gezieret...' (Illustrated Comedy of Childrearing) may be the play on this theme by Johann Rasser (Strasburg, 1574). 'Comedia vom schalckhaftigen knecht aus dem 18. Capittel Mathei, Dadurch wie der fünfften bit im Heiligen Vater Unser erinnert worden' (The Comedy of the Wicked Servant from Mathew Chapter 18 and how in this we are reminded of the fifth clause in the Lord's Prayer) is probably by Johann Bischoff.<sup>54</sup> The last-named play in the list, 'Spiegel Gotseliger eltern unnd frommer Kinder ein lustige unnd nützliche Comedia durch Michel Druidam... 1572' (An Amusing and Useful Comedy, The Mirror of Godfearing Parents and Pious

Children by Michael Druida), appeared in Frankfurt am Main in 1572. We can see from this that the Elector owned a good cross-section of the Lutheran biblical plays available in the middle decades of the sixteenth century. The same plays are listed in the second manuscript inventory of the library taken in 1580 and again in the third dated 1595.<sup>55</sup> By 1629 Georg Pfund's 'Susanna. Eine schöne und nützliche Action' (Susanna. A Pleasant and Useful Play) and Wenceslaus Huber's 'Comœdia Tobiae' (Comedy of Tobias) have been added.

However, we also have evidence of actual performances. Andreas Hartmann's *Christliche Comœdia vom Zuestande im Himmel vnnnd inn der Höllen* (Christian Comedy on the State of Heaven and Earth) was performed in Torgau in 1600 by 107 actors divided into eight groups. The copy of the text, published in Magdeburg in 1600, from the Electoral library is still in the SLUB.<sup>56</sup> In 1602, for the extensive wedding celebrations for the marriage of Elector Christian II and Hedwig of Denmark, Wolfgang Sommer's 'Comœdia. Daß ist, Einn fein Christliches lustiges Spiel, vom Heiligenn Patriarchen Isaac' (Comedy, that is, A Fine Christian Amusing Play of the Holy Patriarch Isaac) was performed.<sup>57</sup> It is a typical biblical play with twenty-three characters, narrative rather than dramatic in its structure. In 1604 Heinrich Kunn had a copy made of his play 'Geistlige Gewissen ruerende Historische Comœdia, von der Schweren Belagerung und Wunderbar Erlösung zu Samaria aus dem 2. Buch der Königen am 6. Und 7. Capittel genommen' (A Religious and Historical Comedy, calculated to touch the conscience, of the Fierce Siege and Wonderful Salvation of Samaria from 2 Kings, chapters 6 and 7) and sent it to Elector Christian II, although it is not clear if the piece was performed for the wedding.<sup>58</sup> Preserved in another beautiful manuscript in the SLUB is Cornelius Schonaeus's Latin play 'Triumphus Christi. Das ist Die historia von der Sieghafften Aufferhebung Jesu Christi von den todten' (The Triumph of Christ, Or, the History of the Victorious Resurrection of Christ from the Dead').<sup>59</sup> The manuscript contains the German translation by Elias Gerlach as a parallel text. It is dated 1606 and dedicated to the young prince August (1589–1615), the younger brother of Christian II and Johann Georg I. In September 1612 a whole series of biblical plays by Hans Zihler was performed for the christening of Christian Albrecht, Johann Georg I's firstborn son who died in infancy. On 2 September 'Ruth' was performed, on 8 September 'Isaac' and on 9 September 'Mose', 'Jael' und 'Jephte'. All these plays are preserved in manuscript in the SLUB.<sup>60</sup>

Our knowledge of dramatic performances at the Dresden court is largely based on the detailed diaries and assorted paperwork relating to

festivities produced by the Oberhofmarschallamt, or Chamberlain's department, at the time and preserved today in the Hauptstaatsarchiv in Dresden. These records list in detail guests and their entourages, their accommodation, the programme organised for their visit, score sheets for the tournaments, sometimes drawings of inventions or costumes, all bound in great manuscript volumes. Sometimes printed programmes or libretti are also included. There are, however, several important gaps in these records that falsify our picture. The volumes relating to the wedding of Sophia, the sister of Johann Georg I, and Franz, Duke of Pomerania, in 1610, the engagement and wedding of Sophie Eleonore, eldest daughter of Johann Georg I, and Georg II, Landgrave of Hesse, in 1627 and the wedding of Maria Elisabeth, Johann Georg I's second daughter, and Friedrich, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, in 1630 are all now missing, so we have to rely for our information on such older works as those by Fürstenau, Prölß and Sponsel.<sup>61</sup>

From them we learn that English strolling players, who are discussed in greater detail in chapter 6, also performed biblical plays at court on their visits. Their themes are all the familiar ones: 'Der verlorene Sohn' (The Prodigal Son) and 'Haman und Esther' (Haman and Esther) in 1626 and 1627, 'Die Geschicht von der Hebraeischen Heldin Judith und dem Holoferne' (The History of the Jewish Heroine Judith and Holofernes) in 1629, 'die Tragödie vom Reichen Mann und Lazaro' (The Tragedy of Dives and Lazarus), the Prodigal Son again in 1632 and 'die Komödie von der Erschaffung der Welt' (The Comedy of the Creation of the World) in 1646. The first two appear in the printed collection of plays of the strolling players published in Leipzig in 1620 and again in 1624.<sup>62</sup> The biblical play thus continued to flourish into the seventeenth century.

### **Johann Georg II and the 'Joseph' plays**

We have seen above how various Lutheran art-forms had a resurgence during the long reign of Johann Georg II (1657–80). The building of the chapel at Moritzburg, Johann Georg II's commissioning of depictions of himself in attitudes of Lutheran piety and the recrudescence of Lutheran church music encouraged by a ruler who was a composer himself, are examples of this. Biblical drama also had a notable flowering during the reign. Johann Georg II, who was responsible for promoting Italian opera and French ballet in Dresden, included frequent performances of German biblical dramas on traditional themes in his festivities. For the christening of his grandson, Johann Georg IV, in 1669, for instance, a whole series of biblical plays was performed: 'Die Historia von Saul

und David' (The Story of Saul and David), 'die Historia von Haman und Esther' (The Story of Esther and Haman), 'die Hebräische Heldin Judith und der Holoferne' (The Jewish Heroine Judith and Holofernes) and 'die Tragödie von Joseph und seinen Brüdern' (The Tragedy of Joseph and his Brothers).

The theme of Joseph was a particular favourite of Johann Georg II's which he used for his own purposes. During his reign, a play on this topic was performed for large social gatherings at court in 1665, 1669, 1671, 1672 and 1678, but with a particular slant. The story of Joseph had been a favourite subject for biblical drama since the Reformation, as is documented by Lebeau and Wimmer,<sup>63</sup> but the three aspects most frequently stressed in earlier versions were Joseph's chastity in the face of the seductive wiles of Potiphar's wife during his exile in Egypt, his ability to interpret dreams and his role as saviour and prefiguration of Christ. In 1602, for instance, the Dresden court preacher Matthias Hoë von Hohenegg translated Aegidius Hunnius's play on the Joseph theme from Latin into German for the wedding of Johann Georg Goedelmann, Imperial Count and Saxon Councillor. It stressed Joseph's virtues of chastity and filial obedience.<sup>64</sup>

The Joseph plays staged during the reign of Johann Georg II are quite different. Their theme is Joseph and his brothers, or, more exactly, the hatred of the envious brothers for the virtuous Joseph, their father's favourite son, and his triumph over their wicked wiles. The first recorded performance was at the carnival season in 1665. Johann Georg II's only daughter, Erdmuthe Sophie, and her husband, Christian Ernst, Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth, were the guests of honour at the celebrations, which lasted from 19 January to 22 February. The Court Chamberlain's papers record that the story of Joseph 'and how he was sold by his brothers into Egypt until he revealed himself to them' was performed on 27 January.<sup>65</sup> We have far more information about the performances given in February 1669. These were in honour of Johann Georg IV, who had been christened the previous October. The celebrations lasted from 2 to 23 February and, as mentioned above, included five biblical dramas, of which the 'Comödie von Joseph' was one. The biblical story has now been divided into two plays, the first of which is devoted exclusively to the theme of fraternal hatred. A printed plot summary, spoken by Joseph, is to be found in the relevant volume in the Chamberlain's papers.<sup>66</sup> Joseph addresses the assembled company and tells them that the subject of the first of the two plays will be 'the effect of fraternal hatred and how it has turned natural brotherly love into inhuman tyranny'. Other phrases used are 'the hatred my brothers

had conceived for me', 'the white-hot heat (Gluth) of their hatred', the 'embittered hatred of the brothers' which leads them to criminal acts, and so on. The second play deals with Joseph in Egypt. On 1 and 2 May 1671, as part of the celebrations for the installation of Johann Georg II in the Order of the Garter (see chapter 5 below), the Comedy of Joseph was repeated. It was again divided into two five-act plays and would seem to have been a repeat of the work given in 1669. The innovation was that it was followed by a 'Ballet of the Twelve Tribes of Israel'.<sup>67</sup> From 4 to 23 February 1672, Johann Georg II called a summit conference of his brothers and their families at carnival time. This meeting was given the official title the 'Vertrauliche und Fröliche Zusammenkunft' (the Confidential and Joyful Gathering). Again, the Joseph plays were performed, over three evenings, on 14, 15 and 16 February, and were again followed by a ballet of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The printed summary, spoken as usual by Joseph, explains that his brothers begrudged Joseph his father's love.<sup>68</sup> Six years later, between 29 January and 1 March 1678, Johann Georg II called another summit conference, this time recorded in a huge printed festival book with commentary entitled 'die Durchlachtigste Zusammenkunft' (The Illustrious Gathering).<sup>69</sup> Again, the Comedy of Joseph fills three evenings, 6, 7 and 8 February. Tzschimmer makes perfectly clear and at great length how the story is to be interpreted.

His plot summary of Part I of the *Comœdiæ von dem Ertzvater Joseph* (the Comedy of the Patriarch Joseph), which deals mostly with the selling of Joseph into Egypt and takes us up to Joseph's resistance to Potiphar's wife, begins by underlining the havoc which can be caused by hatred and enmity between close relatives and blood brothers unless God supports the weaker party.<sup>70</sup> It goes on to underline the piety, filial devotion and obedience of the beloved son Joseph and the jealousy and bitterness of his brothers. In a separate section entitled 'the Moral of the First Part of the Comedy of Joseph', Tzschimmer hammers home the message: He begins: 'Rara Concordia Fratrum' and continues:

Niemand aber ist gehässiger als ein fleischlicher Bruder/ wenn es den Wechsel der Ehre/ und Hoheit/ oder das Theil einer Erbschafft betrifft: Selten lässet sich die Tugend blicken/ daß die Eintracht der Brüder zusammenhält.

[No one is more filled with hatred than a blood brother when transfer of honour, rank or a portion of an inheritance is at issue. Seldom does one see the virtue of harmony between brothers.]<sup>71</sup>

Tzschimmer then lists nineteen examples of brotherly enmity from Cain and Abel to Ferdinand of Castile, including many examples from ancient history. Part II of the Comedy focuses on Joseph's brothers' journey to Egypt to buy grain and the changed power relations between the sometime victim and his brothers. The moral commentary now is a disquisition on 'Des Josephs belohnte Frömmigkeit und erhöhete Tugend' (Joseph's piety rewarded and his virtue elevated).<sup>72</sup> This is a eulogy on the theme of Joseph's manifold virtues, as is the moral commentary on the third part, which deals with 'Das versöhnliche Bruder-Hertz Josephs / und die treue Versorgung seines Väterlichen Hauses' (Joseph's forgiving brotherly heart and his true care for his father's house).<sup>73</sup> The whole focus of these three plays and the commentary on them is on Joseph, the wise, forgiving, virtuous saviour of his people, rising above the envy and malice of his brothers.

If we examine the guest list for the festivities of which these performances formed a part, we see that in 1669, 1672 and 1678 Johann Georg II's three younger brothers, August of Saxony-Weissenfels (1614–80), Christian of Saxony-Merseburg (1615–91) and Moritz of Saxony-Zeitz (1619–81), and their wives and families were all present, summoned to Dresden by Johann Georg II. Of the younger generation present, Johann Georg III (1647–91) and Johann Adolf of Saxony-Weissenfels (1649–97) were the most important. We have to imagine the brothers and their families obliged to endure these performances at which, each time with increased vehemence, as well as at increasing length, the theme of brotherly hatred against the virtuous Joseph was emphasised. There is no doubt who the figure of Joseph represents and, as a reminder, the guests would have been given a printed plot summary to take away with them.

Only an intense rivalry between the brothers can explain these extraordinary circumstances.<sup>74</sup> Their father Johann Georg I divided his territory four years before his death, presenting his three younger sons with territories in the west of Saxony, territories which were thereby taken away from the patrimony of the eldest son (Figure 11). August was given Weissenfels, Christian Merseburg and Moritz Zeitz. Uncertainty in Johann Georg I's will made a series of further agreements and compromises between the brothers necessary in the following decade. In 1657, for instance, they signed the so-called 'freundbrüderlicher Hauptvergleich' (the amicable and brotherly principal accord), but further agreements were necessary in the years 1660, 1661 and 1663. The gatherings in Dresden were in the nature of summit conferences between the four brothers. Johann Georg II seems to have felt especial rivalry towards his next youngest brother, the notable August of Saxony-Weissenfels, as a fat volume of documents in the SLUB entitled 'Acta Streitigkeiten zwischen Chursachsen und Fürst

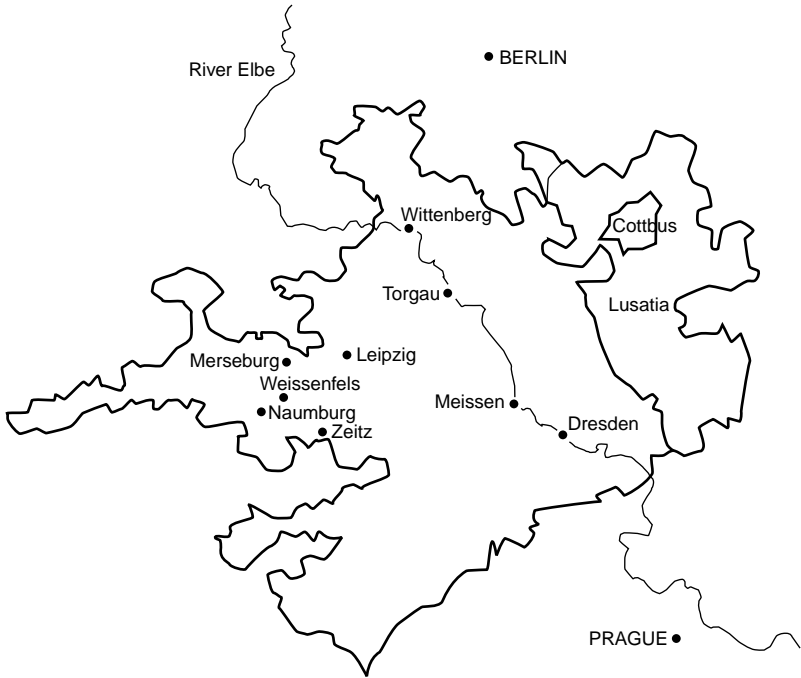


Figure 11. Map of Electoral Saxony after 1648, augmented by Lusatia.

August...betreffend' demonstrates.<sup>75</sup> One can speculate that the contrasting family circumstances of the two brothers fuelled Johann Georg's unease. The Elector had only one son and one daughter, while August had five sons and four daughters by his first wife and a further two sons by his second. A fall from a horse, an illness, could have wiped out the Elector and his heir and brought August or one of his sons to power. Only Johann Georg II's youngest brother Moritz seems to have been regarded with any favour, being paralleled in the plays by the beloved youngest son Benjamin. Biblical drama is thus being used here not for edifying purposes but in the service of family politics. As we shall see in chapter V, Johann Georg used other dramatic forms for the same purpose.

### **Dedekind and the biblical semi-opera**

At about the same time, the greatest original contribution to biblical drama at the Dresden court was being made by the composer, writer, bass, violinist and director of the court orchestra from 1666 to 1675,

Constantin Christian Dedekind (1628–1715). Dedekind published his first collection of biblical plays, *Neue geistliche Schau=Spiele, bekwehmet zur Music* (New Religious Plays Set to Music), in 1670 and dedicated them to Johann Georg II. As the title indicates, these works lie somewhere between plays and operas, and Dedekind presumably hoped that they would be put on in the new opera house in Dresden. As far as we know, this never happened. The collection consists of four plays: *Himmel auf Erden/ Das ist Gott als Mänsch im Freuden=Spiele der Gebuhrt Christi/ vohrgestaellet* (Heaven on Earth, that is, God Made Man in a Joyous Play on the Birth of Christ); *Stern aus Jakob und Kinder=Mörder Herodes/ verfasst in ein singendes Trauer=Spiel. Anderer Teil von Jesus Gebuhrt* (Star of Jacob and the Child-Murderer Herod in a Sung Tragedy. The Second Part of the Nativity); *Sterbender Jesus, auf Thraehnen=reicher Schau=Bühne eines blutigigen Trauer=Spieles/ zu schuldigster Erinnerung / wehemütigst vohrgestaellet* (Dying Jesus on the Tear-soaked Stage of a Bloody Tragedy in Most Due Remembrance Most Movingly Presented); *Siegender Jesus/ in einem Freuden=Spiele Seiner triumphierlichen Höllen=Fahrt und Auferstehung vohrgestaellet* (Jesus Victorious in a Comedy on his Triumphant Descent into Hell and his Resurrection). As the titles make clear, these four plays cover the three themes that are typical of the ‘historia’ – the Passion, Resurrection and Christmas stories – and one can see them as a synthesis of the ‘historia’ and of the biblical play.

In 1676, Dedekind brought out a second collection, *Heilige Arbeit über Freud und Leid der alten und neuen Zeit / in Music-bekwehmen Schau=Spiele ahngewendet* (Sacred reworking of joyful and sorrowful events in ancient and modern times, in plays suitable for music), but this time dedicated to Johann Georg’s younger brother and arch-rival, August of Saxony-Weissenfels. In this collection Dedekind concentrates on themes from the Old Testament. It begins with a group of short, sacred entertainments to be performed during banquets at court, ‘Ahn=Hang zur geistlichen Taffel=Music’. It includes Jacob’s Flight and Dream, the Lord Calling Moses, a Triumphal Song at Pharaoh’s Destruction in the Red Sea, David’s Fight with and Victory over Goliath, and Elija’s Journey to Heaven. Then come five musical and dramatic renderings of the stories of Adam and Eve, ‘der erster Märterer Abel’, (Abel, the First Martyr), ‘Der Wunder=gehorsahmen Isaak und großgläubiger Abraham’ (The Wondrous Obedient Isaac and Most Faithful Abraham), ‘Rebekka’ and ‘Samson’ (the latter being a translation of Vondel’s *Simson*). What is interesting to note is that the theme of brotherly discord is again treated in this collection dedicated to August of Saxony-Weissenfels. ‘Jacob’s Flight and Dream’ begins with the statement that it is brotherly

envy which is driving Jacob away ('Ach! Bruder=Zorn ist übel zuverschmerzen' [Oh, brotherly anger is hard to bear]) and the David play shows him rejected by his natural brothers, only to find a true brother in Jonathan at the end of the piece. The Abel play deals with the quintessential story of brotherly hatred, the murderous envy of Cain for Abel; and Abraham and Isaac depicts the obedient son, beloved of his father. One cannot but speculate that these plays represent the same conflict we saw in the Joseph plays, but from the point of view of the younger brother.

What genre do Dedekind's musical plays belong to? They are not operas on the Italian model nor are they oratorios. They are more dramatic than the 'historia' and are written expressly for theatrical performance. The tightness of their construction and the musical interludes distance them from biblical drama proper. Dedekind combines serious with comic scenes and is writing for a sophisticated stage with all its technical possibilities. We see this particularly in his scenes in hell in the fourth Act of the 'Birth of Christ' and in the Prologue to 'Jesus Victorious'. Yet a specifically Lutheran piety, a reverence for the Scriptures and for the message of Salvation, informs his works. The sacred drama of the Fall is combined in Dedekind's treatment with a search for a Saviour, for instance. Dedekind's works could only have been produced in Dresden, where Lutheran piety, a highly developed court stage and German church music of the highest quality could be found side by side.

If the Electoral burial chapel at Freiberg was planned as a statement of the political ambitions and religious beliefs of the Albertines, it was completed in a climate of unrest between Lutherans and Calvinists at the end of the sixteenth century, heightened by the suspicion that the recently deceased Christian I had actually been a Calvinist himself. If a musical genre like the 'historia' was created from within the core of the Lutheran faith, the sectarian inventions so common in the tournaments held at court in the 1570s and 1580s reflect Lutheran insecurities vis-à-vis Catholicism. If Johann Georg II reiterated his identity as a Lutheran prince after the Thirty Years' War by building the chapel at Moritzburg and by having himself depicted in various media as a pious Lutheran, his struggles with his younger brothers caused him to use the established genre of the biblical drama for propaganda purposes.

How this intensely Lutheran culture was intertwined with, indeed inseparable from, the Italianate ideal of the Renaissance prince is the subject of the next chapter.

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