AESTHETICS OF PROTESTANTISM IN NORTHERN EUROPE

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Aesthetics of Protestantism in Northern Europe

Exploring the field

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Contents

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Which Protestants?

Calvinism, Crypto-Calvinism, and the Scandinavian Reformation

The question mark in the title of this contribution is more than a rhetorical one. It stands for an intellectual historian's perplexity in the face of the confrontation between the two main concepts of this book, Scandinavian aesthetics on the one hand, and Protestantism on the other. From a contemporary perspective, it is true, it seems reasonably natural to connect the confessional and the geographical concept and to point to a series of characteristics typical for both Protestantism and Scandinavian aesthetics, such as simplicity, logocentrism, individualism, and relatedness to the world.[1] But the conjunction is less natural from a historical perspective, and from the perspective of the sixteenth century in particular, when Protestantism emerged. For, as is well known, this emergence was not a uniform process leading to a homogeneous new movement, but a complex accumulation of various initiatives with different centres that involved the most diverse players with their individual beliefs, motives, and goals. As a result, the main branches of the movement that would become known, thanks to their official political support, as the 'magisterial Reformation' divided into two dominant groups in 1529,[2] the Lutherans on the one hand, and, on the other, the Zwinglians, who would later form with the Calvinists the 'Reformed' branch of the Protestant churches. In the course of the sixteenth century, both branches began to evolve into well distinguished and even bitterly divided confessions, developing their respective cultures and stressing their differences,[3] so that it might be difficult to speak, with regard to this historical era, of 'the' Protestant aesthetics as such.

But this is not where the real problem lies. While it is undeniably true that the aforementioned characteristics are somehow typical of 'Protestantism' in a general sense, it is apparent that, within Protestantism, they fit much better with its Reformed, Calvinist

1 See introduction to this volume, pp. 10–11. I would like to thank Christian Grosse for his useful remarks on an earlier version of this paper.

2 For a short, but very concise overview, see Kenneth G. Appold, 'Lutheran-Reformed Relations: A Brief Historical Overview', *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, 95 (2017), 52–61. On the 'magisterial Reformation' and the colloquy of Marburg from 1529, see Amy Nelson Burnett, *Debating the Sacraments: Print and Authority in the Early Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 282–97.

3 See Thomas Kaufmann, *Konfession und Kultur. Lutherischer Protestantismus in der zweiten Hälfte des Reformationsjahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); and Birgit Emich, 'Konfession und Kultur, Konfession als Kultur? Vorschläge für eine kulturalistische Konfessionskultur-Forschung', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 109 (2018), 375–88.

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branch than with Lutheranism. To take the example of simplicity, it is the Reformed churches that were cleansed — sometimes in violent iconoclastic acts — of images, altars, and altarpieces; the Calvinists abandoned liturgical clothing and even banned crosses from their churches, while these furnishings remained in Lutheran buildings and liturgy.[4] This becomes most apparent in buildings from the Baroque age, when Lutheran churches such as the Storkyrkan in Stockholm were equipped with the typically rich and lavish furnishings, while a Reformed temple such as the Church of the Holy Spirit in Bern had no ornaments at all, even though this Zwinglian city was one of the richest places north of the Alps in the early eighteenth century when the church was built.[5] The same is true for the other characteristics mentioned above: regarding logocentrism, it was the Reformed theologians in the sixteenth century who distrusted church music and banned organs to suppress an all too emotional approach to religion;[6] and if the nowadays disputed Weberian notions of Protestant individualism and a specific relatedness to the world are to be maintained at all, it should be remembered that Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was, properly speaking, a description of Calvinist ethics with its intrinsic link to the particularly Reformed doctrine of predestination.[7] If these characteristics are typical for some kind of Protestant aesthetics, it seems, from a sixteenth-century perspective, that the Calvinists were much more Protestant than the Lutherans, who remained, in these regards, closer to the Catholic culture and retained a certain amount of opulence and exuberance. Unsurprisingly, the most relevant book written on 'Protestant' aesthetics in the sixteenth century so far, Victoria George's *Whitewash and the New Aesthetic of the Protestant Reformation*, focuses almost exclusively on Zwinglians and Calvinists.[8]

But why is this a problem? It is a problem because Scandinavia was one of the core regions of Lutheranism, not of Calvinism: the Scandinavian churches all derived from the

4 Cf. Willem J. Van Asselt, 'The Prohibition of Images and Protestant Identity', in *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash: Struggle for Religious Identity*, ed. by Willem J. Van Asselt, Paul van Geest, Daniela Müller and Theo Salemink (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 299–311. On Calvinist simplicity, see Daniel T. Jenkins, 'A Protestant Aesthetic? A Conversation With Donald Davie', *Journal of Literature and Theology*, 2 (1988), 153–62; and also Johannes Stückelberger, 'Das unsichtbare Bild. Prolegomena zu einer reformierten Ästhetik', in *Das unsichtbare Bild. Die Ästhetik des Bilderverbots*, ed. by Matthias Krieg et al. (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2005), pp. 11–18 (p. 17).

5 For both churches, there is a rich collection of images on wikimedia, see <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Storkyrkan_Stockholm> [accessed 10 March 2022] and <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Heiliggeistkirche_Bern> [accessed 10 March 2022].

6 Randall D. Engle, 'A Devil's Siren or an Angel's Throat? The Pipe Organ Controversy among the Calvinists', in *John Calvin, Myth and Reality: Images and Impact of Geneva's Reformer*, ed. by Amy Nelson Burnett (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), pp. 107–25; and Chiara Bertoglio, *Reforming Music: Music and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017). See, however, Erin Lambert, 'In corde iubilum', *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, 14 (2012), 269–87; and Christian Grosse, 'L'esthétique du chant dans la piété calviniste aux premiers temps de la Réforme (1536–1545)', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 1 (2010), 13–31, on aesthetic aspects of chant in Calvinist liturgy.

7 This is most apparent in the quick shift between parts I.1, talking about Luther, and I.2, taking up Calvin: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism with Other Writings on the Rise of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 89–122. See Peter Ghosh, *Max Weber and 'the Protestant Ethic': Twin Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 354–61.

8 Victoria Ann George, *Whitewash and the New Aesthetic of the Protestant Reformation* (London: Pindar Press, 2012). Luther only appears on pp. 33–34 and 199–200.

Wittenberg Reformation, and they never gave up that association.[9] They even defended it to the exclusion of any other influence, to the point that it is almost impossible to find traces of an enduring reception of Calvinist thought in the first two centuries after the Reformation. After some short and almost insignificant episodes in the late sixteenth century — one of them will be treated later on in this chapter — Calvinism was definitely and, as it seems, very effectually banned, such that, in his huge Oxford History on *German and Scandinavian Protestantism* after 1700, the historian Nicholas Hope did not even include an entry in the index for 'Calvin', 'Calvinism', or 'Reformed confession'.[10] Hence, there is an interesting (but problematic) situation: in a region that seems to virtually lack any Calvinist roots in the Reformation era, we have nowadays a set of aesthetic tendencies that seem to conform most closely with Calvinism. Three possible rationales lend themselves to explain this situation: the first denies that there is a real link between Calvinism and the aforementioned aesthetic features; the second suggests that there was, ever since the Reformation, a hidden Calvinist influence in Scandinavia; and the third would say that Calvinist influence in Scandinavia occurred only centuries after the Reformation.

In what follows, I will provide some elements to tackle the first two possible causes, and I will argue that neither of them seems sufficient to explain the situation. First, with regard to Calvinism and a specific aesthetics, I will present three models of how Christianity — at least in its Western occurrences — conceived of religious aesthetics, that is, of the perceivability of the divine. In order to do so, I will focus on the problem of religious images, which is — as will become clear — a test case for the functioning of other aesthetic experiences with a religious connotation. Second, I will discuss the most prominent example of a possible reception of Calvinist thought in Reformation Scandinavia, the case of the Danish theologian Niels Hemmingsen who, in the late sixteenth century, had to withdraw one of his major works and who lost his position at the University of Copenhagen due to an accusation of Crypto-Calvinism. Given that the first section will argue that there is, indeed, a specific Calvinist shape to the aforementioned aesthetic characteristics, and that the second section will show the limitation of Hemmingsen's case, I will conclude that the first two rationales outlined above do not explain our problematic situation. Rather, historical arguments about the conjunction of Scandinavian aesthetics and Protestantism should be based on the third potential cause, suggesting that a Calvinist influence in Scandinavian mentality only occurred centuries after the Reformation, most possibly through mediation of English puritanism.

9 See Torkild Lyby and Ole Peter Grell, 'The Consolidation of Lutheranism in Denmark and Norway', in *The Scandinavian Reformation: From Evangelical Movement to Institutionalization and Reform*, ed. by Ole Peter Grell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 114–43; Ingun Montgomery, 'The Institutionalization of Lutheranism in Sweden and Finland', in *The Scandinavian Reformation: From Evangelical Movement to Institutionalization and Reform*, ed. by Ole Peter Grell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 144–78; and Otfried Czaika, 'Luther, Melanchthon und Chytræus und ihre Bedeutung für die Theologenausbildung im Schwedischen Reich', in *Konfession, Migration und Elitenbildung. Studien zur Theologenausbildung des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Herman Selderhuis and Markus Wriedt (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 53–83 (pp. 79–83).

10 Nicholas Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism, 1700–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

Theological Aesthetics and the Question of Religious Images

First, then, let us see whether there was such a thing as confessional aesthetics. In a religious context such as the one of 'Protestantism', aesthetic theories are forged by their attempts to explain the perceivability of the divine.[11] A historical investigation of models of religious aesthetics will thus ask how the adherents of a religious tradition thought themselves to be capable of having such an aesthetic experience: how did they imagine it was possible that the realm of the divine was perceivably present, and thus representable in the world?[12] In this sense, the problem of religious aesthetics oscillates between the two poles of the divine and the mundane as it becomes most apparent in the question of religious objects and their veneration, since theories about the presence of the divine in a religious image have to ask about the relation between these two poles. In a Christian setting, however, a third factor is taken into consideration, namely, the figure precisely of Christ as a specific incarnation of the godly sphere: he is thought to conjoin in his one person a divine and a human nature, and to function thus as a unique mediator between God and the world.[13] One could say, thus, that Christian religious aesthetics and, more particularly, its thinking about the presence and the perceivability of the divine in material representations is inscribed within the triangle of God, Christ, and the world.

From a historical perspective, the three corners of this triangle had particular functions with regard to the question of religious images. With its Jewish roots, Christianity was long informed by a strong anti-iconic approach, as it was condensed in the Ten Commandments with their strict prohibition of any images of God. The means of this material, created world did not seem appropriate to represent the divine that was believed to be fundamentally different, radically other than anything present and hence representable in this world.[14]

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11 See, most basically, Richard Viladesau, 'Aesthetics and Religion', in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and the Arts*, ed. by Frank B. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 25–43; for a critical survey, see Linda Stratford, 'Methodological Issues from the Fields of Art History, Visual Culture, and Theology', in *ReVisioning: Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art*, ed. by James Romaine and Linda Stratford (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2014), pp. 27–41.

12 See Anton Houtepen, 'The Dialectics of the Icon: a Reference to God?' in *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*, ed. by Willem van Asselt et al., Jewish and Christian Perspective Series, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 49–73 (pp. 51–52); on the fundamental character of this question for the study of religion, see Jürgen Mohn, 'Von der Religionsphänomenologie zur Religionsästhetik: Neue Wege systematischer Religionswissenschaft', *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift*, 55 (2004), 300–09.

13 Richard Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics: God in Imagination, Beauty, and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 64–71; Erin Henriksen, *Milton and the Reformation Aesthetics of the Passion* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 23–24. According to traditional Catholic (and, to a lesser extent, Lutheran) theology, this representing mediation was regularly repeated in the Eucharist; see Thomas Lentes, 'Auf der Suche nach dem Ort des Gedächtnisses. Thesen zur Umwertung der symbolischen Formen in Abendmahlslehre, Bildtheorie und Bildandacht des 14.–16. Jahrhunderts', in *Imagination und Wirklichkeit. Zum Verhältnis von mentalen und realen Bildern in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Klaus Krüger and Alessandro Nova (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001), pp. 21–46; and William A. Dyrness, *The Origins of Protestant Aesthetics in Early Modern Europe: Calvin's Reformation Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 55–57.

14 See Shulamit Laderman, 'Biblical Controversy: A Clash Between Two Divinely Inspired Messages?' in *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*, ed. by Willem van Asselt et al., Jewish and Christian Perspective Series, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 141–56; Houtepen, 'The Dialectics of the Icon', p. 51; Matthias Zeindler, 'Warten auf Gottes Kommen. Zur Theologie des Bilderverbots', in *Das unsichtbare Bild. Die Ästhetik des Bilderverbots*, ed. by Matthias Krieg et al. (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2005), pp. 20–23; and the articles collected in Reinhard Hoeps, ed., *Handbuch der Bildtheologie I: Bild-Konflikte* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007).

From a worldly perspective, there seemed to be no means to directly relate the two realms of the divine and the earthly. On the other hand, there was Christ who, in his person, had bridged the gap between the creator and his creation, between the material and the spiritual, and who — given that he was said to have walked on this earth in human flesh — had become visible, perceptible, tangible, and thus representable. In this regard, Christ was the point of attack (or the detour) Christians thought was needed to comprehend God.[15] Although in and of itself the divine was believed to be unrepresentable, in the figure of Christ God was thought to have proven that he could become present in the material world.

Christian tradition thus incorporates both image-friendly and iconoclastic tendencies, depending on the corner of the triangle from which one chose to approach the question. Accordingly, western Christianity knew of three models to conceive of religious images. The first model was the common medieval one, and it is well known that medieval theology was generally in favour of religious images (although not exclusively, as will become apparent later on).[16] A good example of a typically medieval, image-friendly approach is Bonaventure, a scholastic theologian of the mid-thirteenth century, since he tackled the question about the representability of the divine in a very significant way. In his main scholastic work, a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard,[17] he did not start the discussion by asking about representations of God, but with a discussion concerning the status of the body of Jesus while he lived on earth: given that he was not only a human being, but also God, were the people living then obliged to worship him?[18] Bonaventure answered this question with an obvious yes, arguing as follows:

> Quia est una persona in Christo, cui debetur reverentia summa, una adoratione adoranda est [...] quantum ad utramque naturam, sicut eadem adoratione adoratur in uno homine caput et pes [...]. Et quoniam caro Christi nunquam est separata a Verbo, ideo semper consideranda est ut coniuncta et semper adoranda est latria.[19]
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> [Since there is one person in Christ, to whom the greatest reverence is due, [his body] has to be worshipped according to both natures with one adoration, such as in one human being the head and the foot are revered with one and the same reverence. For, given that the flesh of Christ is never separated from the Word [i.e.,

15 For a nuanced collection of theories about this 'detour', see Jean Wirth, 'Soll man Bilder anbeten? Theorien zum Bilderkult bis zum Konzil von Trient', in *Bildersturm. Wahnsinn oder Gottes Wille?*, ed. by Cécile Dupeux et al. (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2000), pp. 28–37.

16 On medieval iconoclasms, see Guy P. Marchal, 'Das vieldeutige Heiligenbild. Bildersturm im Mittelalter', in *Macht und Ohnmacht der Bilder. Reformatorischer Bildersturm im Kontext der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. by Peter Blickle et al. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2002), pp. 307–32.

17 On Bonaventure's aesthetics in general, see Oleg Bychkov, *Aesthetic Revelation: Reading Ancient and Medieval Texts After Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), pp. 268–78; for his aesthetics as presented in his more mystical texts, see Dyrness, *The Origins of Protestant Aesthetics*, pp. 11–14.

18 Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum* III. 9. 1. 1, in *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* III, ed. by the Collegium at S. Bonaventura (Quaracchi: Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1887), p. 199: utrum cultus latriae sit exhibendus humanitati sive carni Christi.

19 Bonaventure, *Commentaria* III. 9. 1. 1, p. 201a.

> from his divine nature], therefore it always has to be considered as conjoined to it and thus it always has to be worshipped with adoration.][20]

There are at least three points worth noting in this passage. First, by opening the discussion from a Christological angle, Bonaventure stated from the outset that there are things belonging to the realm of the creation — namely Jesus' body with its flesh and blood — that are worth of being worshipped. Hence, worship and adoration were not exclusively reserved to the realm of the divine, but there was a possible setting in which matter rightfully could be the object of veneration since it was linked to the divine. Any further discussion thus occurred in light of this basic fact that there obviously were intersections between the creator and the creation filling the aforementioned gap.

The second point to note here is that, in his argument, Bonaventure introduced an epistemological dimension. The reason contemporaries of Jesus should have worshipped his historical body lies in the fact that, for Bonaventure, it should always have to be 'considered' as conjoined with Christ's divine nature. Contemporaries of Jesus did not perceive with their senses this divine nature (given its divinity), but faithful observers would have known it was there, and by considering this fact they would have realized that they had to adore Christ's divine nature.[21] This is an important point, for if what asks for an adoration is the reflective act of thinking the presence of the divine in a physical body — that is, if an intellectual representation is needed — then it follows that other physical objects capable of eliciting such an intellectual representation might also be worthy of worship. Unsurprisingly, Bonaventure claimed, in the following, that a whole arsenal of religious objects was in need of certain forms of worship, from images of Christ and crosses to the Virgin Mary, the saints and their relics.[22] With the mental presence of the divine being the decisive factor, the sphere of possible media to represent and experience the divine grew dramatically, and so Bonaventure defended this typically late-medieval (and later Catholic) veneration of all kinds of material representations of the divine. It goes without saying that this was a religious approach that was also amenable to numerous other aesthetic ways of experiencing God.[23]

The third point to note is that, on a theological level, it seems that this openness was possible precisely because the gap between God and the world was not thought to be completely unbridgeable. In the text cited, Bonaventure compares the relation of the divine and the human nature of Christ with a body's head and foot, which are two parts of different value and honour, of course, but belong to the same realm of one human body.[24] Later in

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20 All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

21 If Christ's human nature would have been considered alone, it would not have to be adored, as Bonaventure puts it in similarly epistemological terms: 'prout in se nuda consideratione consideratur' (Bonaventure, *Commentaria* III. 9. 1. 1, 201b).

22 Bonaventure, *Commentaria* III. 9. 1. 2–5, pp. 202–11, and 203a in particular: 'Eandem reverentiam exhibemus et exhibere debemus imagini beatae Virginis quam ipsi Virgini, et sic de aliis Sanctis.'

23 See above, n. 19; Oleg V. Bychkov, 'The Place of Aesthetics and the Arts in Medieval Franciscan Theology', in *Beyond the Text: Franciscan Art and the Construction of Religion*, ed. by Xavier Seubert and Oleg Bychkov (St Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013), pp. 196–209; and John W. O'Malley, 'Trent, Sacred Images, and Catholics' Senses of the Sensuous', in *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, ed. by Marcia B. Hall and Tracy E. Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 28–48.

24 See also Bonaventure, *Commentaria* III. 9. 1. 1, ad 1, p. 201a: 'Sicut enim, cum dicitur: solus Petrus est hic intus, non excluditur manus vel pes eius; sic, cum dicitur: solus Deus est adorandus latria, non excluditur humanitas, quia humana natura et divina in unam concurrunt personam.'

his commentary, when discussing images of Christ, Bonaventure described a similar idea in semiotic terms and wrote: 'Res parvi valoris rem nobilem significare potest. Cum ergo adoratur imago, non adoratur ratione nobilitatis, quam habet in se, sed ratione nobilitatis significatae in se.' ('A thing of small value can refer to a noble thing. If we worship an image, we do not worship it for the sake of the nobility it has in itself, but for the sake of the nobility that is signified in it.')[25] Distinguishing clearly between different levels of nobility, Bonaventure implied that the divine and the world differed only gradually and shared a common scale. With this common scale that measured both the lowness of this world and the excellence of the divine, he assumed that there was no insurmountable gap between the spheres. Hence, taking Christ with his two natures as the starting point, Bonaventure ended up with an aesthetic reconciliation, so to say, of the creator and the creation.[26]

A second model for conceiving of religious images started precisely as a critique of this common, shared scale between the creator and the creation. Thinking about God, and not so much about Christ, it was John Duns Scotus in particular who, in the early fourteenth century, opened up a new perspective.[27] Given that God belonged to an eternal, unlimited sphere, while everything corporeal and material was finite and limited, he reinforced the idea of a gap between the two spheres, stating that, from a metaphysical point of view, this gap necessarily had to exist. At the beginning of his *Sentences* commentary, he famously stated: 'Ens prius dividitur in infinitum et finitum, quam in decem genera: quia alterum istorum, scilicet ens finitum est commune ad decem genera.' ('What is is divided into infinite and finite, prior than into the ten categories, for the latter of these, i.e., the finite being, is common [only] to the ten categories.')[28] The point of this division was to stress the huge metaphysical difference between being as it is known, perceived and experienced, and infinite being. Although Scotus still retained the view that both the divine and the worldly realms could be considered as entities, sharing thus a common notion of being,[29] it became unthinkable for him to bridge the gap between God and the world by means of categorical, material entities such as human beings knew them from their finite experience.

Interestingly, Scotus never dealt with the question of religious images.[30] Later theologians in his tradition, however, elaborated on this metaphysical model, coming to conclusions that differed greatly from Bonaventure's position. One of these Scotists was a certain Stephen Brulefer, a Franciscan from the late fifteenth century who even published

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25 Bonaventure, *Commentaria* III. 9. 1. 2, p. 204a.

26 On the concept of 'aesthetic reconciliation', brought up by Schiller in the nineteenth century, see Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 54–61.

27 See Wolfgang Kluxen, 'Die Originalität der skotischen Metaphysik: Eine typologische Betrachtung', in *Aspekte und Stationen der mittelalterlichen Philosophie*, ed. by Ludger Honnefelder and Hannes Möhle (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012), pp. 233–44.

28 John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* I. 8. 1. 3, n. 113, *Doctoris subtilis et mariani B. Ioannis Duns Scoti opera omnia*, ed. by Karl Balić et al., 15 vols (Citta del Vaticano: Vatican Press, 1950–2017), IX (2006), p. 205.

29 There is abundant literature on this doctrine of the 'univocity of being'; see, most helpfully, Tobias Hoffmann, 'The *Quaestiones de anima* and the Genesis of Duns Scotus' Doctrine of Univocity of Being', in *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. by Russell L. Friedman and Jean-Michel Counet (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 2013), pp. 101–20.

30 At the places where this usually was done (the ninth distinction of book III of the *Sentences*), Scotus focused in all versions of his commentary on the sole question of the veneration of Christ's human nature. For a reconstruction of his doctrine of mental images of God, see Andrew T. Lazella, 'Remainders and reminders of the divine. Duns Scotus's critique of images of God', *Anuario filosófico*, 49/3 (2016), 517–37.

a short treatise on the question of knowing if and to what extent the divine persons were representable in colour and wood by images and statues.[31] Unsurprisingly, assuming the theocentric metaphysical perspective of Scotus, Brulefer denied almost every type of representations that prevailed in his immediate religious context. In his discussion of images of God-Father as a bearded old man, he acted precisely on the lack of a common scale between the creator and the created world:

> Nulla est habitudo seu similitudo paternitatis increatae ad paternitatem creatam. […] Nulla imago aut sculptura seu pictura erronee et false sui imaginati repraesentativa et ad haeresim penitus ductiva est fienda ab aliquo vere catholico. […] Simpliciter haereticum est asserere patrem in divinis esse talem qualis per eam repraesentat, ad quod tamen credendum firmiter inducuntur potissime simplices et rudes per talem imaginationem.[32]
>
> [There is no proportion or similarity between uncreated paternity and created paternity. Now, no image or sculpture or drawing that represents its content in a wrong and erroneous way or that leads straight into heresy is to be made by a real Catholic. Yet, it simply is heretical to assert that the divine father is such as he is represented by this kind of image, what the simple and unlearned in particular are induced to firmly believe by such an image.]

The problem, for Brulefer, lay in the fact that any representation of God by worldly, material means necessarily led to mistaken images of God, for there was no common ground between corporeal imaginations and the divine, metaphysically other. It was thus an act of pastoral duty, in Brulefer's eyes, to protect the simple believers from religious images, since these images could only incite these believers to heresy. In a later work — an exposition, by the way, of Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary — Brulefer even appealed for the destruction and abolition of religious images, thus asking for the contrary of what Bonaventure had claimed.[33]

Brulefer's position is interesting in two regards. First, this is a late medieval, scholastic text that was published more or less two generations before the Reformation and its iconoclastic turn. It thus documents the existence of an essentially critical stance against images still within medieval theology.[34] Second, and this is more interesting with regard

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31 The treatise appeared as part of a posthumous edition of Brulefer's works: Stephanus Brulefer, *Positio decem propositionum descindens an persone in divinis sint ut usus habet depingende, et que personarum sit depingibilis*, in *Opuscula* (Paris: Jean Petit, 1500), fol. 18^{v}–23^{v}. On the treatise, see Ueli Zahnd, 'Bildkritik am Vorabend der Reformation. Stephan Brulefers Thesen zur Darstellung der trinitarischen Personen', in *Reformation und Bildnis. Bildpropaganda im Zeitalter der Glaubensstreitigkeiten*, ed. by Günther Frank and Maria Lucia Weigel (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2018), pp. 217–26.

32 Brulefer, *Positio decem propositionum*, fol. 19^{r}.

33 Stephanus Brulefer, *Reportata clarissima in quatuor Sancti Bonaventure doctoris seraphici sententiarum libros* (Basel: Jakob von Pfortzheim, 1507), fol. 294^{rb}–^{va}: 'Imagines facte ad representadnum Patrem in divinis vel Spiritum Sanctum quo ad deitatem nullo honore sunt venerande nec adorande adoratione latrie; sed potius sunt destruende, quia quicquid est impium debet destrui in ecclesia. […] Quicquid est signum falsum et erronee figuratum debet repelli et destrui in lege veritatis. […] Omne quod est provocativum ad idolatriam est destruendum et abolendum.'

34 In this regard, it challenges the idea of an 'epistemological shift' that only occurred with the Reformation, see Robert W. Scribner, *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400–1600)*, ed. by Lindal Roper (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 98–99.

to 'Protestant' aesthetics, this Stephen Brulefer had an avid reader, namely, a young priest from Glarus in central Switzerland by the name of Huldrych Zwingli. The copy of Brulefer Zwingli owned still exists with a whole set of notes in Zwingli's hand,[35] and even if the later Reformer of Zurich did not borrow his own criticism of religious images directly from Brulefer, it is obvious that he found in this late medieval Scotist approach a model for his own position on the irrepresentability of God.[36] A similar case could probably be made for John Calvin[37] who, in his *Institutio Christianae religionis*, also argued against religious images and leaned, in order to do so, on the Scotist division between the eternal and thus unrepresentable creator and the limited corporeal world, which lacks any own means to approach this fundamentally other God.[38] Calvin wrote that it amounted to an

> indecora et absurda fictione foedari Dei maiestatem, dum incorporeus materia corporea, invisibilis visibili simulacro, spiritus re inanimata, immensus exigui ligni, lapidis, vel auri frusto assimilatur.[39]
>
> > [absurd and indecorous fiction, when [the majesty of God] who is incorporeal is assimilated to corporeal matter; he who is invisible to a visible image; he who is a spirit to an inanimate object; and he who exceeds all measure to a bit of paltry wood, or stone, or gold.][40]

Approaching the question of religious images from the angle of God, this Scotist line that would become the Reformed and Calvinist one thus rejected any chance of using religious images. But the rejection was further reaching, of course, and affected other dimensions of the material world, leading to the notorious (but sometimes exaggerated) austerity in Reformed culture.[41] Given the otherness of God, the abolition of images, the relative confinement of the use of music, the prohibition of dancing and other worldly elements was a question of pastorally protecting the flock from being distracted, or, even worse, from being misled to adopt heretical notions of God.

Yet, in claiming the incorporeal otherness of God, this Scotist-Calvinist line still made claims about God, about what he was and what he was not. This is where the third model

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35 See Martin Sallmann, *Zwischen Gott und Mensch. Huldrych Zwinglis theologischer Denkweg im De vera et falsa religione commentarius (1525)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 183–97; the annotations are edited in Daniel Bolliger, *Infiniti Contemplatio. Grundzüge der Scotus- und Scotismusrezeption im Werk Huldrych Zwinglis. Mit Ausführlicher Edition bisher unpublizierter Annotationen Zwinglis* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

36 For Zwingli's theology of images, see Zahnd, 'Bildkritik am Vorabend der Reformation', pp. 218–21, with further literature; Andreas Rüfenacht, 'Bildersturm im Berner Münster. Berns Umgang mit sakralen Bildern in der Reformation — Symptom der städtischen Herrschaft', *Zwingliana*, 44 (2017), 1–155 (pp. 5–9). For Zwingli's aesthetics see George, *Whitewash*, pp. 283–340.

37 There is an ongoing debate about Calvin's potential dependencies on Scotus, but there is an undeniable set of doctrinal parallels; see Heiko A. Oberman, *Initia Calvini: The Matrix of Calvin's Reformation* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1991), pp. 24–25.

38 On Calvin and images, see most recently Dyrness, *The Origins of Protestant Aesthetics*, pp. 57–59; and William A. Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 76–79.

39 Calvin, *Institutio Christianae religionis* I. 11. 2, col. 75.

40 Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (London: S.C.M Press, 1961), p. 48.

41 Susan Hardman Moore, 'Calvinism and the Arts', *Theology in Scotland*, 16 (2009), 75–92; Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, p. 81; see also Kai Hammermeister, *Kleine Systematik der Kunstfeindlichkeit. Zur Geschichte und Theorie der Ästhetik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), pp. 77–78.

comes in. For, back in the early fourteenth century, Scotus had a famous critic in William of Ockham who reviewed Scotus by radicalizing his approach.[42] If one takes it for granted that there is no common measure between the divine and the world — that there is no common scale in the sense of Bonaventure — then the two realms, as Ockham suggested, have to be conceived as incommensurable: the sphere of the divine is so radically other that there is no means anymore to say from a worldly perspective what God is and what he is not, for even notions such as 'other', 'infinite', or 'being' do not apply to God as they are shaped by a worldly understanding.[43]

Considering the subject from the angle of the world, Ockham — just as Scotus — did not, however, discuss the possibility of religious images. Yet, just as with Scotism, there was a theologian in the early sixteenth century who would claim during his lifetime to have been a student in the tradition of Ockham and who would speak out on the problem: Martin Luther who had studied in the Ockhamist *via moderna* at Erfurt.[44] It is well known how much Luther was struck by the human impossibility of approaching God by one's own means, or to think and do anything that would matter in the realm of the divine. Rather, for Luther, God in his absolute, incommensurable otherness was unreachable.[45] With regard to the question of images this meant that, on the one hand, Luther was manifestly against representations of the divine, and even more so if they incited adoration.[46] On the other hand, he was irritated by those who destroyed images, for, from his perspective, they only promoted the abolition of images because by destroying them they thought to do something good. This, however, opposed Luther's idea of the humans' incapacity before God, for according to him, there was no means for human beings to accomplish a good work. And so, in a sermon from 1525, he warned of false prophets, and said:

> Ich hab es offt gesagt und sage es widderumb: Ihr werdet finden, das sie ja allezeyt eyn wercklin auff werffen, nicht damit yhr den leuten hie dienet, sondern damit man verdienen soll: wer das helt und thut, der wird selig, etc. Also reyssen sie dich auff die werck, wie denn unsere schwermgeyster den pöfel auch an sich gerissen haben mit den bilder stürmen: wer eyn bilde zu bricht odder eyn taffel eyn reyst, der thut eyn gut werck, der beweyset sich, das er eyn Christ sey.[47]

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42 See Bolliger, *Infiniti contemplatio*, 166–82; and Alan Perreiah, 'Knowing Unknowing and The Cloud of Unknowing', *Medieval Perspectives*, 25 (2012), 79–87.

43 Anne A. Davenport, *Measure of a Different Greatness: The Intensive Infinity, 1250–1650* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 365–72; and Jenny Pelletier, 'Chatton and Ockham: A Fourteenth Century Discussion on Philosophical and Theological Concepts of God', *Franciscan Studies*, 73 (2015), 147–68.

44 On Luther's involvement in the late medieval theological traditions, see most recently Pekka Kärkkäinen, 'Nominalism and the *Via Moderna* in Luther's Theological Work', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Martin Luther*, ed. by Derek R. Nelson and Paul R. Hinlicky, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), II, pp. 696–708; and Eric L. Saak, *Luther and the Reformation of the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

45 On this incommensurability in Luther, see Ueli Zahnd, 'Protestantische Debatten um die Einheit der Wahrheit. Luther, Melanchthon und Zwingli', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 64 (2017), 58–71 (p. 64).

46 Marc Lienhard, 'Luther et les images', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, 97 (2017), 349–60; Jan N. Bremmer, 'Iconoclast, Iconoclastic, and Iconoclasm: Notes Towards a Genealogy', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 88 (2008), 1–18 (pp. 17–18.); see also Joseph L. Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), pp. 27–28.

47 Martin Luther, *Predigt am Sonntag nach Jacobi (1525)*, in *Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* XVII/1 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1907), pp. 354–72 (p. 366).

> [I often said and repeat it, that you will find them always requiring some good little deed, not thereby to serve the people, but in order to merit salvation, that whoever does and keeps this shall be saved, but he who does not observe and do this, shall be damned. Thus, they force you to trust in works, as the fanatics drove the mob to break up images by saying: Whoever breaks an image or tears down a painting does a good work, and proves himself a Christian.][48]

Thus, Luther concluded that the question of images belongs to the so-called *adiaphora*, that is, doctrinal questions that simply do not matter.[49] This is not to say that Luther explicitly allowed or even recommended religious images, but he did not prohibit them either. Considering the topic from a worldly angle, images were neither good nor bad.[50]

These are thus the three models of dealing with the question of images: a Christocentric promoting one, a theocentric prohibitive one, and an anthropocentric permissive one. In the early modern period, these models would become distinctive for the three main confessions of Catholics, Calvinists, and Lutherans — even if they all had their roots in the late Middle Ages[51] — and they would provide the theoretical framework for the different aesthetic approaches. It is noteworthy, however, that, other than from a chronological perspective, the two Protestant models are difficult to classify. From a phenomenological perspective, the Calvinist model is, of course, the more radical one since it simply does away with images and many other forms of aesthetic media of the divine. The Lutherans, in turn, seem to stand somewhere in between the Calvinists and the Catholics. From a theological perspective, however, Luther is more radical, since he minimizes more radically the conceivability of the divine in worldly terms. There is thus, so to speak, a minimalist culture among Calvinists, and a minimalizing theology among Lutherans. Yet, given that only the former seems to have had an immediate effect in aesthetic terms in the sixteenth century,[52] it appears, with regard to the main question of this chapter, that there actually is a link between Calvinism and a specific aesthetics, so that the first potential solution to the initial 'problematic situation' does not seem to work. What about the second one, then, suggesting that this Calvinism had, ever since the Reformation, a certain — even though hidden — impact in Scandinavia?

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48 *The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther* IV, trans. by John N. Lenker (Minneapolis: Lutheran in All Lands, 1904), pp. 257–8.

49 Thomas Lentes, 'Zwischen Adiaphora und Artefakt. Bildbestreitung in der Reformation', in *Handbuch der Bildtheologie*, (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007) pp. 213–40.

50 See Luther, *Predigt am Sonntag nach Jacobi*, 368: 'Item das andere klöster und bilder ynn eynander brechen, was ist dem nehisten damit geholffen? Dis hat alleyn eynen scheyn und ist an zusehen, als sey es etwas, es ist aber keyn nutz darynne'. See Günther Wartenberg, 'Bilder in den Kirchen der Wittenberger Reformation', in *Die bewahrende Kraft des Luthertums: mittelalterliche Kunstwerke in evangelischen Kirchen*, ed. by Johann M. Fritz (Regensburg: Schnelle & Steiner, 1997), pp. 19–33.

51 On this late medieval 'fermenting tank' for the early modern confessional situation, see Zahnd, 'Einheit der Wahrheit', 70–71.; see also Dyrness, *The Origins of Protestant Aesthetics*, pp. 1–18.

52 On the aesthetic changes, and more so, continuities in the Lutheran milieu, see also Wartenberg, 'Bilder in den Kirchen'; Insa Christiane Hennen, 'The So-Called "Reformation Altarpiece" by the Cranach Workshop and the Restyling of the Wittenberg Town Church Between 1500 and 1600', in *Arts, Portraits and Representation in the Reformation Era: Proceedings of the Fourth Reformation Research Consortium Conference*, ed. by Patrizio Foresta and Federica Meloni (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), pp. 123–30.

The Case of Niels Hemmingsen

As already mentioned, it is difficult to find traces of Calvinism in early modern Scandinavian theology. In the late sixteenth century, when, in the German Empire, the supposedly Calvinistic Philippists and the insistently orthodox Gnesio Lutherans began their quarrels, these quarrels spilled over into Scandinavia, so that there were rumours about Crypto-Calvinists in the region.[53] Duke Karl in particular, the later king of Sweden, was suspected of sympathizing with Calvinist doctrines — but this seems to have been first and foremost a politically driven backlash in the strife between Karl and his brother Johan III, the latter of whom openly sympathized with the Catholicism of his Polish wife.[54] For, after Johan's death in 1592, it was Karl who forced Johan's Catholic son Sigismund to accept the resolutions of the Uppsala Synod from 1593, a synod that exclusively enforced the Augsburg Confession, forbade Catholicism and Calvinism, and thus consolidated the Lutheran confession in the entire region. In contrast to any earlier allegation of Crypto-Calvinism, Karl became the champion of Scandinavian Lutheranism.[55]

At least, these political moves and the debate in the German Empire led some Scandinavian theologians to take note of the existence and to write against the henceforth prohibited Calvinists. It is very telling to observe, however, how they did this. A good example is the Finnish theologian Marcus Henrici who flourished in Helsinki at the turn of the seventeenth century.[56] In 1602, Henrici published an 'Elenchus or succinct refutation of the Calvinists' theses';[57] however, he drew the theses not from a personal confrontation with Calvinist theologians nor from reading their works, but from a translation a Swedish Lutheran had made[58] of a collection of articles a German Lutheran had composed[59] in the 1560s when Frederik III of the Palatine had switched from the Lutheran to the Reformed

53 See Ole Peter Grell, 'Introduction', in *The Scandinavian Reformation: From Evangelical Movement to Institutionalization and Reform*, ed. by Ole Peter Grell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1–11 (pp. 5–6); and Montgomery, 'Lutheranism in Sweden and Finland', pp. 162–67. Earlier in the century, Dutch refugees had caused similar debates in Denmark; see Lyby and Grell, 'Lutheranism in Denmark and Norway', pp. 118–9; and E. I. Kouri, 'The Reformation in Sweden and Finland', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. by E. I. Kouri and Jens E. Olesen, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), II, pp. 60–88 (p. 72). More generally on the reception of Philipp Melanchthon in Scandinavia, see Czaika, 'Luther, Melanchthon und Chytræus', pp. 62–64.

54 Lyby and Grell, 'Lutheranism in Denmark and Norway', p. 121.

55 See Otfried Czaika, 'Konfession und Politik in Mecklenburg und Schweden in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts', in *Verknüpfungen des neuen Glaubens. Die Rostocker Reformationsgeschichte in ihren translokalen Bezügen*, ed. by Heinrich Holze and Kristin Skottki (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020) pp. 345–68 (pp. 359–62).

56 On Henrici, see Simo Heininen and Markku Heikkilä, *Kirchengeschichte Finnlands*, trans. by Matthias Quaschning-Kirsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), pp. 80–81.

57 Marcus Henrici Helsingius, *Elenchus seu refutatio succinta thesium calviniarum ex ordinantia ecclesiastica ecclesiarum Heidelbergensium decerptarum* (Rostock: Christofer Reusner, 1603). See Tuija Laine, 'Die Bedeutung Rostocks für das lutherische kirchliche Leben in Finnland von der Reformation bis zur frühen Orthodoxie', in *Verknüpfungen des neuen Glaubens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), pp. 283–99 (p. 294).

58 Petrus Johannis Gothus, *Puncta aff them Heydelbergiska pfaltziska caluiniska kyrkeordning, som år nu nyliga vprettat* (Rostock: Christofer Reusner, 1602). On Petrus Johannis Gothus, see Kajsa Brilkman, 'Petrus Johannis Gothus und der Konfessionskonflikt im Schwedischen Reich. Kompilation, Übersetzung und Paratext in *De Christiano milite* (1592)', in *Verknüpfungen des neuen Glaubens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), pp. 391–404.

59 The anonymous German pamphlet with the title 'Ettliche Artickell so die Zwinglianer in der Pfalz in irem Synodo berathschlagt und agerichtet haben' was published in winter 1562/63 and has been edited by Albrecht Wolters, 'Zur Urgeschichte des Heidelberger Katechismus', *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 40 (1867), 7–51 (pp. 15–18).

confession. It is thus only through three Lutheran lenses that readers of Henrici's work could connect with Calvinist thought.

The most famous Scandinavian theologian who seems to have engaged with Calvinist thought is the aforementioned Niels Hemmingsen. Vice-chancellor of the University of Copenhagen, Hemmingsen was one of the leading Danish theologians in the second half of the sixteenth century, but, charged with defending Calvinist positions, he had to retract one of his works and finally leave his positions.[60] In Hemmingsen's case, the reasons also seem to have been political rather than theological, even if the affair took its starting point in a theological debate about the Eucharist. For the aforementioned reason of a minimalist theology, Luther had tried to exclude metaphysics from theology. But as early as his split with Zwingli in 1529, he had to introduce several metaphysical notions to explain his position in the Eucharist, one of them being the doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's body, a doctrine needed to defend Christ's real presence in the Eucharistic bread and wine.[61] Although Hemmingsen did not reject the Lutheran doctrine of real presence as such, he was not willing to accept the theory of ubiquity that became a metaphysical standard among Lutherans,[62] and he confessed this openly in his main theological work, the *Syntagma institutionum Christianorum* published in 1574.[63] In Denmark, the publication did not cause any problems at first, but when the Gnesio-Lutherans in Saxony noticed what had been published in Copenhagen they got the ball rolling, and they immediately interfered on a political level: since August of Saxony was the brother-in-law of Frederik II of Denmark, the former urged the latter to take measures.[64] On this political level, it has to be said that, given the then raging religious wars in countries with a considerable Calvinist influence such as France and the Netherlands, it seemed politically mandatory to keep clear of this dangerous doctrine of Calvinism and to suppress debate. Frederik had no interest in the theological details of the Eucharist; rather, he feared that too much discussion would stir up the controversy, so he forbade to give it any room, and he even silenced a persuaded Lutheran theologian who was willing to refute Hemmingsen's

60 On Hemmingsen, see Mattias S. Sommer, *Envisioning the Christian Society. Niels Hemmingsen (1513–1600) and the Ordering of Sixteenth-Century Denmark* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2020); Rasmus H. C. Dreyer, 'The Changing Face of Lutheranism in Post-Reformation Denmark', in *Medicine, Natural Philosophy and Religion in Post-Reformation Scandinavia*, ed. by Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 38–58 (pp. 46–51); Ole Peter Grell, 'The Reformation in Denmark, Norway and Iceland', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, II, pp. 44–59 (pp. 54–55); Ole Peter Grell, 'Intellectual Currents', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, II, pp. 89–100; and Mattias S. Sommer, 'Hemmingsen, Niels', *Encyclopedia of Martin Luther and the Reformation*, ed. by Mark A. Lamport, 2 vols (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), II, pp. 323–25.

61 For a careful analysis of the concept of ubiquity in Luther, see Allen G. Jorgenson, 'Luther on Ubiquity and a Theology of the Public', *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 6 (2004), 351–68 (pp. 362–65).

62 Sommer, 'Hemmingsen, Niels', pp. 324–5; see also Paul D. Lockhart, *Frederik II and the Protestant Cause: Denmark's Role in the Wars of Religion, 1559–1596* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 159. For further material on Hemmingsen's Eucharist theology, see Kurt Jakob Rüetschi, 'Heinrich Bullinger und Dänemark. Die Widmung von "De gratia dei iustificante" an König Christian III. im Jahre 1554', *Zwingliana*, 15/3 (1980), 215–37 (p. 231).

63 Niels Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum, perspicuis assertionibus ex doctrina Prophetica et Apostolica congestis (plerisque propositis et disputatis in Academia Hafniensi) comprehensum* (Copenhagen: Balthasar Kaus, 1574); on the kind of 'presence' Hemmingsen supported see pp. 509–10.

64 Lyby and Grell, 'Lutheranism in Denmark and Norway', p. 121; Paul D. Lockhart, *Denmark, 1513–1660: The Rise and Decline of a Renaissance Monarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 69–71.

Syntagma for Frederik's cause.[65] For August of Saxony, however, this was not enough, and notwithstanding an expert advise of the Lutheran University of Rostock that confirmed that Hemmingsen was an orthodox Lutheran,[66] Frederik eventually forced Hemmingsen to resign and to quit teaching.

The whole affair was so clearly political that Hemmingsen's reputation as a theologian was not really harmed. He remained an important voice and his works continued to be published.[67] The interesting point for the present purpose is, however, that the whole debate — where it had a theological dimension at all — concerned a detail within the setting of the Lutheran doctrine of real presence and did not question Lutheran doctrine as such.[68] Moreover, if ever this could be seen as a Calvinist slant in Hemmingsen's theology, it remained focused on this doctrine of the Eucharist and had nothing to do with the theology of images and religious aesthetics. The *Syntagma*, however, do have a chapter on religious images, and it is worth looking at it to check whether it was there that Hemmingsen — unnoticed by the Saxon Lutherans — adopted a Calvinist position.

Hemmingsen treats the question of religious images as part of an exposition of the Ten Commandments.[69] Like other chapters of the *Syntagma*, the section consists of a collection of theses that had been discussed several years before the publication of the *Syntagma* in a university disputation and had been printed before, but they were now incorporated into the *Syntagma* without any substantial changes.[70] In both cases, these 'theses on the prohibition of images and idols' commented on the second of the Ten Commandments, which is revealing, since the Calvinists numbered the Ten Commandments differently than the Lutherans — and as a matter of fact, Hemmingsen used the Calvinist numbering.[71] In the exposition itself, he also adopted terminology that seems familiar from a Calvinist perspective:

> Tria hac Lege prohibentur. Primum, ne Deum ulla effigie exprimere tentemus. Effigies enim Dei manu hominis expressa, cedit in contumeliam divinae maiestatis. Nam cum Deus sit expers corporis, invisibilis et infinitus, et effigies omnis ex materia corporea sit, visibilis, et terminis clausa, fieri non potest sine contumelia Dei, effigiem Dei manu exprimere.[72]
>
> [This Commandment prohibits three things. First, that we do not try to express God through any figure. Because any figure of God expressed by human hand is an

65 This Lutheran was Henrik von Bruchofen; see Lockhart, *Frederik II and the Protestant Cause*, p. 160.

66 Lockhart, *Frederik II and the Protestant Cause*, p. 162.

67 Sommer, 'Hemmingsen, Niels', p. 325. Hemmingsen's *Syntagma*, however, were not republished in Danish lands. On the contrary, the first re-edition of the *Syntagma* in 1578 in Calvinist Geneva (by Eustache Vignon) may have tipped the scales for Hemmingsen's dismissal (see Lyby and Grell, 'Lutheranism in Denmark and Norway', p. 121), and two further editions were printed in 1581 and 1585 by Aegidius Radaeus in Antwerp.

68 Within Lutheranism, Hemmingsen followed the 'Philippist' (Melanchthonian) tradition. On the aftermath of this tradition in Denmark, see Dreyer, 'Changing Face of Lutheranism', pp. 51–52.

69 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, pp. 706–14. The work consists of two main parts, an exposition of theological *loci*, and this explanation of the Ten Commandments.

70 Niels Hemmingsen, *Assertiones de prohibitione imaginum et idolorum* (Copenhagen: Laurentius Benedictus, 1568).

71 In the Lutheran and Catholic traditions, the prohibition of images belongs to the First Commandment, while the Reformed, Anglican and Orthodox traditions consider it as a commandment on its own.

72 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 2, p. 706.

> insult to the divine majesty. For, given that God is incorporeal, invisible and infinite, and given that every figure is of corporeal matter, visible and finite, it cannot be without an insult to God that a figure of God is expressed by hand.]

These are the typical metaphysical statements about what God is that have been presented above as model two: God as an infinite being cannot be represented, but the statement that he is infinite seems possible. Yet, in what followed, Hemmingsen made clear that even so, there were reasons not to be against images as such. After having explained that the devil had introduced images and their veneration into Christianity,[73] he went on and explained:

> Porro, ne quis artem pingendi et sculpendi, prohibitione imaginum et idolorum damnari existimet, conferat Legem prohibitionis cum alijs praeceptis et exemplis Scripturae, quibus aliquae imagines et simulachra approbantur.[74]
>
> [Yet, in order that one does not think that the prohibition of images and idols condemns the art of painting and sculpting [as such], he should compare the law of prohibition with other laws and examples of Scriptures, some of which approve of images and statues.]

In contrast to the first exposition, this seems a rather permissive claim, and in order to substantiate it, Hemmingsen gave the example of the Cherubim in the First Temple according to 1 Kings 6, arguing thus on a purely biblical basis for the legitimate existence of images within religious buildings.[75] All of a sudden, therefore, he seemed to be much more in line with the Lutheran approach.

This same tension is present in a second part of the disputation where Hemmingsen explains what uses images can have. He distinguishes three uses, a superstitious one of the worshippers of idols, a typological and a political one.[76] With regard to the typological use, Hemmingsen said: 'Typicus usus in veteri Testamento fuit, ut rem aliquam divinam, sub imagine rei incurrentis in oculos, adumbraret.' ('The typological use existed in the Old Testament in order to adumbrate something divine in the image of a thing that catches one's eyes.')[77] The strict reservation concerning the possibility of material things to 'adumbrate something divine' that would have been typical for model two is abandoned. Yet, again, Hemmingsen finds an example in the Bible to confirm his case, namely the story of the bronze serpent according to Numbers 21 that the New Testament itself presented as a type of Christ, and thus as a material type of something divine. However, also according to the Bible, this serpent was later destroyed by King Hezekia since it was

73 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, §§ 6–16, pp. 707–10.
74 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 17.
75 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 18; on the role of the Cherubim in debates on religious images, see Laderman, 'Biblical Controversy', pp. 152–3.; and Houtepen, 'The Dialectics of the Icon', pp. 55–56.
76 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 23, p. 712: 'Triplex est in universum imaginum et simulachrorum usus, videlicet, Superstitiosus, typicus, et politicus.'
77 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 25.

abused for worship;[78] and while the typological reading seems to stress that Hemmingsen rather adopted the Lutheran model, the Danish theologian used this destruction as an appeal to his contemporary rulers: Hezekias 'relinquens omnibus Regibus et principibus exemplum, ut et ipsi tollant instrumenta idolatriae, ne impediatur verus Dei cultus, et caveant, ne posteris instrumenta relinquant impietatis' ('He [i.e., Hezekias] left for all kings and princes an example, that they also abolish the instruments of idolatry, so that the true worship of God is not encumbered, and that they take care so that they do not leave instruments of impiety to posterity').[79] Even if this was not an explicit appeal to destroy religious images as such (but only the 'instruments of idolatry'), in the context of the present chapter of the *Syntagma* it obviously could be read as a strong iconoclastic tendency such as prevailed, in these years, in the Calvinist Netherlands.[80]

With the vocabulary of the infinite, invisible God, and with this appeal to the destruction of 'instruments of impiety', there seem to have been traits in Hemmingsen's approach that reveal a Calvinist shape; however, just as with his doctrine of the Eucharist, they do not lead to a fundamental questioning of religious images that would have broken with the common Lutheran tolerance of them. When presenting the last use of images, the so-called 'political' one, Hemmingsen rather stressed that images could be used as ornament, in a symbolic, or in a historical way, the latter serving for the comprehension and remembrance of things.[81] The argument is close to medieval legitimization of wall paintings in churches,[82] so that one thing becomes clear: if this is the intrusion of Calvinism into Scandinavian Protestantism, then there is not much reason to link the minimalist Scandinavian aesthetics with its Protestant roots.

Conclusion

It is time for a short conclusion. The present chapter started with the observation that the typical features of 'Protestant' aesthetics belong to the Calvinist branch of Protestantism rather than to the Lutheran one that prevails in Scandinavia. Three scenarios have been proposed to solve this problem: the first denies that a typically Calvinist aesthetics exists at all; the second suggests that there must have been a Calvinist impact in Scandinavia in the sixteenth century itself; and the third suggests that Calvinist influence only took

78 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 25: 'Veluti aeneus Serpens suspensus in deserto, adumbrabat Christum, Iohan. 3 [14]. Hic usus tantisper fuit licitus, donec populus Aegyptio more eum adorare caepit' (see 2 Kings 18.4). On this '*locus classicus* of the image debate', see van Asselt, 'The Prohibition of Images', p. 303.

79 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 25, p. 712.

80 On the Dutch wave of iconoclasm, see Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); on its effects on aesthetics, see Angela Vanhaelen, *The Wake of Iconoclasm: Painting the Church in the Dutch Republic* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).

81 Hemmingsen, *Syntagma institutionum Christianarum*, II. 4, § 28, p. 713: 'Historicus usus est, qui Historiis servit, hoc est, qui ad intelligendas rectius rerum descriptiones, et ad memoriam rerum conservandam facit. Hic usus et in libris et alibi licitus est.'

82 For the so-called *biblia pauperum* according to Gregory the Great, see Houtepen, 'The Dialectics of the Icon', p. 52; Hammermeister, *Kleine Systematik der Kunstfeindlichkeit*, p. 76; and Lentes, 'Auf der Suche nach dem Ort des Gedächtnisses', pp. 25–26.

place at a later point in Scandinavian history. This chapter has focused on the first two scenarios, arguing that neither explains the situation: on the one hand, there absolutely is a typically Calvinist approach to images in a religious context — and thus to a certain kind of religious aesthetics — so that there is no need to abandon the idea of a 'Protestant' (or rather Calvinist) aesthetics. On the other, it has become clear that this Calvinism did not have a lasting effect on Scandinavian theology in the sixteenth century, the case of even Niels Hemmingsen being too feeble to be considered as a Calvinist incursion.

This opens the door, then, to the third scenario. While this is not the place to approach it in detail (and while it would exceed the competences of a Reformation historian), the history of Scandinavian Protestantism after the Reformation era does not exclude that modern Scandinavian aesthetics has a Calvinist dimension. Even though since the late sixteenth century — and even more so since the end of the Thirty Years War — the Lutheran confession was exclusively in force on an official level,[83] there are several possibilities where, in the following centuries, this Scandinavian Lutheranism may have adopted influences from Calvinist regions. It is noteworthy in this regard that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Scandinavian students frequented Franeker Academy and the University of Leiden, the academic hot spots of the Calvinist Netherlands;[84] one might think of the more irenic inter-confessional exchanges in Pietist milieus;[85] and, most importantly, there was an undeniable influence of Puritan literature in Scandinavia.[86] These possible paths of influence would not concern the official, institutionalized theology much, as they might become apparent in literature, arts, and architecture. It is thus in a domain other than Reformation history that this 'problematic situation' will have to be explained.

83 Dreyer, 'Changing Face of Lutheranism', pp. 54–57; see Grell, 'Introduction', pp. 9–10 for exceptions on a less official level.

84 Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism*, pp. 84–85.

85 In general, see Todd Green, 'Swedish Pietism (1700–1727) as Resistance and Popular Religion', *Lutheran Quarterly*, 21 (2007), 59–77; Seppo Salminen, 'Religious and Intellectual Currents', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, II, pp. 545–86. On the effects of Pietism, see David M. Gustafson, 'Swedish Pietism and American Revivalism: Kindred Spirits in the Evangelical Free Tradition' in *The Pietist Impulse in Christianity*, ed. by Christian T. Collins Winn et al. (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2012) pp. 199–214; and Aage B. Sørensen, 'On Kings, Pietism and Rent-Seeking in Scandinavian Welfare States', *Acta Sociologica*, 41 (1998), 363–75 (p. 358).

86 Tuija Laine, 'English Puritan Literature in the Swedish Realm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries — Translation Phases', *Journal for the History of Reformed Pietism*, 1 (2015), 35–55; Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism*, pp. 34–40. See also Hardman Moore, 'Calvinism and the Arts', pp. 81–85; and Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, pp. 181–85.