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Danish Medieval Wall Paintings

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1411, Queen Margrethe I, who had gathered Denmark, Norway and Sweden into a personal union, ordered the refurbishment of a chapel in one of the towers of Roskilde cathedral. She wished it to be vaulted and furnished with new windows and a painted decoration so that the chapel should be 'bright and fair'. We do not know if the windows were adorned with stained glass but the painted decoration can still be seen. It consists of elegantly painted ornamentation and conventionalised trees with leaves, but there are no figurative narrative subjects. Has the lack of religious and narrative subjects something to do with the queen's request for a bright and fair chapel? Almost all other decorations depict scenes from the Bible or holy stories and without really knowing their function it is clear that the intentions behind them do not stem from a staunch sense of pleasant decoration. From the time of Saint Gregory the Great it was a widespread notion that images in churches should be perceived in a didactic way as the bible of the illiterate. One can question the effectiveness of this linguistic function of the wall paintings. A conventional religious iconographic image cannot be understood without previous knowledge of the stories in the Bible or the lives of the saints. Even if most of the paintings are of a narrative character they possess no linearity, they have a non-discursive function presenting all their information in the one and same syntax and consequently they cannot function as a substitute for the discursive linear spoken or written language. It is important to underline that by looking at narrative images the linear narration is performed by the spectator in his or her 'reading' of the contents, and not by the artist. The main function of images, it could be argued, lies in their appeal to the emotions and not to the intellect of the spectator. From the 13th century many images were credited with active functions in themselves. They were endowed with qualities similar to relics in that they were viewed not only as representative but also as actual substitutes for the represented. They were furnished with some of the intercessory functions of the saints. They could even grant indulgences to those who prayed to them. In the late 15th century the rich noble lady Barbara Brahe received from the pope several thousand years' abolishment to those who visited two of her churches with the images of *Christ in Distress* and *The Sudarium of Veronica*¹. This was not presumably a usual function of wall paintings. Unlike many sculptures, wall paintings mostly are of a narrative character and are not destined for devotion. The absolute majority of wall paintings reflect the artistic, religious, economic and ideological intentions of the artist and the commissioner and their messages were directed towards both God and his saints and on the other hand clerical and secular spectators.

During the whole medieval period and the century succeeding the Reformation in 1536 Danish churches were decorated with wall paintings, which in the 17th and 18th centuries were whitewashed, altering the old coloured interiors to cool white ones. In Denmark a long and highly

¹ The three subjects *The Virgin Mary with the Child*, *Christ in Distress* and *The Sudarium in Brunnby church* offered 89.000 years' abolishment; Knud Banning, *Kalkmalerierne i Skånes, Hallands og Blekinges Kirker 1100-1600*, 1985, p. 191ff

developed tradition of uncovering the wall paintings from whitewash start as early as 1826. During the following century the new discoveries were considered as being of rather historical than of aesthetic and artistic interest. Most people, including the conservators, did not like the images. This attitude has completely changed. Today the wall paintings are considered a national treasure. Even though new decorations are uncovered every year, many paintings still are waiting to be uncovered and looked at in the future.

In the 1920s the art historian Francis Beckett for the first time included wall paintings in his thorough two-volume edition of Danish medieval art *Danmarks Kunst*. This represented the beginning of an acknowledgement of these decorations that accorded to sculpture and painted altarpieces. In 1944 the historian Poul Nørlund published a volume about the Romanesque paintings, which is the first scientific essay on the subject. In the 1960s a group of researchers created a complete iconographic index of the wall paintings, which now has been entered into a database. Since the creation of the index leading scholars such as Ulla Haastrup, Søren Kaspersen, Eva Louise Lillie, and many others, have published articles on the wall paintings. The major part of their essays deal with iconographic subjects. Two fundamental editions should be mentioned: *A Catalogue of Wall Paintings in the Churches of Medieval Denmark 1100-1600. Scania, Halland, Blekinge*, vol. I-IV, 1976-82. Ed. Knud Banning (including an art historical survey by Søren Kaspersen); *Danske kalkmalerier 1080-1536*, (vol. I-VI), 1985-92. Ed. Ulla Haastrup & Robert Egevang; *1536-1700* (vol. VII). Ed. Eva Louise Lillie². Connected to the establishment of the index a journal *Den iconographiske Post* was introduced. Two very different monographs are worth mentioning, one that deals with Romanesque ornament and another with the depicted musical instruments. Both are very thorough studies³. Niels M. Saxtorph has published several editions of a handbook on the wall paintings⁴. Axel Bolvig has in three volumes introduced a different way of dealing with the wall paintings based on a semiotic analysis, a reference to the history of mentalities and involving social structures⁵. The present essay is based on this view. The author has also initiated the creation of a database containing a large selection of the wall paintings and the complete iconographic index. It can be found on the Internet on the address: www.kalkmalerier.dk/.

The first Danish churches were built of wood in the 10th and 11th centuries. From a few surviving fragments we know that these churches were decorated with paintings but very little is left. From about 1050 to 1250 the country, which until the middle of 17th century included the southern part of Sweden and the northern part of Germany, experienced the erection of about 2,500 stone churches. These churches were decorated with Romanesque wall paintings of which many still remain. The founders of the churches and the patrons of paintings belonged exclusively to the land-owning elite to which the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy belongs. It is in the light of this patronage that the Romanesque paintings must be evaluated.

² An almost complete bibliography can be found on the Internet: www.kalkmalerier.dk.

³ Susanne Stangier, *Ornamentstudien innerhalb der dänischen romanischen Wandmalereien*, 1995; Dorthe Falcon Møller, *Music Aloft*, 1996

⁴ Niels M. Saxtorph, *Danmarks kalkmalerier*, 1986

⁵ Axel Bolvig, *Kirkekunstens storhedstid*, 1992; *ibid. Bondens billeder* 1992; *ibid. Reformationens rindalister*, 1996

Like all European countries, Denmark was primarily an agricultural community. A small elite of powerful men, with the king at their head, owned the land. They accumulated vast tracts of land that was worked on their home farms and on the many tenant farms. Farm labourers who did not themselves own farms big enough to feed a family worked these large estates. They had few rights in early medieval Danish society. The social structure was thus sharply class-divided into a well-defined affluent class of independent landowners and a very large heterogeneous group of dependent farm labourers ranging from pure slaves to lessee farmers. The elite owned more land and was more exclusive in the east of Denmark than in the west. It looks as though we can, roughly speaking, talk of Zealand and Scania as a "landowner society" and Jutland west of the Great Belt as a kind of 'gentleman farmer society'. Generally the village churches of the West are bigger than their eastern sisters are. There is also a great difference in the way that building materials have been used in the two parts of the country. In order to understand the medieval wall paintings it is therefore necessary to mention that there was a social and cultural division between east and west Denmark with the Great Belt as a kind of differentiating iron curtain.

Until recently Danish historians and art historians applied and often still apply the widespread model of explanation of cultural influence and artistic movements that can be characterised as a centre-periphery or an imperialistic model. Being a small country in northern Europe, Denmark, according to this understanding, belonged to the periphery. Consequently its art was conceived as inferior and as delayed, compared to the so-called European cultural and artistic centres. Art historians considered Danish Romanesque art as a vague reflection of the high art from northern France and the Rhine area. Today the Danes look upon themselves as equal to their European partners and consequently their judgement of their Romanesque art has changed. Now it is conceived as being of a high European standard. This is why art historians during the last two decades have revised the dating of the painted decorations. The Romanesque wall paintings are now dated to the same time as their European parallels. They have become an equal part of European art. Traditional art history concentrates on finding traces of inspiration, artistic influence and use of models. Today there is a tendency to look at Romanesque art as an international visual language without specific centres and without direct lines of influence from one German, French or English decoration to a specific Danish wall painting. The migration of stylistic characteristics is no longer a one-way main road.

The techniques of the paintings were both *al fresco* and *al secco*. Today it is argued that the newly built stone churches were decorated *al fresco* straight after erection. Architecture and pictures were closely connected. We do not know the identity of any artist or workshop but the high artistic level of most Romanesque paintings indicates that the artists were very familiar with contemporary European art. We do not know if the artists were foreigners or Danish, and this is anyway of minor importance to an 'international' religious art. Modern national borders did not exist in those days. Denmark belonged to Europe with regard to religion, Latin language, the extent of the erection and decoration of stone churches, and indeed to its social and economic conditions.

The Romanesque churches had flat wooden ceilings so the frescoes were placed on the walls, first of all in the apse and the chancel but very often in the nave too. Painting on the surfaces of the walls often results in a linear type of visual expression and the motifs are normally of a narrative character referring to biblical subject matter. The pictures are two-dimensional unlike the late medieval paintings on vaults, which in a way are three-dimensional, partially surrounding the spectator. Like Romanesque paintings in other parts of Europe, the walls were decorated in their totality such that the fine background colours completely covered the white plaster. Contrary to other kinds of pictures, wall paintings have no marked frame that demarcates what is the picture from what is not. In principle the architecture itself is the frame of a total decoration covering all the walls. The paintings that we know of today never cover the walls completely. The lower part is either white or furnished with a painted drapery, separating it from the higher part. This horizontal division of the walls into a section with painted motifs and a section with an illusion of tapestry is due to the arrangement of the interior. The typical Romanesque church had built-up benches along the northern and southern walls in the nave.

The figures are depicted in a majestic way in static situations without violent movements. Even if they refer to biblical stories their narrative elements seem frozen or stiffened. They radiate solemnity with their frequent use of frontality. There are but few analogous references to contemporary material society; on the contrary the imagery connotes the self-understanding of the great landowners.

Of the 1780 indexed iconographic motifs from the period 1100-1300 the most frequently depicted are: Unidentified 188; Evangelist(s) 126; *Majestas Domini* 102; Apostle(s) 79; Angel(s) 76; Mary 66; Saint(s) 54 St. Peter 49; The Day of Judgement 46; Bishop(s) 36; The Magi 33; St. John 29; Prophet(s) 28; Founder(s) 26; Lamb of God 23; St. Paul 20; The Offering of Cain and Abel 20; The Crucifixion 15; Virtue(s) 15; The Annunciation 13; The Nativity 12; Abraham's Bosom 10. There are relatively many unidentified images, which is due to two things. The pictures, being 800-900 years old, have lost many of their details and, secondly, the Romanesque images are first of all representative and certainly the opposite of individualising, they are therefore often difficult to identify. The many depictions of evangelist(s) refer most often to the evangelist symbols surrounding the *Majestas Domini*⁶. Therefore, it can be argued that the *Majestas Domini*, i. e. God in His glory, was the dominant motif, expressing both the notion of the mighty God and the notion of the mighty land-owning magnate. This is stressed by the location of the motif. Some places in the church were of greater religious importance than other places. Contrary to the situation in the west of Denmark, the eastern churches as a rule had apses that were decorated with a *Majestas Domini* motif⁷. The depiction is very similar to its European sisters and of a high artistic standard. This image of the highest ruler is often interpreted as connoting visually the notion of secular power⁸. God surrounded by his

⁶ Søren Kaspersen, "Majestas Domini – Regnum et Sacerdotium. Zu Entstehung und Leben des Motifs bis zum Investiturstreit", *ibid.* "Majestas domini – Regnum et Sacerdotium. Das leben des Motifs in Skandinavien während der Kirchenkämpfe unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Dänemarks im 12. Jahrhundert", *Hafnia. Copenhagen Papers in the History of Art*, No 8, 1981, p. 83-146, No 10, 1985, p. 24-72

⁷ See www.kalkmalerier.dk Majestas in motiv

⁸ Georges Duby, *Le temps de cathédrales*, (1966-67) 1976, p. 64

Evangelists can on an ideological level easily be interpreted as the prince surrounded by his vassals. This connotative world belongs to the eastern part of Denmark⁹. It is interesting to notice that the death of the Lord, the *Crucifixion*, does not appear very often. And in accordance with traditional Romanesque expression, Jesus is not depicted as a dead man¹⁰. The two most important apostles, *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, are depicted relatively often. They are the followers of Jesus Christ. He delegated some of his divine power to his trusted men. These two apostles connote the vassals to whom the feudal lord delegated some of his power. Abraham with souls in his bosom at *the Day of Judgement* belongs to the Romanesque period not only in Denmark. This motif, which disappears during 13th century, can also be interpreted as a visualisation of the feudal lord surrounded by and taking care of his vassals¹¹.

It is also in the eastern part of Denmark that we find pictures of the church founders, proud men and women handing a church model to God (fig. 1). In Jutland where as a rule a partnership of landowners stood behind the erection and decoration of the churches this motif seems irrelevant¹². In the same location where we find images of the founders in eastern Denmark, in the west we often find depictions of *The Sacrifice of Cain and Abel*. The two sons of Adam and Eve are richly dressed so they do not represent the peasant and the shepherd; on the secular level they represent the church founders' small community of landowners (fig. 2).

In the period 1250/1300-1400 the era of agrarian expansion gradually stopped and the nobility turned to a refined culture. Tournaments replaced real battle, and this is reflected in the wall paintings. For instance we see a change in the weapon that St. Michael uses when fighting the devil in *The Day of Judgement*. In the Romanesque period he uses a sword while in the later Middle Ages he uses a lance¹³. Similar to development elsewhere in Europe the Danish nobility cultivated a refinement of life and manners. Female values and appearances dominated (to a certain degree)¹⁴. As a matter of fact sometimes during this period the queens governed the country on behalf of their underage sons and the above mentioned Margrethe I ended the period by establishing herself as the head of all three Nordic countries.

The period is characterised by the Gothic style which compared to the Romanesque style is elegant and refined in workmanship. The movements and gestures of the depicted figures are gracious. Men and women are characterised by rather big heads and hands, which indicate the most expressive parts of the human body¹⁵. The coloured background known from the Romanesque period is replaced by white plaster, which gives the images a shining brightness¹⁶. This is a period where *The Coronation of Mary* replaces the *Majestas Domini* (fig. 3). This change is symbolic in many ways. Mary gets

⁹ 72 depictions of *Majestas* are known today. 54 belong to the eastern part of Denmark and 18 to the western part. Out of a total of 114 registered *Majestas*-motifs, 102 belong to the period 1100-1300 whereas only 12 belong to the rest of the medieval period 1300-1550

¹⁰ www.kalkmalerier.dk sh/ 255 (Råsted church 1125-1150)

¹¹ www.kalkmalerier.dk 25/ 141 (Fraugde church 1175-1200)

¹² 21 depictions of founders are indexed. 16 belong to the eastern and 5 to the western part of Denmark

¹³ www.kalkmalerier.dk 29-2/ 8 (Råsted church c. 1125: sword); 18/ 95 (Stenlille church 1200-1250: lance); 17/ 162 (Vester Tørslev church 1250-1275: lance);

¹⁴ www.kalkmalerier.dk 29-3/ 55 (Birkerød church 1350-1400)

¹⁵ www.kalkmalerier.dk 17/ 47; 17/ 38; 17/ 36; 17/ 44 (Keldby church ca. 1325)

¹⁶ www.kalkmalerier.dk Birkerød in kirkenavn

a heavenly position and the crown emerges as a symbol of power. It can for instance be seen in the depiction of *The Three Magi* who in the early Romanesque period appear as The Wise Men from the East but as crowned kings in the early gothic period¹⁷. *The Coronation of Mary* indicates too a changed position of women in the ideology of the imagery of the period.

From the period 1300-1400, 1482 motifs are indexed. The most frequently depicted motifs are The Day of Judgement: 87; The Creation: 74; Unidentified: 61; Evangelist(s): 49; Saint(s): 41¹⁸; St. Christopher: 39; Mary: 34; Angel(s): 31; Prophet(s): 25; Apostle(s): 27; The Crucifixion: 28¹⁹; The Annunciation: 20; Coat of arms: 18. From these figures we see that *The Day of Judgement* is the dominating motif. Apparently it has nothing to do with the Black Death because 66 depictions are indexed before 1350, twelve to the year 1350 and only nine after the great plague. It is interesting to notice that *The Creation* emerges with 74 items. It might be interpreted as an underlining of a growing equality among God's creatures or maybe as a hymn to Life in the midst of an increasing uncertainty. Anyhow the sudden appearance of St. Christopher may indicate a fear of death. Everybody who has had a glimpse of the image of this saint would be secured from a sudden death that day. *Memento mori* imagery reminded viewers of their own mortality (fig. 4).

The demographic effects of the Black Death caused the rise of the lessee farmer system with a population of peasants who put their imprint on society, not only in economic terms but also concerning imagery. It ushers in the last phase of the Middle Ages.

The late Middle Ages (1400-1550) are characterised by the dominance of the local peasants. They recruited the churchwardens who administered a third of the tithes intended for the upkeep and decoration of the churches. Everywhere in Europe we find an intense interest in donating images to the churches. This is the case in Denmark too but we also find many indications of the activity of the churchwardens regarding the decorating of their churches with wall paintings. The late Middle Ages are characterised by an intense phase of decorating activity. The majority of all indexed iconographic motifs belong to this period (Fig. 5)²⁰.

New Gothic buildings did not replace the original Romanesque churches, but the latter were changed. Often the chancel was enlarged and chapels, towers and porches were added to the building. The interiors were changed too. The old built-up benches along the southern and northern walls in the nave were removed to expand the floor area. Often the nave was enlarged. Especially in the eastern part of Denmark the local churches received vaulting. All in all, the area for the congregation was enlarged, which might seem a paradox because the population was radically

¹⁷ www.kalkmalerier.dk sh/ 750 (Soderup church c. 1125: scullcap); sh/ 37 (Fjenneslev church c. 1125: scullcap); sh/ 254 (Råsted church ca. 1125: scullcap); 17/ 27 (Keldby church 1250-1275: crown); sh/ 782 (Bregninge church ca. 1400: crown)

¹⁸ The saints that can be identified on basis of inscription or iconography amounts to 227 entries. Among the most depicted are: St. Peter: 17, St. Laurence: 16, St. Michael 13 and St. Olav: 11

¹⁹ The Passion, including The Entry into Jerusalem, The Last Supper, The Agony in the Garden, Judas betraying Jesus, The Enquiry, The Whipping, The Crowning with Thorns, The Bearing of the Cross, The Crucifixion, The Resurrection, counts for 113 entries

²⁰ A division of the indexed iconographic motifs into periods of 50 years gives the following numbers: 1100-1149: 30; 1150-1199: 44; 1200-1249: 89; 1250-1299: 94; 1300-1349: 114; 1350-1399: 50; 1400-1449: 115; 1450-1499: 258; 1500-1549: 414

diminished by the plagues. These changes in architecture can be seen as an expression of the needs of the 'new-born' peasant population. This group took over the use of the local churches and formed the main congregation. Consequently the nobility often erected chapels attached to the parish churches as a kind of a private church within the church.

According to traditional art history, most of the late medieval wall paintings are not classified as high Art. Compared to Romanesque and early Gothic painting late medieval visual expression is rude and simple²¹. The colours are not of the same quality. The images are full of action and violent gestures²². Romanesque wall paintings belonged to a common European artistic mode of expression. The late medieval paintings on the contrary belong to a North-European visual language. During the late Middle Ages Denmark experienced a massive influence from the Hanseatic towns. The import of Hanseatic wooden sculptures and altarpieces was considerable. The wall paintings were of course made in the geographically widespread churches but they belonged stylistically and iconographically to the Hanseatic or North-European imagery. Nevertheless it would be wrong to maintain that they were mere copies. Danish painters transformed the North-European visual language into an artistic expression that was suitable for the social groups who initiated and perceived the wall paintings. Most of the pictures are painted on the vaults so that decoration includes the spectator who is standing under or in the middle of the imagery²³. Romanesque linearity is replaced by a three-dimensional, all-embracing imagery on the vaults, consisting of one complex syntax, which leaves it to the spectator to choose a viewing direction.

We also notice a diachronic change in the contents of the wall paintings. The *Majestas Domini* and *Abraham's Bosom* disappear with the Romanesque style. The charitable *St. Martin dividing his cloak* to the beggars emerges in the 14th century²⁴. His appearance finds a parallel in society's incipient interest in the care of the poor. The saints are, in the late Middle Ages, often depicted being tortured²⁵. It is a consequence of the development of a realistic and popular visual language where experiences from daily life make their imprint on the images. Humour becomes a new phenomenon (fig. 6).

In the period 1401-1550 6947 motifs are indexed. Among the most depicted motifs we find The Passion: 875²⁶; Identified saints: 712; The Childhood of Christ: 385²⁷; The Day of Judgement: 376; Unidentified: 321; Grotesque(s): 235; The Creation: 178; Evangelist(s): 165; Coat of Arms: 163; Adam and Eve: 149; Mary: 149; Saint(s): 103; Emblems: 90.

These figures clearly demonstrate a huge interest in Jesus Christ, his Childhood and Passion. Many recognisable saints are found in the vaults. They seldom function as devotional images but demonstrate an intense interest in the cult of saints. The relatively high number of Emblems is an

²¹ www.kalkmalerier.dk e.g. 16/ 195 (Brarup church 1480-1500); 15/ 149 (Kongsted church 1430-40); sh/ 119 (Over Dråby church ca. 1450); sh/ 394 (Jetsmark church 1474)

²² www.kalkmalerier.dk e.g. 9/ 33 (Mørkøv church 1450-75)

²³ www.kalkmalerier.dk e.g. sh/ 572 (Elmelunde church ca. 1500)

²⁴ www.kalkmalerier.dk Martin

²⁵ www.kalkmalerier.dk 2h/ 334 (St. Erasmus in Vejby church ca. 1500)

²⁶ *The Passion* consists of the following main motifs: The Entry into Jerusalem, The Last Supper, The Agony in the Garden, Judas betraying Jesus, The Enquiry, The Whipping, The Crowning with Thorns, The Bearing of the Cross, The Crucifixion, The Resurrection

²⁷ *The Childhood of Christ* consists of the following main motifs: The Annunciation, The Nativity, The Adoration, The Magi, The Massacre of the Innocents, The Flight to Egypt

indication of the peasants' influence on the painted decoration of many churches. The same can be said of the scenes in which Adam and Eve are depicted. Especially the subject, *The First Labour*, gives us good an insight into the idealistic notion of the peasants' life on earth (fig. 7).

The Devil is one of the most depicted creatures, representing a materialisation of all that is evil. The many representations of *The Day of Judgement* and of devils are often considered as an expression of ordinary men's fear but the state of things is more complex. Everybody might fear the future Judgement where we see devils dragging souls to the mouth of Hell but in many scenes he is the loser²⁸. For instance in the scenes with St. Michael's *Weighing of the Souls* the devils that try to drag down one of the bowls on the scales very seldom are depicted as dangerous, but are rather shown in a humorous way²⁹. In only one example in Højby church he is winning against St. Michael³⁰.

Normally wall paintings in the churches are labelled as religious, which of course in many ways is correct. But late medieval imagery is a complex visual world. Many motifs cannot be defined as religious in our modern sense. Under the heading Grotesques we find hundreds of strange configurations such as mermaids, jesters and Cyclops and alternative motifs such as *The Churning of the Butter* and *Acrobatics*³¹. Modern research tends to recognise most of these motifs as a secular commentary or version of the traditional religious motifs (fig. 8).

Being a visual language of the peasants, the wall paintings reflect their notion or more correctly their ideological notion of daily life³². We should not expect to find documentary representations in this realistic visual language, but a connotative world that reflects everything from idealistic wishes to politically inspired conceptions³³.

1411 Queen Margrethe I wanted a 'bright and fair' chapel. It was decorated with pure ornamentation without any narrative motifs. One hundred years later a group of churches were solely decorated with ornamentation³⁴. Because of the lack of motifs scholars of today describe them as primitive paintings done by the bricklayers after finishing the vaulting³⁵. But the painted decorations are all too elegant to be the result of bricklayers' amateurish craft. Maybe these rather elegantly painted decorations should be evaluated as isolated attempts to create a bright room without the 'noise' from all the narrative images that dominate the interior of the Danish churches. Anyhow the fact that almost all wall paintings are narrative or were meant for devotion indicates that they constitute what we can call an intentional art.

²⁸ Annedorte Vad, "Devils here, there and everywhere", *Medium aevum quotidianum* 39, 1998, p. 37-54. Ed. Gerhard Jaritz. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters, Krems, Austria

²⁹ www.kalkmalerier.dk Ad 6-31 (Ballerup church 1425-50)

³⁰ www.kalkmalerier.dk sh/ 204 (Højby church ca. 1375)

³¹ Steen Schjødt Christensen, "Mysterious Images – Grimacing, Grotesques, Obscene, Popular: Anti- or Commentary Images", *Medium aevum quotidianum* 39, 1998, p. 55-75. Ed. Gerhard Jaritz. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters, Krems, Austria

³² Martin Bo Nørregaard, "The conception of Labour in the Danish Medieval Wall-paintings", *Medium aevum quotidianum* 39, 1998, p. 76-93. Ed. Gerhard Jaritz. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters, Krems, Austria

³³ Axel Bolvig, "Images of Late Medieval 'Daily Life': A History of Mentalities", *Medium aevum quotidianum* 39, 1998, p. 94-111. Ed. Gerhard Jaritz. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters, Krems, Austria

³⁴ www.kalkmalerier.dk liljemester

³⁵ *Danske kalkmalerier 1500-1536*, 1992, p. 76ff

With the Lutheran Reformation in 1536, Denmark experienced a considerable decline in campaigns of decoration. But it is worth mentioning that we have no evidence of the reformers' whitewashing Catholic images. An explanation for this may be found in the fact that both the expression and the contents of the late medieval images had become very secularised. When St. Anne becomes popular it is a sign of the dominance of a secular, materialistic, mortal notion acclaiming bourgeois family values: these were precisely the values that Martin Luther praised.