



Erik Fischer

with Ernst Jonas Bencard and Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen

and a Contribution by Marco Iuliano

Melchior Lorck

VOLUME 1

Biography and Primary Sources

Translations by Dan Marmorstein

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Preface

If we were asked why the work of the 16th century artist Melchior Lorck would be one of any current interest in our present day, we would be prompted especially – above and beyond pointing toward his unassailable artistic qualities – to give prominence to his many pictures with Osmanli/Turkish motives. In Lorck’s day, the Islamic Ottoman Empire happened to be the most formidable foe of the Christian Western Europe. The day was crying out – also at *that* time – for building bridges between the cultures and Melchior Lorck contributed to this end: with few exceptions, his Turkish works are stamped with a level-headed urge to enlighten and educate. Lorck chose to reproduce the Turkish architectural style, inhabitants and traditions and even its notorious military forces in a neutrally registered manner. Although it is a vision of the exotic and outlandish that quite distinctly characterizes his motives and – also frequently – the oddly suggestive attitudes Lorck’s figures take up, what we are presented with in his renderings are not the sanguinary caricatures or the simplified propagandistic images of the enemy incarnate we might otherwise expect to see. Instead, the Turkish people are reproduced in a respectful and conscientious manner, commensurate with the nature of the encounters that Lorck experienced when meeting these people during his sojourn in Turkey in the 1550s.

The message seems to be that the first step toward understanding the foreigners – whether they be friend or foe – must be, quite simply, to *see* them, that is to say, to show pictures of them that are as truthful and unbiased as possible. This is precisely what Lorck was trying to do. And he was so very successful in his attempt that his Turkish woodcuts were re-printed for more than a century after the woodblocks were created. The prints came to acquire the status of being one of the Europeans’ most important sources of knowledge about the “exotic” Ottoman Empire. It is in this light that his Turkish

project occupies a unique position in our own day as one of art history’s first essential contributions to greater understanding and more peaceful co-existence between East and West.

Lorck’s sober-minded representation of the Ottoman Empire was fueled by the scientist’s curiosity. It was this urge to inquire and explore that was a fundamental impulse for this particular artist. This is what carried him not only to Turkey but also around most of Western Europe and moreover through a veritable cavalcade of motives, varying styles and different artistic mediums. In fact, Lorck’s oeuvre consists not only of Turkish pictures but delineates a highly variegated conglomerate of drawings, graphic works, paintings, architectural projects, maps, writings and other creative efforts. Lorck can most certainly be characterized as a multi-artist or an *uomo universale*, as the nomenclature of his times would have it. The aim of the present publication is to provide what is up until the present moment the most comprehensive and all-inclusive presentation of the full gamut of Lorck’s multifaceted activity.

Lorck’s oeuvre is unfolded before the reader in a progression that encompasses a total of five volumes, which gather together all of his works that are known to us today as well as all the known writings about our man. The first four volumes are being published together: volume 1 contains a pictorial synopsis of the aggregate oeuvre, an elaborate biographical sketch, all the documents related to Lorck that are known to us and a comprehensive bibliography. Volume 2 reproduces Lorck’s *magnum opus*, the so-called *Turkish Publication*, in facsimile. Volume 3 is a catalogue raisonné of *The Turkish Publication*, while in volume 4, the reader is presented with a “leporello” folding-album of Lorck’s gigantic panorama of Constantinople, which is accompanied by an introduction penned by the architectural and urban historian, Marco Iuliano. Volume 5 will contain a catalogue raisonné of all of the

remaining Lorck works which have not otherwise been catalogued in volume 3; the preparation of this final catalogue volume is in progress.

First and foremost, this set of books is the result of Erik Fischer's many years of interest and immersion with Melchior Lorck. Erik Fischer, former Keeper of The Department of Prints and Drawings at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, has gathered the material from a great many museums and archives all over the world. He has diligently been investigating, describing, analyzing and arranging the material, while Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen and Ernst Jonas Bencard have been busy – all the way up to the publication of this set of books – compiling, editing, and supplementing Fischer's texts in those instances where it was necessary to do so.

All three of the authors are art historians. Therefore, we can imagine that the reader, in certain instances, might sense that extended and elaborate Turkological and military historical commentary on the material is missing here. It is our fervent hope that this will not be experienced as a shortcoming of our scholarship but will be regarded, rather, as a relatively inconsequential flaw in relation to this publication's primary goal, namely to generate an aggregate survey view of an outstanding artistic oeuvre which has hitherto not been sufficiently known or understood in its entire girth.

Ever since the close of the 1950s, Erik Fischer has turned his attention to Lorck during a number of different periods of intense focus in the course of his long and sweeping career. Along the way, he has been fortunate enough to encounter many who have been ready and willing to help in his scholarship. So many persons and so many different museums, archives and libraries have extended this helpfulness that it would be impossible to thank everybody individually. Nonetheless, everyone who has helped this project along in the course of its emergence ought rightfully to feel encompassed by the expression put forth here declaring the chief author's highest gratitude: *Thanks to each and every one of you!*

This being said, the names of these individuals who have helped the project along in its trajectory

will be mentioned: Leopold Auer, Vienna; Nils G. Bartholdy, Copenhagen; Birgit Christensen, Copenhagen; Karsten Christensen, Copenhagen; Torben Holck Colding, Copenhagen; Troels Dahlerup, Hinnerup; Jan Drees, Schleswig; Jan Würtz Frandsen, Copenhagen; Stephen Freeth, London; Fritz Fuglsang, Flensburg; Adolf Gaisbauer, Vienna; Peter Goeritz, Flensburg; Leif Grane, Copenhagen; Lars Henningsen, Flensburg; Finn-Ove Hvidberg-Hansen, Aarhus; Jørgen Jark, Farum; Jørgen Steen Jensen, Copenhagen; Mikkel Leth Jespersen, Flensburg; Uwe Kahl, Zittau; Werner Kayser, Hamburg; Henrik Klackenberg, Stockholm; Patrick Kragelund, Copenhagen; Martin Schwarz Lausten, Copenhagen; P. J. Riis, Frederiksberg; Thomas Riis, Kiel; H. D. Schepelern, Copenhagen; Ernst Schlee, Gottorf; Hans Friedrich Schütt, Gottorf; Jutta Strehle, Wittenberg; Walter Thüringer, Heidelberg; Christopher Toll, Stockholm; F. Vahman, Copenhagen.

Fischer's colleagues of many years who have worked alongside him at The Department of Prints and Drawings deserve an especially warm round of thanks. Our gratitude must also be expressed to Claus-Peter Haase, Jørgen Ulrich and Bente Gundestrup, each of whom, in his/her own distinctive way – and especially during the later phases of preparing these volumes for publication – has put in a great deal of effort in order to ensure that this set of books would not come to the same fate as that suffered by the evidently reluctant-to-publish Melchior Lorck's own shipwrecked projects.

A warm round of thanks must be bestowed upon The Department of Prints and Drawings and The Royal Library in Copenhagen; The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg Castle, Hillerød; The Carlsberg Foundation and The New Carlsberg Foundation for their various forms of support to the undertakings of Erik Fischer during the years. And last but certainly not least, we respectfully ask both The Velux Foundation and The Ludvig and Sara Elsass Foundation to accept a rousing round of gratitude for their generosity and their understanding support in connection with the preparation and the printing of the present publication.

A comprehensive survey of Melchior Lorck's oeuvre

Listed here are the various works of art in all different kinds of media that can plausibly or certainly be attributed to Melchior Lorck, including a number of lost works that seem to have been authentically signed by the artist, according to the sources recounting them. These will be catalogued in detail in volumes 3 and 5.

Information as follows:

- ∞ EF number (The number is composed of the date of the work of art and a number (e.g. 1551,1); *The Turkish Publication* has been given its own numbering, following the chronological sequence of the woodcuts).
- ∞ Title
- ∞ Medium
- ∞ Dimensions (in mm)
- ∞ Collection (inv. no.)
- ∞ No. in older catalogues (references: see the bibliography)



1545,1
David's son, Amnon, violating his half-sister, Tamar
Engraving
188 × 77
Nagler (1859), 5



1545,2
Apollo and Phaëton
Engraving
65 × 45
Nagler (1859), 2



1545-45,1
Christ feeds the multitude
Pen and ink, brownish ink
Flensburg, Städtisches Museum (inv. no. 18015)



1545-45,2
Samson and the lion
Woodcut
148 × 102
Nagler (1859), 29



1545-45,3
Portrait of an unknown man with a scar on his forehead
and battered ears
Chiaroscuro-woodcut
358 × 245
Strauss (1975), 2



1545-45,4
Ornament leaf
Engraving
60 × 42
Berliner (1925-26), 162

UNKNOWN

1545-45,5
The carrying of the cross
Painting
1180 × 1790
Ex. coll. Princes of Liechtenstein



1545,1
The Pope as a wildman in Hell
Etching
252 × 196
Nagler (1859), 10



1546,1
Hieronymus in the desert
Etching
102 × 91
Nagler (1859), 1



1547,1
Architectura
Engraving
58 × 41
Zijlma (1978), 47



1547,2
Female soothsayer
Engraving and etching
55 × 38
Zijlma (1978), 15



1547,3
Man with the bagpipes
Etching
87 × 61
Nagler (1859), 8



1548,1
Martin Luther
Etching
257 × 172
Nagler (1839), 14



1548,2
The basilisque
Engraving and etching
43 × 62
Nagler (1839), 4



1548,5
The mole
Engraving
71 × 107
Nagler (1839), 6



1548,4
Ornament with coronet
Engraving
60 × 42
Nagler (1839), 25



1549,1
The crane
Etching
63 × 41
Nagler (1839), 7



1549,2
Landscape with city
Pen and ink, black ink, traces of red chalk
159 × 237
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Department of Prints and Drawings (inv. no. KKSgb5457)



1550,1
Cain slews Abel
Black and white chalk on salmon-colored paper; white chalk applied secondarily
197 × 293
Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg



1550,2
Lot and his daughters
Black and white chalk on salmon-colored paper; white chalk applied secondarily
209 × 302
Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg



1550,5
Two unclothed men carrying a hideous woman
Pen and ink, brown ink
c. 301 × c. 308
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Department of Prints and Drawings (inv. no. KKSgb7862)



1550,4
Cross-eyed person
Red chalk; red watercolor or "stumped chalk". Signature: chalk.
409 × 275
Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg



1550,5
The obsessed man
Pen and ink
306 × 203
Ex. coll. Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett



1550,6
Albrecht Dürer
Etching
165 × 97
Nagler (1871), 12



1550,7
The crucified Haman
Engraving and etching
165 × 99
Nagler (1839), 9



1551,1
Sibilla Tiburtina
Woodcut
221 × 158
Nagler (1839), 30



1551,2
The shot taken at the father
Woodcut
310 × 490
Nagler (1839), 34



1551,3
The Flood
Woodcut (2 printing blocks)
310 × 495
Nagler (1839), 25



1551,4
The Flood
Pen and ink, black ink; traces of charcoal; red chalk
248 × 380
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (inv. no. Bock 8048)



1551,5
Roman walking near a source
Pen and ink, black ink
311 × 240
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Department of Prints and Drawings (inv. no. KKSgb5458)



1551,6
Neptune
Pen and ink, black and brown ink
309 × 194
Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg



1551,7
The Ascension of Christ
Pen and ink
400 × 222
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques
(inv. no. 18728)



1551,8
Kneeling man at prayer
Pen and ink, brown ink
195 × 120
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (inv. no. Bock 817)



1551,9
Exotically dressed man in a landscape
Pen and ink, brown ink
136 × 101
Brno, Moravaska Galerie (inv. no. B 2586)



1551,10
Eighteen studies made after ancient sculptures
Pen and ink, dark brown ink, dark brown wash
256 × 190
Weimar, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Schlossmuseum Weimar



1551,11
Eighteen studies made after ancient sculptures
Pen and ink, gray-brown ink, brush and ink, gray-brownish wash
266 × 190
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Department of Prints and Drawings (inv. no. 11592)

The life and works of Melchior Lorck

Introductory remarks

Before the reader embarks on the journey through the life and art of Melchior Lorck, a few comments must be made here about the text in general.

The biography of the artist in this first volume will open up our picture of the man's life, activity and work. All the relevant sources are reproduced at the end of this volume. As we proceed through the biographical account, references to these sources will continually be made. The sources have been ordered chronologically according to year and date in such a way that a typical reference to the particular source will read as follows: "Document no. 1563-January 20". In the same manner, a survey of all Lorck's works is found on the pages 9-61, again arranged in chronological sequence by year and numbering so that a reference to a particular artwork will read as follows: "Catalogue no. 1552,2".

Lorck's unequivocally main work is the collection of woodcuts with themes about Turkey, elaborating on the drawings and sketches that recorded what the artist experienced first-hand during his extended period of residence at the German embassy in Constantinople in the years 1555-59. It is this collection that has come to be known as *The Turkish Publication* and which has made him famous.

The Turkish Publication did not appear in print during the artist's lifetime but had to wait for more than forty years after the last of the printed blocks was carved. In volume 2, *The Turkish Publication* is reproduced in facsimile after one of the finest copies of the first edition dating from 1626, now in possession of the Royal Library in Copenhagen. In volume 3, *The Turkish Publication* has been catalogued and examined, leaf by leaf, in chronological sequence. However, *The Turkish Publication* is only one aspect of the wide-ranging oeuvre of the artist. Volume 4 contains a reduced reproduction of *The Constantinople Prospect*, a work that has been in the Universiteitsbibliotheek in Leiden since the end of the sixteenth century, appended by a lengthy treatise

on the prospect in its European context by Marco Iuliano. Volume 5 will contain a catalogue raisonné of all the other works by the artist.

A versatile character

Melchior Lorck was born in Flensburg, in either 1526 or 1527. How long he lived is still uncertain. The latest irrefutable piece of documentation that is pertinent to his life dates from 1585. Lorck is one of the most fascinating figures in all of Danish art history. His exceptional artworks, his prodigious talent and his mercurial and incessantly itinerant life collect themselves into a singular picture of a profoundly original and ambitious artist who was constantly looking for new challenges and new grazing grounds but whose innate restlessness resulted in leaving his main body of work incomplete.

We know of 274 art works by Lorck, all of which are described in the five volumes of this book. Of these works, 242 are signed and 218 bear dates, and many are unequivocally situated in terms of their place of production. There is, as well, a considerable array of documents that all cast light, in various ways, on the artist's life and activity. Taking our mark in this material, part of which has hitherto been unknown or unpublished, we will attempt in what follows to sketch out Lorck's biography in a more thorough and comprehensive way than has ever been possible before. However, we must concede from the outset that part of what we are saying remains speculative. For this reason, various conjectures and calculated guesses and diverse suggestions for explanations are inevitably going to crop up in our examination, which simply cannot be crystallized into conclusive proofs and arguments. However, working out from the notion that it is better to offer qualified guesses than to say nothing at all, we have attempted to create a coherent and continuous story – one that is factual in certain spots

and, in other spots, a merely probable or plausible course of events – which will serve to articulate a feasible account about the course of the man's life and career.

Lorck's oeuvre is, in many ways, inconsistent. The style evinced in the signed works changes again and again as the years go by in such a radical way that had the signatures been missing, one would be hard pressed to believe that the newly viewed works were really created by the same Lorck one feels he has just gotten to know. The successive sheddings of styles can succinctly be enumerated as follows: In the 1540s, the Dürer-pupils' "Kleinmeister"-style,¹ the "Danube School's" expressionism² and the popular woodcuts from Nuremberg.³ From around 1550, the strong attachment to the art of the ducal court in Munich, with the large figure compositions' throngs of people set in milieus of fantastic architecture.⁴ In the 1560s, the archaeological drawings' "learned" and presumably Italian-inspired stringent monumentality⁵ and the similarly Italian-inspired, freely improvising "imperial court style".⁶ In the 1570s, the remarkable costume drawings⁷ with figures that are choreographed as though they could be actors in a ballet from the 1920s; the spiritual affinity with Titian in the Bible illustrations⁸ and in a few landscapes;⁹ the stone cold and epically impressive portrait heads,¹⁰ entangled in a merciless play of lines, the grandiose systematics of which petrify the psyche into existential unapproachability. And at last, *The Turkish Publication's*¹¹ monumentally enlarged, detailed registrations of a foreign world's exotic phenomena. And, on top of all this, spread across the years, glimpses of pure observation in the individual drawings.¹² With all this changeability, it might give cause to wonder whether it is at all possible to attribute unsigned works to Lorck. In a number of instances, however, secondary sources do substan-

tiate the works' attribution to Lorck or alternatively, such sources might serve to reaffirm our attempts to assign dates to the undated works, while in other cases certain pieces' similarity to signed works from a given time is so striking that even without corroboration from secondary sources, we are compelled to attribute these works to Lorck.

The changeability arouses our curiosity: Who was this man? What were the external forces or inner drives that incited him over and over again to rescind his position and replenish himself anew?

The question is raised in the first instance by a concentrated consideration of the aggregate oeuvre, where the answers are supposedly concealed – if one can find them at all. Lorck's capability was patently indisputable. Why, then, did he never manage to gain a foothold on a permanent position as an artist?

His oeuvre is rife with fragments of stranded projects: The archaeological drawings were never printed or published; nor was his truly sensational Prospect of Constantinople.¹³ Neither was the book about his festive decorations of Vienna on the occasion of Maximilian II's entry into the city in 1563 completed, a book on which work actually was commenced.¹⁴ Nor did he carry into realization a book with costume drawings that he obviously executed with every intention of putting out a costume-historical publication. Even Lorck's *opus magnum*, *The Turkish Publication*, was never completed and was first published by others about forty years after the artist had faded away, for all intents and purposes, from garnering any mention at all in the literary sources. Many of the aforementioned works are creations that would, in all likelihood, have made Lorck a central figure in the art in his own day and in the sphere of the intellectual elite, a circle within which he already had a number of friends

who were as illustrious as the cartographer, Abraham Ortelius¹⁵ and the historian, Hubert Goltzius,¹⁶ a brother of the well-known artist, Hendrick. The Flemish engraver, Philip Galle, dedicated to Lorck his impressions of Hans Vredemann de Vries's proposal concerning how fine wells ought to be modeled.¹⁷ Similarly, on two separate occasions – many years apart – the publisher, Sigmund Feyerabend, put out large books that were prefaced by lengthy dedications to Lorck.¹⁸

In his exposition of the history of art in Northern Europe, published in 1604, the Dutch author, Karel van Mander, reports that the painter, Hendrik van Cleef from Antwerp, in his renderings of ancient ruins, which were engraved, in fact, by Philip Galle, borrowed a great deal from drawings by "the Hanseatic" Lorck, "who had lived for quite some time in Constantinople".¹⁹

Emperor Maximilian II was so interested in Lorck that, in a personal letter addressed to King Frederik II he championed Lorck's position in a legal problem involving inheritance.²⁰ Even so, the Emperor did not offer him employment as an artist but rather enlisted his services as a *Hartschier* in his Imperial Horseguards. This was a job, however, that did not chain Lorck to a sedentary life on horseback in Vienna but offered him instead a great deal of freedom to travel – and with full pay – wherever he might wish to go and as far as he might want to go. Denmark's monarch, King Christian III, had sponsored Lorck's artistic training in foreign countries²¹ with the proviso that the young stipendiat would subsequently settle down in Denmark as the royal artist, but Lorck never fulfilled the terms of this undertaking. And in 1582, when he finally, as a retired *Hartschier* – entered into service as King Frederik II's royal artist, he was dismissed after only three years in the position,²² although the king was certainly not lacking in assignments for an able artist. With so many opportunities, why

did he never grab hold of the chances? What was the nature of this lack of stability?

Perhaps the question can be inverted and we can focus on the man himself: Wasn't Lorck similar, when it comes to certain features, to his profligate brother, Andreas, who – after a wild and hectic life – lived within the domain of large-scale political intrigues, ended his days in the year 1584 having his head chopped off, in compliance with the orders of the Swedish King Johan III?

Or is it the case that Melchior Lorck positioned himself as an artist in the wrong way with respect to the situational context of his own day? In his most ambitious works within the domain of painting, the paintings with the story of Esther²³ and the grandiose compositional sketch for The liberation of the Jewish people from Babylonian subjugation,²⁴ the artist allowed an already outmoded notion of art to attain its final culmination – too late for awakening any interest. The costume historical drawings and the Turkish woodcuts are, despite all their intrinsic qualities, of a documentary character. On this account, they fall outside of what had become the day's customary norms for *la maniera grande*, the grand style as a yardstick for the fine arts. And since neither of these works or, for that matter, *The Constantinople Prospect* or the archaeological drawings, were ever published and since *The Turkish Publication's* woodcuts were not accessible to public view until well into the following century, there were not too many people living in the artist's day who could have developed any fully informed impression about Lorck's capabilities. However, when *The Turkish Publication* finally saw the light of day, Rembrandt van Rijn purchased a copy,²⁵ while other prominent artists of the seventeenth century like Nicolas Poussin and Stefano della Bella turned their attention toward drawing copies of the woodcuts.²⁶ Was Lorck, then, just the right man at the wrong time with the wrong ambitions?

1. Catalogue nos. 1543,1-2; 1547,1-2; 1548,5; 1549,1.

2. Catalogue nos. 1549,2; 1550,1-2.

3. Catalogue nos. 1551,1-3.

4. Catalogue nos. 1552,2; 1552-54,1-4.

5. Catalogue nos. 1560-64,2-5; 1561,1-5.

6. Catalogue nos. 1562,4; 1569,1-5.

7. Catalogue nos. 1569,4-5; 1570,1-3; 1571-73,1-4; 1571,2-5; 1572,1; 1573,1-2.

8. Catalogue nos. 1574,6-10.

9. Catalogue nos. 1565-70,1-2.

10. Catalogue nos. 1562,1-2; 1574,1.

11. *The Turkish Publication*, catalogue nos. 1-128.

12. Catalogue nos. 1555,2; 1555-59,1; 1562,3.

13. Catalogue no. 1560-64,1.

14. Catalogue nos. 1563,1-4.

15. Catalogue no. 1574,5; document no. 1574-October 10.

16. Catalogue no. 1574,4.

17. Document no. 1574-n.d.

18. Document no. 1564-August 28; document no. 1577-August 28.

19. Mander (1604, edition of 1906), p. 235f. Document no. 1604-n.d.

20. Document 1566-December 1.

21. Document no. 1549-March 24.

22. Document no. 1582-November 10.

23. Catalogue nos. 1552-54,1-4.

24. Catalogue no. 1552,2.

25. Groot (1906), p. 189f., no. 169.

26. E.g. *The Turkish Publication*, catalogue nos. 49, 50 and 95.

To be sure, this rootless individual who was fluttering around in such a singular and odd way did not leave many trails behind in the art of his own day, despite the fact that his mature work is masterly and original: the engraved portraits; the costume drawings' expressionistic ballets; the Turkish woodcuts, the strikingly few monumentalized elements of which are put into play and juxtaposed with the gaps in the deep spaces, looking out toward the low and remote horizons.

So, who was Lorck, anyway?

The answer, of course, can be found primarily in his artistic works and in a few texts issued from his own hand. These sources can sporadically be supplemented with the few words that his contemporaries penned to and about him and with the not entirely few extant accounts and documents wherein Lorck appears and is mentioned with administrative neutrality.

When Lorck was living in Vienna in 1563 and was well into his thirties, he offered his services to the Danish King Frederik II. Along with the letter of application, he sent along a kind of *autobiography*;²⁷ a *curriculum vitae*, in which he presented himself in a favorable light. Even though what he writes is not always consistently lucid and although he speaks only briefly about important topics, the autobiography is nonetheless a valuable source for our knowledge about Lorck's younger years. Lorck reprinted the autobiography in his book, *Soldan Soleyman ...*,²⁸ which he published in Antwerp in 1574.

Some of Lorck's letters are extant.²⁹ His Last Will and Testament³⁰ offers us a glimpse into a critical moment in his life. His twenty-four stanzas in the satirical *Liedt vom Türcken und Antichrist*³¹ give expression to the political correctness of his own time. A poem written in praise of his celebrated friend, the Flemish geographer,

Abraham Ortelius, was inscribed by Lorck in Ortelius's *album amicorum*.³²

As mentioned above, Lorck was also praised with stanzas and dedications penned by some of the day's learned luminaries.³³ A number of portraits³⁴ enrich our impression of his circle of acquaintances. Finally, the dedications on the back sides of some of Lorck's works³⁵ provide us with an important impression about what artists he was in contact with during an earlier period of his life.

Sources

Documents that sporadically cast light on Lorck's biography – and that touch especially on his life in official circles and his contacts with kings and emperors – can be found at The Danish National Archives in Copenhagen and at the Imperial Archives in Vienna. A part of the records in Copenhagen have been available to the public before, but new documents have turned up as well. Of particular importance is the patent of nobility that was bestowed on the Lorck family by Emperor Ferdinand I as a renewal of their alleged noble status.³⁶ But almost none of the imperial material – including the terms of his employment as a *Hartschier*³⁷ and the preliminary draft for the document concerning the renewal of the Lorck family's noble status³⁸ – has been publicized in the past. The copious body of material that touches upon the work Lorck did for the city of Vienna in connection with Maximilian's entry into the city in 1563³⁹ is available to the public but has been overlooked for a very long time, ostensibly because the artist's name appears as *Lerch*, *Lercher* or in other garbled forms – moreover, this is similarly the case, and to much



The artist as he saw himself. Detail from *The Constantinople Prospect*, catalogue no. 1560-64,1.

greater extent, in the other documents in the Imperial Archives. Documents that illuminate Lorck's frequent presence in Hamburg during the years 1569-75 can be found in the city's State Archives; these documents were published quite some time ago, just like the Danish ones, but have likewise been re-examined and re-transliterated for this publication.

Aside from the aforementioned dedications addressed to Lorck, his name turns up a few times in the literature of his day and in the literature appearing shortly after his life. In the context of a comment about his native city, Flensburg, in the fourth volume of Braun and Hogenberg's *Civitates orbis terrarum ...*⁴⁰ mention is made of the celebrated painter, engraver and portrait artist Lorck's travels and emphasis is placed on his portraits of Süleyman⁴¹ and Ismail.⁴² It appears that the source for these comments could be Lorck's autobiography,⁴³ which had just been published at the time. The same text reappears in 1631 in a version that was somewhat abridged by Johannes Isacius Pontanus, who was the Royal Danish historiographer,⁴⁴ and once again in 1655, in an even shorter version, in Martin Zeiller's description of Flensburg.⁴⁵ In his letters from Constantinople,⁴⁶ Joris van der Does (Georgius Douza) mentions Lorck's *Constantinople Prospect*,⁴⁷ situated at the

time in Leiden. Karel van Mander's mention of Lorck has already been cited above.

In what follows, these various threads and clues will be interwoven to form our pathway leading through a fantastic life and oeuvre and what we find along the way will hopefully contribute to the understanding of a fascinating man and artist.

How Lorck wished to appear before the eyes of his audience is evinced in a few self-portraits.⁴⁸ The most elaborately detailed of these shows him as he is busy drawing the *Constantinople Prospect*: We see before us a small and elegantly dressed young man with light curly hair and what are almost lethargically languid and long-fingered hands. He is being assisted by a gargantuan Turkish servant. What is apparent, above all, is that the artist regards himself as a self-styled aristocrat who happens to have torn one day out from his otherwise busy agenda for the specific purpose of securing the picture of a city that only very few people know. But the material that he is drawing on is of the most select quality! Here is a man of the world, of good birth, elegant, and an *antiquitatis studiosissimus*, at the apex of his abilities and with the most promising prospects for the future.

Let's follow his trail.

27. Document no. 1563-January 1.

28. Catalogue no. 1574,2.

29. Document nos. 1549-March 22; 1549-March 24; 1560-November 1; 1563-January 10; 1563-January 20; 1567-November 25; 1570-September 17; 1570-October 22; 1572-February 15; 1574-October 10; 1575-May 19.

30. Document no. 1572-February 15.

31. Catalogue no. 1568,5.

32. Catalogue no. 1574,5.

33. Catalogue nos. 1574,2-4 and document nos. 1574-n.d.; 1564-August 28; 1577-August 28.

34. Catalogue nos. 1556,2; 1557,1-2; 1563,6; 1564,2; 1574,4.

35. Catalogue nos. 1550,6; 1551,6-9.

36. Document no. 1564-February 22 (c).

37. Document nos. 1565-October 31; 1566-June 2; 1566-December 20; 1566-December 23 (a); 1566-December 23 (b); 1570-October 14; 1570-October 31; 1570-November 14; 1571-May 31; 1574-January 16; 1574-March; 1574-August 15; 1575-January 27; 1575-May 31; 1575-July 20; 1576-February 8; 1576-October 31; 1577-April 24; 1578-March 7 (a) and (b); 1579-June 15.

38. Document no. 1564-February 22 (a) and (b).

39. Catalogue nos. 1563,1-6.

40. Braun and Hogenberg, vol. 4 (1574), folio 50.

41. Catalogue nos. 1562,1 and/or 1574,1.

42. Catalogue nos. 1562,2 and/or 1573,3.

43. Document no. 1563-January 1.

44. Pontanus (1631), p. 656 and p. 788.

45. Zeiller (1655), p. 41.

46. Does (1599), p. 25. Document no. 1599-n.d.

47. Catalogue no. 1560-64,1.

48. Catalogue nos. 1560-64,1, leaf 11; 1575,2-5.

Melchior Lorck

On his portrait of Martin Luther dating from 1548,⁴⁹ Lorck states that he was 21 years old at the time he created the work. Consequently, he allows us to draw the conclusion that he must have been born in either 1526 or 1527, a fact that we otherwise might never have known. On the etching, he refers to himself as a *flensburgensis*, which indicates that his birthplace was Flensburg, the port city of the Duchy of Schleswig, which constituted, together with the Duchy of Holstein, the border region situated between the kingdom of Denmark and the Holy Roman Empire.

Denmark had its own sovereign king. However, in Holstein, this same monarch was not formally regarded as being fully sovereign but rather as a duke with the Emperor as his feudal overlord. Throughout the course of his life, Lorck referred to himself as a *flensburgensis holsatus*, a Holsteiner from Flensburg.⁵⁰ This explains why, on the one hand, he felt obligated to the Danish king and, on the other, he felt it was natural for him to step into the service of the imperial court.

Without being in possession of any documentation that could substantiate such a supposition, the Lorck family considered itself as belonging to an old and noble line. In the sixteenth century, the definition of the phenomenon of “nobility” was a relatively vague one. In the case of the Lorck family, this designation could hardly have meant anything else than “gentry” which, during this era, also could be widened to include a good many well-to-do burgher families.⁵¹ However, the status of nobility was, in any event, sufficient-

ly acknowledged to precipitate a situation where in 1564, Emperor Ferdinand I⁵² – most likely proceeding in response to Melchior’s services and merits – did not create but rather *renewed* the status of nobility, and not only for Lorck himself but also for his brothers.

When spoken, the name *Lorck* sounds like *Lork*, which is the Lower German word for “toad”.⁵³ In his younger years, Melchior generally signed his name as *Lorch*, although there were times when he signed as *Lorch*. However, on an engraving that dates from 1562, he suddenly changed the way he spelled his surname to *Lorichs*.⁵⁴ What this accomplishes, first of all, is that it does away with any allusions to toads. Secondly, it suggests a Latinization of the name, concomitantly elevating the namebearer’s status. Thirdly, it indicates a genitive form, corresponding roughly to what would happen if a “von” or a “de” had been added to the surname. From this moment on, the name-form of *Lorichs* was the one used primarily by Melchior himself, while his brothers and their descendants, up until the present day, have chiefly stuck with the older name, *Lorch*, except for the Swedish branch of the family whose members, ever since the confirmation of their nobility by the Swedish king in 1802, have reinstated the form *Lorichs*.⁵⁵

The family’s twentieth-century genealogist⁵⁶ held that the family originally came from Austria or from the Rhineland country. In Flensburg’s archives, there is, in fact, an unknown ‘Lorck’ whose name turns up as far back as the year 1390. Whether this person was an ancestor of the



King David’s son, Amnon, violating his half-sister, Tamar, catalogue no. 1543,1.

artist is entirely uncertain. The family’s first well-documented member was Melchior’s father, the recorder, Thomas Lorck.⁵⁷ Together with his wife, Christine,⁵⁸ he begat a daughter, Anna⁵⁹ – who was married, later on, to one of the Danish king’s government officials, Hans Johel⁶⁰ – and bore four sons, three of whom were christened with the names of the Three Wise Men: the officer, Casper (Jaspar);⁶¹ the artist, Melchior; and the merchant, Balthasar,⁶² while the fourth son, the officer and diplomat, Andreas,⁶³ was an able-minded and spectacular fortune-hunter.⁶⁴

Thomas Lorck was a well-to-do townsman in

what was then an enterprising city, Flensburg. He owned several houses in the city, was a member of the city council and was working as the recorder, the public official who represented the interests of the king and the power of the state, a fact that serves to support Melchior’s claim that the Danish king, Christian III,⁶⁵ was a frequent guest in the family home.⁶⁶

Education

In his autobiography,⁶⁷ Lorck recalls that already as a young boy, he wanted to become an artist, an aspiration that, oddly enough, his affluent parents accepted. Accordingly, in much the manner that artists from the preceding generation like Albrecht Dürer⁶⁸ – who apprenticed with his father, a goldsmith – had been, Melchior Lorck served his apprenticeship with a goldsmith in the nearby city of Lübeck, the Free Imperial Hanseatic city.

At the goldsmith’s workshop, young artists were also instructed in the craft of making etchings and engravings. We must assume that Lorck’s very earliest works, two well-executed copies dating from 1543 – made when he was 16 or 17 years old – of two currently popular engravings by the Albrecht Dürer-influenced North German artist, Heinrich Aldegrever,⁶⁹ were executed during the time of his apprenticeship at the workshop.

The goldsmith took Lorck along with him on a ship as part of an extensive business trip that wended its way through the Baltic region and up to Denmark and maybe even to Bergen⁷⁰ on the west coast of Norway, and dropped him off again in Lübeck after the little entourage had paid a visit to the Hanseatic city of Stralsund on the shoreline opposite the island of Rügen.

49. Catalogue no. 1548,1.

50. As Dr.Phil. Lars Henningsen of the Research and Archival Department of the Danish Central Library of South Schleswig in Flensburg has kindly drawn attention to, the designation *holsatus* was often used by students in spite of their actual Schleswigian birth. See Achelis (1966). Lorck’s use of the term may therefore be seen as mirroring a common practice, which exploits a common misconception – wherein Schleswig is frequently considered to be a part of Holstein – for purposes of being considered subjects not only of the Danish king but also of the Holy Roman Emperor.

51. Arndt (1971), p. XII.

52. Document no. 1564-February 22 (a)-(c).

53. Lorck-Schierning (1949), p. 7. “Lurch” in High German.

54. Catalogue no. 1562,1.

55. The family, which, around 1800, was called Hassel and had Finnish origins, could trace its ancestry back to Balthasar Lorck and made an application to the imperial archives in Vienna in 1772 for a copy of the “concept” for the patent of nobility (Document no. 1564-February 22 (a) and (b)) as documentation. The members of this branch of the family had the old coat of arms reinstated as well.

56. Lorck-Schierning (1949), which serves as the basis for the information about the family’s history.

57. 1490-1551.

58. † after 1542.

59. † 1600.

60. † 1551.

61. C. 1520-c. 1565.

62. C. 1520-1589.

63. 1550-1584. See, for example: Helk (1966), pp. 155-164.

64. For more on the brothers: See the autobiography, document no. 1565-January 1, commentary on section 5.

65. 1505-1559, reigned from 1554.

66. Document 1565-January 1, section 5.

67. Document no. 1565-January 1, sections 2-4.

68. 1471-1528.

69. 1502-1555/61. Catalogue nos. 1543,1-2, see this page.

70. Lorck mentions “the western Danish regions”. Norway had, since 1580, been in “personal union” with and therefore *de facto* a part of Denmark and Bergen had close commercial relations with the Hanseatic League.



Portrait of Martin Luther,
catalogue no. 1548,1.



The Pope as a wildman in Hell,
catalogue no. 1545,1.

We do not know who the goldsmith was. Nor do we know how long the apprenticeship lasted. Moreover, we know absolutely nothing about where Lorck was residing in these years. Not before the year 1549 do we come upon his name in the written sources.⁷¹

However, prior to this time, he had certainly managed to create other artworks that do disclose a little bit about what kind of art he was moving toward. Might we presume that it was this kind of art that the goldsmith was asking him to pursue?

A couple of undated drawings from this period⁷² offer style-related testimony attesting that Lorck must have known something about the

works made by Lucas Cranach the Elder⁷³ and the fact that Lorck had already become familiar with Albrecht Dürer is revealed in an inspection of the copy Lorck made of Dürer's rare etching of Saint Jerome.⁷⁴ Here Lorck takes the demonstrative liberty of omitting the depicted saint's cardinal's hat, which in Dürer's print is placed quite conspicuously on top of the cloak that is flung across the pictorial space. May we conjecture that this was because as a Lutheran, Lorck regarded Catholic attributes with aversion?

In any event, Lorck's etching, *The Pope as a wildman in Hell*,⁷⁵ leaves no room for doubt about the artist's standpoint with respect to the Reformation, which the Danish king, Christian

III, had imported and introduced into his kingdom in 1536. Lorck's anti-papal prints are different from the countless number of populist satires on the papacy dating from his own day by virtue of the fact that they could hardly be said to have been targeted at a wide audience: etchings were a relatively costly commodity which, due to technical considerations, could not withstand the distance of being printed in large editions. The circle of recipients, then, must have been quite exclusive. And then it is striking, at that, that the aforementioned print was made in 1545, the very same year that Martin Luther⁷⁶ launched with his pastoral, *Against the Papacy of Rome, Founded by the Devil*,⁷⁷ what was hitherto his most brutal assault on the pope and the Roman Catholic church.

Accordingly, we can see that Lorck was keeping abreast of the day's currents. Three years later, in a very small engraving, Lorck chose to let the pope make an appearance as a basilisk.⁷⁸

In the same year, 1548, Lorck executes his first little masterpiece, the etched portrait of *Luther*.⁷⁹

The level of ambition evinced here was really very high: the young Lorck was challenging no less a force than Dürer, whose last engraving, a portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1526), served as his prototype. However, Lorck did not copy Dürer's engraving as such. It appears, instead, that the younger artist was aiming at revising the accomplished master's concept. In the first place, Lorck has removed Dürer's imposingly large rectangular tablet with the imitation-antique inscriptions, with the result that room was gained for rotating Luther 45 degrees, so that he could be seen from a more frontal vantage point. It is not likely that Lorck had ever seen Luther, who had died two years before Lorck etched the portrait. Consequently, as far as the portrait's resemblance to its subject was concerned, the artist was compelled to base the monk and theologian's likeness on how others had seen him. Most prominently, there was the portrait created by Lucas Cranach the Elder, who had close personal ties to Martin Luther. But there was also another portrait made by an artist whose name we

71. Document no. 1549-March 22.

72. Catalogue nos. 1543-45,1-2.

73. 1472-1555.

74. Catalogue no. 1546,1.

75. Catalogue no. 1545,1.

76. 1483-1546.

77. Luther: *Wider das Babstum ...* (1545).

78. Catalogue no. 1548,2.

79. Catalogue no. 1548,1.

do not know which, in the form of a handful of copies, can be found drawn right into printed Biblical Scriptures – in several instances, into copies of Martin Luther’s German language edition of the Holy Bible, dating from 1545⁸⁰ – volumes that belonged to members of Luther’s innermost circle of friends and associates. The similarities between Lorck’s portrait and the portrait in question by the anonymous artist would seem to indicate that Lorck himself had gained access to this exclusive circle.

It is certainly not without some measure of pride that Lorck indicates quite explicitly on the print that this is the work of an artist who is only twenty-one years old. Is it possible that what we have here is the journeyman Lorck’s “graduation piece”, consummating his period of training?

In any event, Lorck was now finished with his apprenticeship. He bid farewell to the Lübeck goldsmith and set out to see the world. The goldsmith had found his student to be brimming with talent and suggested to Lorck that he travel to foreign lands like the Low Countries and Italy in order to become a true artist.⁸¹ Precisely what the two men said to each other upon Lorck’s departure remains unknown to us, but it appears that Lorck followed his mentor’s advice and chose to venture forth into the wide world in order to continue his studies. For the time being, however, he headed for southern Germany.⁸² Perhaps it was his well-to-do parents that financed his trip.

We can surmise that his first destination was Nuremberg, which had been a Lutheran city since 1525. Even more importantly, Nuremberg had also been Albrecht Dürer’s city, a city that was now populated with his students, the Nuremberg school of the so-called *Kleinmeister*, the “Little Masters”, so named for the often very small format of their etchings and engravings. The style of these artists certainly served, by and large, as the basis for works that Lorck created during the years 1546–48.⁸⁵

Travel stipend from the royal court

In March 1549 Lorck, who had now returned to Flensburg, signed a receipt for the first installment of a travel stipend that King Christian III, who was allegedly one of his parents’ close acquaintances, had granted to him.⁸⁴ Two days later,⁸⁵ he sent the king a confirmation that he now was fully cognizant of what the stipend involved: for a period of four years, he would be receiving 30 *rigsdaler* (rix-dollars) annually so that he could study art abroad. After these four years had passed – that is to say, in the spring of 1553 – he would return to the Kingdom of Denmark to serve this king and his heirs as an artist. When this came to pass, he would *either* receive a fixed annual salary or would be paid for every single artwork that was executed.

Christian III was neither a prodigal nor a splendor-loving king. On certain occasions, to be sure, he had enlisted the service of the excellent German Northern Renaissance painter, Jacob Binck,⁸⁶ chiefly as a portrait painter. However, Binck was old enough to have been Lorck’s father. In this light, it’s easy for us to understand that for the king’s part, staking his bets on Lorck as the hope of the future seemed like a reasonable thing to do. Accordingly, the young artist would have to be properly educated.

Seeing that the stipend was granted for four years of study commencing in March 1549, it would appear that, strictly speaking, the stipend ought to expire in March 1553. In April 1551, Lorck again signed a receipt for 30 rix-dollars of the stipend,⁸⁷ but this is all we have been able to find until now in the account books pertinent to this matter. In the year 1552, the king himself became entangled, more or less, in one of the Lorcks’ sibling squabbles. Melchior had lodged a complaint alleging that his sister, Anna, who had come to be a widow after the death of her husband, who had been a government official in service of the Royal Court, was refusing to pay out Melchior’s fair share of the inheritance left by their father to members of the family. In re-

sponse, King Christian III wrote to the municipal government in Flensburg that while Melchior was still abroad and still receiving his royal stipend, he should absolutely *not* have any portion of the patrimony sent to him and that he should furthermore desist from pestering Anna about this matter, which could easily wait until Melchior had returned home to Flensburg.⁸⁸

What comes to light here is that the king had heard nothing at all from the traveling stipendiary. From what we can read in Christian III’s letter to the people in Flensburg, the king was operating on the primary supposition that Lorck was busy pursuing his studies among skilled artists in the Low Countries “and other lands” ... the Low Countries, from where, in 1549, the king had commissioned the renowned architect and sculptor, Cornelis Floris,⁸⁹ to build a tomb in Schleswig Cathedral for his own father, King Frederik I.

We can thus conclude that the stipend that had been granted to Lorck three years earlier was still valid and in force. What the king did not foresee, however, was that more than 25 years would elapse before Lorck would return to the Kingdom of Denmark and step into the service of a Danish king.

At the Imperial Diet in Augsburg

From what we can see, King Christian III was underwriting Lorck’s sojourn in foreign lands from March 1549 and thenceforth. Documents report that Lorck set out on his formative journey supplied by letters of recommendation from the court and a valid passport. But where did he set out for?

From King Christian III’s letter, written in response to the conflict with Lorck’s sister, Anna concerning the inheritance, it appears that the king was inclined chiefly to figure that Lorck was studying in the Low Countries – what the king apparently wanted was, ultimately, to be served by a highly qualified “Danish Netherlander”.⁹⁰ It is not possible to document such a sojourn,⁹¹ but Lorck does assert in his autobiography that he spent time in the Low Countries during the days

of his youth, and it would seem reasonable to accept this at face value.⁹²

Lorck also claims⁹³ that it was through his work as an artist that he became acquainted – but he doesn’t tell us anything about *where* this might have transpired – with some of Emperor Charles V’s courtiers, who accompanied him to “the Great Diet in Augsburg”. Many artists turned up when, every other year, an Imperial Diet (Reichstag), i.e. an assembly of the Holy Roman Imperial Council, was held. It was here that potential patrons of princely rank and economic potency, coming from all different parts of the Empire, with the Emperor or his deputies presiding over the proceedings, would gather together for an extended period of time, naturally – and chiefly – for purposes of dealing with the empire’s affairs and matters of business.

Three important Diets took place in the free imperial city of Augsburg, which had been founded in the days of ancient Rome and had come by the middle of the sixteenth century to be the financial center of the Holy Roman Empire, especially as a result of the Fugger family’s efforts.

Lorck writes about “the Great Diet in Augsburg”, but fails to mention a year in connection with the event. Historically, the most important Diet in Augsburg was the one that, under Charles V’s chairmanship, was held over a period of months lasting from September 1, 1547 until May 30, 1548 and is typically referred to as the “gehar-nischer Reichstag” (Harness-clad Diet). The central topic for discussion at this assembly was the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Protestants. The Emperor was at the zenith of his power and had, only a few months before the Diet’s beginning, defeated the rebellious Protestants and their princes in the battle at Mühlberg. The Diet came to a close when the Emperor forced the ratification of The Augsburg Interim, which accommodated the wishes of the Protestants on only a very few points. The rest of the imperial realm’s problems would have to be sorted out at a later Diet.

If Lorck was, in fact, in Augsburg at this time, it is possible that he could have met eminent Italian artists like Titian, who had painted sever-

80. Luther: *Biblia ...* (1545).

81. Document no. 1565-January 1, sections 3-4.

82. “Hochdeutschlandt”. Document no. 1565-January 1, section 5.

83. Catalogue nos. 1546,1; 1547,1-2; 1548,2-4; 1549,1.

84. Document no. 1549-March 22.

85. Document no. 1549-March 24.

86. C. 1500-1569.

87. Document no. 1551-April 11.

88. Document no. 1552-July 14.

89. 1514-1575.

90. Document no. 1552-July 14.

91. Certain elements in catalogue no. 1552,1 could, however, suggest a Dutch inspiration.

92. Document no. 1565-January 1, section 6.

93. Document no. 1565-January 1, section 5.

al portraits of Charles V, both seated and mounted on a horse – as the victor in the twilight after the Battle of Mühlberg. But Lorck mentions nothing about such an encounter.

If it is indeed this Diet that Lorck is writing about in his autobiography, we can conclude that the artist must already have been in Augsburg some time *before* the (Protestant!) Danish king endowed him with his travel stipend, the first installment of which he certainly signed for in Flensburg ten months after the Diet officially ended.⁹⁴ However, being out of a well-to-do family, it is far from inconceivable that Melchior Lorck would already have been traveling around and that, somewhere or other, he could have met the imperial courtiers that he speaks of in his writings. At the time, his brother, Andreas, was in the service of the Emperor as an officer. It certainly seems possible that Andreas could have been the link in such a meeting.⁹⁵ However, another obvious intermediary for Lorck in this regard would have to be the Danish king's emissary, the Hamburg-based rural dean and secretary to the king, Caspar Fuchs,⁹⁶ who continued working as a representative at the Emperor's court after the termination of the Diet and whose brother, Kilian, must moreover be considered a candidate, together with Lorck's brother-in-law, Hans Johel, for the role of the person who effectively transferred the royal stipend's first installment to Lorck.⁹⁷ Also, taking into account his rank, which was higher than that of Andreas Lorck, it appears more feasible that Caspar Fuchs served as the intermediary in establishing the contacts from which Lorck came to benefit so much.

Another important imperial assembly, one which, however, was not a Diet, took place in 1552, at a time when the religious conflicts were still unresolved. Here, the complicated problems connected with the succession to the imperial throne were sorted out in favor of Ferdinand (I), the Emperor's younger brother. At the time, it is

certain that Lorck was in Nuremberg.⁹⁸ From Nuremberg, it's not very far to Augsburg.

The next "Great" Diet took place in 1555, when the Protestants finally obtained a religious settlement in Augsburg. By this time, though, Lorck was living in or was on his way to Constantinople.

In summary, it is unclear to us just which Diet Lorck took part in, but there is much to suggest that he is referring to the Diet in 1547/48.

However, Lorck also claims that on the Diet in question, he became acquainted with the Elector Palatine, Otto Henry (a.k.a. Ottheinrich), the regent of the new duchy of Palatinate-Neuburg, and also, and evidently worth mentioning in particular, with the cardinal of Augsburg.⁹⁹

The cardinal had, since the year 1545, been the prince-bishop Otto Truchsess von Waldburg.¹⁰⁰ He was a Jesuit and a bitter opponent of the odious practice of Protestantism, ergo an odd, but potentially useful acquaintance for the Lutheran, Lorck. As a matter of fact, the cardinal was interested in art and was active as an art dealer when he lived in Rome.¹⁰¹ He was, in fact, in Augsburg during the Diet of 1547/48, where he did not set himself in opposition to the *Interim*¹⁰² – despite his being a Catholic. However, Lorck's acquaintance with the cardinal apparently failed to leave any traces other than what Lorck reports in the autobiography.

Lorck's connection with Otto Henry must remain conjecture, since he is not documented to have attended the Diet. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

In his autobiography,¹⁰³ Lorck tells that when he took his leave of them, both the cardinal and Otto Henry bestowed him with favors, presents and letters of recommendation, after which he moved on to the Low Countries.

As has been mentioned, the alleged sojourn in the Low Countries cannot be documented. However, in Lorck's works dating from the period around 1550-52,¹⁰⁴ one can sense every now and

then that he must have been familiar with works by Netherlandish artists. The question of whether he actually visited this region himself in order to acquaint himself with the Netherlandish masters will have to remain an open one, though. It is possible that Lorck could have learned to know them through graphic works that were being distributed on a wide scale – and virtually everywhere – throughout Europe.

In Nuremberg – and may be in Augsburg

As has been mentioned, there are grounds for surmising that Lorck might already have been in Nuremberg in 1549, but we know for sure that he was there in 1550/51. Mainly, we are certain about this because he actually wrote "in Nuremberg" on a drawing that is dated 1550¹⁰⁵ and also because the dedication on the verso of the engraved portrait with which he paid homage to the city's eminent artist, Albrecht Dürer,¹⁰⁶ is dated "Nuremberg 1550". The first edition of Lorck's woodcut of the Sibilla Tiburtina¹⁰⁷ was published by the Nuremberg bookprinter, Hans Glaser,¹⁰⁸ while the second edition served to illustrate a poem praising the female virtues written by Hans Sachs,¹⁰⁹ the city's celebrated poet. There are also a couple of other woodcuts from the period¹¹⁰ that chime in very beautifully with the city's tradition for popular woodcuts.

On the verso of two of his best drawings from those years,¹¹¹ Lorck wrote dedications, respectively, on the 4th and 5th of September 1551 to the artist, Lorentz Stöer,¹¹² who was living in Nuremberg at the time and evidently must have been Lorck's friend, supposedly of the same age.

Apparently, another close and yet slightly older friend was the graphic artist and draftsman, Hanns Lautensack,¹¹³ whose work as a landscape artist is especially interesting. Lautensack was also living in Nuremberg at the time. The proof of the contact between the two men is quite



Albrecht Dürer, catalogue no. 1550,6.

remarkable: at the top of his friend's signed etchings, Lorck, ostensibly motivated by occult reasons, has inserted his own monogram but has nonetheless omitted the supplemental letter, "F", which was intended to designate that he hailed from Flensburg.

In all probability, the monogram is Lorck's. In adding the symbol in this particular way (i.e., omitting the "F"), the artist was evidently affirming his affiliation with the so-called Danube School, which so patently fashioned the basis for Lautensack's landscapes. It seems obvious that Lorck must have been familiar with the Danube School's wildly expressive landscapes when, in 1549,¹¹⁴ he executed his far more delicate and

94. Document no. 1549-March 24.

95. Document no. 1564-February 22 (a) and (c).

96. Recorded 1554-1571.

97. See document no. 1549-March 22.

98. According to a drawing signed in Nuremberg, see catalogue no. 1550,5.

99. Document no. 1565-January 1, section 6 and appurtenant commentary.

100. 1514-1575.

101. Jansen (1992), p. 196.

102. Ranke [n.d.], p. 1064.

103. Document no. 1565-January 1, section 6.

104. For example, catalogue nos. 1550,5; 1551,5; 1551,15; 1552,1.

105. Catalogue no. 1550,5.

106. Catalogue no. 1550,6.

107. Catalogue no. 1551,1.

108. Recorded 1540-1572.

109. 1494-1576.

110. Catalogue nos. 1551,2 and 3.

111. Catalogue nos. 1551,7 and 8.

112. C. 1550-after 1599.

113. C. 1520-1564/66.

114. Catalogue no. 1549,2.

Documents related to Melchior Lorck and the events of his life



The Lorck coat-of-arms, section of dokument no 1564-February 22 (c).

All of the known documents dating from the time of his life that contribute to our knowledge about biographical facts related to Melchior Lorck are reproduced, in what follows here, in transcriptions with paraphrasing translations and commentaries. The only exceptions are the short dedications to other artists found on a few of his works. The wording of these exceptions will be reproduced in the respective catalogue entries.¹ Most of the texts have been subdivided into numbered sections with the intention of facilitating the reader's sense of orientation in what can sometimes be rather lengthy texts.

The aim here has been to obtain a transcription which, in terms of both orthography and syntax, is as direct and faithful as possible, based on our examination of the original sources which, in certain instances, are records of missives or letter books containing incoming or outgoing correspondence. In some few albeit important cases, however, it has proven impossible to proceed in this way. We refer here to four documents that have not been available or accessible in their original form, but only through the transcriptions of others.

These documents are:

Document no. 1563 – January 1

Lorck's autobiography. This lengthy document was later printed at the beginning of the book, "Soldan Soleyman ...", which Lorck published in Antwerp in 1574. According to the assertion here, it was enclosed in a letter to King Frederik II dated January 20, 1563 (Document no. 1563-January 20). The only known example of the book was destroyed in Hamburg's conflagration brought about as a result of the allies' "Operation Gomorrah" during the night between the 23rd and the 24th of July, 1945. Fortunately, at some point in time before this event, the Flensburg

museum official, Fritz Fuglsang, managed to transcribe the entire autobiography, a transcript which Erik Fischer inherited from Fuglsang and which has been reproduced here.

Document no. 1574 – October 10

Lorck's letter to Abraham Ortelius. This was published in: Hessels (1887), p. 123, no. 53. The letter was part of The Ortelius Collection which, up until September 1954, was placed on deposit by the Batavian Church in London at the Guildhall Library, also in London. In February 1955, the collection was sold to a private collector. Presumably, the collection is presently spread out into a number of different collections.² The present owner is unknown to us.

Document no. 1575 – May 19

Lorck's second letter to King Frederik II. The transcription is taken from Sandvig (1785) p. 27f. According to Sandvig's account, the letter was located in the Danish State Archives (Rigsarkivet) in Copenhagen, in the records of the so-called German Chancellery (Tyske Kancelli), that dealt with the interior affairs of the mainly German speaking duchies to the south of the realm (Indenrigske Afdeling), as well as most foreign affairs (Udenrigske Afdeling). It has not been possible to locate the document.

Document no. 1582 – November 10

Lorck's dismissal from service to King Frederik II. Transcribed in the archivist C. E. Voss's *collektanea* in The Royal Library, Copenhagen (Ny Kgl. Saml. 1212 b 4^o). Here, referral is made to the Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Ex Registr. Reg. Frd. No. 76. The document has not been found.

1. Catalogue nos. 1551,10-15.

2. Helpfully suggested by Stephen Freeth, Keeper of Manuscripts, Guildhall Library Manuscripts Section, London.

The remaining documents related to Lorck are found primarily in the Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen, in the Staatsarchiv in Hamburg and in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Vienna. Some portion of this material has previously been known and/or published; this is true especially of most of the Danish-language source material about Lorck and of the material from Hamburg that appears in Bolland (1964). In the course of many years of research, a large number of new documents have turned up, especially those having to do with Lorck's employment in the service of the Emperor's court in Vienna.

The present publication is the first to collect all the known archival documentation about Lorck.

Abbreviations that have been resolved are indicated with angle brackets: < >.

Commentaries in the transcription; for example, illegible words or questions raising doubt are indicated in square brackets: [].

Sections that have been crossed out in the documents are indicated by underlining: _____.

Margin annotations and supplementary appendices in the margins of the documents are indicated with square brackets and the prefatory 'in marge', in this fashion: [in marge:], similarly, square brackets frame other items of information concerning the placement [verso:], [addressing:] and information about the script [in another hand:] and so on.

Along the way, extensive use will be made of cross-references to other documents, and facts will be repeated in different contexts in order to facilitate the use of the documents as reference material. The references to the location of the sources is kept in the original form used by the different archives or libraries so as not to obstruct the tracing of the original documents.

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Document no. 1549 – March 22

Lorck signs for 30 Joachimsthaler received as an installment of the royal stipend
Flensburg, March 22, 1549

SOURCE

Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Tyske Kancelli Indenrigske Afdeling – A 44.

1. Ich melchior lorck vonn flensburck bekenne hie mith ynn kraft meiner eigenn handth das jch vonn dem erbaren küliann fuchsenn auf ko<nigliche> ma<jestät> zu denmarck meines gnedychsthenn herrenn vorschreibung vnd begnadung auf vir yar langk dreÿssich jochims daller zu voller gewige entpfangen hage vnd quithir seine kon<igliche> ma<jestät> hir mith
2. yn chraft dÿsser quittans vrkunth habe ich ym mangel meines pethschaffts meinen swager Johan Johel erbettenn das er von meinen wegenn sein pitschschir hir vor gedruckth vnd gebenn zu flensburck freidages nach reminishere anno d<omi>n<i> 1549

[The seal is missing but it can be adumbrated as an indentation in the paper]

Paraphrase and commentary:

GENERAL

The letter is entirely written in Lorck's own hand. The numerals indicating the year are closely akin to the numerals representing the year that appear on the drawing, catalogue no. 1549,2. Mentioned by Andrup (1925), p. 285.

1. PARAPHRASE

I, Melchior Lorck, from Flensburg, acknowledge herewith, in my own hand, that I, through Külian Fuchsenn [or Fuchs] have been granted by my generous Lord, the Danish king, 30 full-value Joachimsthaler, for four years, and I herewith sign my name for His Royal Highness.

COMMENTARY

A few days later, in document no. 1549-March 24, Lorck extrapolates the receipt more elaborately: The stipend is supposed to be used for further artistic training abroad. After the expiration of the four-year period, Lorck is supposed to return to Denmark and enter into the service of the king.

Külian Fuchsenn must be the Kilian Fuchs in Hamburg who was the brother of King Christian III's secretary, the rural dean, Caspar Fuchs, who frequently appears as the recipient of letters from the king that can be found today in the Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen. In the letter book, Tyske Kancelli Indenrigske Afdeling -A 44, Inl. Reg. 1552-53, his brother Kilian also appears (for example, fol. 72 and fol. 283, where Kilian is the messenger between the king and Caspar Fuchs, who was situated at the time in Nuremberg). On May 12, 1553, King Christian III makes a house on Steinstraße in Hamburg available to Kilian Fuchs, who is granted custodianship of these premises for the rest of his life. Moreover, Kilian Fuchs is exempted from paying any taxes as a reward for his excellent services (Tyske Kancelli Indenrigske Afdeling -A 44, Inl. Reg. 1552-53, fol. 275).

From the year 1540, Caspar Fuchs was rural dean in Hamburg. Consequently, he was in charge of supervising all of the clergy positions in Holstein, including appointing new ministers. He was, accordingly, an important factor in the service of the Reformation and, as the king's trusted servant, he was endowed with the manor, Bramstedt. Moreover, he acted as an emissary for King Christian III and the king's ducal brothers at the Great Diet in Augsburg in 1548 and at the Emperor's enfeoffment of Holstein to the king and his brothers in August of the same year,⁵ while later on, he appears to have continued operating as being an important contact person in connection with the events surrounding the Emperor. It might have been through Caspar Fuchs, in addition to through Lorck's brother, Andreas – who was still very young at the time – that Lorck was able to procure the contacts which he claims to have made at the Diet (see document no. 1563-January 1, sections 5 and 6). The supposition that Caspar's brother, Kilian, could have been the intermediary here appears in this light to be quite plausible.

2. PARAPHRASE

Concerning my position with regard to this receipt, I have – seeing as how I do not presently have my seal at hand, I have requested of my brother-in-law, Johan Johel, that he, on my behalf, place his imprinted signet ring at the bottom of this letter.

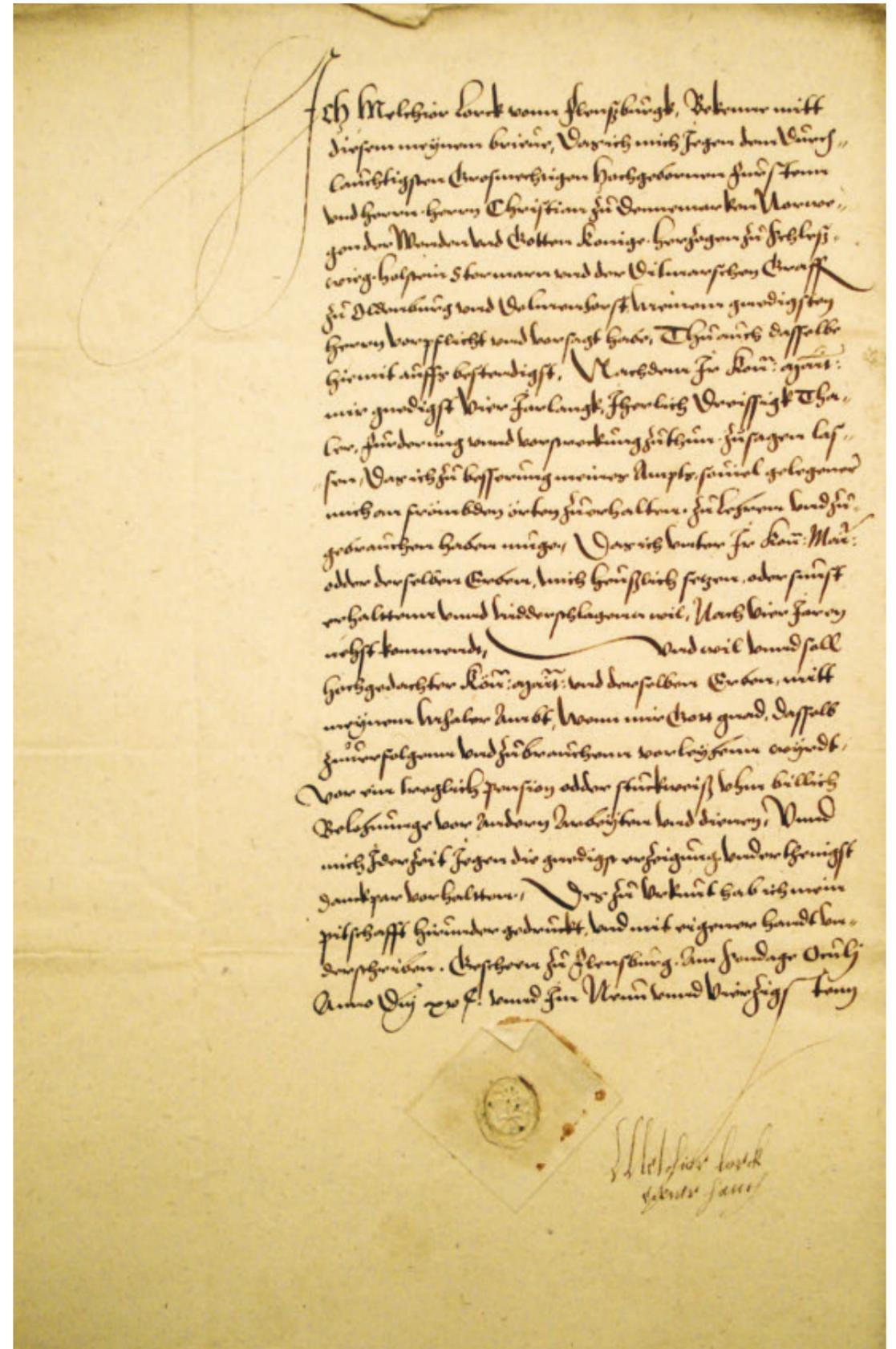
Written in Flensburg. Friday after *Reminiscere*, in the year 1549

COMMENTARY

Johan (Hans) Johel: was married to Lorck's sister, Anna. In Document no. 1552-July 14, King Christian III refers to Johel as his late former secretary. That is to say, he was nothing less than a royal secretary, who could guarantee for Lorck in this matter of business – and supposedly also a familial connection, which can explain how Kilian Fuchs figures into the picture.

petschaft, pithschir: signet.

Reminiscere: second Sunday in Lent. This means to say that the receipt was written out on the Friday before the third Sunday in Lent (*Oculi*, see document no. 1549-March 24). At a somewhat later point in time (document no. 1552-July 14) we have the king's own words on what constituted the terms of the binding agreement.



Document no. 1549-March 24.

5. Prange (1966). See, in this regard: Andersen (ed.) (1949), p. 540ff.

Document no. 1549 – March 24

Lorck to King Christian III
Flensburg, March 24, 1549

SOURCE Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Tyske Kancelli Indenrigske Afdeling, A 44, Uregistrerede Koncepter til Bestallinger m.m. 1536-1657, Tyske Kancelli til 1670, III.

[verso:]
Melchior Lorck Zu / Flensburg Revers vnd / Verschreibung / 1549

[recto:]

1. Jch Melchior Lorck vonn Flensburck, Bekenne mitt diesem meÿnem brieue, Das ich mich Jegen dem Durchlauchtigsten Grosmechtigen Hochgebornen Furstenn vnd Herrn, Herrn Christian zu Dennemarken Norwegen der Wenden Und Gotten Konige, Herzogen zu Schleißwieg, Holstein Stormarn und der Ditmarschen Graff zu Oldenburg und Delmenhorst, Meinem gnedigsten Herrn, vorpflicht und vorsagt habe.
2. Thu auch dasselbe hirmit auff bestendigst, Nachdem Ir Kon<igliche> Maie<stä>t mir gnedigst Vier Jarlangk, Jherlich Dreissigk Thaler, furderung vnnd vorstreckung zuthun, zusagen lassen, Das ich zu besserung meines Ampts, souiel gelegener mich am frömbden örten zuerhalten, Zu lehren vnd zu gebrauchen haben muge, Das ich vnter Ir Kon<igliche> Mai<estä>t odder derselben Erben, mich heusslich setzen, oder sunst erhaltten vnnd nidder-schlagenn wil, Nach vier Jaren nechst kommendt,
3. Und vil vnnd soll Hochgedachter Kön<iglicher> Maie<stä>t vnd derselben Erben, mitt meÿnem Mhaler Ambt, Wenn mir Gott gnad, dasselb zuverfolgenn vnd zu brauchenn verleÿhenn wÿrdt, vor ein meglich pension odder stuckweiß vhm billich Belohnunge vor Andern Arbeÿten vnd dienen, Vnnd mich Jder Zeit Jegen die gnedigst erzeigung vnderthenigst danckpar vorhalten,
4. Das zu Vrkont hab ich mein pitschafft hirunder gedruckt, Vnd mit eigener Handt vnderscriben.
Gescheen zu Flensburg, Am Sondage Oculi. Anno D<omi>nj MD vvnd Im Neun vnnd Vierzigstenn.
Melchior lorck
egener hanth

Paraphrase and commentary:

GENERAL REMARKS The letter has been written by another person's hand; only the signature is in Lorck's own hand.
Published by Andrup (1925), p. 285, whose reading is slightly revised.

1. PARAPHRASE I, Melchior Lorck, acknowledge with this letter what I have promised and committed myself to doing for my gracious lord, King Christian of Denmark and Norway; these are pledges that I hereby affirm:
- COMMENTARY The letter has to be regarded as a follow-up of document no. 1549-March 22.
2. PARAPHRASE His Majesty has most graciously granted me the sum of 30 daler annually, for four consecutive years, to be used in connection with my continuing education in foreign countries. When these four years have passed, I pledge to settle down in Your Majesty's – or in Your Majesty's successors' – country,
- COMMENTARY The actual document stipulating the terms of the grant is not extant but the king does refer to what are its essential contents in the letter he sent to the city of Flensburg (document no. 1552-July 14).
3. PARAPHRASE where I – if God wills it to be so – will first and foremost serve Your Majesty and Your Majesty's heirs in exchange for a suitable remuneration or in exchange for a reasonable sum of payment for each individual assignment and will, moreover, display my gratitude for such tokens of your favor.
4. PARAPHRASE In my own hand, I have signed the present document and embellished it with an imprint of my signet. Written in Flensburg, *Oculi* 1549. Melchior Lorck, in my own hand (imprint of signet).
- COMMENTARY *Oculi*: the 3rd Sunday of Lent, which in the year 1549 fell on March 24.
When, just two days earlier, Lorck was busy writing out a receipt for the stipend (document no. 1549-March 22), he found that he was unable to locate his own signet and had to make do with using his brother-in-law's stamp – but now, evidently, his own signet had turned up again. The signet's coat-of-arms bears no similarity to the family's coat-of-arms, which was “improved” in connection with the Imperial confirmation of the family's nobility (document no. 1564-February 22 (c)). See also p. 212 for a close-up of Lorck's signet.

Document no. 1551 – April 11

Lorck receives the third rate of his royal stipend
April 11, 1551

SOURCE Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Regnskaber før 1559, Rentemesterregnskab 1551, fol. 171v.

[in marge: 30 daller / M: L:]
Jned løgerdagen for Bøndagen misericordia giffuit melcher lurck ephther
barbi beffalning Bom Kong^el^{ig} M^{ajestæt} skenngē hañum tüll under-
hollning och hans lere

Paraphrase and commentary:

PARAPHRASE On the Saturday before *Misericordia*, following Barbi's directive, Melcher Lurck was given the sum of 30 daler as a subsidy from the Royal House, for his sustenance and to be used for instruction.

COMMENTARY *Misericordia* is the second Sunday following after Easter Sunday.

Barbi was King Christian III's chancellor at The German Chancellery, Andreas von Barby (1508-1559).

Document no. 1552 – July 14

King Christian III writes to the city of Flensburg on the matter of Lorck's inheritance
Copenhagen, July 14, 1552

SOURCE Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, Tyske Kancelli Indenrigske Afdeling, A.18. Inl. Reg. 1552-53, fol. 81

[fol. 81 verso:]
An die Stadt Flensßburg
Melchior Lorcken Betreffen, Actum
Coppenhagen den 14 Julij Anno lij

[fol. 82 verso:]
Christian etc.

1. Vnsern gnedigsten grus zuuorn, Ersahmen lieben getrewenn Wir mugen euch gnedigst nicht vnangezeigt lassen, Nach dem wir befunden das Melchior Lorck Thomas Lorcken sohn, zu dem Mahlen vnd Schneiden guethe naigung gehappt, Vnd desselben auch ziemlich geubett gewesen, Das wir vff vnderthenigst ansuchen, so sein wegen beÿ vns geschehenn, Vnd aus gnaden Ime, dreij Jahrlang steur vnd hulff ohn gelde thun lassen, das ehr sich jm Niderlande vnd Andern Orthen an geschickte meister begeben Vnd ferner Vben soldt,
2. Dargegen hatt ehr sich Inhalts seins Worts vns Verpflicht Nirgendst Anders, dan jn vnsern Reichen vnd Landen, sich niderzusetzen, Vnd Aldar sein Lebens zeit bleiblich zu wohnen, Vnd so wir seiner zu thun, Vns mit seiner Arbeit zu dienen,
3. Nun werden wir bericht, Das ehr von seiner Schwester Vnsres gewesenenn vnd verstorbenen Secretarien Hans Johels Hausfrawen sein Antheil erbes, So jme Aus dem hause nach geburt, vast mit drangsall erfordern, Vnd das selbe Ausserlandtz ahn sich zubringen furhabens sein soll,
4. Vnd ob wir woll vnß versehen, ehr werde seiner Verpflichtungk Zu seinen ehren Ingedenck sein, Vnd derselben nachsetzen

[fol. 182 verso:]
Gibet vns doch solch sein furhaben nachdencken,

5. Jst derweg^{en} vns nicht geleg^{en}, das jme das erbe Ausserlandz vorstadt Begehren vnd Beuehlen demnach ernstlich, Ihr wollet die sache bis zu vnser glucklich^{en} ankunfft gegen flensburgk rueh^{en} Vnd Mehlhior Lorckenn sein Antheil, was jhme gebuehenn mag nicht Volgen lassen, Auch die witfraw Hans Johels, hirwidder bis zu der zait nicht bedrang^{en} oder bedrangen lassenn, es sey mit oder Ausserhalb rechtens, Daran geschieht vnser Ernster Beuehl, Vnd sindt mit gnaden gnaiget, Dat^{um}