

Preface

Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus (1485–1558) has been recognized as one of the leading Lutheran reformers of the sixteenth century. Indeed, it is defensible to assert that his contributions to the Wittenberg movement are exceeded only by those of Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon. While historical scholarship has recognized him primarily as the organizational genius of the Lutheran Reformation, during the sixteenth century Bugenhagen was also a well-known theologian, pastoral leader, educator, and social reformer, especially in the northern German territories and Denmark. The diversity of his contributions and his significance as a reformer still deserve extensive scholarly attention. So do his varied writings. Excellent studies on some of his biblical commentaries and theological treatises have appeared in the last four decades. Much still needs to be done, however, especially beyond the German scholarly context. Bugenhagen's church orders, which provided precise guidelines to the evangelical communities regarding liturgical, theological, and educational reforms as well as the care of the poor, have been published in *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*.¹ Much of his correspondence has also been collected

1. See Emil Sehling, ed., *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, 24 vols. (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1902–2012).

and printed.² In addition, the first volume of a critical edition of Bugenhagen's works in their original languages has appeared,³ but this includes only some of his earliest writings. No English edition of the Reformer's works has been published. The vast majority of the Bugenhagen materials are, therefore, only extant in their sixteenth-century editions, and the limited availability of his writings has, without question, curtailed scholarly endeavors and, perhaps, also scholarly interest.

The purpose of this two-volume edition is to offer a representative selection of Bugenhagen's treatises in translation in order to make them accessible to the English-speaking world and to illustrate the diversity of the Pomeranian Reformer's interests and contributions. None of his major biblical commentaries are included in this edition because of their size and because they lend themselves primarily to monograph studies. While Bugenhagen taught at the University of Wittenberg for more than three decades and was certainly an academic theologian, his main concern was to address the Christian community in general, not primarily his fellow academicians. Therefore, the treatises that are translated have been chosen from his German or Low German writings rather than his Latin works because the former reached the widest audience. If a German edition of a particular Latin work was printed during the sixteenth century that edition was translated.

Because almost all of these works are still only available in their original editions, a concerted effort has been made to translate the material as literally as possible without compromising the integrity of the English language. The goal was to capture Bugenhagen's linguistic style and the content of his writings as faithfully as possible.

2. Otto Vogt, ed., *Dr. Johannes Bugenhagens Briefwechsel* (Stettin: Leon Saunier, 1888).

3. See Anneliese Bieber-Wallmann, ed., *Johannes Bugenhagen: Reformatorische Schriften (1515/16–1524)*, Johannes Bugenhagen Werke, Band I,1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

All of the scriptural passages quoted in these works have been translated according to Bugenhagen's rendering of the texts.

The chief repository of Bugenhagen's writings is the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, and almost all of the translations in these volumes are based on original editions that are part of the vast holdings of this library. The only exception is the translation of the *Braunschweig Church Order*, which is based on the Low German version of the Order included in the Sehling edition of the evangelical church orders.

It is my hope that these volumes will facilitate greater engagement with Bugenhagen's diverse literary corpus and result in more scholarly exploration and evaluation of Dr. Pomer's contributions to the Wittenberg reform movement. Such exploration will surely shed important light on the theological priorities, the liturgical practices, and the social consciousness of that movement and the people who joined and were inspired by it.

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