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## THE CHURCH PAINTINGS OF GOTTFRIED HENDTZSCHEL IN NORWAY – PAST AND FUTURE CONSERVATION

### Abstract

Prior to this study, no comparative analyses of painting techniques had yet been carried out in Norway on any major group of 17<sup>th</sup> century church paintings. Previous discussions on the attributions of paintings from this period have mainly been based on historical, stylistic and iconographic research. In addition, preservation strategies for conservation priorities with regard to Norwegian early post-Reformation ecclesiastical art have still not been established.

*The primary objects* of this study are the 146 panel paintings that had already been attributed to the Silesian artist Gottfried Hendtzschel. During the second quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the artist worked in nearly 30 churches within the diocese of Stavanger, which lies in the south-western part of the country. This makes him one of the most productive domestic church painters of the century.

*The main questions* addressed by this project are to define the characteristics of Hendtzschel's paintings, and to determine whether the artist actually made all the works ascribed to him. Further, to examine the painting process itself. What can the present condition of the paintings – taking into account known past changes – tell us about their original appearance? Which paintings ought to be given future conservation priority, and how to improve *in situ* recording of early post-Reformation church paintings in Norway?

*The ultimate objectives* are to confirm or to endorse the previous attributions to Hendtzschel and to make a register of all his works worthy of further preservation; to substantiate a proposal for a conservation priority; and to evaluate the examination procedure used.

*The principal method* involved comparing the results from *in situ* examination of the paintings with available 17<sup>th</sup> century church records and with 20<sup>th</sup> century restoration reports.

*The main results* are the new register of Hendtzschel's Norwegian church paintings; an outline of his methods; an overview of the paintings' past changes, present condition, and conservation requirements; a proposal for conservation priorities; and verification of the procedure for *in situ* examination. The application-oriented results of this project are anticipated to be relevant for heritage management in general, and for both humanistic and heritage management-oriented research.

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Part two, the Catalogue: ca 550 pages, 164 figures, 276 tables

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