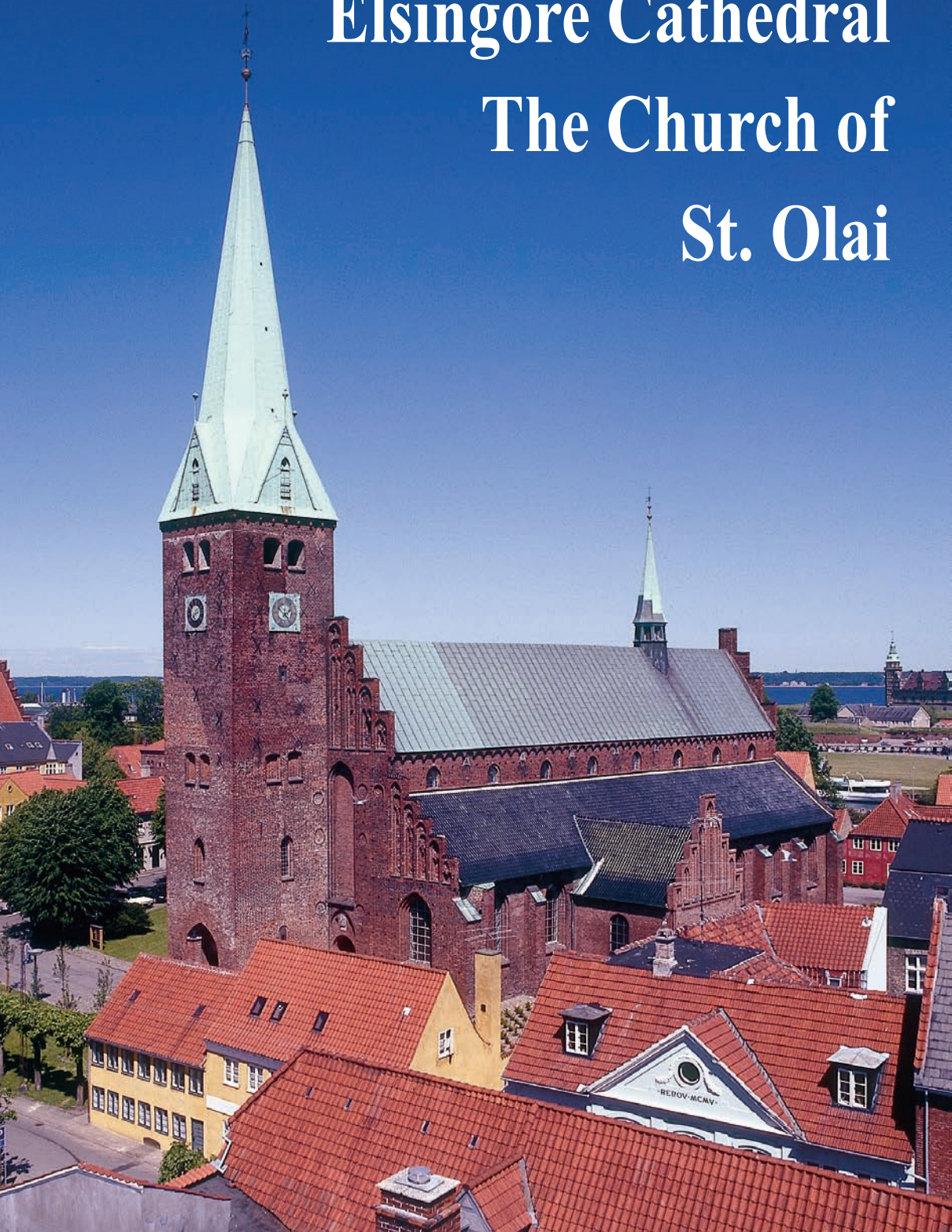


Elsingore Cathedral

The Church of St. Olai





Interior

1. Font presented to the church in 1579 by Frantz Lauritsen Skriver and his wife, Bente Poulsdatter, in the year he became mayor. The cover, by an unknown craftsman, dates from 1656. The baptistery is particularly the children's part of the church and its twenty brass balusters were given by wealthy citizens in the names of their children. The wall paintings of Jesus, Paul and the twelve apostles are by Joakim Skovgaard (1899).

2. Christening pew, flanking the main W. door, where godparents and guests sat. Henrik the carpenter made it in 1580 for 45 rixdollars. On the wall a sconce (1583). Once an altar to St. Gertrude stood here.

3. The imposing organ was built in 1969 by P. G. Andersen, Copenhagen. One of the largest in Denmark it has 54 voices and 3300 pipes.

4. Monument to Jens Pederson Grove, Master of the Lighthouse Service, and his wives, Anne Andersdatter and Dorte Mortensdatter. Erected 1640.(see 5.).

5. Chandelier, presented in 1633 by Jens Pederson Grove (see 4.). The ornamented rods suspending all four chandeliers are by Casper Firicke, master metal smith to Christian IV.

6. Monument to David Hansen, alderman and customs officer, his wives, Karen Hansdatter and Bente Andersdatter and their children. In the painting they are shown kneeling at prayer on red velvet cushions. Erected 1599 (see 7).

7. Monument to Frederik Lejel, mayor and customs officer,

and his three wives, Pernille Olesdatter, Kirstine Jensdatter and Sophie Hansdatter. Erected 1601. It is the largest in the church and like 6. and 12. is thought to be the work of Statius Otto of Lüneberg.

8. Monument to Hans Rostgaard, district revenue officer and administrator of the King's fish-ponds, and his first two wives, Kirsten Pedersdatter and Chatrine Asmundsdatter. He was a famous resistance fighter during the Swedish occupation of Kronborg in 1659. The fine painting is attributed, like 21. and 30, to Heinrich Dittmers, the celebrated court portrait painter. Erected c. 1670. Their gravestone.

9. Chandelier. To the glory of God and the adornment of the Church of St. Olaf this chandelier is the gift of the right noble and worthy Ivar Pederson, formerly notary at Kronborg and alderman of this town of Helsingør, and Marine Pedersdatter, beloved, godfearing and virtuous wife and mother, anno 1653«.

10. Pulpit, dated 1567, is among the oldest in Denmark and one of the most splendid features of the church. In 1568 the churchwarden recorded a contribution of 390 marks from the congregation towards the new pulpit. Jesper Mathiesen received 120 rix-dollars for the pulpit. He was master cabinet-maker to the King at Kronborg and became the first warden of the Helsingør Cabinet-makers' Guild. In 1624 the pulpit was altered somewhat with the addition of new pillars and the tabernacled canopy. Under the frescoed arch used to stand the old organ until it was moved to the W. end of the church in 1726.

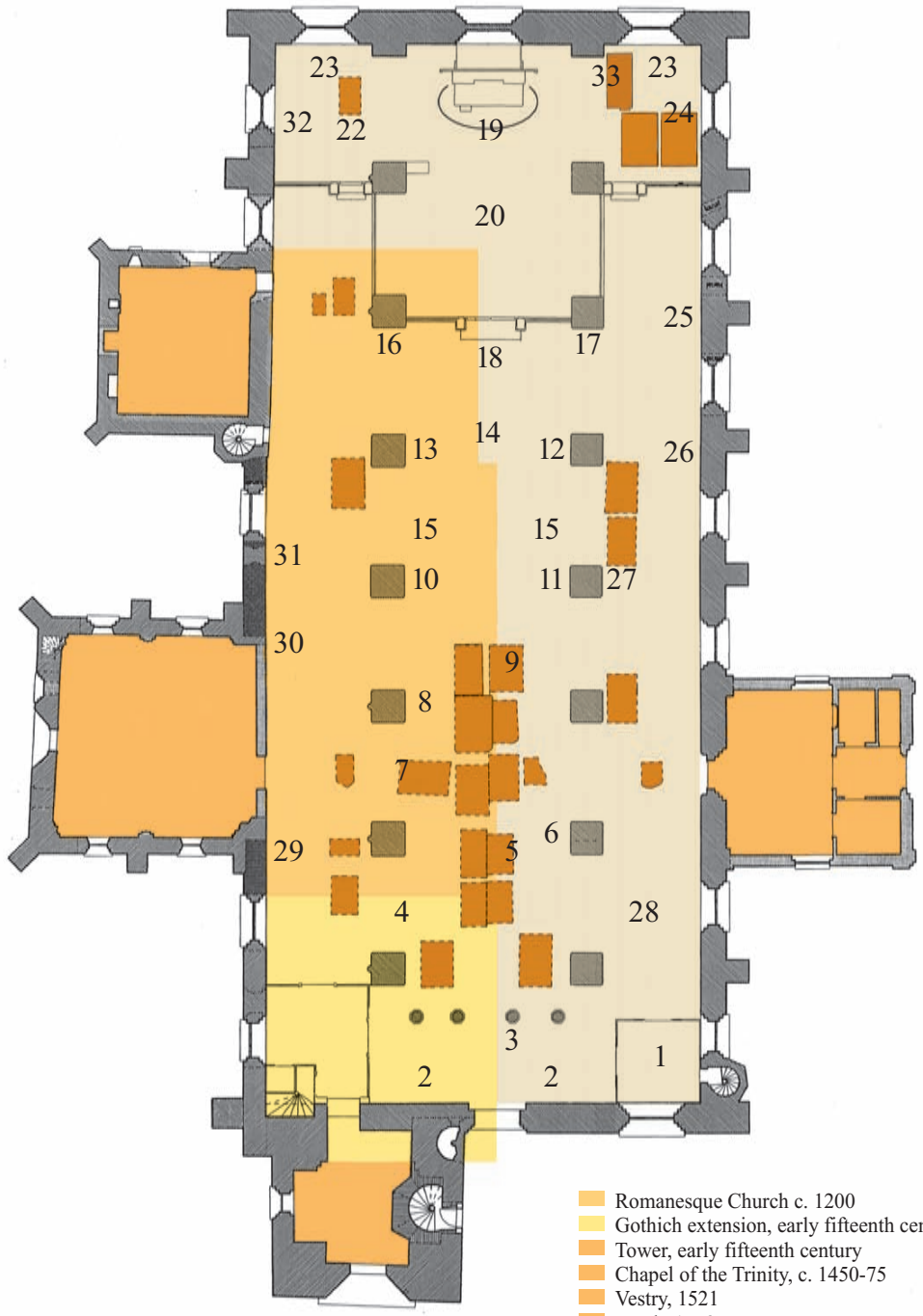
11. Memorial tablet to Herluf Trolle, the naval hero, and Birgitte Gjøe. One of the finest works of the Renaissance in Scandinavia it was made in Antwerp by Cornelis Floris and erected in 1568. The Latin inscription records the very handsome gift the pious couple made to the town's grammar school, in return for which the pupils were to sing in church every morning and evening.

12. Monument to Hans Meyer, customs officer, and Anna Thorschmedes, in the style of the high Renaissance, 1603. (see 7.).

13. Monument to Laurids Christiansen Rhod, customs officer, recorder and mayor, and Margrete Hansdatter. Erected 1650. In 1754 Hans Jensen Fredboe bought the monument and the tomb underneath. An interesting example of the extravagant flights of imagination the auricular style was capable of. (see 14. and 19.).

14. Chandelier presented by Laurids Christiansen Rhod (see 13.) in 1651.

15. Pews are from 1938. The two front pews have finials depicting St. Olaf and the dragon, and in some of the ends are coats of arms from earlier pews.



- Romanesque Church c. 1200
- Gothic extension, early fifteenth century
- Tower, early fifteenth century
- Chapel of the Trinity, c. 1450-75
- Vestry, 1521
- Porch, 1578
- Church completed 1559
- Tombstones



S. e. Timm.
128
232
601
650
377
312

16. Monument to the first Lutheran rector of the church, Peder Samsing Erected 1576.

17. Memorial tablet to the hymn writer Hans Christensen Sthen, who was the incumbent 1566-83.

18. Rood screen. Carved in magnificent high Baroque style by Claus Brameyer and Jens Mortensen, 1652-53. One of the herms (in the panel on the S. side between the first and second pillar) depicts a half-naked man with a snub nose and long curly hair. According to tradition it is a likeness of Claus Brameyer. The fine balusters were presented by wealthy citizens and bear the name, device or coat of arms of the giver. The crucifix probably dates from 1521, when the rebuilt church was consecrated. On the back of the screen (seen from the altar-rails) there is a painting (1730) showing the Crucifixion when viewed from the left and the Resurrection from the right.

19. Reredos. 12.0 m high it is one of the largest in Denmark. It was carved for the church in the workshop of Lorentz Jørgensen of Holbaek (1664) and cost the large sum of 1350 rixdollars. Originally in natural oak it was painted in white and gold in 1755 at the expense of »the noble and esteemed Hans Jensen Fredboe, citizen and newcomer to this town and Anne Malene Fredboe, a most virtuous wife and mother«. (see 13.) On the altar two Gothic candlesticks, possibly from the earlier Church of St. Olaf. Behind the altar the Royal Arms and the date 1559, when rebuilding was completed. Two small alabaster shrines, made by Floris and presented in 1560 by Herluf Trolle and Birgitte Gjøe, hang on either side of the high altar. (see 11.).

20. Chandelier, presented 1662 by nine young men of the Guild of Pall Bearers from money received as gratuities. The figure on top is that of St. Olaf, the patron saint of the church.

21. Monument to two aldermen, Rasmus Regelsen and David Melvin, who married Regelsen's widow, Margrethe Jacobsdatter. Erected prior to 1671 (see 8.).

22. In the arch a cannonball, fired by the English fleet on 30th March 1801 when it sailed through the Sound on the way to the Battle of Copenhagen (2nd April 1801).

23. Seventeenth century chests used for storing church records and alms for the poor.

24. Wall cupboard, dated 1680, in which altar plate was kept until only a few years ago.

25. Portraits of seventeenth and eighteenth century rectors on N. and S. walls.

26. Slab of black stone on which according to tradition, were written the names of those who had sinned, for all to see. They were excluded from communion and the



Christian community and only received back into the flock when they repented, did public penance and paid a sum of money to the church.

27. Poorbox, possibly sixteenth century.

28. Ship model, presented by Erland Andersen, a brewer and distiller 1761.

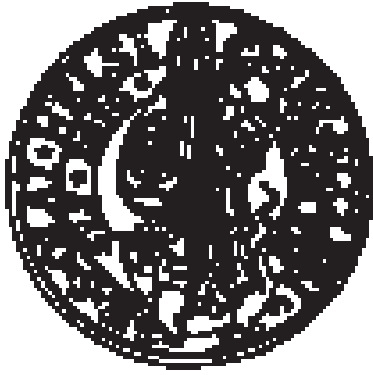
29. Silken banner, in memory of the part played by the town militia on 30th March 1801 (see 22.).

30. Monument, erected before 1668 by Jørgen von Weelen, alderman, and Sille Hansdatter Kruse, to themselves and her first husband Claus Clausen, merchant and public trustee of Helsingør (see 8.).

31. Sixteenth and seventeenth century pews. The numbers on them are from the time when pews were rented for a yearly payment, a custom which continued until 1915.

32. Christian Hansen Baden's tombstone was originally placed before the altar over his burial place in the crypt. He was in charge of Kronborg and died during the Swedish occupation, on the 4th December 1618.

33. The trapdoor to the French Consuls burial place. There are in all 18 vants, where renowned citizens from Helsingør from 1600-1700 are buried.



History

St. Olaf's Church is named after its patron saint, St. Olaf, the King of Norway who fell at Stiklestad in 1030. On an old seal of the church from 1616 (above) and elsewhere in the church he is shown tramping on the dragon of paganism.

The body of the church, as we see it today, was completed in 1559, but the church has a much longer history having been founded about 1200 as a Romanesque village church of considerable size with a chancel (c. 19.25 X 11.5 m). At the beginning of the fifteenth century a Gothic extension (12.5 m long) and a crenellated tower c. 15 metres in height was added to the W. end. About 1450-75 the Chapel of the Trinity, the sepulchral chapel of the Oxø family, was built. It must have been shortly afterwards that a start was made on enlarging the church, which by then was far too small. Helsingør, where since 1429 every ship passing through the Sound had been required to pay Sound Dues, was growing rapidly at this period and was, after Copenhagen, the largest town in Denmark. First, a large new chancel was built to replace the old one. Comprising the furthest three bays of the present E. end it was the same height as now and with a ridge turret.

There is no doubt that the church must have looked very odd at this time with its huge chancel dwarfing the nave, which was still in use, and its stump of a tower. A temporary west wall was built across the chancel so that it could be used while rebuilding was in progress. As soon as the west gable was reached the old nave was demolished. Only its N. wall was retained and made slightly higher to form part of the wall of the N. aisle.

The Vestry was also added at this time and in 1521 the Bishop of Roskilde, Lave Urne, consecrated the church. However it was not completed until 1559 when the last arch of the nave was built and 10 metres added to the height of the crenellated tower.

The porch is a later addition (1578-79) and in 1615 a tall, slender spire, known as the Virgin of Helsingør, was built

by Vitus Krægen, master carpenter. It was blown down in a storm in 1737 and destroyed the porch in its fall. The porch was rebuilt but the church was without a spire until 1898 when the present one was erected (H. B. Storck).

Built of large red mediaeval bricks St. Olaf's is a three-aisled basilica. The centre aisle is higher than the side aisles, which are under separate roofs, and light is admitted by windows in the clerestory. There are no transepts, nor a separate chancel as such. The ground plan is rectangular (49.5 x 21.25 m). Apart from the tower other, extensions to the church include the porch on the S. side and the Chapel of the Trinity and the Vestry on the N. side. The gables are crowstepped, with good blinding. In places the brickwork includes lozenge patterns of blackglazed bricks. Practically everywhere there are put-log holes for scaffolding to be seen on the walls. The windows of several burial vaults are to be found, with sandstone frames and wrought iron lattice work. The spire, the roof of the central aisle and the ridge turret are clad with copper. The roof of the south aisle and the porch are covered with black glazed tiles, the roof of the north aisle, the Vestry and the Chapel of the Trinity with red tiles.

The open space surrounding the church is the former churchyard where burials took place up to 1827. It is backed on to by cottages in Stengade, Sct. Annagade and Sophie Brahesgade, forming a charming setting. North of the church (which does not lie due E.W but N.E.E- S.W.) runs Sct. Olaigade, built in 1850, with its fine listed town houses. The contrast between the low roofs, of the cottages (though two in Sct. Annagade have been pulled down) and the tall church is most impressive. The church is surrounded by magnificent lime trees.

The modest dwelling, No. 6 Sct. Annagade, was in the past the organist's house. Here lived Hans Jensen Buxtehude, who was organist of St. Olaf's Church from c. 1642 to 1672, and his son, Didrik Buxtehude (1637-1707), the world famous composer. Perhaps it was in this church that he learned to play the organ. Though his life work was to be done outside Denmark here in Helsingør he laid the foundations of his genius, probably taught by his father. Between 1660-68 he was organist of St. Mary's Church, Helsingør.

The 1. January 1961 the Church of St. Olaf became the Cathedral in the new Helsingør Diocese. From 2000 until 2001 the church has gone through a general restoration. This has uncored many old tombstones which now add to the richness of the church interior.