

Anton Praetorius

Anton Praetorius (1560 – 6 December 1613) was a German Calvinist pastor who spoke out against the persecution of witches (witchhunts, witchcraft trials) and against torture.^[1]



Lippstadt

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Life and writings

Praetorius was born in Lippstadt as the son of Matthes Schulze.^{[2][3]} He later changed his name to the Latin *Praetorius*. He studied theology and became principal of the humanistic Latin school in Kamen, Westphalia. There, he married, but his wife Maria died of the plague. They had one child, Johannes.

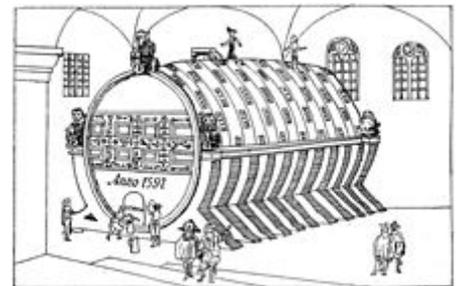
As the first Calvinist pastor in the parish of Dittelsheim, he undertook a trip to Heidelberg, the centre of Calvinist theology in Germany. Praetorius was so impressed by the Great Wine Barrel in Heidelberg Castle that he published a poem with the title "Vas Heidelbergense" in October 1595, praising its size as an apparent proof of the superiority of the Calvinist religion.

In his poem on Wolfgang Ernst, Count of Ysenburg, Büdingen and Birstein ("De pii magistratus officio"), he asked the Christian governments for a reformation of nation and church along the principles of the Bible and the Calvinist faith. Subsequently, the count called him as a princely preacher to his castle in Birstein near Frankfurt.

In the town of Birstein, Praetorius published church songs, a catechism, and a book for families about Christian education in 1597. In 1602, he made a contribution to the discussion about the interpretation of the Last Supper and the Sacraments in his book *De Sacrosanctis novi foederis Jesu Christi*



Persecution of witches



Heidelberg Castle Wine Barrel

Fight against the persecution of witches

In 1597 Praetorius was appointed as pastor to the Count of Büdingen/ Ysenburg in Birstein and had to witness the torture of 4 women accused of witchcraft.

- Gründlicher Bericht, (Thorough Report about Witchcraft and Witches) printed 1629 in Frankfurt am Main by Johann Niclas Stoltzenbergern/ Johann Carl Unckels
- several handwritten letters

Tributes

The church of Laudenbach displays a plaque in memory of Praetorius^[4] and on May 7, 2015 the city of Lippstadt named a path in his honor



Inauguration of a street name for Anton Praetorius in Lippstadt/ Germany on May 7th 2015

References

1. Williams, Gerhild S. (2013). "Demonologies". In Levack, Brian *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (https://books.google.com/books?id=Lum96_FPZp0C&pg=PR79). Oxford University Press. p. 79. ISBN 9780199578160
2. Hartmut Hegeler: Anton Praetorius, Kämpfer gegen Hexenprozesse und Folter, (fighter against the persecution of witches and against torture) Unna, 2002
3. de:Anton Praetorius
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvp3rla5fw>

Bibliography (in German)

- Hartmut Hegeler: *Anton Praetorius, Kämpfer gegen Hexenprozesse und Folter*(fighter against the persecution of witches and against torture) Unna, 2002 ISBN 3-9808969-4-3
- Hartmut Hegeler und Stefan Wiltshko: *Anton Praetorius und das 1. Große Fass von Heidelberg*(the 1. Great Wine Barrel in the Castle of Heidelberg) Unna, 2003 ISBN 3-9808969-0-0
- Anton Praetorius, De Sacrosanctis Sacramentis novi foederis Jesu Christi, Eine reformatorische Sakramentenlehre von 1602 über die hochheiligen Sakramente des Neuen Bundes Jesu Christi (teachings about the sacraments) Lateinische Originalschrift (the original writing in Latin with a translation into German, translated by Burghard Schmanck), herausgegeben und übersetzt von Burghard Schmanck, Bautz & Lag, Nordhausen 2010, ISBN 978-3-88309-550-9

External links

- <http://www.bautz.de> (Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon, Verlag Traugott Bautz)
- <http://www.anton-praetorius.de> biography and literature about Anton Praetorius
- <http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/%7Ecd2/drw/F3/praetor/o02wid.htm> reprinted text of the "Bericht" of Praetorius 1613
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20050326032054/http://www.theology.de/praetorius.htm> Biography including coloured pictures
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20050317002004/http://news.genealog.de/rheinessen/dittelsheim-hessloch/anton-praetorius-teil1.shtml> Praetorius as pastor in Dittelsheim (with pictures)
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20050220230627/http://www.sfn.uni-muenchen.de/hexenverfolgung/art784.htm> biography
- http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost16/Praetorius/pra_mag.htm (Latin texts of Praetorius)
- http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost16/Praetorius/pra_vas0.htm Latin text der Schrift von Praetorius Das 1. Große Fass von Heidelberg
- <http://www.schmanck.de/desacrFormat20Auszug.pdf> De sacrosanctis, Homilia quinta: De infantibus ante baptismum mortuis Latin text

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