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# Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century

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## Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century

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# Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century

*Edited by Andreas Hellerstedt*

Amsterdam University Press

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# Introduction

*Andreas Hellerstedt*

## Abstract

Introducing the theme of the volume, this chapter starts from the question posed in Plato's *Meno*: can virtue be taught, and if so, how? It considers changing views on virtue from the ancient world to the Enlightenment and the role virtue, as a concept, played in social, political, and religious contexts. It highlights the differences between philosophical traditions, but stresses the relevance of the study of virtue ethics in its historical context for the understanding of societies in the premodern world. Furthermore, this chapter connects virtue ethics to other important fields of study, such as the history of emotion, gender, and social identities.

**Keywords:** conceptual history, history of philosophy, intellectual history, history of virtue ethics

Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue can be taught, or is acquired by practice, not teaching? Or if neither by practice nor by learning, whether it comes to mankind by nature or in some other way?<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Plato begins the dialogue *Meno*. He continues by discussing, without really answering, what virtue is, asserting that it is fundamentally one, and not several things. Particular virtues must always be exercised with wisdom, it seems, and at one point we get the impression that virtue is itself a form of knowledge. However, towards the end of the work, Plato returns to the question of whether virtue can be taught, and specifically who may be able to teach it. The sophists, whose function was to educate sons of the ruling class in Athens in Plato's day, seem to be likely candidates, but they

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Laches; Protagoras; Meno; Euthydemus*, p. 265 (trans. W.R.M. Lamb). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

are dismissed vehemently: they do not even know what virtue is. Neither have prominent men of the past, famed for their virtue themselves, been able to pass virtue on to their own sons. Consequently, the dialogue ends with the problematic conclusion that virtue is not based on knowledge, but only on true belief. Men who act virtuously do not really know what they are doing. Therefore, virtue must come from neither education nor nature, but from divine inspiration.<sup>2</sup>

In this introduction, I will argue for the broad relevance of this theme for research on the history of premodern societies.<sup>3</sup> This means that I will ask more questions than I will answer, and more questions than will be answered within the chapters contained in this book. This will also lead me to consider virtue ethics as a system of thought – What characterizes such a system in very general terms? How did conceptions of virtue change over time? Perhaps this may even contribute to the definition of premodernity. Are there reasons to believe that virtue ethics was somehow characteristic of a premodern form of thinking? More importantly, which roles did virtue ethics play in the context of premodern societies? Why was virtue such a useful concept to work with, when analysing and legitimizing the organization of society?

As Reinhart Koselleck has pointed out, a word is ‘devoid of meaning’ if not studied ‘in its process of conceptual change’.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, a word is likewise unintelligible without the context of a particular time and place, as Quentin Skinner is well-known for arguing: ‘it is only when we have grasped the precise intellectual context’ within which a thinker is writing that we can recognize where his intention has been to deviate from, to repudiate, or to challenge his own ‘heritage’.<sup>5</sup> This means that

2 It seems likely that Plato is in fact contrasting the poor teaching methods of the sophists with the exemplary ones of Socrates, and that he is proposing a view according to which virtue-as-knowledge is *both* innate and taught (acquired). This point is well made by Devereaux, ‘Nature and Teaching in Plato’s *Meno*’. It should be added that Plato gives a different view of the same question in the *Protagoras*.

3 The category of ‘premodernity’ is not often used in historical research and has many obvious drawbacks. I have, nonetheless, argued elsewhere for the relevance of this period concept in the particular context of the history of virtue ethics. Many reasons could be presented for it, but the main one is in my view that the previous scholarly debate, originating in MacIntyre and Anscombe, has already established a set of questions and problems which can only be answered by taking the whole of the very long premodern period into account. For an extended argument, see Hellerstedt, ‘Möjligheter och utmaningar i dygdens historia’, a preliminary version of which is available in English as Hellerstedt, ‘Challenges and Possibilities in the History of Virtue’.

4 ‘bedeutungsblind’, ‘in seinem Begriffswandel’, Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, p. 116.

5 Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, p. 129.

the individual works studied are considered to be ‘moves in an argument’ but must also include an understanding of ‘what traditions [a particular thinker] reacts against, what lines of argument he takes up, what changes he introduces into existing debates’.<sup>6</sup> With Bo Lindberg, I believe that it is possible, especially within the framework of crossdisciplinary collaboration, to combine the study of long-term conceptual change *and* the analysis of a single text in its historical context.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, that is the aim of this book: to combine a number of individual studies with a common set of research problems, carried out against a common background of historical tradition.

The main purpose of the research project ‘Teaching Virtue’, which has been active since the beginning of 2013 at the Department of History, Stockholm University, has been to bring together undergraduate and postgraduate students and faculty members in a crossdisciplinary research environment. This has been achieved through the organization of seminars, workshops, courses, and conferences. The primary aim has thus been to facilitate cooperation, interaction, and personal contacts. This has been done with a specific common research focus in mind. The participants are united by their interest in the study of the educational history of virtue ethics. The question we all try to answer within our respective fields is this: how was the teaching and learning of virtue envisioned and represented in premodern Europe? From this basic question, several secondary issues follow. The individual participants provide answers from widely different perspectives, using different methods and primary sources. The crossdisciplinary approach has made comparative studies a natural part of activities within the project. While the project as a whole has not been situated within the academic discipline of the history of philosophy, the moral philosophical problems outlined above make up the foundation of the individual research projects and the issues under discussion.

Despite Plato’s doubts, kings, advisers, philosophers, theologians, and artists were constantly occupied with the problem of teaching members of their societies the virtues upon which the stability and prosperity of those societies were thought to rest.<sup>8</sup> This holds true throughout antiquity, the Middle Ages, and into the early modern period. Erasmus expressed this sentiment more clearly than most:

6 Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 8. This seems to me to agree well with Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 52, 55, 64-68.

7 Lindberg, *Den antika skevheten*, p. 36 (incl. n. 67).

8 One of few works to take both a longer and broader view of the history of virtue is Classen, *Aretai und Virtutes*, which does indeed make the point that conceptions of virtue are as old as civilization itself.

First and foremost, a prince who is about to begin his rule should be instructed that the greatest hope of the state lies in a good education of children [...] Thereby it can happen, that there is no need for many laws or punishments, which is not surprising where the citizens do what is right of their own free will.<sup>9</sup>

From the earliest beginnings of the history of philosophy, ethics was dominated by the concept of virtue. Socrates and Plato formulated their ideas in response to the everyday terms and concepts of their contemporaries, and it was a commonplace notion already in their day that a well-ordered society was founded on the virtue of its citizens. The virtues were connected to the achievement of happiness (*eudaimonia*). It was the starting point of ancient moral philosophy as a whole, not a unique position represented by Plato or Aristotle. They both agreed that virtue was not a means through which we achieve happiness, but rather that the exercise of virtue in itself constituted happiness. In this, it is likely that their views were more original.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, both Plato and Aristotle started out from the commonly held view that there were a number of different and perhaps fairly independent virtues. The most well known division is, of course, that of the four cardinal virtues, as described in Plato's *Republic*, Book 4, 426-435. However, both philosophers and many others who followed them were interested in how these different virtues were interconnected. Plato is often considered to have defended a 'strong' version of the 'unity of the virtues' argument.<sup>11</sup> This view also came to be highly influential in subsequent centuries. Aristotle is generally held to have considered the virtues to be separate, although he too viewed them as interconnected, but perhaps not in the 'strong' sense that Plato did. Because Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* came to be so influential all throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the work here.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* returns to the questions asked by Plato in the *Meno*. In general terms, Aristotle sets out to answer the common question of classical moral philosophy, namely what constitutes *eudaimonia*. In all practical action, man always has a view to an end. Among the ends we strive for, one is desired for its own sake. This is the supreme good. The supreme

9 'Illud in primis admonendus est princeps gubernaculis admovendus, praecipuam reip. spem sitam esse in recta educatione puerorum [...] Hac ratione fiet, ut non sit opus multis legibus, aut supliciiis, nimirum civibus suapte sponte, quod rectum est sequentibus', Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio principis Christiani*, p. 86.

10 See, for instance, Price, *Virtue and Reason in Plato and Aristotle*, introd.

11 Price, *Virtue and Reason*, p. 15; Carl Joachim Classen, 'Platon: philosophische Überlegungen'.

good for mankind follows from man's function (*ergon*). Man's function is the active use of his distinguishing characteristic: the exercise of the faculties of the soul in conformity with reason. A good man does this well, and doing this is virtue, meaning excellence (*arete*), which is the supreme good.<sup>12</sup> This not only means that the rational soul should rule over the human body, but more specifically that the rational part of the soul should rule the lower, irrational parts of the soul, as far as this is possible and desirable.<sup>13</sup> Aristotle also argues that a happy life requires certain external goods, in addition to virtue, because exercising virtue would be impeded without them.<sup>14</sup> To an extent such goods do include innate natural capacities for virtue.<sup>15</sup> But it is more important that virtue is not, as the Stoics and Plato would have it, self-sufficient. Regarding the acquisition of virtue, it comes from habituation and training, which is largely 'pre-rational', although the exercise of virtue itself, in an already well-educated, well-brought-up individual, must involve reason. We learn to be virtuous from a young age, under the guidance of teachers and parents, but it is also very much our own responsibility to develop into the right kind of person.<sup>16</sup>

Aristotle classifies the virtues as belonging to two broad types, corresponding to the rational and sensitive parts of the soul: intellectual and moral virtues. The moral virtues are strengthened by good habits: doing whatever is characteristic of a particular virtue makes us better at it. Also, excess or deficiency is harmful to virtue, and can destroy it. Only the right measure in the activity strengthens virtue: a man does not become brave by constantly running away from danger, and one may become rash by thoughtlessly throwing oneself into it. Only through the measured management of his fears, under the guidance of reason, will he become brave in acting bravely.<sup>17</sup> What is virtuous also largely depends on the situation. One should feel the right emotions or act in the right way, at the right time, towards the right people, and so on.<sup>18</sup> Finally, it is made very clear that virtue is difficult to achieve. Consequently, Aristotle also spends some effort in distinguishing the different ways in which we may fall short of the ideal, which vices are worse than others, and which are more or less similar to true virtue, and so on.

12 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b22-1098a20 (trans. H. Rackham).

13 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1102a27-1102b29.

14 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1099b1-1101a6; Cooper, 'Aristotle on the Goods of Fortune'.

15 This is mentioned in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1144b33-1145a3.

16 Broadie, 'Philosophical Introduction', p. 18.

17 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104a13-1104b3.

18 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b16-1106b25.

The study of ethics is also the study of character (*ethos*), which is significant. Aristotle defines virtues as stable, acquired *dispositions* (*hexeis*) of character.<sup>19</sup> Although he does not claim that virtue can be wholly given to us by nature, he does discuss the interplay of nature, habit, and education, as did many other classical authors, including writers of history and biography. There are, however, significant differences in the way literary representations of historical figures were constructed in terms of virtue: whereas a philosopher would be inclined to investigate the moral development of a child into adulthood, often considering adolescence a crucial period, the historian would often be more concerned with evaluating and explaining the character of a grown man as an agent in the historical narrative. For these reasons, characters of classical literature, biography, and history often come across as products of a fixed *ethos*, giving the impression that they were determined from birth to become such as they are because of their innate nature, temperament, or something similar. More closely examined, however, it is clear that writers such as the immensely influential Plutarch did not consider character to be a direct consequence of temperament. In fact, their view cannot even be reduced to an interplay between innate and acquired dispositions, as outer circumstances as well as individual rational choice could also be seen to play their part. Tacitus's Tiberius, for instance, is in certain passages portrayed as consciously and deliberately evil, choosing what is wrong, despite being capable of what is right.<sup>20</sup>

Another difference is the one between philosophy and rhetoric. Aristotle did consider rhetoric to be in a sense a part of ethics (or politics).<sup>21</sup> However, ethics was also a means among others to achieve the objective of rhetoric: persuasion. Apart from the obvious use of the virtues in describing people one wishes either to praise or to blame, it is also important for the speaker himself to possess a trustworthy character in order for his speech to persuade. But Aristotle's *Rhetoric* advised that the effective speaker only needs to *appear* to possess the virtues himself in order for his character (*ethos*) to facilitate persuasion. Whether he actually is virtuous or not was strictly speaking irrelevant.<sup>22</sup> Later writers argued instead that a good orator must also be a truly good man, and the Roman ideal of a *vir bonus dicendi peritus* ('a good man skilled in speaking') lasted until the Renaissance.<sup>23</sup>

19 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b19-1106b14.

20 This issue is investigated by Gill, 'Question of Character Development', esp. pp. 481-86.

21 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1356a30-1356a32.

22 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1366a10-1366a34.

23 Classen, 'Aristoteles: Forderungen and den vollkommenen Redner'; Cox, 'Rhetoric and Ethics in Machiavelli'.

Furthermore, what has been said up to now mainly regards the moral virtues. They are indeed often at the centre of modern interpretations, as are their political implications and applications, such as they are presented in the *Politics*. However, it is important to emphasize that Aristotle seems to have considered contemplation to be the highest form of human activity, an argument he makes in *Nicomachean Ethics* 10. The contemplation of a solitary sage may be described as an activity, but it does not concern action, and seems to present an ideal quite different from the virtues which are discussed in the previous books. This has puzzled many modern scholars, but attempts have been made to explain this perceived inconsistency. Several scholars have, in various ways, stressed that the ‘contest of lives’ (such as that between the active and contemplative life and the life of pleasure) was a trope that Aristotle inherited from his forerunners. In the context of ancient philosophy then, the differences within Aristotle’s ethics should not come as a surprise. Unfortunately, exactly how these different ways of life relate to one another in Aristotle seems to remain an open question.<sup>24</sup>

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the classical philosophical discussions of virtue in terms of moral philosophy were closely connected to politics. Both Aristotle and Plato considered the virtues on a societal scale. This is most famously done in Plato’s *Republic*, but Aristotle also mentions the way different constitutions can degenerate through loss of virtue in both the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, although he did not agree that this happened in the regular cycles proposed by Plato. Following Plato’s lead, later authors, notably Polybius, used this conception of society as a cycle of virtue and vice as a grand theory for explaining history. Such theories became highly influential, not least in the Renaissance, where Machiavelli combined them with Galenic theory, viewing the classes of society as ‘umori’, humours of the political body. They were also easily combined with the myth of the golden age as found in Hesiod or Ovid, as well as with the Christian story of the fall of man.<sup>25</sup>

Virtue ethics saw continuous changes throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages. Stoicism and Neoplatonism were increasingly important in the Roman centuries, and both influenced Christianity. Within Neoplatonism,

24 Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*; Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*; Lockwood, ‘Competing Ways of Life’, p. 363, convincingly argues that the ways of life need not necessarily be considered mutually exclusive. On the contrary, a life of contemplation can include moral virtue as well as pleasure.

25 See, for instance, Parel, *Machiavellian Cosmos*. Koselleck argues that it was only with the eighteenth century and the modern idea of progress that a view of the future as ‘open’ broke through; Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, pp. 9-66.



a theory of degrees of virtue was developed. This will be dealt with in Eliasson's chapter in this volume, but it is important to note that such a theory fits well with both Christianity and the hierarchical view of the world and society, which often accompanied it in premodern Europe. Le Roy Ladurie's famous study of Saint-Simon is a testament to the continued importance of such ideas. By the early eighteenth century, however, they were on their way out, and Ladurie describes Saint-Simon as 'a sort of monolith displaced from its natural environment, a Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite somehow wandered into France – Lord knows why – in the middle of our second millennium'.<sup>26</sup>

Of great importance for the Christian tradition was Augustine, who developed a version of the unity of the virtues, which fit well with his Christian Platonic outlook. He considered love (love of God, Christian charity) to be the most prominent virtue, without which other virtues would be quite hollow. However, he did criticize the Stoics, as he associated their view of the unity argument with a conception of human perfection he was not prepared to support. For instance, he preferred to describe man as gradually ascending towards the light of God, rather than, as the Stoics would, describing him as either perfectly wise or completely ignorant.<sup>27</sup>

After the fall of the Roman Empire, political thought generally shifted with changing circumstances. In Europe, the dominant political form was monarchy, and so it remained until the age of revolutions. Virtue ethics continued to be relevant to political thought, although it increasingly found expression in the 'mirrors for princes', which Tjällén's and Hellerstedt's chapters explore. The debate in recent research has also highlighted the resurgence of 'republican' ideas in the early modern period, following the landmark works of Skinner and Pocock.<sup>28</sup> The present volume will refer to these developments only very sparingly. However, it is quite clear that such ideas had become prominent even in the context of an absolute monarchy by the late eighteenth century, as Nell's study of the Swedish case (included in this volume) shows.

26 Le Roy Ladurie, *Saint-Simon*, p. 347 (trans. A. Goldhammer).

27 Langan, 'Augustine on the Unity'.

28 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*; Skinner and Gelderen, *Republicanism*. Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern*, argues that the republicanism of the classical world was fundamentally different from modern liberal democracy and at odds with Christianity. The ancients, he argues, valued virtue (the political life of a free man) as an end in itself, whereas the moderns would consider political freedom a means to the end, which was the preservation of life, happiness, or individual well-being; in short, Rahe argues that material well-being was a means to virtue in the classical world, and that in the modern world virtue became a means to material well-being.

## Communities of disposition: social and gendered aspects of the virtues in premodernity

Following the common views in the ancient world outlined above, Roman writers and scholastic philosophers described virtue as a 'habitus mentis' or 'habitus animi', corresponding to the Aristotelian view of virtue as a stable disposition (*hexis*) acquired by habituation (the English 'habit' should not be confused with the Latin 'habitus' in this context!), which makes virtuous people prepared to act well according to the circumstances, without the need for time-consuming deliberation or reflection.<sup>29</sup> The concept was taken up by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose views have become immensely influential. They do in my view illustrate why the historical study and awareness of virtue ethics can contribute to our understanding of social history. For Bourdieu, habitus is a system of 'durable, transposable dispositions', 'the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations', 'history turned into nature'; it structures practice and representation, and works without the 'conscious aiming at ends'. For that reason, habitus can help us explain how societal norms are internalized and how practices are generated through human interaction: 'Through the habitus, the structure which has produced it governs practice.' In short, habitus – i.e. in our case, virtue – is the nexus through which structures are perpetuated or change. It explains human action without reducing it to a simplistic maximization of interest, economic advantage, etc. In Bourdieu's view, this certainly amounts to a form of materialist determinism: virtue may be perceived as the 'community of dispositions', which is common to a class or other social group, as habitus is a mark of social position and social distance.<sup>30</sup>

As already mentioned, Aristotle did not view virtue as an effect of material factors such as the constitution of one's body. If virtue were given by nature, it would not be meaningful to praise a man for being virtuous. It would take no effort, whereas Aristotle in fact held that the greater the effort, the greater the difficulty of his undertakings, the greater the honour bestowed on a virtuous man would be. However, in a virtuous man, passions and emotions are conditioned in the right way, so as to contribute to right action. This view persisted for a long time, although seemingly at odds with Christian notions of the body. Well-used anger was, for instance, a part of a king's exercise of justice, despite the fact that wrath was held to be one of the seven deadly sins.<sup>31</sup>

29 Bejczy, *Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages*, pp. 257-59.

30 Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, pp. 72-96, quotes at pp. 72, 78, 95 (trans. R. Nice).

31 Rosenwein, 'Introduction', and Althoff, *Ira regis*, pp. 61, 64-73.

It is also clear that many character traits, similar to virtues or vices, are dependent on or a direct result of one's temperament. It also seems that the physical constitution of the body has a part to play in attaining true virtue. For instance, a form of confidence, similar to that of the brave man, comes with a sanguine temperament.<sup>32</sup> Related views also underlie Aristotle's remarks on gender. In classical antiquity generally, as in the Middle Ages and still in the early modern period, the theory of the four humours provided a basis for distinguishing physical and mental differences between human beings of different age, sex, geographical, even social origins. Women and children were considered to be of a wet and cold temperament, and their capacities for rational thought and deliberation were often regarded as impaired in various ways as a result. When this paradigm began to crumble in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was gradually replaced by various forms of mechanism. In practice, however, theories explaining the workings of the human body were many and varied for a long time. Few were as reductionist as those of La Mettrie. Linnaeus's view, for instance, combined elements of the scholastic tradition with mechanism, as well as vitalist theories of his own day. Furthermore, the famous dualism of Descartes was perhaps not such a radical departure as has sometimes been suggested, and at all events retained the fundamental opposition between reason and the passions, which underlie so much of early modern ethical and political thought.<sup>33</sup>

Virtue was not only gendered, it was also differentiated according to social status or estates. Aristotle himself spoke about virtues appropriate to different functions, such as those of men, women, and children in the family and the rulers and ruled in society. Martin Luther was critical of scholasticism and Aristotelianism, which he regarded as harmful to theology because they were not founded on the only legitimate source of religious precepts, the Bible. However, he and his followers did not do away with virtue ethics entirely. Indeed, his theological views can be compared to the Augustinian version of the 'unity of the virtues' argument. More importantly, virtues were central to his political thought. In political terms, virtue was an important constituent of the good order, which was

32 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1117b9-1117b22.

33 See, for instance, Laqueur, *Making Sex*; Alanen, *Descartes's Concept of Mind*; Broberg, *Homo Sapiens L.* Leif Runefelt has recently argued that there was little practical difference between the psychologies of Aristotle and Wolff, and that consequently the political thought (taken in a very broad sense) of eighteenth-century Sweden was still, to all intents and purposes, Aristotelian, with a distinct stress on inculcating virtue among the citizens. Runefelt, *Hushållningens dygder* (in particular ch. 2) and Runefelt, *Dygden som välståndets grund*.

the end of political life in Lutheranism. This had little or nothing to do with salvation. Instead, it is in discussions of estates, calling, and worldly professions that we find important clues to the continued importance of virtue ethics in the Lutheran states of northern Europe. In the context of secular society, Luther's ethics resemble, as Risto Saarinen has pointed out, exactly those late medieval views on grace and cooperation in virtue that he disliked so much when discussing salvation through faith alone. We also find function-specific virtues, such as were important in the Middle Ages, and mentioned already in Aristotle. People perform different functions in society, and correspondingly possess virtues particular to that function.<sup>34</sup> Classical, medieval, and early modern views of society almost invariably shared the common fundamental ideals of unity, harmony, and concord. Different functions must work in unison towards the same goal: 'Ein jeder lerne sein Lection, so wirt es wol im Hause ston', as the 'Haustafel', which concludes Luther's small catechism, has it.<sup>35</sup> In both Luther and Aristotle, the relation between man and woman in the context of the family is the prime example of functionally differentiated virtues. Despite this, it has been claimed in a recent overview that historical research on the gendered aspects of virtue ethics has been nearly non-existent up until the 2010s.<sup>36</sup> In this volume, these aspects are most directly explored by Fogelberg Rota, Eyice, and Kolrud, although they are clearly relevant to all contributions.

### **The relevance of the modern revival: an analytical definition of virtue**

Although constantly changing, premodern ethical systems remained, to a large part, systems of virtue ethics, and they differed from modern systems based on duty or utility. When we speak about moral issues today, we may refer to laws or principles, even civic duties, individual rights, or human suffering and welfare. However, we seldom speak of chastity or fortitude.

34 Saarinen, 'Ethics in Luther's Theology', pp. 202-3, 208, 211; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1162a16-1162a33, and *Politics* 1259b20-1260b4 (trans. H. Rackham). It is important to note that this is discussed within the context of the family, and refers to relations between parents and children, masters and slaves, and so on. This was then taken also to hold for society at large. Aristotle makes it clear that children and slaves have only an incomplete or relative virtue, not virtue in the full sense most often used in his *Ethics*.

35 Approx. 'When each and every one learns his lesson, the house will be in good order', Luther, *Der kleine Catechismus*.

36 Green and Mews, 'Introduction', p. ix.

Virtue ethics seems to be a tradition that has not survived modernity, even though it may have begun to experience a revival in recent years.

The modern discussion of virtue ethics is to a significant extent the result of *After Virtue* by Alasdair MacIntyre, published in 1981. Since MacIntyre specifically claims that modern moral philosophy, of which he himself is a part, has lost touch with a premodern, in essence Aristotelian tradition of virtue ethics, it is reasonable to start with him when discussing the problems outlined in the first part of this introduction. To simplify things somewhat one might say that MacIntyre does indeed consider virtue ethics to be characteristic of premodernity, while arguing that modernity has tried to replace it with duty- or consequence-based systems, after having abandoned an Aristotelian teleological conception of man. However, MacIntyre is hardly representative of the developments in moral philosophy in recent years. Therefore, it will be necessary to consider some alternative points of view, as well as certain problems in MacIntyre regarding the relevance of his claims for historical research.

As the very first example of the return of virtue ethics within twentieth-century moral philosophy, it is not MacIntyre, but G.E.M. Anscombe (1919-2001), who is usually given. Anscombe was an English philosopher and disciple of Wittgenstein, who made important contributions to central problems in philosophy regarding human action, intention, and cause and effect. In an article entitled 'Modern Moral Philosophy' (1958), she criticized modern moral philosophy for lacking a proper foundation and pointed out the need for a new direction. In particular, she argued that modern forms of ethics based on duty or rules (deontological ethics) have outlived themselves. Interestingly, she claimed that the reasons for this were largely historical. The concept of a divine lawgiver has been abandoned, with far-reaching and inescapable consequences: 'if such a conception is dominant for many centuries, and then is given up, it is a natural result that the concepts of "obligation", of being bound or required by a law, should remain though they had lost their root'. Without the metaphysical foundation (most often a Christian one) that ethics had historically had but now had lost, it had become hollow. We live, she argued, with the superstructure of a moral philosophy without the base of metaphysics that made it a defensible system: 'The situation, if I am right, was the interesting one of the survival of a concept outside the framework of thought that made it a really intelligible one.'<sup>37</sup> However, she also claimed that this does not mean that (modern) moral philosophy is an impossible undertaking without the conception of a God-given law: the virtue ethics

37 Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', p. 6.

of Aristotle does not need it, yet can provide the necessary foundation. It is important to point out that Anscombe made a sharp distinction between Aristotelian virtue ethics on the one hand and Judaeo-Christian law-based ethics on the other. According to Anscombe, it is in fact because of the great dominance of the latter that we have lost contact with the former.<sup>38</sup>

Scottish-born philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* is still the single most important work in the revival of virtue ethics (and its history) in our time. MacIntyre maintained, very much as Anscombe had done, that modern moral philosophy finds itself in a highly lamentable state of confusion. We cling to terms and concepts from an age long passed, the meaning and real content of which has been lost to us. This is primarily a crisis for MacIntyre's own academic subject, but it also has a wider societal significance: there is no rational way of reaching consensus on moral issues in our culture, according to MacIntyre, and thus philosophical arguments are reducible to basic premises which are simply not compatible or even in obvious conflict. Freedom stands against equality, justice against self-preservation, and there our discussion ends. Philosophers may claim that there are generally valid principles to fall back on, such as obligation or public utility. However, in fact, MacIntyre argues, these have long since been written off as respectable philosophical premises. If it were not for the historical dimension, the discussion would be entirely unintelligible. Nevertheless, the values we have lost still haunt us, and we still wish ethical argumentation to be rational, even though we know this to be impossible. In elaborating on his argument, MacIntyre severely criticizes most modern attempts in the field. Nietzsche and Sartre are rejected as belonging in a philosophical 'bestiary', while Rawls and Nozick are honoured with a slightly lengthier refutation: he considers them both to be examples of the deficiencies inherent in modern liberal individualism. MacIntyre describes their positions as constructed around the assumption that human beings as members of society have been stranded on a deserted island together with a group of total strangers, and he describes modern politics as a war fought by non-violent means.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, the root causes of these shortcomings of modernity are historical. Admittedly, MacIntyre does question whether we may ever be able to recover what we have lost, but he still seems to view the sort of unproblematic

38 Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', pp. 8, 14-19. This is how the article has often been read, but there are alternative interpretations. Some have claimed that Anscombe in fact tried to put forward an indirect argument for a religiously founded ethics: see Driver, 'Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe', § 5.1, for an extended treatment of this topic.

39 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 11-22, 244-55.

collective identity shared by all, which he considers to have been characteristic of premodern societies, to represent a possible alternative. This collective identity included a shared belief in the good life for man within the bounds of communities of the village, family, and kin, but above all it was grounded in the metaphysical foundation of a conception of human nature. According to this conception, human beings were created for a specific purpose. This is, of course, where virtue ethics enters the discussion. MacIntyre considers Aristotelian ethics to be the strongest premodern system of moral philosophy. In contrast to Anscombe, MacIntyre does not perceive any decisive conflict between virtue ethics and Christianity. The central point that they shared was the quest for the good and a corresponding rejection of self-interest. The break with this tradition occurred with Luther and Hobbes. What is sketched is certainly a drawn-out process: the last to figure in MacIntyre's exposé is Jane Austen, who, he claims, defended a classical conception of virtue, even though she did so within the framework of the bourgeois family.<sup>40</sup>

Much could be said about this view of history. It is worth stressing that MacIntyre was not a professional historian. In fact, he is very critical of modern social science, pointing to Max Weber in particular as complicit in the failings of modernity, although from the point of view of intellectual history MacIntyre and Weber seem to share a simplified and idealized view of premodern 'traditional' societies, in strong contrast to a rational but demystified modernity. Be that as it may, I believe that MacIntyre and other modern moral philosophers can contribute greatly to clarifying the concepts and problems that historians use, particularly when studying premodern societies or the long transition to modernity. However, to be able to speak about virtue as a concept characteristic of premodernity, we must first of all establish what it is that we are actually speaking of.

MacIntyre's description of virtue in premodern systems of ethics centres above all around the conception of virtue as standing in an internal means-end relationship to an overarching purpose (the supreme good). This means that the virtues are part of the end itself, and that they are their own motivation. Aristotle does not (explicitly) use the internal/external distinction himself, but Aquinas does, and it seems that this distinction describes many virtue ethical systems in a useful way. Thus, MacIntyre defines virtue in the following way: 'A virtue is an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving such goods.'<sup>41</sup>

40 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 238-43.

41 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 191; Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, pp. 100-6.

As I have already indicated, MacIntyre claims that this conception of virtue as internal in relation to its end was not exclusive to ancient Greek or Roman philosophers, but formed a part of the Christian tradition as well. It did, however, conflict with the views of many Enlightenment philosophers, such as the utilitarians (Benjamin Franklin being MacIntyre's example). For them, the relation was clearly external. The end may be achieved in different ways, but the means has no intrinsic value. Thus, while for such thinkers virtue may well be a means to an end (such as general or individual happiness), it is only one means among many. As long as these means contribute equally well to the end, they are interchangeable. Thus the value of virtue is only instrumental.<sup>42</sup>

This is also where an historian encounters significant problems in MacIntyre. Contrasting, as he does, a modern, rationalized but meaningless existence to a premodern society in which virtue ethics provided a set of stable values is an unwarranted simplification of complex historical processes. The tensions between the 'classical tradition' (of which MacIntyre writes) and Christianity were considerable from St. Paul and Augustine onwards. Furthermore, beside the Aristotelian tradition there were strong Platonic influences on classical and medieval, as well as early modern, systems of virtue ethics. Luther was not the first to reject the pagan 'sour dough', and somewhat paradoxically, the thought of Aristotle also saw a strong revival in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries *within* Lutheranism.<sup>43</sup> One could also argue that the decisive break with tradition occurred not with Bentham or Kant, as MacIntyre would have it, but with late thirteenth-century voluntarism within scholasticism, as Bonnie Kent has done, or even with sixteenth-century probabilism, as Rudolf Schüssler has argued.<sup>44</sup>

Above all, there are many instances in premodern historical periods of philosophical systems in which virtue plays an important role, without this having very much to do with Aristotle or even having a similar function as virtue has in Aristotelianism. The Stoics, of both the classical and early modern varieties, are among the most important examples of this.<sup>45</sup> The same is true of those new systems of thought, based on various versions

42 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 197-99.

43 For instance, Porter, 'Virtue Ethics in the Medieval Period'. Excellent studies of the application of Aristotelian virtue ethics in economic thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are Runefelt, *Hushållningens dygder*, and Runefelt, *Dygden som välståndets grund*, quoted at p. 21.

44 Kent, *Virtues of the Will*; Schüssler, 'On the Anatomy of Probabilism'; it should be noted that Schüssler argues against Anscombe and not MacIntyre in this instance; Krays and Saarinen, 'Introduction', however, do criticize MacIntyre's nostalgia and make the case for the period of 1300-1700 being exceedingly rich in developments and debates on moral philosophy.

45 Lindberg, *Seneca*, pp. 31-50, and Lindberg, *Stoicism och stat*, in particular pp. 46-56, 73-85, 105-15.



of materialism, rationalism, and natural law, which were so important in the early modern period. They would most often not fit MacIntyre's definition of virtue. Stretching this definition, we might label Machiavelli and Lipsius virtue ethicists, but Hobbes and Pufendorf could hardly be so described, no matter how much virtue is lauded by them – this problem is explored further in Lindberg's chapter in this volume. In fact, it may well be the case that constructing a historically useful definition of virtue or virtue ethics is strictly speaking impossible. This may, however, not be a bad thing: the problems we encounter can perhaps clarify the terms and concepts historians use when speaking of an 'Aristotelian tradition' or even 'premodern' society and its norms and values.

In addition, there are other points of view to be found among modern moral philosophers, which may prove highly relevant to a historical exploration of the problems I have outlined. American liberal feminist philosopher Martha Nussbaum considers virtue ethics from a different angle. Nussbaum does not lack a historical perspective; on the contrary, her consciousness of the intellectual and social context in which the Greek and Roman philosophers lived and wrote is always a part of her discussion of their arguments. What she does lack is nostalgia over a lost heritage or tradition. She is very critical of MacIntyre, whom she sorts among 'thinkers who are both antitheory and antireason and appeal to ancient Greek ethics with that agenda'.<sup>46</sup> For Nussbaum, then, the philosophers of antiquity are relevant to the modern day in a more direct and less problematic way, even when they express positions we would never share. It would seem that to her, it would not be true to the spirit of Socrates if we did not scrutinize Socrates' views, criticizing them where appropriate. Nussbaum has famously argued for the continued relevance of studies of the canonical Western classics in higher education, where she claims that such studies can aim at a fruitful discussion of the questions of our age: religious and cultural pluralism, social and economic justice, gender equality, and so on.<sup>47</sup>

More directly relevant to historical research, in my view, is Nussbaum's discussion of virtue ethics in her earlier, and perhaps even better known work, *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986). Here, Nussbaum makes two important points. First, that the virtue ethics of Aristotle considers human happiness as dependent on circumstances beyond our control: 'luck', 'fortune', *tyche*. Second, that for Aristotle, emotions make up an indispensable part of practising the virtues: 'Aristotle's final point [...] is that [...] [the] virtuous

46 Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, p. xxvii.

47 Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*.

condition is not, itself, something hard and invulnerable. Its yielding and open posture towards the world gives it the fragility, as well as the beauty, of a plant.<sup>48</sup>

Nussbaum has a certain preference for organic metaphors when describing human virtue and happiness (or ‘flourishing’), as did many premodern philosophers. A flower requires care, watering, and nourishment to grow, and it is to a high degree dependent on its environment. The flower can be contrasted by another common metaphor, the hard gemstone, which, being perfect, needs nothing, but neither is it dynamic – it does not grow and cannot be improved. Thus, although precious stones were historically often used as metaphors for virtue,<sup>49</sup> Nussbaum would argue that man is a living being, not an unfeeling, sterile, and passive rock. Autonomy may well be a respectable ideal in moral philosophy, but if we were to eliminate all those elements of our existence, which we cannot control – friends, family, community – we would be left with an impoverished life.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, Nussbaum argues that emotions must be considered an integral part of the virtues. She prefers to speak of ‘the rationality of the passions’, strongly opposing the traditional dichotomy between reason and emotion. They are, in her view, compatible, and both are indispensable to a good human life. Clearly, this perspective is also feminist: the hard, reductionist point of view, according to which the good life becomes synonymous with the elimination of everything beyond human control, is also a male point of view. On a general level, Nussbaum characterizes Aristotle’s ethics as anthropocentric, a term that encapsulates much of what distinguishes his views from other systems of virtue ethics. In this way, Nussbaum delineates a set of problems, including not only those forms of the history of emotions – which is at present a growing field<sup>51</sup> – but also such aspects as the conception of man and his nature, gender, and body, and man’s dependence on and interplay with society and the environment; aspects which must always be at the forefront of the historical study of conceptions of virtue and virtue ethics.

48 Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, p. 340.

49 For instance, Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, p. 21.

50 Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, pp. 7, 55-63, 67, 80, 103, 238, 327-30, 336-40, 347-50, 366, 397, 415-18, 420-21; an excellent example of how this problem has been studied historically, using early modern sources, is Savin, *Fortunas klädnader*.

51 Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, pp. 41-47; Barbara Rosenwein has long argued for a history of emotions, but it seems that the approach of William Reddy is particularly suited to the aims of the present volume; see, for instance, Reddy, ‘Logic of Action’.

But where do the debates within modern moral philosophy lead us? It would have been a simple task if it were possible to provide an ideal type definition of the concept of virtue (probably very much like the Aristotelian view), which could then be followed through the centuries. However, this is hardly meaningful, even if one were only interested in the Aristotelian tradition (if there is such a thing). This method would most likely lead only to an evaluation of different systems of thought, resulting in some being deemed closer to the ideal type, others less. It is much more interesting if we instead, just like moral philosophers of recent years, also explore those systems of virtue ethics that do not originate in the Aristotelian strain.

To give but one example, Confucianism has been the subject of much recent work, showing that it shares many general points of view with ancient Greek ethics, without there being any reason to suspect that the one system has been influenced by the other.<sup>52</sup> The history of the reception of Confucian thought in the early modern West is likewise an important example of how virtue ethics, historically speaking, has been much more than just Aristotle. It shows that conceptions of virtue, perhaps because they were so well entrenched in the societies in which they were formed, could be amalgams of ideas of very different origins. German eighteenth-century philosopher Christian Wolff, who was fascinated by Confucianism, claimed that the Chinese had been ruled by philosopher emperors (who were also models of virtue for their subjects) long before Confucius himself appeared: Confucius was 'not the founder, but the restorer of Chinese wisdom'. Thus, Wolff created an ideal representation of the ancient Chinese in accordance with his own political ideal: a modern version of Plato's philosopher-king. From his starting point, Wolff goes on to show how classical Chinese philosophy was in perfect harmony with the modern, rationalist system of natural law, which he himself propounded. Not surprisingly, he considered the Chinese to have held that the perfection of oneself and one's fellow men was the *finis ultimus* (the 'final end') of man's life. This is Wolff's own position, of course, and he even admits that the Chinese have a somewhat 'confused' point of view on the matter.<sup>53</sup> However, in this concept of perfection, Wolff does position himself close to the tradition of scholastic philosophy with which he also often disagreed.

It seems then that it would be wiser to study the various uses to which the concept of virtue has been put, instead of trying to reach a universally valid definition. This seems more appropriate for cultural history, as it enables us

52 For instance, Ivanhoe, 'Virtue Ethics and the Chinese Confucian Tradition'.

53 Wolff, *Oratio de sinarum philosophia practica*, p. 17.

to understand changes over time and compare differences across different parts of Europe. For this purpose, it may suffice to state that by 'virtue' we will understand an acquired and stable, morally good stance or disposition. This must then be submitted to various reservations: virtue can be more or less constant; it can be more or less similar to a practical skill or intellectual capacity, and more or less a specifically *moral* disposition; it can to a greater or lesser extent be regarded as both a state and as an activity, etc.

This approach also leads to further questions. How were these virtues acquired? Were they considered to be achieved through practical exercise, intellectual study, or imitation of examples? How important were innate talents and gifts and other natural predispositions perceived to be? Were emotions, passions, and affectations considered a hindrance or a prerequisite for virtue? Which role did ideas about acquired or inherited virtue play in legitimating hierarchies based on gender, profession, class, or estate? To what extent was human nature itself considered to be an impediment to the acquisition of virtue? And to what extent was virtue deemed to be dependent on social and material preconditions?

## Overview of the volume

The questions posed above are best answered empirically. This volume includes chapters that are the result of ten independent research projects. The range is very wide both chronologically and geographically. A large part deals with Scandinavian sources. This might seem odd, as Scandinavia is usually considered a peripheral and marginal part of Europe. We do not believe this to be entirely true. The Scandinavian countries were indeed Christianized at a relatively late date and were for that reason largely recipients of continental culture and learning for a long time. However, in the early modern period (as most period experts would agree) Sweden and Denmark were neither marginal, nor peripheral. Instead they were the leading Lutheran monarchies, shaping the fate of Western Europe as we know it today. Furthermore, the Scandinavian countries were characterized by certain distinguishing societal and cultural features, which make them worthy of detailed study in their own right. On the most basic level, the Scandinavian countries had a peculiarly structured society in premodern times: relatively egalitarian societies with a strong free peasantry and a relatively weak aristocracy, as well as well-developed local self-governance. On the political level, Scandinavia was never a part of the Roman Empire. Although Denmark was very briefly subject to the German Emperor during the Middle

Ages, this never amounted to much de facto. Related to this was a particular intellectual heritage, with a common legal and literary tradition. Together with the fact that previous studies in the history of virtue ethics have been almost exclusively focused on the familiar western European centre of classical Greece and Rome, France, Italy, England, Spain, and Germany, not to mention its focus on the great men of the Western philosophical tradition, all of this speaks strongly for the relevance of Scandinavian sources to the story of virtue ethics. Thus, far from reflecting a peripheral or marginal interest, we believe that the introduction of Scandinavian material will provide a much needed widening of the discussion.

Erik Eliasson's (Philosophy) chapter develops some of the threads from this introduction, serving as an extended background to the volume as a whole. Eliasson studies the interplay between Platonic and Aristotelian notions of virtue in the Middle Ages. In particular, Eliasson explores the influence of the commentator Eustratius of Nicaea (early twelfth century) on the later Aristotelian tradition. He shows how Eustratius introduced the important Neoplatonic conception of the levels of virtue through his commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Until now, Macrobius's commentary on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* has been considered the main link, but Eliasson shows that Eustratius, commenting directly on Aristotle's ethics, is an important alternative channel for such an influence. While Eliasson's subject matter may not seem directly connected to the consequent developments in the late Middle Ages or Renaissance, the Platonist influence was one of a number of important shifts in the history of virtue ethics over the long term and must be borne in mind when studying later periods. In general, Aristotle did not arrive unmediated in the later Middle Ages or the early modern period: his thought was constantly layered over with the continuous reception, commentary, and adaptation of successive generations.

Biörn Tjällén (History) investigates the Aristotelian ethics of Giles of Rome, author of one of the most important medieval mirrors for princes, the *De regimine principum* (thirteenth century). In particular, Tjällén explores his treatment of the virtue of justice and the concept of perfection. Giles considers the law a means for educating the people. Through the coercion of law, the subjects are made virtuous, as it were, against their will. The prince himself is portrayed as morally superior, possessing an extraordinary form of virtue, which is considered to be a result of divine grace, although education seems to play some part for him as well.

Mari Eyice (History) studies the pedagogic problem faced by the Swedish reformers of the sixteenth century, who had persuaded local congregations that good deeds are not meritorious in the eyes of the Lord, following the

precepts of Luther's *sola gratia*. In this context, virtue could be considered to be highly suspect, as most likely being only feigned or even a veil covering sin. As a consequence of perceived misconceptions of this doctrine, however, the reformers soon felt the need to remind their congregations of the continued relevance of good works, as a central part of a Christian life and as the fruits of true faith.

Tania Preste (History) investigates how early seventeenth-century Swedish student theatre was used to shape virtuous subjects out of young pupils. The period is characterized by major changes in the educational system as a result of the upheavals of the Reformation and the growth of the confessional state. At the same time, the pedagogical ideas of the Jesuits were of central importance in Sweden, as they were in the rest of Europe, despite the confessional divide. Using theatre for educational purposes was an old tradition, which was put to novel uses in fostering Christian virtues as well as practical skills such as rhetoric. History, both classical and biblical, was frequently used as a source of themes and subjects. Preste, however, investigates the historical drama of Johannes Messenius in particular. His plays used ancient (mythical) Swedish history for the purpose of inculcating the virtues of governance during a crucial period of state-building.

Stefano Fogelberg Rota (Comparative Literature) studies moral education in court ballet during the reign of Queen Christina of Sweden. After having been introduced to Sweden in 1638, French *ballet de cour* saw a brief golden age under Christina's patronage. As part of a larger effort to raise the cultural standing of the state that inherited Gustavus Adolphus's position on the European stage, French *maître à danser* Antoine de Beaulieu was brought to the Swedish court to refine the manners of the courtiers. Ballet became a privileged medium for conveying the queen's political decisions and ambitions. The political messages were constantly communicated through the use of examples, portrayed as ideals of virtue. Virtue, not least the then immensely popular *heroic* virtue, was intended to educate and counsel Christina and her young aristocratic favourites. Thus, Fogelberg Rota investigates both the underlying purposes of the representations and the rhetorical strategies that were employed in creating them, as well as the audiences for which they were intended and the actors who performed in them.

Bo Lindberg (History of Ideas) explores the discussions of virtue ethics at Swedish universities during the seventeenth century. These discussions were conducted very much in the wake of contemporary criticism of Aristotle following the scientific revolution and the rise of secular natural law theories, but also older criticism, inherited from Lutheran theology. However, despite such criticism, virtue still had a place in seventeenth-century academic discourse.

Through humanist and republican ideas (within the monarchical political setting), including cyclical views of history, virtue ethics remained relevant in the realm of politics. Even so, natural law emerged as a serious competitor, providing a clearer and more efficient method for teaching moral philosophy and a solid theoretical foundation for the political systems of the period.

Kristine Kolrud (Art History) investigates the court ballet *The Education of Achilles*, performed in Turin in 1650. The work is interpreted as an education for princes and princesses. As with the contemporary Swedish ballets, courtiers and members of the ducal house performed part of the roles themselves. In particular, the role of duchess Marie Christine – de facto regent of Savoy – as educator is highlighted. In the centre of the performance stands the education of Achilles (identified with Carlo Emanuele II) by the centaur Chiron. We encounter a harmonious vision of education in the context of the symbolical universe of the seventeenth century: a perfect balance of the elements corresponds to the balance of the four cardinal virtues and the four humours of the body.

Michaela Vance (English Literature) explores the theme of virtue and education in the early works of English writer Frances Brooke (1724-1789): namely, the periodical *The Old Maid* and the novel *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*. Brooke's thoughts on education were formulated in response to Rousseau's and Locke's ideas, which she considered to entail a supervisory ideal of education. In contrast, Brooke cultivated the notion of the child's virtue as innate and natural to an unusual degree, and consequently argued for liberty and individual agency. Adopting the child's perspective, she regarded the role of the teacher to be closer to an adviser and friend than the supervisor associated with traditional education.

Jennie Nell (Comparative Literature) analyses how King Gustavus III of Sweden, who was a talented writer, utilized the cardinal virtues in his dramatic works, considering both princely and common virtues. The King used the idea of exemplum as a tool for educating his people. In fact, the communication can be said to have been two-way: an interplay of ideals and expectations between the King and his subjects, expressed through art. Often using a variety of historical material, Gustavus preferred to use the famous Gustavus I and Gustavus Adolphus (his 'Gustavian' ancestors) as exempla, and as mirrors for and of himself. Perhaps even more importantly, he used the stage for royal rhetoric, presenting an image of an ideal king as well as ideal subjects.

Providing a loose framework around the project as a whole, Andreas Hellerstedt (History of Ideas) studies Scandinavian mirrors for princes from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. This includes a relatively small

number of texts, and thus it is possible to study their development over a long period of time. Despite strong continuities and a living tradition, a number of important changes are observed. Most important among them is a slow shift from ends to means. Where the earliest texts consider politics as the means of achieving virtue, the later texts regard virtue as a means for preserving the state or even the personal interest of the ruler.

Together, we argue that premodern societies were characterized by a search for answers to questions about the good life for mankind. Perhaps this can be said of almost all human societies throughout history. Even so, the history of virtue seems, in our view, a particularly fruitful approach when studying premodern periods. It is hard to deny that systems of moral philosophy, and more day-to-day moral ideas and practices in which virtue was also prominent, were incredibly important in premodern societies. Thus, we believe that the history of virtue is central to understanding these societies, and that even the criticism of virtue and virtue ethics tells us important things about how men and women thought and acted in ages long past.

Furthermore, our perspective can provide the benefits of long-term historical study. Through comparison of the development of concepts, and by contrasting them with competing views, systems of thought, and patterns of human action, they will stand out more clearly to us. In that sense, 'Teaching Virtue' is perhaps part of a larger turn back towards a history of the *longue durée*. It may be that historians in recent years have in fact regained some faith in the capacity of their subject to contribute something to our understanding of what it means to be human, more than any purported contribution to short-term political utility. Swedish historian David Larsson has argued that in particular cultural history, with a breadth in terms of method and a depth in terms of time frames, will indeed be forced to confront larger issues, such as distinguishing between what is universally human and what is in fact period- or context-specific.<sup>54</sup> It will be sufficiently clear from what has already been said that this is more than relevant to the long history of virtue. It has, however, also been claimed that our interest in history has 'existential' aspects, that we have a 'need' of history, and so on.<sup>55</sup> Surely this is a consequence of the fact that scholars within the humanities at present are experiencing increasing difficulties in countering the demands of short-sighted public utility: history, like all forms of education, it is claimed, must make itself useful. To me a golden

54 Larsson [Heidenblad], 'Vilka tidsrymder angår oss?', pp. 758-59; Österberg, 'Den omoderna människan'.

55 For instance, Österberg, 'Den omoderna människan'.



mean is good enough, a long-term utility, if you will. In fact, I believe this to be something we can actually learn from history itself, that is, that we *can* actually learn from history. I am not speaking of any moral lessons or the fulfilment of existential needs. I would simply claim that history is a story of human action. This was a view defended with great force in premodern societies: ‘thus, if someone wishes to be successful in his endeavours, he should employ the same means, with which others have sought the same goal. For there seems to be no reason, why that should fail to happen, which has happened before, and why the same cause should not have the same effect, *ceteris paribus*’,<sup>56</sup> a professor at Uppsala University stated in 1743. His grandfather, also a professor at the same university, wrote some 60 years previously, that ‘to the means, with which those who are best equipped to govern the state take up their office, history belongs, which is the witness of truth, and the best works of the best writers’.<sup>57</sup> Why should the same not be applicable today? British archaeologist Richard Miles seems to think so, and in his simple expression echoes the same idea: ‘it [i.e. history] is the story of us, then’.<sup>58</sup> This may lead us to abandon notions of the past as ‘a foreign country’ and realize, with Miles, that history is indeed a mirror.<sup>59</sup>

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56 Ihre/Wargentín, *De politica Machiavelli*, p. 4.

57 Matthias Steuchius, ep. ded., in Norcopensis/Forelius, *Gubernacula*. Both Ihre and Steuchius based their arguments on Machiavelli, *Discorsi* 3.43, pp. 564–66.

58 Miles, *Ancient Worlds*, p. xxv.

59 I would like to thank the participants of the project ‘Teaching Virtue’ and professors Mette Birkedal Bruun and Bo Lindberg for constructive criticism, both on the project as a whole and on the first drafts of this introduction. A special thanks goes to Stefano Fogelberg Rota and Maria Andersson for advice on the final draft, and most of all, to Erik Eliasson for invaluable help with the Greek material at a late stage in the writing process.

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# Eustratius of Nicaea as a source for the Neoplatonist notion of levels of virtue in the Early Latin commentators on the *Nicomachean Ethics*

Erik Eliasson

## Abstract

The chapter analyses the influence of the Byzantine commentator Eustratius of Nicaea on the later Latin reception of Aristotle's ethics. It argues that Eustratius's commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 1 and 6, composed around 1118, introduced the important Neoplatonist conception of levels of virtue, i.e., in short, the conception that the four cardinal virtues can be acquired on subsequently higher levels, aiming at the Platonic ideal of assimilation to the divine. Traditionally, Macrobius's commentary on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* is considered the only source for medieval occurrences of this Neoplatonist conception of the virtues, but the chapter argues that Eustratius, commenting directly on Aristotle's ethics, is an important alternative channel for such influence.

**Keywords:** Eustratius of Nicaea (c.1050-c.1120), Macrobius (early fifth century), *Nicomachean Ethics*, cardinal virtues, Neoplatonism

This chapter builds on two well-established facts that to my knowledge have not been systematically discussed together in the previous literature on the early Latin reception of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter, *EN*, *Ethica Nicomachea*).

The first fact regards the composite Byzantine Greek commentary on *EN*. The commentary included parts of very early commentaries, such as the extant parts of Aspasius's second-century commentary, as well as fairly recent commentaries, notably commentary by Eustratius of Nicaea

on Books 1 and 6 and Michael of Ephesus on Books 5, 9, and 10. It is quite well established that since the Latin translation of the entire composite Greek commentary by Grosseteste, which accompanied his influential early Latin translation of the *EN* text itself (1246/48), the commentary by Eustratius has constituted an especially important authority for the early Latin commentators on Grosseteste's Latin translation of the *EN* text.

The second fact regards the influence of the Plotinian or Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue, i.e., in short, the conception that the four cardinal virtues can be acquired on different levels. This implies that the moral goal of acquiring them on subsequently higher levels ultimately aims at the Platonic ideal of 'becoming like god', or assimilation to the divine, as far as possible. It is quite well-established that this Neoplatonist theory, in its Latin version given by Macrobius in the *Commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio*, was highly influential in the reception of Aristotle's ethics throughout the Middle Ages.

The specific point of discussing these two themes together is that it might enable us to discern if, and in what way, Eustratius's commentary was already influenced by the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue. If this is the case, we will have identified an additional possible channel of Neoplatonist influence on the early Latin commentaries regarding the conception of the division of the virtues, i.e. in addition to the Latin commentators' well-known knowledge of Macrobius and other Latin sources. Notably, even in light of the *auctoritas* of Macrobius on a range of philosophical and scientific subjects, what makes the case of Eustratius unique is that his commentary would constitute a source that specifically brings the Neoplatonist theory into a commentary on *EN*. The issue at stake in what follows then is this: did Eustratius contribute to the influence of the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue on the Latin commentaries?<sup>1</sup>

### **Macrobius's *Commentary* as the single medieval source for the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue**

The importance of Macrobius as a source of general Neoplatonist influence on the medieval commentators is long since well-established. In his

1 The only suggestion along these lines in recent scholarship is to my knowledge Bejczy, *Study*, 217, who states that '[l]ike the Platonic scheme of the cardinal virtues, Macrobius' Neoplatonic classification of them was occasionally imposed on Aristotle's *Ethics* (again, the commentary of Eustratius of Nicea set a precedent in this respect)', referring to Eustratius, *In EN* 1.17, in Mercken, *Greek Commentaries*, vol. I, p. 176.

systematic 1926 study, van Lieshout specifically established a number of cases where the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtues visibly influenced scholastic accounts of the virtues. Their only possible source for this theory would, according to van Lieshout, be Macrobius's *Commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio*:

Among the philosophical ideas that the Middle Ages receives from Macrobius, there is also the Plotinian theory of virtue. This theory does not appear in scholasticism as it had originally been established by Plotinus. The Scholastics knew it only from Macrobius. As the works of Plotinus were unknown, none of them could realize that there were certain differences between Plotinus and Macrobius. They all had to believe that Macrobius in his commentary had reproduced the authentic doctrine of his master, and even more so as he makes it seem as if he is literally copying. This explains the fact that the scholastic doctors, who in their works use the Plotinian theory, sometimes attribute it to Macrobius, and sometimes to Plotinus.<sup>2</sup>

This understanding of Macrobius's *Commentary* as the single channel for transmitting the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue to the medieval commentators remains the received view even in recent scholarship.<sup>3</sup> To begin with, then, it might thus be useful to take a brief look at Macrobius's version of the theory.

### The account of the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue in Macrobius

Macrobius's commentary, written c.430 (but distributed some 50 years later),<sup>4</sup> mainly deals with Cicero's account of the dream of Scipio in Book

2 All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated. Van Lieshout, *La théorie plotinienne*, pp. 124-25: 'Parmi les idées philosophiques que le moyen âge reçoit de Macrobe, se trouve aussi la théorie plotinienne de la vertu. Cette théorie n'apparaît pas dans la Scolastique, comme elle avait été établie originellement par Plotin; les Scolastiques la connaissent *uniquement* par Macrobe. Les oeuvres de Plotin étant inconnues, aucun d'eux ne pouvait se rendre compte du fait qu'entre Plotin et Macrobe il y avait certaines nuances. Tous devaient croire que Macrobe avait reproduit dans son Commentaire la doctrine authentique de son maître, d'autant plus qu'il fait semblant de copier littéralement. Ainsi, le fait s'explique que les docteurs scolastiques, qui utilisent dans leurs ouvrages la théorie plotinienne, l'attribuent tantôt à Macrobe, tantôt à Plotin.'

3 See e.g. Kent, 'Virtue Theory', p. 495.

4 Flamant, *Macrobe*, p. 140.



6 of *De re publica*.<sup>5</sup> In addition to being often cited as the source of the fourfold classification of the virtues in the Middle Ages,<sup>6</sup> it is also given as a source for other related Neoplatonist themes, such as the descent of the soul into bodies, the nature of the soul in general, and specific issues such as the application of the scale of virtues in attempts to spell out the notion of heroic virtue of *EN* 7.1.<sup>7</sup> The work was largely read and discussed by philosophers and commentators, both Pagan and Christian, in late antiquity, through the Middle Ages and Renaissance.<sup>8</sup>

Macrobius, at *In somnium scipionis* 1.8 first describes Cicero's view that traditional 'political' virtues, that is, those of men that are 'governors and protectors' (*rectores et servatores*) of states, namely the four cardinal virtues which are implied but not explicitly mentioned here, actually suffice to produce or guarantee happiness or blessedness after death (§§ 1-2). This traditional view is then opposed to the understanding of 'others' (§§ 3-4), that is, what seems to be partly the analysis of a straw man and partly an intentionally one-sided understanding of the Neoplatonist position. That position holds that no one but philosophers, who practice the four cardinal virtues in a different contemplative sense, can be happy or blessed.<sup>9</sup> This latter view implies that the traditional Ciceronian account would be false, that is, significantly, that the 'rulers of the state are unable to be happy' (*rerum publicarum rectores beati esse non possint*).

The solution, according to Macrobius, then comes from Plotinus's treatise *On Virtues*, to which Macrobius explicitly refers, which is a rare phenomenon in the work. Plotinus is here said to have proposed a scale of virtues, composed of four levels with four virtues on each level (§ 5 *et seq.*).

5 Cicero's account is focused on the more long-lasting rewards of virtue, naturally in a way similar to the Myth of Er at the end of Plato's *Republic* 10, as the *Dream* is intended to have a similar role in his *Republic*, as the afterlife vision of Er, in Plato's. On the separation of the *Dream of Scipio* from the *De re publica*, see Caldini Montanari, *Tradizione medievale*, pp. 370-74.

6 There is no possibility here of discussing the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue in detail, but see e.g. Catapano, *Plotino: Sulle virtù*, introd.; Dillon, 'Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue', *passim*; Finamore, 'Iamblichus on the Grades of Virtue', *passim*; with O'Meara, *Platonopolis, passim*, and for the Platonic background, Baltzly, 'Becoming like God', *passim*.

7 Costa, 'Heroic Virtue', pp. 157f., following Hofmann, *Tugend*, pp. 27ff.

8 Flamant, *Macrobe*, p. 140; 688ff., with p. 475.

9 There is no consensus whether this position is taken by Macrobius to really represent the view of any historical or contemporary philosopher. One suggestion, if we are to identify any such real candidate at all, would be the sort of ethical dualism that we find in e.g. Alcinoos's Middle Platonist handbook *Didascalicus*, where ch. 2 appears to attribute to Plato the view that only the contemplative life is choiceworthy in itself, while the practical or political life is not, and thus only something forced upon the wise. See Eliasson, 'The Myth of Er', pp. 66-73, and Whittaker and Louis, *Alcinoos*, notes *ad loc.*

These levels, identical to the ones Porphyry distinguishes in his *Sentences* 32, attributed here to Plotinus himself, are thus the political virtues, the purifying virtues, the virtues of the purified soul, and the exemplary virtues” (*virtutes politicae [...] purgatoriae [...] animi iam purgati [...] exemplares*).<sup>10</sup>

Macrobius then defines the *prudentia, fortitudo, temperantia, and iustitia* of the political man (§ 7), the virtues through which the *vir bonus* may govern himself and thus the state (§ 8), where the term *vir bonus* obviously acquires Porphyry’s sense of the person possessing this level of virtue.<sup>11</sup>

He continues with the ‘purificatory’ virtues (§ 8), already defined (in § 4), and furthermore adds that these are virtues of men who decided to purify themselves from the contamination of the body and ‘as it were escape from human affairs to blend with divine things alone’ (*quadam humanorum fuga solis se inserere divinis*). However, he then asserts that these are the virtues of *men of leisure* who withdraw from political action (*Hae sunt otiosorum qui a rerum publicarum actibus se sequestrant*), thus emphasizing that he is still talking of a state of the soul to be reached in this life.

Thus, regardless of the last remark, Macrobius, like Porphyry, explicitly makes the point that the political level and its virtues strictly speaking constitute the realm of human affairs, whereas the higher levels relate to intellect and the divine and thus the gradual assimilation to the divine,<sup>12</sup> rather than the human, and this in a sense constitutes superhuman levels of virtue.

He then defines the four virtues on the level of already purified souls, where, for example, justice consists in forming a perpetual connection with the divine mind (*divina mens*) by imitating it, thus closely following Porphyry’s definitions (§ 9). In accounting for the exemplary virtues (§ 10), which reside in the divine mind itself, Macrobius even refers to the divine mind by the Greek term νοῦς, intellect. Again following Porphyry, he ends by asserting (§ 11) that the four levels distinguish themselves in how they relate to the passions: the first level consists in tempering (*molliant*) them, the second in suppressing them, the third in forgetting them, and on the fourth level it is even impious (*nefas est*) to mention them.

10 Porphyry thus in *Sentences* 32, in Lamberz, *Porphyrii Sententiae*, pp. 22-35, gave a fuller, technical account of Plotinus’s distinctions in *Enneads* 1.2, making additions and significantly introducing clear distinctions of *four levels of virtues* (Τέτταρα [...] ἀρετῶν γένη), namely (1) political (πολιτικά), (2) purificatory (καθαρκτικά), (3) theoretical (θεωρητικά), and (4) paradigmatic (παραδειγματικά) virtues.

11 Porphyry, *Sentences* 32, in Lamberz, *Porphyrii Sententiae*, p. 31,4-8.

12 O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 45, with Porphyry, *Sentences*, in Lamberz, *Porphyrii Sententiae*, pp. 22,1-23,3; 25,6-9.

The account ends (§ 12) with the general conclusion that the ‘political’ virtues also make us happy (*et politicis efficiuntur beati*) and that Cicero was thus right in the passage where the dream of Scipio is commented upon.<sup>13</sup> This is not a very convincing conclusion, however, as the ‘political’ virtues in the Neoplatonist scale of virtues merely prepare for the higher levels of virtue that alone can provide the divinization of the soul and its happiness, and the ‘political’ virtues are thus instrumental, or provide merely the means for attaining happiness. On the other hand, it has been suggested that this might be all Macrobius is intending or claiming here, as he refers to ‘political’ virtues and actions as preparing their way to heaven.<sup>14</sup> This does not seem very likely either, however, since these references are merely recapitulations of the traditional positions of the Ciceronian text being commented on: that good rulers and other benefactors of the state receive rewards in the afterlife, and they are thus not the conclusions that follow from the confrontation of these values with the Neoplatonist scale of virtues. Rather, the weakness of Macrobius’s conclusions arguably emphasize the radical and, in some contexts, problematic content of the Neoplatonist theory of the virtues.

So, in addition to being somewhat self-contradictory, Macrobius’s account or version of the Neoplatonist theory must generally be regarded as somewhat simplified and mundane, but perhaps for that very reason all the more accessible to a larger audience.<sup>15</sup>

## The medieval impact of Macrobius’s *Commentary*

The impact of Macrobius’s treatise on medieval philosophers is rather well established.<sup>16</sup> As indicated above, Macrobius’s *Commentary* is often cited

13 For Armisen-Marchetti, *Macrobo, ad loc.*, far from merely gathering well-known stock rhetorical points, Macrobius here attempts a substantial reconciliation of the Neoplatonists scale of virtues theory and Cicero’s defence of traditional Roman values. I share this impression, though I see the attempt as a failure, particularly given that Macrobius fails to address the crucial point that the Neoplatonist scale of virtues, already in Plotinus’s sketchy account in *Enneads* 1.2, involves the idea that the lower levels of virtue cannot produce or guarantee happiness, as they do not yet imply that the soul is turned away from the aspects following its incarnation in a body, notably the emotions and their moderation.

14 O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, pp. 81–82.

15 For a detailed analysis and suggestions regarding Macrobius’s sources, see Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism*, pp. 493–596. For a comparison with the other Neoplatonist sources for the theory, see Eliasson, ‘Heroic Virtue’, *passim*.

16 On the impact of Macrobius’s *Commentary* in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see Ramelli, *Commento*, pp. 128–32 and 162, n. 284; Armisen-Marchetti, *Macrobo*, pp. lxvi–lxxii; Hüttig, *Macrobius*,

as *the only* source for the fourfold classification of the virtues in the Middle Ages (and its application to e.g. the notion of heroic virtue specifically).<sup>17</sup> In particular, this work was largely read and discussed by philosophers and commentators, both pagan and Christian, in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, from Macrobius's relative Boethius in the early sixth century, and his contemporary Cassiodorus, to Isidore of Seville even earlier at the end of the fifth century. While there was a temporarily diminished interest in the *Commentary* in the tenth and eleventh centuries, examples exist of people using it significantly to conciliate ancient philosophy with Christianity.<sup>18</sup> This important reception of the work gained new force with Peter of Abelard (1079-1142) in the twelfth century. Abelard adopted the theory of the four levels of virtue and its relation to the immortality of the soul. The commentary was substantially received by the School of Chartres, with people like William of Conches (1080-1154) adopting its Neoplatonism and using it in his notes on the *Timaeus*. John of Salisbury (1115-1180), pupil of Abelard and William of Conches, also quotes the commentary extensively.<sup>19</sup> In the thirteenth century Vincent of Beauvais (1184?-1264?) draws on the commentary for his account of the immortality of the soul. It was used by the Dominican Albert the Great (1193-1280),<sup>20</sup> who discusses among other things Macrobius's account of the nature of the soul, and Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), who cites him extensively in his *Summa Theologica*, along with his pupil the Franciscan Bonaventure (1221-1274), who specifically focuses on Macrobius's account of the virtues and the decent of the soul.<sup>21</sup> This reception continued throughout the later Middle Ages and Renaissance.<sup>22</sup> Despite the massive influence of Macrobius in conveying Neoplatonist material to the medieval commentators, it appears exaggerated to single him out as the one possible source for their knowledge of the Neoplatonist levels-of-virtue theory. One proof against that view is Eustratius and his commentary on *EN*, to which we shall now turn.

*passim*; Stahl, *Commentary*, pp. 39-55; Regali, *Commento*, pp. 29-32; Caiazzo, *Lectures*, pp. 27-43 with pp. 45-85. For the Renaissance specifically, Lecompte, *La chaîne d'or des poètes*, *passim*.

17 Costa, 'Heroic Virtue', pp. 157f., following Hofmann, *Tugend*, 27ff.

18 Hüttig, *Macrobius*, pp. 57-74 discusses several relevant examples.

19 Armisen-Marchetti, *Macrobe*, pp. lxix.

20 Significantly, Robert Grosseteste, the translator of *EN*, himself frequently draws on the *Commentary*, see Stahl, *Commentary*, p. 45.

21 Armisen-Marchetti, *Macrobe*, pp. lxx.

22 Flamant, *Macrobe*, p. 140; 688ff., 475. In the fourteenth century, e.g. Petrarca (1304-1374) and Ficino both drew on Macrobius's account of the virtues specifically, see Zintzen, *Bemerkungen*, pp. 421-31.

## Eustratius's Greek *EN* commentary and its Latin reception

Eustratius of Nicaea's (c.1050-c.1120) partial commentary on *EN*, covering Books 1 and 6, was probably composed between 1117 and c.1120.<sup>23</sup> Later during the twelfth century someone combined Eustratius's material together with other commentaries to form a composite commentary including one commentary on each of the ten books of *EN*, and during this period the so-called *corpus ethicum* was formed, i.e. with the *EN* text divided into sections immediately followed by the commentary on each section.<sup>24</sup> This corpus was translated by Robert Grosseteste in his complete Latin version of the *EN* text (1246/48).<sup>25</sup> Quite soon, Eustratius was considered 'the commentator' on *EN*.<sup>26</sup>

The complete *EN* translation showed the commentators, who had been reading only the first, rather general parts of *EN*,<sup>27</sup> that Aristotle's theory centred around a large number of quite specific ethical and intellectual virtues. This was a very significant discovery, and this naturally called for discussions of the appropriateness of his divisions of the virtues, given that the commentators until then had elaborated with a different kind of division of the virtues, mainly in terms of the four cardinal ones, filtered through the Christian tradition.

It is striking then that Eustratius's commentary has received rather little attention in light of its status as a an early key factor in forming the medieval reception of the first complete Latin version of the *EN* text.<sup>28</sup> One may distinguish between two aspects of its reception here. Firstly, cases where Eustratius

23 Cacouros, 'Eustrate', p. 382.

24 Cacouros, 'Eustrate', pp. 385-86. Cacouros claims that (a) the composite commentary was probably made towards the end of the twelfth century (p. 385), and that (b) the *corpus ethicum* was probably composed in Eustratius's generation or (c) the following (p. 386). To me (a) and (b) seem to contradict each other. On the composite commentary see Mercken, *Greek Commentaries*, vol. III, pp. 3-33; and for its Latin translation and reception pp. 34-52.

25 For references on Eustratius's influence on the Aristotle commentaries in the west see Benakis, 'Aristotelian Ethics', p. 65, and n. 10. Cacouros, 'Eustrate', p. 385, gives 1240-43 as the date of the translation. On some suggestions as to how Grosseteste came in contact with the mss., see also Brams, 'Traductions et traducteurs latins', pp. 102-3, and Dionisotti, 'Greek Studies of Robert Grosseteste', *passim*.

26 De Libera, *La philosophie médiévale*, pp. 32-33.

27 See e.g. Bejczy, 'Introduction', pp. 2-3.

28 See Mercken, *Greek Commentaries*, vol. I, pp. 6-14; Mercken, 'Greek Commentators of Aristotle's *Ethics*', pp. 410-19; Mercken, *Greek Commentaries*, vol. III, pp. 5-7. See also Sorabji, 'Ancient Commentators', pp. 20-21, Lloyd, 'Eustratios', *passim*; Trizio, 'Necessity', *passim*; Trizio, 'Source Material', *passim*. Regarding *EN* 6 specifically, Jenkins, 'Definition of Being', *passim*; Barber, 'Separation', *passim*; Steel, 'Sources', *passim*.

has been influential on and used by the Latin commentators and others *tout court* – here we find Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Gerald Odo, Walter Burley, and John Buridan.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, cases where he obviously incorporates Neoplatonist material into his commentary, which as such provides a source for Neoplatonist conceptions for the Latin commentators. I will mention the former cases only in passing and focus on the latter.

### Some aspects of Eustratius's influence on the conceptions of virtue in the early Latin *EN* commentaries in recent scholarship

Eustratius's general influence on Albert the Great, Aquinas, and Bonaventure is often mentioned.<sup>30</sup> Among the specific issues pointed out in recent scholarship, where Eustratius seems to have influenced the commentators, are those most relevant to the theory and division of the virtues concerning the status of prudence.

In *EN*, Aristotle presented prudence not as a moral virtue but as an intellectual virtue, though the moral virtues could not exist without it. This somewhat mixed status of prudence gave rise to several different interpretations in the early Latin commentators. The Dominican Robert Kilwardby (d. 1279) thus placed prudence as an intellectual, but also a moral, virtue, as it is responsible for setting the deliberations governing moral agency.<sup>31</sup> A similar view was taken by Grosseteste in his *notule* to the Latin *EN* version, and by Albert the Great in his commentaries on *EN*,<sup>32</sup> who argued for prudence as occupying a middle ground between moral and intellectual virtues, seemingly following Eustratius's *Commentary*.<sup>33</sup> While Aquinas opted for a similar view in his theological work, in his commentary on *EN* he on the contrary associates prudence with the moral virtues.

Thus, Eustratius's commentary influenced both Albert and Aquinas specifically on the understanding of the status of the virtue of prudence.<sup>34</sup> This

29 For a brief overview, see Mercken, *Greek Commentaries*, vol. III, pp. 45-52, with references given there.

30 Mercken, 'Greek Commentators of Aristotle's *Ethics*', pp. 441-43. Aquinas may have been influenced reading Albert though, as Gauthier suggested in his Leonine edition of Aquinas.

31 See Bejczy, *Study*, p. 164, quoting Robert Kilwardby, *In librum tertium Sententiarum* q. 30, pp. 113-15.

32 Bejczy, *Study*, p. 164; Müller, *Natürliche Moral*, pp. 177-83. See also Mercken, *Greek Commentaries*, vol. III, pp. 46-49.

33 Bejczy, *Study*, p. 164 with n. 117.

34 Bejczy, 'Cardinal Virtues', pp. 203-5. Lambertini, 'Political Prudence', *passim*.

influence is both shown in the passages where he is quoted but rejected, as is the case with Albert the Great's treatment of Aristotle's distinction between prudence and political knowledge,<sup>35</sup> which stands in contrast to Aquinas' later acceptance of Eustratius's view on the same matter.<sup>36</sup> Further influence on this matter is seen regarding the Augustinian friar Henry of Freimar's *Sententia* on *EN*, which agrees that prudence exists on different levels of perfection.<sup>37</sup>

It has been suggested that Eustratius's commentaries both on *EN* 1 and *EN* 6 were significant sources of Neoplatonist views, and particularly that Proclus was an important source for Eustratius's own commentaries.<sup>38</sup>

As is often noted, the early commentators on the Latin *EN* version, given the predominance of the four cardinal virtues in moral philosophy before the Latin translation and the resulting increased focus on Aristotle's ethics in the thirteenth century, sometimes forced upon the *EN* text previous conceptions of ethics in terms of the four cardinal virtues. In recent literature on this reception, the picture is given that this was all that Eustratius's influence amounted to.

Thus, to begin with, Eustratius's *Commentary* seemed to suggest that the four cardinal virtues somehow comprise Aristotle's remaining virtues.<sup>39</sup> This, as it were, reductionist idea is alluded to by Grosseteste in his *notule* on *EN*, and while the idea was refuted by Aquinas, Walter Burley, who largely drew on Grosseteste's *notule* in his own *Expositio super libros Ethicorum*, holds that the four cardinal virtues are as such not *qua* particular virtues, but *qua* genera comprising the other virtues as species.<sup>40</sup>

To illustrate a different aspect of this impact, we may take the fact that John Buridan (d. after 1358) cites Eustratius as saying that the four main *moral* virtues (*quattuor principales virtutes morales, scilicet prudentia, temperantia, fortitudo et iustitia*) correspond to four bodily qualities. However, Eustratius instead speaks of four *general* virtues or general qualities.<sup>41</sup>

35 Lambertini, 'Political Prudence', p. 228.

36 Lambertini, 'Political Prudence', p. 230.

37 Lambertini, 'Political Prudence', p. 238, with the concluding remarks at p. 246.

38 Trizio, 'Source Material', pp. 71f.; 86-89. De Libera, *La philosophie médiévale*, pp. 32-33, states that Eustratius's account draws more on Simplicius and Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite than on Aristotle and points out a number of Neoplatonist elements (some of which are present in the Arabic tradition from Al-Farabi and Avicenna too), but does not mention anything regarding the virtues.

39 Bejczy, 'Cardinal Virtues', pp. 201-2, who also notes that Grosseteste's *notule* on the *EN* text contains a similar suggestion.

40 Bejczy, *Study*, pp. 172-73, nn.145 and 146.

41 Mercken, *Greek Commentaries*, vol. III, p. 35; Bejczy, 'Cardinal Virtues', p. 207, n. 34, with references given there. Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 20,32-34: ὡς γὰρ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τέσσαρες αἱ γενικαὶ ἀρεταί, φρόνησις ἀνδρεία σωφροσύνη δικαιοσύνη, οὕτως ἐν τῷ σώματι τὰτα

In addition, Eustratius seems to suggest that for Aristotle, temperance and the other virtues have both a general and a specific sense. As Albert the Great pointed out, this interpretation went beyond the *EN* text, as Aristotle merely distinguished a general and particular form of justice specifically. Still, Albert, Aquinas, and many other commentators repeat a similar distinction.<sup>42</sup> One may note then, that Eustratius, while to some extent misread, here attempts to force upon the *EN* text an account with four general virtues which can then be given more specific definitions, while such a structure is absent in *EN*.

Now, these observations in previous scholarship may seem rather vague, and thus as simply reflecting the commentators' various ways of misreading Eustratius (and *EN*) in light of their previous conceptions of the four cardinal virtues; but there are other more substantial cases, which make it clear that what Eustratius does in the passages already mentioned, and elsewhere more explicitly, is bring in the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue.

### **Eustratius's Neoplatonist conception of levels of virtue in the *EN* commentaries**

The general Neoplatonist framework in which Eustratius attempts to read *EN* is clearly already shown in the introduction to his commentary on *EN*, Book 1, where Aristotle had identified the end or goal of human life as happiness (*eudaimonia*). Eustratius here defines what this end actually involves, and in doing so he brings in the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue and the goal of divinization:

In the first book, he investigates the issue of the end towards which the virtues successfully lead, which is called happiness among the ancients. And this is also the end of human life, for which reason the human being passes through this world. And this is from the beginning moderation of the passions [...] but in the end it arrives at absence of passion, which we call blessedness. For it is necessary that the one who searches for perfection strive for the final death of the irrational capacities (so that only reason is

τέτταρα. 'For, as in the soul there are four general virtues, prudence, courage, temperance, justice, so in the body there are the following four [...].'

42 Albert the Great, *Super Ethica* 6.7 (516), in Kübel, *Albertus Magnus*, pp. 440-41, quoting Eustratius in Grosseteste's translation; Bejczy, *Study*, p. 170, nn. 136 and 137. On Albert's readings of Eustratius, see Müller, *Natürlicher Moral*, p. 181.



active in him, no longer troubled by irrationality), from which once established by the constant and uninterrupted activity of reason, the human soul approaches Intellect and becomes like Intellect, or indeed Intellect through participation, and then even godlike as it has united with god through the one within itself, which the Great Dionysios called 'bloom of the Intellect'.<sup>43</sup>

Following the Neoplatonist theory, the account of ethical development, as depicted in *EN*, is thus said to be divided into *four stages*, which in turn involve (i) the moderation of the passions, (ii) the extirpation of the passions, ending in *apatheia*, (iii) the participation in the Intellect, and (iv) the union with God, the primary good, which according to Eustratius is identical to 'the good at which everything aims' that Aristotle mentions at *EN* 1094a13.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, as Mercken correctly notes:

Eustratius sees the life of the passions, that is the life of enjoyment or pleasure, as the natural life of the child, but one becomes practised in the moral virtues in order to leave that life behind for one of civic virtue, a middle stage between the life of the passions and that of contemplation. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is, for Eustratius, an exploration of the virtues of this middle sort of life, the life of the political man. To the following stages belong the 'purgative or purifying' life and the life of contemplation.<sup>45</sup>

Commenting on Aristotle's distinction of the three lives (*EN* 1.3), Eustratius rather bluntly forces upon this tripartition his own Neoplatonist divisions of the virtues:

43 Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 4,25-38: ἐν δὲ τῷ πρώτῳ βιβλίῳ τῆς πραγματείας περὶ τοῦ τέλους ζητεῖ πρὸς ὃ αἱ ἀρεταὶ φέρουσι κατορθοῦμεναι, ὅπερ εὐδαιμονία παρὰ τοῖς πάλοι σοφοῖς ὀνομάζεται. τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς, οὗ ἕνεκα ὁ ἀνθρωπος ἐν τῷ παρόντι κόσμῳ παράγεται. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν μετριοπάθεια [...] τελευταῖον δὲ καταντᾶ εἰς ἀπάθειαν, ὅπερ μακαριότης παρ' ἡμῖν λέγεται. δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ζητοῦντα τὸ τέλειον μέχρι τῆς τελευταίας σπεύσαι νεκρώσεως τῶν ἀλόγων δυνάμεων, ὡς μόνον τὸν λόγον ἐνεργεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀλογίας μηδαμῆ ἐνοχλούμενον, οὗ γενομένου ἢ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆ διὰ τῆς συνεχοῦς καὶ ἀδιακόπου ἐνεργείας τοῦ λόγου εἰς νοῦν ἄνεσι καὶ νοοειδῆς γίνεται ἤτοι νοῦς κατὰ μέθεξιν, εἶτα δὲ καὶ θεοειδῆς ὡς θεῶ ἐνωθεῖσα κατὰ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐγκείμενον ἔν, ὅπερ ἄνθος τοῦ νοῦ ὁ μέγας ὠνόμασε Διονύσιος.

44 See Mercken 'Greek Commentators of Aristotle's *Ethics*', p. 416. Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 6,5-8: ἔστι μὲν γὰρ κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, οὗ πάντα ἐφίεται καὶ δι' ὃ πάντα ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ, τὰ τε ταπεινότερα τὰ τε ὑψηλότερα. ἀλλ' ὅσα μὲν ἐστὶν ἐγγυτάτω ἐκείνου, δι' ἐκεῖνό τε ἀπλῶς γέγονε κἀκείνου ἀμέσως ἀπολαύει· τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' ὃ καὶ εἰς ὃ.

45 Mercken, 'Greek Commentators of Aristotle's *Ethics*', pp. 416-17; Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 34, 19-31.

And the third kind he says, and the most prominent, is the theoretical, the unaffected, which generally denies any irrational activity. For he does not there say that the theoretical kind is that of natural philosophy, or the mathematical, or the theological, but the one who through purification from the stain of passions is pressing on towards intellection, who breaking through the matter and the flesh, this cloud and veil, through unaffectedness converses with God and the gods.<sup>46</sup>

Evidently, both the language used and the picture Eustratius gives here reflects the Neoplatonist goal of divinization through subsequent purifications, where absence of passions (*apatheia*) is a prerequisite for reaching the goal, a conception absent from *EN*.

Commenting again on the same issue (*EN* 1096a4, 'the third kind is the theoretical'), Eustratius summarizes his understanding of Aristotle in light of his Neoplatonist terminology:

Having enumerated before the foremost lives at hand and saying that they are three, the one of enjoyment, the political one and the theoretical one, or indeed the passionate one, the one of moderate passion, and the one without passions, he then conceded to two of them to appear good.<sup>47</sup>

The same conception is found further along, again in connection to the distinction between the political life and the contemplative, which Eustratius sees as referring to his Neoplatonist conception:

But the puzzle is solved from the difference between the two lives, the political and the purificatory, or indeed theoretical. For as the virtues apply differently to each of these, the former involving moderation of passion, but the latter absence of passion, so the notions of happy and blessed apply differently to the political type, and differently to the theoretical type, since the former is moderation of passion [...] But the purificatory and theoretical [sc. life] when it has altogether rejected the average occupations

46 Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 34,23-28: τρίτον δέ φησι και κορυφαιότατον τὸν θεωρητικόν, τὸν ἀπαθῆ και καθόλου πᾶσαν ἄλογον ἀπηρνημένον ἐνέργειαν. οὐ γὰρ τὸν φυσιολογικὸν ἐνταῦθα φησι θεωρητικὸν ἢ τὸν μαθηματικὸν ἢ θεολογικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸν διὰ καθάρσεως τῆς τῶν παθῶν κηλίδος πρὸς θεωρίαν κατεπειγόμενον, ὃς διακόπτων τὴν ὕλην και τὸ σαρκικὸν τοῦτο νέφος και προκαλύμμα θεῶ και τοῖς θεοῖς δι' ἀπάθειαν συγγίνεται.

47 Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 38,5-7: Ἀπαριθμησάμενος ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν τοὺς μάλιστα τῶν βίων προὔχοντας και τρεῖς εἶναι τούτους εἰπὼν, τὸν ἀπολαυστικὸν τὸν πολιτικὸν τὸν θεωρητικὸν, ἤτοι τὸν ἐμπαθῆ τὸν μετριοπαθῆ τὸν ἀπαθῆ, τοῖς μὲν δυσὶ τὸ δοκοῦν ἀγαθὸν οἰκείως ἀπέδωκε.

and has chosen the superhuman form of life, and has separated itself from the body, and furnished the intellect with wings, in order to rise above the higher things, and is letting go of all things that depend on time and the first movement, and is ascending and raising itself to God.<sup>48</sup>

Commenting on *EN* 1102a13, Eustratius makes an excursus revealing his conception of the division of the virtues, which is the Neoplatonist levels-of-virtue theory in its post-Iamblichean form. His aim here appears to be to provide the reader with an overall picture of the division of the virtues, in which we are to situate what Aristotle says explicitly:

The ancients ‘introduced’ many kinds of virtue, political, purificatory, intellectual, and the paradigmatical, also [called] the theurgic. They divided each one of these into four, the primary, prudence, courage, temperance, justice, and in different ways defined each of them differently, namely in a manner appropriate to the kinds of each one.<sup>49</sup>

He goes on to point out that for present purposes, two kinds of virtue are particularly relevant, the *political* and the *purificatory* kinds or types of virtue:

But now the following two kinds concern us most, the political and the purificatory, the former, when the soul is cooperating with the body, the latter when the soul has separated itself from it, and is being unaffected in relation to it. For the former is moderation of passion, which simply checks the excesses of the passions and, as far as is necessary watches over this activity, while the latter either leads towards the absence of passions by further purifying the soul, or, even having already removed [it], by having already both purified [the soul] and made it free from bodily passion.<sup>50</sup>

48 Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 59,19-34: λύεται δὲ ἡ ἀπορία ἐκ τῆς τῶν βίων διαφορᾶς τοῦ πολιτικοῦ καὶ καθαρτικοῦ, ἤτοι θεωρητικοῦ. ὡς γὰρ αἱ ἀρεταὶ ἄλλως καὶ ἄλλως ἐκατέρω τούτων ἐφαρμόζουσιν, ὡς εἶναι τὰς μὲν μετριοπαθείας, τὰς δ' ἀπαθείας, οὕτω καὶ τὸ εὐδαίμον καὶ μακάριον ἄλλως μὲν τῷ πολιτικῷ, ἄλλως δὲ τῷ θεωρητικῷ ἐφαρμόσει, ὡς εἶναι τῷ μὲν μετριοπάθειαν [...] ὁ δὲ καθαρτικός καὶ θεωρητικός, ἐπεὶ πάντα τὰς ἐν μέσῳ διατριβάς ἀπηνήγατο καὶ τὴν ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων εἴλετο βίωσιν, καὶ κατὰ προαίρεσιν κεχώρισται τοῦ σώματος, καὶ τὸν νοῦν πτεροῖ ὡς τῶν κάτω παντελῶς ὑπεραίρεσθαι καὶ πάντ' ἐὰν ὅσα ὑπὸ χρόνον καὶ πρώτην κίνησιν, καὶ πρὸς θεὸν ἀνάγεσθαι καὶ ἀναίρεσθαι.

49 Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 109,19-22: Πολλὰ γένη ἀρετῆς εἰσήγον οἱ παλαιοί, πολιτικὴν καθαρτικὴν νοεράν καὶ τὴν παραδειγματικὴν τὴν καὶ θεωρητικὴν. τούτων δ' ἐκάστην διήρουν εἰς τέτταρα τὰ πρῶτα, φρόνησιν ἀνδρείαν σωφροσύνην δικαιοσύνην, ἄλλως καὶ ἄλλως ἕκαστον ἀποδιδόντες αὐτῶν, οἰκείως δηλονότι τῶν γενῶν ἐκάστου.

50 Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 109,23-29: ἀλλὰ νῦν ἡμῖν τὰ δύο ταῦτα συνέγνωσται γένη μάλιστα, ἡ πολιτικὴ καὶ ἡ καθαρτικὴ, ἡ μὲν τῆς ψυχῆς συμπραττούσης τῷ σώματι, ἡ δὲ χωριζομένης

What the initial statement thus conveys is that in Eustratius's Neoplatonist conception of levels of virtue, Aristotle's account is by no means an alternative or conflicting conception of the division of the virtues. On the contrary, he seems to identify the focus of the *EN* account as lying foremost on two of the central levels, as if Aristotle would elsewhere grant the rest of the Neoplatonist levels-of-virtue scheme.

He then states, following the tradition from Porphyry onwards, that the political level is the human one properly speaking:

Now, he [*sc.* Aristotle] says that the political kind of virtue is the proper human one, since the purificatory kind, and the remaining ones are above the human being in the sense of the union [*sc.* of soul and body], since also by nature Man is civilized and gregarious and sociable. And in that [it] denies the unity with one's own body, this account was set above the human, denying all material activity, in what is inattentive to the things inferior to soul, and in pure intellect, bringing us towards higher things and sailing off towards the divine illumination.<sup>51</sup>

This account thus clearly draws on the Neoplatonist one, as given by Plotinus and clarified by Porphyry. In that account the *political virtues* involve the practice of reason in ordering the soul, and as has been pointed out,<sup>52</sup> the 'political' virtues are thus in this conception the first really *human* virtues since they correspond to Plato's definition of man as a 'rational soul using body as an instrument' in the *Alcibiades* (129e-30c). As emphasized by later Neoplatonists,<sup>53</sup> it is in fact *only* at this political level that man uses the body as an instrument.

αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐχούσης ἀσυμπαθῶς πρὸς αὐτό, ὡς εἶναι τὴν μὲν μετριοπάθειαν, μόνον κολάζουσαν τὰς ὑπερβολὰς τῶν παθῶν καὶ μέχρι τοῦ ἀναγκαίου συντηροῦσαν τὴν κατὰ ταῦτα ἐνέργειαν, τὴν δὲ ἢ εἰς ἀπάθειαν ἄγουσαν ἐν τῷ ἔτι καθαίρεσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν, ἢ καὶ ἤδη ἀπαγαγοῦσαν ὅτι ἤδη καὶ κεκάθαρται καὶ ἀπροσπαθῆς πρὸς τὸ σῶμα γεγένηται.

51 Eustratius, *In EN 1*, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, pp. 109,29-110,4: ἀνθρωπίνην τοίνυν ἀρετὴν φησι τὴν πολιτικὴν, ὡς οὐσης τῆς καθαρτικῆς καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ὑπὲρ ἀνθρωπων ὅσον κατὰ τὸ συναμφοτέρον, ἐπεὶ καὶ φύσει ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἤμερον καὶ συναγελαστικὸν καὶ κοινωνικόν. ὅτι δὲ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον σῶμα κοινωνίαν ἀρνήσεται, ὑπὲρ ἀνθρωπείαν τοῦτο καθέστηκε σύνθεσιν, πάσαν ὕλικὴν ἀπηρνημένους ἐνέργειαν καὶ ἀνεπιστρόφῳ τῶν χειρῶν ψυχῇ καὶ νῶ καθαρῶ πρὸς τὰ κρείττω ἀναφερόμενος καὶ πρὸς τὴν θεῖαν ἀναπλούμενος ἔλλαμψιν.

52 O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, pp. 47-48.

53 Damascius *ap.* Olympiodorus, *In Alcibiadem* 4,15-21, in Westerink, *Olympiodorus: Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato* (with 177,14-15), and Olympiodorus, *In Phaedonem* 3, 6, 7-8, in Westerink, *Olympiodorus*, vol. I of *Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, with the comments by O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 48.

This account goes far beyond the *EN* text. For in Book 10 (chs. 7-8), where Aristotle addresses the key question of the work – what constitutes happiness – the answer is (perhaps contradicting the rest of the work) a life of contemplation, which is made distinct from the life of moral virtue and action, considered a happy life only in a secondary sense. His argument here centres on contemplation as the activity of the gods and therefore the most divine of the virtues, and the view that humans are happy to the extent that they have some likeness to this activity.<sup>54</sup>

However this is of course very far from the Neoplatonist theory of ethical development as divinization. For Plotinus and his successors, this theory was based in Plato's notion of virtue as assimilation to god (*homoioōsis theō*), to the extent that this is possible, from the *Theaetetus* 176b1 (and, for example, *Republic* 500c1 *et seq.*), and Plato's definition in the *Phaedo* (67b) of virtue as purification. The Neoplatonists thus developed a theory of the scale of virtues, attempting to reconcile the rather different Platonic accounts of virtue.

Eustratius moreover insists that the life of contemplation that he finds in *EN* can be identified with the monastic life of the Christian hermit, who aims precisely at unity with God in solitude, far away from the life of political action.<sup>55</sup> Along these lines his commentary on Aristotle's *EN* actually amounts to a Neoplatonist account of a Christian ideal.

## Conclusions

As we stated initially, the received view has for a long time been that it was Macrobius and Macrobius alone who furnished the Latin commentators with the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue, which was then applied widely and sometimes taken for granted, sometimes understood as a tool,

54 Aristotle, *EN* 10, states that happiness must be 'lacking nothing' (οὐδενὸς ἐνδεής) and self-sufficient (αὐτάρκης) (1176b5-6), and is an activity in accordance with the strongest or highest virtue, which is the activity of the best and most divine part of us; it is the activity of contemplation (ἡ ἐνέργεια [...] θεωρητικὴ 1177a16-18, cf. σοφία being the highest virtue in *EN* 6), which possesses the highest degree of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια [...] μάλιστα 1177a26-27), and is not in need of or directed towards something else, but is the only activity which is its own end and does not aim at something else (1177b1-4). The contemplative life *transcends the human level*, and is achieved not through our humanity but through what is divine in us (1177b26-28), whereas the life of moral virtue, whose activities are human, is only happiness in a secondary sense (1178a9-10). Contemplation is the activity of the gods, who thus enjoy supreme blessedness and happiness, and humans are blessed in so far as they have some *likeness* (ὁμοιωμά τι) to such an activity (1178b7f.).

55 Mercken, *Greek Commentators*, p. 416, with Eustratius, *In EN* 1, in Heylbut, *Eustratii*, p. 35,33-37; p. 7,9-12; and p. 34,23-28, for references to the Christian martyrs and hermits.

and sometimes considered a mere distinction in various discussions of the virtues. As we have seen though, even in the light of an increasing amount of recent literature on Eustratius's commentaries on *EN*, it is widely neglected that his commentary on *EN*, in its Latin translation by Grosseteste, which accompanied the influential Latin translation of *EN* itself, not only constituted an authority for Grosseteste's *notule* on the text, for Albert the Great's two early commentaries, the *Super Ethica* and the *Ethica* paraphrase, and thereby for Aquinas' *Sententiae libri Ethicorum*, but significantly provided a preparation for interpreting the account of virtue in *EN*, as well as its overall program, in the light of the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue, and of virtue as divinization of the individual.

Thus, while many medieval authors on Aristotle's account of the virtues did refer to Macrobius as their source for the theory, Eustratius – pupil of John Italus, successor of Psellus, whom we know still discussed the Neoplatonist theory of levels of virtue as the head of the school of Constantinople – still constitutes a separate and more direct possible influence on the early Latin commentaries in this respect. Hence Eustratius's commentary, for this reason and many others, appears to be worthy of further study.

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# Teaching virtue through the law

Justice and royal authority in Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* (c.1280)

Biörn Tjällén

## Abstract

This chapter explores the account of justice and royal authority in the most influential of the medieval mirrors for princes, Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*. In the history of political thought, Giles is sometimes described as a proponent of proto-absolutist rule because he believed that the prince should make the law but not be bound by it himself. But the crucial role of Giles's discourse on virtue, both to enable this extraordinary authority of the prince and to explore its limits, has not been thoroughly discussed in previous research. Certainly, Giles felt that the prince should be able to dispose of or change the positive law – in order to make it conform better to the eternal standards of natural law. However, an inseparable part of his thinking about this extraordinary prerogative was that the prince should be a man of supereminent virtue. Giles did not expect each prince to be morally perfect. *De regimine principum* was an educational tract, and he wrote it to guide his readers towards virtue. In the last instance, however, and in common with other theorists on virtue, Giles knew that the extraordinary level of virtue that was required of the prince, if he was to rule justly, could only be granted by divine grace.

**Keywords:** Giles of Rome (c.1243-1316), virtue of justice, royal authority, medieval political thought, *De regimine principum*, princely mirrors

Is it possible to teach virtue? How can it be taught? And who is the appropriate teacher? No medieval genre is better equipped to deal with these questions than the so-called mirrors of princes, a type of text read mainly

by scholars of political thought,<sup>1</sup> but also, more recently, by historians of education.<sup>2</sup> The mirrors are normative accounts of princely rule, so they allow us to glean the application of virtue ethics in political discourse. And they are relics of educational attempts, written to inculcate virtue in the prince and the political community. The mirrors were designed to instruct the ruler about the value of each virtue, but also to depict him as a shining example and a guide for his subjects. This chapter explores this twofold educational agenda – teaching the prince while making him a teacher to his people – as it appears in the most popular of the medieval mirrors, *De regimine principum* of Giles of Rome (c.1280).<sup>3</sup> In the following, the focus will be on Giles's account of the virtue of justice, since it is here that his virtue-ethical approach to politics and his monarchic ideology combine to shape the idea of the prince as a teacher of virtue. Three concepts stay in view throughout this enquiry: justice, law, and authority. However, to understand Giles's account of the relation between justice and law, and to grasp what it implied for the discourse on royal authority, it is helpful to begin by situating it in the context of the governmental and legal shifts of which it was a part.

### Kingship, law, and virtue at the turn of the thirteenth century

*De regimine principum* appeared at a time of new directions in European political thought, and simultaneously a time of a rapid governmental development. It summarized the Aristotelian moral philosophy that resurfaced in the late thirteenth century and enriched virtue-ethical thought, and it endorsed the idea of strong monarchical rule by a king who should make the law, but not be bound by it himself.

The strong monarchy that Giles defends on theoretical grounds in *De regimine principum* had its real-life counterparts in contemporary assertive monarchs, such as Philip IV of France (r. 1285-1314), Edward I of England (r. 1272-1307), and in equally ambitious but less known kings elsewhere. To strengthen their domestic power, these monarchs strove to expand their judicial rights, and by the late thirteenth century, most European kings had made strides towards the control of jurisdiction and legislation in their

1 The literature on princely mirrors is large, but see Berges, *Fürstenspiegel*; Quaglioni, 'Il modello del principe'; Nederman, 'Mirror Crack'd'.

2 Perret, *Les traductions françaises*.

3 The best introduction is Briggs and Eardley, *Companion to Giles*.

realms. Royal justice was encroaching on feudal and regional courts and thereby reaching its tentacles further out and deeper into society. There were financial as well as political motives for this development: more cases for the king's courts meant increased revenue to the royal coffers and helped the king assert his influence in the parts of the realm where he lacked the direct lordship of personal demesnes. As for the development of legislation, this often began as initiatives to codify the already existing regional and customary laws, but was soon followed by royal and national legislation proper. These laws, often proclaimed to ensure 'the peace' of the land, were also a means to curb overmighty subjects. It is for good reasons that all scholarly accounts of medieval state formation discuss the development of royal justice as a crucial step in the process of centralizing government.<sup>4</sup>

But what legitimized this new assertive kingship, as it took charge of the arena of law? What discursive developments matched the jurisdictional and legislative ambitions of these rulers? State-formation scholars regularly emphasize the important influence of Roman and canon law, which, from the twelfth century, spread from the schools and into the royal chanceries, where it inspired the codification of customs, new legislation and the formalization of the royal high courts, and where it moreover promoted the idea of a king who was not just a feudal overlord, but a public authority with a unique sway over the legislation and jurisdiction in his realm.<sup>5</sup> The Aristotelian legacy, which enriched the thinking on virtues in the thirteenth century, was another source of political inspiration. It was not unequivocally in favour of monarchy, but many medieval readers certainly interpreted it as if it were.<sup>6</sup> The Roman legal tradition was easy to blend with the tradition of virtue ethics. In the positivism of modern legal thinking, law is essentially a social construction: for law to be considered law it must not necessarily conform to any particular moral standard. The Roman law texts, however, considered law as an expression of the moral imperative of justice, and the medieval readers were quick to point out that justice was one of the virtues.<sup>7</sup>

These lofty discourses on law and virtue and royal authority were not just sophistry concocted in the clerical ivory towers of Paris and Bologna; they also reached the men who used the law in their capacity as judges, and as far as the northern periphery of Scandinavia. Law codes such as the Danish

4 See Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, pp. 29-30, 38-41, 53; Watts, *Making of Polities*, pp. 73-89, 207-19; Bagge, *Cross and Scepter*, pp. 86-107.

5 Watts, *Making of Polities*, p. 74.

6 Renna, 'Aristotle', pp. 309-24.

7 Bejczy, *Cardinal Virtues*, p. 82.

Law of Jutland or the Swedish Law of Uppland were prefaced by theorized accounts that dealt both with the purpose of law and with the ruler's role in jurisdiction and legislation. The contents of these texts were not far removed from what went on in the schools of learned law and philosophy, but they were written in the vernacular, and hence also accessible to non-clerics, who used them in their legal practice. The preface to the Law of Uppland (promulgated c.1296) makes it clear that by the late thirteenth century, the notion of the king as lawgiver was also making inroads in Sweden. The code declares that just as God had sent the first law to his people through its first chief judge, Moses, so Birger (r. 1290-1318), absolute (*enwaldughær*) king of the Swedes and the Goths, was now sending a new law code to the inhabitants of Uppland.<sup>8</sup> And the same text also provides an eloquent account of the purpose of law, resonant with a virtue-ethical account of human character and behaviour:

The law shall be made and established for the guidance of the people, both rich and poor, and to distinguish between right and wrong. The law shall be obeyed and observed for the protection of the poor, the peace of the peaceful, but for the chastisement and fear of the violent. The law shall honour the prudent and the just, but correct the imprudent and unjust. If all men were just, there would be no need for a law.<sup>9</sup>

The law, this preface tells us, should be an impartial guide for the people, and protect the poor and the righteous while it curbs the wicked. This praise of the law ends with a terse but lucid statement that links law to virtue. Men with the virtues of prudence and justice, it says, have nothing to fear from the law, and if all men were just, the law would in fact be redundant. But how could the law act as a guide for the people? How could it replace

8 Both royal and sectional interests had to be met in this account of the legislating process; the preface had to balance royal ambition with the traditional independence of the regional law circuit. In the text, the king does not appear as sole legislator. He issues the book with the law code, but it includes some laws that are older and some that are made by a commission led by the local chief judge. However, the king's position as a protector of the new law, and his command that there henceforth shall be no other law, is unequivocal. For the discussions of the Romano-canonical impact on Upplandslagen, see Bååth, *Den kanoniska rätten*, pp. 112-17, and Olsson, 'Upplandslagens stadsfästelsebrev', pp. 236-55.

9 Schlyter, *Corpus iuris sueo-gotorum*, p. 6: 'Lagh skulu wære satt ok skipað almænni til styrsl þáþi rikum ok fatökum ok skiæl mellom ræt ok oræt. Lagh skulu gömæs ok haldæs fatökum til wærner spakum til friþær æn ospakum til næfst ok ognær. Lagh skulu wære rætwisum och snællum til sömdær æn wrangum ok osnællum til rætningær. Warin allir rætwisir þa þurfti æi lagha wiþ.' All translations in this chapter are my own.

or repair the people's lack of virtue, and thus safeguard the peace of the realm? What was the role of the prince in this great educational project, and how was he qualified for the task? The sparse account of the Uppland preface gives no further indication, and to fully understand it we must read it with a particular, broader intellectual context in mind. Its author, the Uppsala canon Andreas And, was an old student of Paris.<sup>10</sup> He would have been familiar with the legal-philosophical trends that were summarized by Giles of Rome, and might even have read the *Regimine principum*.

### Giles of Rome – virtue ethics for the prince and his people

The popularity of *De regimine principum* is attested by its large number of extant manuscripts and by the swift appearance of translations into several European vernaculars, including smaller languages like Swedish. Some reasons for the rapid success of the text are obvious. Giles offered an accessible introduction to the ethical and political works of Aristotle, which the previous generations of schoolmen had translated into Latin and commented on for the use of their students. As a pupil of Thomas Aquinas in Paris, Giles had been at the centre of this flourishing (if sometimes controversial) Aristotelian movement,<sup>11</sup> and for many of those who wished to master this new intellectual currency, *De regimine principum* could serve as a textbook.<sup>12</sup> Another factor that probably contributed to its popularity was Giles's fluid and accessible style of writing.

Giles's explicit addressee was not an ordinary Paris student, but the dauphin and future king of France, Philip IV. With this reader in mind, it was fitting to recast the Aristotelian scholarship into the format of a princely 'mirror', a book to teach the prince how to carry himself and how to rule. However, Giles intended that the work should also teach his subjects how they were to obey, and he made it clear that what his book had to say about ethics applied to all people, and not just kings, with some adjustment according to their roles as leaders and followers respectively:

Even though this book is named after the education of princes, all people are to learn from it. For even though not everyone might be a

<sup>10</sup> Westman, 'Andreas Andreae And', p. 649.

<sup>11</sup> Zumkeller, 'Aegidius Romanus'. For an outline of the rise of Aristotelianism and the controversies caused by it in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Paris, see Bianchi, *Censure et liberté*.

<sup>12</sup> For the readers and their use of the texts, see Briggs, *Giles of Rome*.



king or a prince, they should certainly strive to be such that they would be worthy to rule and govern, which is not possible unless they learn and observe what is said in this book. So, in fact, all people are, in a way, the audience of this science, even though few have the [required] sharpness of mind [...] Indeed (according to the Philosopher in his *Politics*), what the masters must know to command, their subjects must know to achieve. If princes are instructed through this book on how to behave and on how they should rule their subjects, it is proper that this teaching shall reach all the way to the people, so that they may know how to obey their prince.<sup>13</sup>

Giles considered that his broad choice of audience necessitated a less sophisticated and more figurative approach in his style of writing (he would write *modum grossum et figuralem*),<sup>14</sup> but for all its accessibility, *De regimine principum* is a massive work that boasts an encyclopaedic range of moral-philosophical knowledge. It covers more than 700 print pages in the sixteenth-century edition that most scholars use today, but the size was commensurate with the ambitious scope of the undertaking. *De regimine principum* accounts for all three areas that were considered to constitute the subject matter of practical philosophy – ethics, economics, and politics – which it relates to the particular needs and concerns of the temporal ruler.<sup>15</sup> In keeping with this division of practical philosophy, Giles partitioned his work into three books. The first – where Justice and eleven other virtues are dealt with – debates how the prince should govern himself (*Ethics*). The second book concerns his rule of the princely household (*Economics*). In the third book (*Politics*), Giles addresses practical and theoretical issues

13 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.1.1, fols. 2v-3r: ‘Nam licet intitulus sit hic liber de eruditione Principum, totus tamen populus erudiendus est per ipsum. Quamvis enim non quilibet esse rex vel princeps, quilibet tamen summopere studere debet, ut talis sit, quod dignus sit regere et principari. Quod esse non potest, nisi sciantur, et observentur quae in hoc opere sunt dicenda, totus ergo populus auditor quoddammodo est huius artis, sed pauci sunt vigentes acumine intellectus [...] Immo quia (secundum Philosophum in *Politico*) quae oportet dominum scire praecipere, haec oportet subditorum scire facere: si per hunc librum instruuntur principes, quomodo se habere, et qualiter debeant suis subditis imperare, oportet doctrinam hanc extendere usque ad populum, ut sciat qualiter debeat suis Principibus obedire.’

14 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.1.1, fol. 3r: ‘si per hunc librum instruuntur principes, quomodo se habere, et qualiter debeant suis subditis imperare, oportet doctrinam hanc extendere usque ad populum, ut sciat qualiter debeat suis Principibus obedire. Et quia hoc fieri non potest (ut tactum est) nisi per rationes superficiales et sensibiles: oportet modum procedendi in hoc opere, esse grossum et figuralem.’

15 This division of the field of practical philosophy appears with the Victorines. See Taylor, *Didascalicon* 2.1, 2.19.

of government, including matters of jurisdiction and legislation. Personal ethics, family life, and politics might appear as disparate topics, but Giles's persistent discourse on virtue builds a single moral arc that unites these three books.

### The moral good of kingship

*De regimine principum* champions a monarch with far-reaching prerogatives in the sphere of law. The Carlyle brothers – whose pioneering work on medieval political thought fixated on the relation between the prince and the law – took particular note of Giles and interpreted his account as a primordial statement of the absolute monarchy that would only fully develop in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>16</sup> This tag of 'absolutism' followed in later research on the text,<sup>17</sup> and the most recent accounts continue to emphasize Giles's particular advocacy of a monarchy with far-reaching prerogatives.<sup>18</sup>

Giles acknowledged that kingship was not the only form of rule. Aristotle had considered the rule of one (kingship), a few good men (aristocracy), or a multitude (polity) as respectable alternatives for the organization of government. Giles and other readers in late thirteenth-century France, however, made it clear that government by one, by a prince, was preferable over other forms of rule.<sup>19</sup> But the ideal number of rulers was just one of many concerns in this academic quest for the best regime. Principalities could differ in many ways. For instance, the king who governed for his own interest, instead of for the common good and for the good of his subjects, was nothing but a tyrant.<sup>20</sup> Another important distinction, which is particularly relevant for Giles's discourse on justice, concerned the king's relation to the law. In one type of regime, the *regimen regale*, the king rules according to his own will and by laws of his own making. In the other type, the *regimen politicum*, he governs according to laws that are made by the people.

16 Carlyle and Carlyle, *History of Medieval Political Theory*, p. 76. The Carlyles were however aware that similar absolutist statements were made among the jurists.

17 Berges, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 61.

18 Briggs and Eardley, *Companion to Giles*, p. 5.

19 Giles's discussion of the best regime occurs in several parts of *Regimine principum*, but central are Egidius Romanus, *De regimini principum* 3.2.2, 3.2.3, and 3.2.3, fol. 269v: 'regnum est optimus principatus'.

20 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 2.2.2, fol. 268r.

The state can be ruled by two types of rule; political or royal. Someone is said to lead with royal rule when he leads according to his will and according to laws that he has made himself. But then he leads by political rule when he does not lead according to his will nor according to laws that he has made himself, but according to those made by the citizens.<sup>21</sup>

Giles culled this distinction from *Politics*, and he also retained Aristotle's original discussion, which sets out its terms in the context of authority relations within the family. The prince, or any man, Giles held, ruled arbitrarily or *regale* over his children, but in his rule over his spouse, he must respect the laws of matrimony and other agreements; and hence it is a rule that rather conforms to the *regimen politicum*. But which type of rule was preferable outside the sphere of the family: the one that was based on the law made by the people, or the one that was based on the laws made by the king and based on his judgement? According to Giles, the father best benefits his son's needs by using his judgment (*arbitrium*), and this is the manner in which the king should rule his subjects:

just as the father better procures for his son when he rules and governs by himself, in the same manner, the king should rule his subject people according to his will, to, as it appears, better procure for this people.<sup>22</sup>

Giles's *regimen regale* is a paternalistic form of kingship, where the ruler is supposed to govern his people as a benevolent father rears his child. He is the moral guide in this relationship. Giles describes the king as an archer, and the people are his arrow, which it is his task to shoot towards its designated end.<sup>23</sup> The king's most precious tool to carry out this duty is in fact the law.

21 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 2.1.14, fols. 154v-155r: 'Civitas [...] duplici regimine regi potest, politico, scilicet et regali. Dicitur autem quis praesse regali dominio, cum praest secundum arbitrium et secundum leges quas ipse instituit. Sed tunc praest regimine politico quando non praest secundum arbitrium, nec secundum leges quas ipse instituit, sed secundum eas quas cives instituerunt.'

22 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 2.1.14, fol. 155r: 'sed pater secundum suum arbitrium prout melius viderit filio expedire, ipsum gubernat et regit: sicut et rex gentem sibi subiectam regere debet secundum suum arbitrium, prout melius viderit illi genti expedire.'

23 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.8, fol. 278v: 'Rex igitur et quilibet director populi, est quasi sagittator quidam: populus vero, est quasi sagitta quaedam dirigenda in finem et in bonum.'

## Obey and be good – the virtue of legal justice

Giles's Book 1 is a systematic treatment of twelve virtues, as these pertain to the behaviour and government of the ruler.<sup>24</sup> The same template, more or less, is used to discuss each virtue. The headings of chapters 10 to 12 give an idea of the remit of his discussion of justice: (10) 'What are the different types of justice, to what matters does it pertain, and how is it different from other virtues?'; (11) 'Without justice, realms are unable to endure'; (12) 'It is most fitting that kings and princes are just and heed justice in their realms'.<sup>25</sup> A more in-depth enquiry into the theory and practice of law appears in Book 3 of *De Regimine principum*. However, in practice, these chapters on justice as a virtue in Book 1 also focus on matters of law.

Following Aristotle, Giles identifies two main forms of justice: legal justice (*iustitia legalis*) and fairness (*iustitia aequalis*). Legal justice is a virtue that demands that the law is enforced and obeyed.<sup>26</sup> This notion, that law-abidingness is a virtue, becomes a useful device for Giles to illustrate how obedience to authorities, such as the king, can be a good thing. Law-abidingness may not sound much like a virtue, but Giles departs from the idea that the law is something more than just a set of arbitrary rules imposed by force. Human law, as he explains in Book 3, should correspond to the fundamentally just principles of natural reason or natural law. They should also be useful for the common good, and adapted to suit the existing customs of the land.<sup>27</sup> With these preconditions in mind, it is easier to understand why Giles expects that moral goodness will follow from lawfulness; proper human law is law that conforms to what is just absolutely. This makes legal justice, a person's inclination to implement the law, into a virtue that promotes all other virtues:

24 Giles discusses the cardinal virtues – *Prudentia, Iustitia, Fortitudo, Temperantia* – as well as a set of contiguous virtues (*virtutes annexae*): *Liberalitas, Magnificentia, Magnanimitas, Honoris Amativa, Mansuetudo, Amicabilitas, Veritas, Locunditas*. The theological virtues – *Spes, Fides, and Caritas* – get little mention in his account, though at 1.1.12, fol. 24v, Giles concludes that the most important of the virtues, *Prudentia*, should be governed in its exercise by *Caritas*.

25 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* ch. 10: 'Quot sunt modi iustitiae, & circa quae iustitia habet esse, & quomodo ab aliis virtutibus est distincta'; ch. 11: 'Quod absque iustitia nequeunt regna subsistere'; ch. 12: 'Quod maxime decet reges et principes esse iustos, et in suo regno iustitiam observare'.

26 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* ch. 10: 'Nam ex hoc est quis iustus legalis, quia adimplet praecepta legis'.

27 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.26.

The law commands generally that all virtues are implemented and that vice is shunned. Because of this, legal justice – that is, the implementation of law – is in a sense each and every virtue.<sup>28</sup>

Legal coercion can be thought to promote virtue in different ways. Giles alludes to two examples from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 5, where Aristotle says that the law bids men to act bravely since it forbids the soldier to leave the lines of battle, and to act as temperate men, since it forbids adultery.<sup>29</sup> In the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas considers this idea that the force of law could improve the morals, at least of young men, who are still capable of being trained. ‘Force and fear’, he suggests, might prevent those who are ‘depraved and prone to vice’ so that they desist from ‘evil doing and leave others in peace’, a notion similar to what was expressed in the preface to the Law of Uppland, as discussed above. However, Aquinas felt that the effects of constant legal coercion could have effects more far-reaching than simply repressing the wickedness of certain boys. Law could make good men out of adolescents who might otherwise have turned bad. It could ‘habituate’ them to do the right thing and thus make them ‘virtuous’.<sup>30</sup> Giles does not go quite this far. While it is clear that he thinks that the purpose of the law is to lead people to good conduct and to teach them what is right and what is wrong,<sup>31</sup> he holds that even if the virtue of legal justice might make men act courageously, they do so purely for the reason that they wish to fulfil the law, and not because they take real delight in courage for its own sake.<sup>32</sup> This is virtual courage, but not the real virtue of courage.

In Giles’s paternalistic view of kingship, the prince is the moral guide of his people. He is a teacher of virtue, the great archer who directs his people towards its designated goal. The law is a formidable instrument to help him achieve this edifying task. It forbids what is lewd and teaches what is laudable, and hence it will lead the people to act in the right way.<sup>33</sup>

28 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* ch. 10: ‘Lex igitur universaliter iubet omnem virtutem implere, et militiam fugere. Quare iustitia legalis, id est impletione legis, est quodammodo omnis virtus.’

29 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.2.10, fol. 44r.

30 Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* 1-2.95.1. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer of AUP for his or her perceptive remarks on this point.

31 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.1, fol. 267v: ‘populus enim ad bene agendum, per leges maxime inducendum est, eo quod ipsis legibus praecipuntur laudabilia, et prohibentur turpia.’

32 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum*: 1.2.10, fol. 44r: ‘non tamen aget ea secundum eandem intentionem, vel secundum eandem rationem formalem’.

33 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.1, fol. 267v: ‘populus enim ad bene agendum, per leges maxime inducendum est, eo quod ipsis legibus praecipuntur laudabilia, et prohibentur turpia.’

## The just king is the living law

In the hand of the king, the law is an instrument of virtue. But what is the king's relation to the law? What enables him to put its precepts into practice? These questions are central to Giles's understanding of royal authority, and inseparable from his idea of the king as a teacher of virtue. They pertain to a tradition of legal thought where the quotidian positive law appears as no more than a flawed application of a higher, natural law standard.

Giles separated his discussion of the virtue of justice from his treatment of legal theory and practice by addressing them in two different books (1 and 3). However, these two spheres of enquiry are united not only by virtue ethics, but also by a single system of legal thought. This system of thought, which Giles had in common with contemporary theologians and scholars of Roman and canon law, assumed that human laws were mutable and sometimes flawed, but that there existed the eternal and more fundamental norms of natural law, which provided the gold standard by which human laws could be measured and improved. Giles devotes a chapter to explaining, as he says in his heading, 'that there are different types of law and different manners of justice, and that all other types can be reduced to natural law or positive law'.<sup>34</sup> While something can be said to be just in the sense of positive law because it is established as being so by some agreement or decree, something is naturally just because natural reason says so, or because we have a natural impulse or inclination to it. Natural law is right always and everywhere, while positive law is established in the circumstances of a particular time and place. It is natural, says Giles, that an evildoer who disturbs the peace and threatens the common good should be punished, but just how he should be punished is always a matter of positive law. Giles says that natural law is written in our hearts, and also in the hearts of people who have no other law (Romans 2:15).

Human or positive law must compare favourably with the common good and with the customs of the people whom it is designed to rule, but also with the natural law on which it should be based:

First of all, human or positive law must be just, so that it compares with natural reason or natural law: since it is not law if it is not just, but only corruption of law. For nothing is established justly by men if it does not in

34 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.24, fols. 305v-307r: 'Quod diversa sunt genera legum & diversi sunt modi iustitiae & quod in ius naturale & positivum caetera alia reducuntur.'

some way take its origin from the natural law, and without that natural reason in some way declares that it should be established.<sup>35</sup>

But who decides if a human law compares with natural law and reason, and hence if it is valid? And on what grounds could anyone presume to judge the law, if such inconsistency with natural law is found? Giles rejected Aristotle's view, that it was better that the realm was governed by the best of laws than by the best of kings. One reason to hold the law as the superior ruler was that the king, being human, could be perverted by desire, but it was also clear that in certain particular cases, the law was deficient. Then it was better that the king was in the position to correct the law. Giles maintained that where positive law was concerned, the king should be placed above the law. Even the etymology of king (*rex*) seemed to indicate that he was as an instrument of reason, and hence a mediator between the natural law and the positive law:

it should be known that the king and whoever rules is the mediator between the natural law and the positive, for no one rules rightly unless he acts as right reason declares, because reason must be the rule of all human works. Hence, if the name of king [*regis*] is derived from rule [*regendo*] and it is fitting that the king rules others and is the rule [*regulam*] of others, then it is proper that the king in his rule of others shall follow right reason, and by consequence follow the natural law. Because he rules rightly to the extent that he does not deviate from the natural law. But he is above the positive law, since it is established on his authority [...]: hence positive law is below the ruler, as natural law is above. And if it is said that some positive law is above the ruler, this is not in that it is positive, but in that which it preserves the force of natural right.<sup>36</sup>

35 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.26, fols. 309v-310r.

36 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.29, fols. 314v-315r: 'sciendum est regem et quemlibet principantem esse medium inter legem naturalem et positivam, nam nullus recte principatur, nisi agat ut recta ratio dicat: nam ratio debet esse regula humanorum operum. Quare si nomen regis a regendo sumptum est, et decet regem regere alios, et esse regulam aliorum, oportet regem in regendo alios sequi rectam rationem, et per consequens sequi naturalem legem, quia in tantum recte regit, in quantum a lege naturali non deviat: est tamen supra legem positivam, quia illam sua auctoritate constituit [...] quare positiva lex est infra principantem, sicut lex naturalis est supra. Et si dicatur legem aliquam positivam esse supra principantem hoc non est ut positiva, sed ut in ea reservatur virtus iuris naturalis.'

Giles's absolutist principle is clear, but circumspect at the same time: the prince is above the law, but only as long as he acts according to right reason.<sup>37</sup>

The chief justification for royal authority in Giles's account is neither references to divine right nor extensive quotes from Roman law, but the premise that the prince is a man of extraordinary virtue. We see him legitimize the princely prerogative to transgress positive law on the grounds of his personal justice in chapter 12 in the second part of Book 1, where he explains why 'it is most fitting that kings and princes are just, and that they heed justice in their rule':

If the law is a rule of conduct, as can be had from *Ethics V*, then the judge, and much more so the king who makes the laws, must be a rule for those who are to act. Because the king or prince is a kind of law, and the law is a kind of king or prince. For the law is a kind of lifeless prince. And to be sure, the prince is a kind of living law. And to the same extent that the living is above the lifeless, the king or prince should be above the law. For the king ought to be so great in his justice and fairness that he may direct the laws themselves, since in some cases he should not have to heed the laws.<sup>38</sup>

Giles's account of royal authority cannot be separated from his understanding of the virtue of justice as the link between human law and natural law. The prince, acting out of his innate justice, can and should transgress the fallible human laws when this is called for.

## Virtue by the grace of God

Giles's account of royal authority implies a prince of moral perfection. At times, he makes this expectation explicit, stating that the prince should excel

37 This circumspection seems to go against the grain of the 'absolutist' tag that the scholarship has placed on Giles. Some of its practical consequences appear in the *Regimine* where he suggests that the prince should heed the existing laws of the land as far as possible and not make new ones unnecessarily (3.2.31, fol. 317v), and that he should take counsel when he legislates (3.2.19, fols. 298v-299r).

38 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.2.12, fol. 48r-v: 'si lex est est regula agendorum, ut haberi potest ex 5 Ethic., ipse iudex, et multum magis ipse rex cuius est leges ferre debet esse quaedam regula in agendis. Est enim rex sive princeps quaedam lex, et lex est quaedam rex sive princeps. Nam lex est quidam inanimatus princeps. Princeps vero est quaedam animata lex. Quantum ergo animatum inanimatum superat tantum rex sive princeps debet superare legem. Debet etiam rex esse tantae iustitiae et tantae equitatis ut possit ipsas leges dirigere: cum in aliquo casu leges observari non debeant'.



his subjects in virtue and be like a 'demigod'; he should be good beyond the ordinary measure of man and boast that semi-divine, 'heroic' level of virtue that is the proper quality of the ruler.<sup>39</sup> Did Giles really expect the prince to be that virtuous? Had he no qualms about investing such immense powers in the king, based on nothing but an expectation of surpassing goodness?

Giles was just one, but probably the most influential, among many late medieval authors who seemed willing to support an unrestrained authority for the king on the supposition that he should care for the common good and be virtuous.<sup>40</sup> Machiavelli, writing *The Prince* in 1513, already appears to reject his medieval forerunners' accounts of princely virtue on the grounds that they were naive. When commenting on the value of good character in the prince, Machiavelli professed to present the 'real truth of the matter', rather 'than the imagination of it', probably to suggest that fantasies were the best one could hope for from the earlier accounts. In Machiavelli's view, it was enough to appear virtuous; the traditional virtues were of no consequence for the success of the prince. The prince must sometimes appear generous or clement, but to actually be any of those things was, in Machiavelli's view, positively harmful. Liberality could serve the prince's public image, but if it was not moderated, it led to his ruin.<sup>41</sup> Machiavelli's depiction of the old-school do-goodery and political naiveté of earlier accounts of princely virtue was largely a straw man, propped up to flaunt the cutting edge of his own account.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, it does call attention to potential problems in the virtue-ethical accounts of authors like Giles of Rome. Did Giles not consider the possibility that the prince might be a man of no virtue at all, or think about the relative merit of feigned virtue, in cases where the right stuff was lacking? Could the king teach his people virtue if he lacked it in himself?

Giles acknowledges that certain acts might have the appearance of virtue, even though the actor is not virtuous. Speaking of fortitude, he states that men may act courageously because they care for their reputation,

39 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 3.2.32, fol. 321v; see also Tjällén, 'Aristotle's Heroic Virtue', pp. 55-66.

40 Dunbabin, 'Government', pp. 484-86.

41 Machiavelli, *Prince*, chs. 15-18.

42 Machiavelli took a shot at clemency and liberality, but passed over the virtues more commonly associated with government, such as prudence, justice, or fortitude. If Giles had been in the position to reply, he might have felt that Machiavelli had also missed the fundamental point that virtue was defined as a mean. Strictly speaking, there could be no such thing as 'too much liberality' – liberality in excess of what was needed for the situation was not liberality at all, but prodigality.

or because cowardice is a punishable offence, but real courage has no such external motivation; it is spurred only by the impetus to do what is good and right. Giles says that it is well for the king in his capacity as commander to understand what might make his people act with courage, but personally he must possess the real thing, because the knowledge of what is good and right is necessary to keep his people out of wars that are unjust.<sup>43</sup> Giles's account of justice is analogous to this account of fortitude. As mentioned above, even the wicked can do right by simply following the law out of fear, but when it comes to the king, there can be no substitute for the real virtue of justice. The good of his subjects depends on it. He is supposed to be a measure for all who act, and nothing will be straight (*regulatum*) in the realm without his justice. Without justice, he is not even a proper king:

If kings are unjust they administer the realm so that justice is not heeded. They must strive not to be unjust or unfair, because their injustice and unfairness removes their royal dignity. Because kings who are unjust, even if they rule by force, are not worthy to be kings, since they ought to be straight and fair rulers [*regulam esse rectam et equalem*]. The king, since he is a kind of living law, is a kind of living rule of action, and it is most fitting that he in his own royal person himself should serve justice.<sup>44</sup>

Giles's insistence that the king should be just is unequivocal, and it is central to his conception of royal authority. It could be argued that this image of a morally perfect prince is not an attempt to describe the person of the king at all, but rather an attempt to construe an image of public authority, a political fiction somehow necessary to define sovereignty, nascent in the late medieval state. However, *De regimine principum* is also an educational tract. It was addressed to an individual prince whose duty it was to enact that fiction. The problem of the virtue of the prince, or rather the lack of it, remains and must be addressed.

It is clear from *De regimine principum* that Giles was aware that there might be a chasm between the princely ideal and the individual man on the throne. He does not take it for granted that the prince is heroically virtuous,

43 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.2.14, fol. 54r.

44 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.2.12, fol. 48: 'Sic si reges sunt iniusti, disponunt regnum ut non observetur justitia. Maxime ergo studere debent ne sint iniusti et inequales; quia eorum injustitia et inequalitas tollit ab eis regiam dignitatem. Nam reges iniusti etsi dominant per civilem potentiam non tamen digni sunt ut sint reges, cum enim deceat regulam esse rectam et equalem. Rex, quia est quaedam animata lex, est quaedam animata regula agendorum, ex parte ipsius personae regiae maxime decet ipse servare justitiam.'

or virtuous at all. This is already obvious from the fact that Giles feels the need to admonish the prince to strive to avoid injustice, as he does in the quote above, and there are other ways in which he tries to make sure that the rift between the desirable level of princely virtue and the shortcomings of the individual prince shall not grow too wide.

To begin with, *De regimine principum* was in itself an instrument for the moral improvement of the prince. In Book 1, Giles explains how the work will be useful for the prince. He has written it for the education of the prince (*gratia eruditionis principum*), and he claims that if the prince understands and observes the book, four good things will follow. First, he will gain the greatest of good: the virtues. Second, through the virtues he will win control of himself (since the virtues help subordinate the passions under reason). Third, Giles points out that the man who truly rules himself also gains the dignity to rule others. Ultimately, the unity and goodness gained through virtue will draw the virtuous man closer to the supreme unity and goodness, which is God and happiness eternal. Giles's political vision, then, is a vision of individual and political unity under the guidance of reason, which also leads the prince and his people to God.<sup>45</sup> This rational myth of the state presupposes a prince of virtue and reason as its figurehead. If the prince reads, understands, and observes what is said in *De regimine principum*, it will help realize this ideal.

Giles does not presume, however, that the prince is virtuous from the outset. His discourse assumes a Christian framework and the agency of divine grace. Giles in fact nods to the weakness of the human material of the prince and the need for divine intervention to perform virtuous works:

Truly, since what I am talking about cannot be heeded without divine grace, it is fitting that all men and in particular the royal majesty, shall pray for divine grace. For the loftier the height of the royal majesty, the more he needs divine grace so that he may perform virtuous works and have the strength to lead his subjects to virtue.<sup>46</sup>

The prince ought to pray in order to perform virtuous works and lead his people. It has been remarked that Giles's account of moral philosophy

45 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.2.3, fols. 6v-7r.

46 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.1.3, fol. 7r: 'Verum quia ea, quorum trademus notitiam, absque divina gratia observari non possunt, decet quemlibet hominem, et maxime regiam maiestatem, implorare divinam gratiam. Nam quanto maiestas regia in loco altiori consistit, tanto magis indiget divina gratia, ut possit virtutum opera exercere, et sibi subditos valere inducere ad virtutem.'

was more secular than that of Aquinas,<sup>47</sup> that references to Scripture and church fathers are virtually absent from *De regimine principum*, and that he addressed his readers more in the mode of a moral philosopher than the mode of a preacher.<sup>48</sup> However, in view of the continuous attempts to harmonize Aristotelian philosophy with Christian religion it is probably misleading to think of these two modes as mutually exclusive.<sup>49</sup> Certainly, Giles's most common reference is Aristotle, and it is the language of virtue that shapes his account of the prince, but it should be added that he reserved a strategic place for grace in this account.

In the quote above, Giles suggests that the prince must pray for grace so that he will be able to carry out the works of virtue and make his subjects virtuous. He returns to this theme at another passage in Book 1. The prince, he suggests on this occasion, should be in the highest degree of 'exemplary virtue', since he must serve as an example to his subjects. Nevertheless, again, Giles does not think that this can be achieved without divine intercession, because 'no one can be in that degree of goodness without the grace of God and his help, so the more that kings and princes should excel above others, the more ardently they ought to pray for divine grace'.<sup>50</sup> Like many other thirteenth-century theologians,<sup>51</sup> Giles acknowledged that virtues could be acquired by effort, but they could also be elevated to higher degrees by grace, or infused by God. Without divine intercession, the degree of virtue required for the task of a prince was unachievable.

## Conclusion

So to questions again: Is it possible to teach virtue? How can it be taught? And who is a suitable teacher? Giles of Rome's reply is found in his account of the virtue of justice, which tackles the complexity of these questions by connecting the fields of law and philosophy, and religious and political thought. On the one hand, it is obvious that Giles thought that it was possible to teach virtue, since the basic assumption of his great work is that the prince

47 Canning, *History of Medieval Political Thought*, p. 133.

48 Krynen, *L'Empire du roi*, p. 183.

49 For the different strategies that medieval authors applied to avoid incompatibility between the Aristotelian texts and Christian doctrine, see contributions in Bianchi, *Christian Readings*.

50 Egidius Romanus, *De regimine principum* 1.3.33, fol. 90r: 'sed cum tantae bonitatis nullus esse possit absque dei gratia, et eius auxilio: quanto reges et principes alios excellere debent, tanto ardentius decet eos divinam gratiam postulare'.

51 Bejczy, *Cardinal Virtues*, pp. 184-99.

and his people may learn from the text and improve. However, he reserves a particular place for the prince in this process of general improvement. As impressed by the political thought of Aristotle, Giles felt that government could fill a positive moral function. His prince is an archer and an example, a teacher of virtue who should direct his people to its ultimate end. In particular, it is in his discourse on justice that Giles addresses the issue of teaching virtue. He maintains that the law is an important tool to enact the moral function of government, since the law forces men who lack virtue to act as if they were virtuous, although Giles does not go quite as far as Aquinas, who states that the fear of the law eventually habituates the wicked and makes them good.

Giles placed great expectations on his prince, and great powers. To serve as a teacher of virtue for his people the prince must be a man of superhuman virtue himself. In the quasi-religious legal theory of the day, it was the great personal justice of the prince that made him a mouthpiece for the higher good of the natural law – and made him a ‘living law’, with the authority to bend the positive law to his will. Hence, *De regimine principum* mirrors the confidence of the late thirteenth-century schoolmen in the potential of virtue and reason, both as aids to help them connect with God and as means to govern this world with justice. However, they were not as blatantly naive about the moral perfection of their prince as we are led to believe by the later and more cynical voice of Machiavelli. Giles was aware that there could be a far reach between the ideal of the virtuous king and the capacity of the real individual on the throne. To help his prince toe the line, Giles offered *De regimine principum*, a work that summarized the moral philosophy of his time. However, in the final instance, Giles would have acknowledged that the prince was also likely to need the help of divine grace, administered through prayer, pastoral care, and royal confessors.

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# The tree and its fruit

The problem of good deeds in the Swedish Reformation

*Mari Eyice*

## Abstract

Mari Eyice studies how the Swedish reformers of the sixteenth century tried to tackle the pedagogical problem posed by the Lutheran focus on the two theological principles of *sola gratia* ('by God's grace alone') and *sola fide* ('by faith alone'). The reformers needed to inculcate these principles in their congregations, and at the same time avoid that the congregations drew the logical conclusion that good deeds were unnecessary. Yet, in the context of the Reformation, virtue was considered to be highly problematic, as most likely being only feigned or even a veil covering sin. The solution to this problem was to employ the metaphor of the tree and its fruit, through which the reformers could argue that good works were still of the highest relevance as part of a Christian life, since they were the fruits of true faith.

**Keywords:** Reformation, faith, good works, pedagogy

To illustrate the nature of human action in this world, no other metaphor is used more often during the Swedish Reformation than the one about the tree and its fruit. The metaphor occurs in Matthew 7, where it is used to describe how one should recognize false prophets (the allegorical trees) by their actions (the fruits), because just as a bad tree cannot bear good fruit, false prophets cannot do good works. It also occurs in Luke 6, where it is stated that a tree is known by its fruit and that a good man brings forth good from his heart, while an evil man brings forth evil. In the Swedish Reformation period, the metaphor includes all people, as in Luke 6, and is used to illustrate various and sometimes conflicting aspects of the nature of human works. As in the Bible passages, the metaphor is sometimes used



to describe how false faith is evident in bad actions. At other times, the emphasis is instead on true faith as the basis for all good works.

The first use of the metaphor is general, while the second is in line with the two Lutheran core doctrines of *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. According to Lutheran theology, humans are justified by God's grace alone (*sola gratia*), for the sake of Jesus's sacrifice, and only through faith (*sola fide*). This meant that a righteous life did not contribute to salvation, as the Catholic Church taught.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, Lutheran theology placed an overwhelming emphasis on faith as a matter of internal assurance instead of as a matter of good works.

While the frequent use of the metaphor of the tree and its fruit in the Swedish Reformation texts testifies to the centrality of these doctrines in Lutheran theology, it also suggests that this was a complicated matter to instruct people on. This is apparent from one dialogue between an anonymous teacher and his pupil that was printed early in the Swedish Reformation. The teacher uses the metaphor of the tree and its fruit to point out to his pupil that actions are pointless with regard to salvation, and the pupil contends that if that is indeed the case, he will do nothing. Obviously, the teacher explains that the pupil will have unconditionally to do good works anyway.<sup>2</sup> In this way, the dialogue illustrates the pedagogical risk of a theology centred on internal devotion. Although the doctrine of *sola fide* was the central theological message of the Reformation, there were nevertheless rules for attitude and behaviour<sup>3</sup> that were inherent in the Christian tradition, as well as specific Reformation interpretations of these, which were to be taught. These were as central as the theological doctrines to the formation of an ideal Lutheran practice,<sup>4</sup> but ran the risk of being

1 Wåghäll Nivre and Larsson, *Reformationstiden*, p. 36.

2 O. Petri, 'Een skön nyttugh vnderwisningh 1526', p. 144.

3 The Christian commandment to love one's neighbour, for example.

4 The understanding that religious instruction creates religious practice is inspired by Norman Fairclough's description of texts as constitutive in the social sphere. According to Fairclough, the relationship between texts and social reality is dialectical in the sense that texts have their origins in, and are formed by, the social reality that they are created in. At the same time, texts renegotiate and reformulate that reality. On a textual level, this can be seen in both the use of words and clauses as well as the larger structure of the texts. Furthermore, it can be observed in the interrelation between texts, or the intertextuality in Fairclough's terminology. Although intertextuality will not be investigated here, it is nevertheless of utmost importance in the case of religious instruction. Since religious instruction is primarily based on scripture, the origins of many of the discussions that will be analysed here is clear, but the focus will be on the negotiation existent within the texts of the period, rather than the relation to other uses of the same sources.

underemphasized or forgotten. In this chapter, I will analyse how the tension between internal faith and external good works was addressed in the Swedish Reformation material. I ask how the nature of human action was understood, how faith was supposed to be shown, and how these themes together formed a guideline for ideal Lutheran practice.

## Forms of religious instruction in the Reformation period in Sweden

There is one other Lutheran doctrine that is of central importance for the form that religious instruction took. It is the doctrine of *sola scriptura*. This doctrine states that the Bible should be the only authority in religious matters, and thus that only religious practices that could be deduced from scripture were to be followed. Additionally, it meant that inspiration for religious instruction could come only from scripture, and no other source.

The doctrine of *sola scriptura* was integrated into the Reformation in Sweden early on, as Christer Pahlmblad has shown. The Riksdag of 1527 decided that God's Word should be preached 'purely' in the whole realm, which meant that the Bible should be the basis of the sermon although the expressions used may not be openly Lutheran.<sup>5</sup> Pahlmblad has argued that the reformers were especially keen to terminate the use of exempla, illustrative narratives that were popular in religious instruction during the late Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup>

This development coincides with the general trend in the use of exempla, which has been described by Karlheinz Stierle as a 'crisis' during this period. Stierle argues that the pedagogical function of the exempla was questioned when the world became more unpredictable during the late Middle Ages and the early modern period. According to Stierle, this resulted in more explicit moral and didactic argumentation even when exempla were used.<sup>7</sup>

As a consequence of this reasoning, authors can be seen as agents for social change within an ideological structure. The subjects of texts, their audiences, are usually embedded within the same ideological structure, but may react creatively in response to these texts. This is important to remember in this study, since the investigation will only concern the actual texts and their agency for social change. How the audience responded is not part of the investigation, and therefore it is only the intended practices that will be the subject of analysis. Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 64, 75, 91.

5 Pahlmblad, 'Fyra reformationstida påskpredikningar', pp. 49-51.

6 Pahlmblad, 'Fyra reformationstida påskpredikningar', p. 52.

7 Stierle, 'Three Moments in the Crisis of Exemplarity', pp. 587-90. The unpredictability that Stierle refers to is brought on by 'the new and powerful experiences of plurality in the

Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre and Olle Larsson have described the same tendency to explicitly emphasize moral-didactic arguments in printed texts. However, they ascribe this development to the increasing central control by the crown over printed texts during the sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Thus, while forms of religious instruction were central to the Reformation movement, they were also subject to continuous negotiation. For the question of ideal religious practice, this means that not only did the premises for what constituted the ideal attitude and behaviour change, so did the form of instruction.

In the Swedish case, two brothers, Olaus and Laurentius Petri, carried out this negotiation almost exclusively. They were the leading reformers in the Swedish Reformation, which was orchestrated chiefly from above, with support from King Gustav Vasa. Olaus Petri is the originator of nearly all printed texts in Sweden from the mid-1520s to the end of the 1530s. His brother, Laurentius, became influential somewhat later, as the first Lutheran archbishop of Sweden between 1531 and 1573. Although he was not as productive a writer as his brother, he produced a comprehensive sermon collection that will be examined here. These two brothers stand behind almost all of the texts examined in this chapter, which should not be seen as a problem, however, since their textual dominance matches their influence over the Reformation in Sweden.<sup>9</sup>

The material consists of mainly two genres of texts: printed instruction books and sermon collections. The instruction books<sup>10</sup> were probably intended to instruct parish clergy in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, while the printed sermon collections<sup>11</sup> were intended as guides for

Renaissance, for whom [sic. Probably "of which"] the division of the Catholic Church and the discovery of the New World are but symptoms'.

8 Wåghäll Nivre and Larsson, *Reformationstiden*, p. 106.

9 Some scholarly work has been primarily devoted to Olaus Petri. Two of the more recent studies are Ferm, *Olaus Petri och Heliga Birgitta*, and Hallencreutz and Lindeberg, *Olaus Petri: den mångsidige svenske reformatorn*.

10 The printed instruction manuals that are examined in this chapter are: L. Andreae, *Een Kortt vnderwijsning om troona och godha gerningar*; O. Petri, 'Een nyttwgh vnderwijsning 1526'; and O. Petri, 'Een lijten boock ther vthi forclarat warder hwar igenom menniskian får then ewigha salighetena 1535'. These are not all the instruction manuals that were printed during the period, but they have been chosen because they cover the topic of the chapter the most thoroughly.

11 The printed collections examined in this chapter are O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', and L. Petri, *Postilla*. These two are the only ones covering the ecclesial year that were printed during the Reformation. While the first is an original work in Swedish, the other is a translation. Laurentius Petri translated *Postilla* from German. Although one could argue that the translation is more representative of a German context than a Swedish one, it is the use, instead of the origin, that is of interest in this chapter. From the perspective of how religious ideals were taught to Swedish congregations, this translated work is equally interesting to examine.

the actual sermons. It is impossible to detect how much, and in what ways, preachers deviated from the printed versions. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish general trends in the discussion of ideal Christian practice from the printed texts.

The sermons are also of special interest because of the position of the sermon within the Lutheran service. The reformers criticized the Catholic Church for its perceived lack of sermons,<sup>12</sup> and stipulated that sermons in the vernacular should be a central part of the service. This call is repeated also in the first sermon collection that was published in Sweden during the Reformation. There Olaus Petri urged the Swedish clergy to start preaching to their congregations, instead of 'reading and singing' (*läsa och siwnga*) as they had previously done.<sup>13</sup>

### The problem of good deeds

The topic of faith and good deeds was, as has been stated above, discussed repeatedly in many of the early Reformation texts in Sweden,<sup>14</sup> and it was the single focus of the text *Een kort vnderwisning om troona och godha gerningar* (A short instruction on faith and good deeds). The work is one of the earliest Reformation texts in Sweden and was written by Laurentius Andreae.<sup>15</sup> In the introduction to this text, Laurentius Andreae states that there are two misconceptions with regard to faith and good deeds. Some people take certain parts of the Bible as evidence that only right faith is required of a Christian, and that one can therefore ignore good deeds. Others have interpreted other sections of the Bible to mean that it is only good deeds that matter for salvation and have thereby given themselves a false power to control their own salvation. Both are deceived, however, since right faith necessarily results in good deeds, but good deeds cannot arise without right faith.<sup>16</sup>

12 However, research has shown that sermons were given in the vernacular during the fifteenth century as well, cf., for example: Kreitzer, 'Lutheran Sermon', 35-36; Härdelin, *Världen som yta och fönster*, p. 231.

13 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 6. All translations of Swedish quotes into English are done by the author of the chapter. For a more general discussion of sermons in medieval and Lutheran settings, cf. 'Théologie et philosophie en predication de Thomas d'Aquin à Jean Calvin'.

14 See references in the following discussion.

15 Laurentius Andreae was in the leading circles of the Swedish Reformation and supported Olaus Petri's Lutheran opinion. Cf. Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, III, p. 21.

16 L. Andreae, *Een Kortt vnderwisning om troona och godha gerningar*, p. 2.

This initial statement is developed throughout the text with the use of the metaphor of the tree and its fruit, although it is sometimes not immediately clear if the metaphor actually illustrates that which is discussed. Laurentius Andreae emphasizes that right faith necessarily results in good deeds, just as a healthy tree must bear good fruit, and that before people have received the grace of right faith it is impossible to do good deeds. Herein lies the problem, however, because people are incapable of judging the nature of each other's deeds. Although deeds might seem just and right, they are not if they stem from bad motives. People without the right faith (bad trees) will never do anything from a 'good heart and assured mind' (*itt gott hierta och mz itt gott frijt moodh*) but out of slavery and fear, and therefore they will never be good no matter how noble they appear to other people.<sup>17</sup>

Another example of how the Lutheran view of faith and good deeds was explained in the Swedish Reformation is in Laurentius Petri's sermon collection, where he states that:

One should do good deeds, since one knows that sin is paid with death, but to hope for redemption from the eternal death through deeds is a lie and delusion, because even if we did it all, we are still useless servants and in need of God's grace.<sup>18</sup>

In this discussion, the emphasis is placed on the doctrine of *sola gratia* rather than on *sola fide*, which in this example results in a more distinct emphasis on human action. In other passages where *sola gratia* is emphasized for the question of faith and action, the grace of God is accentuated to an even higher degree, however. In these passages, Lutheran Christians are contrasted with other believers, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, or doubting Lutheran Christians, who are described as being in a pitiable state because they can never be certain that their actions are good enough to please God, whereas the believing Lutheran Christian is assured of God's grace and eternal life.<sup>19</sup>

Although the relationship between faith and good deeds is explained repeatedly, there seems nevertheless to have remained a general suspicion that this position was difficult to grasp for the intended readers. This suspicion

17 L. Andreae, *Een Kortt vnderwisning om troona och godha gerningar*, p. 5.

18 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Femte söndagen i faston': 'Godha gerningar skal man göra, effter man weet, att synden haffuer dödhen til löna, Men hoppas förlosning ifrå then ewiga dödhen genom gerningarna, ther är lögn och wilfarelse, Ty thet wij än alt gjorde, äre wji än tå onyttigha tienare, och behöffue at Gudh är oss nådeligh.'

19 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Förspråk'.

is for example evident in discussions where internal faith is contrasted with faith 'in hand' (*j händerna*),<sup>20</sup> and where confidence in one's actions is described as a diversion from true faith or a road to damnation, since people are not themselves able to judge which actions are truly good in the eyes of God.<sup>21</sup> In one instance, it is even suggested that virtuous behaviour might be a sign of bad faith. Since true faith should ideally reside in the heart, it should be hidden from other people, and virtuous behaviour might therefore serve to hide what is actually in the heart. As Laurentius Petri puts it, the heart is 'so secret and inscrutable' that it can be 'covered up and enveloped more and more, both with fine virtues and other things'.<sup>22</sup>

The problem with human action seems thus to have been the risk that its importance could be either underestimated or overestimated so that true faith was forgotten. Furthermore, the highlighting of the human inability to judge the nature of actions, and the last example of how seemingly good actions can hide a godless heart, seems to show a kind of suspicion regarding moral action as such. Taken together, these elements in the discussion indicate that action was a complicated topic in Reformation instructional literature.

### Ideal Lutheran practice

The primary goal of religious instruction is to prepare the reader for the ultimate goal of the Christian life, to obtain salvation. According to the introduction to Olaus Petri's sermon collection, the road to salvation can be divided into three themes. First, to 'rightly' believe and trust in God. Second, to love one's neighbour and do right by him. Third, to carry the cross with Christ, which means that one should suppress one's own sinful nature.<sup>23</sup> Although the doctrine of *sola fide* is evident in the primacy of right faith and trust in God in this text, the commandment of love and suppression of sin is nevertheless also part of the road to salvation. In this section, I will investigate how faith was perceived and how these conceptions were thought to function together with the commandment of love to form an ideal Christian practice.

20 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Then tridie Söndagen: i Aduentet'.

21 O. Petri, 'Een nyttwgh wnderwijsning 1526', p. 24; O. Petri, 'Een lijten boock ther vthi forclarat warder hwar igenom menniskian får then ewigha salighetena 1535', pp. 451-52.

22 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Näste Söndagh effter Jwladagh': 'så heemligit och oransakeligit [...] att hon må thet yterligare skyla och hölia, både medh sköna dygder och annat'.

23 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 7.

## Faith

The concept of faith was both renegotiated and highlighted in the Reformation period, as is apparent from the doctrine of *sola fide*.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is only to be expected that the concept of faith, and how it should be understood to function, is a central part of religious instruction in the Reformation period. This theme is repeated both in sermon collections and in instruction manuals from the early as well as late Reformation in Sweden.

Discussions of faith are often begun with how faith comes to people. According to Lutheran theology, faith cannot be achieved or accomplished by people themselves, but is a result of the grace of God and the workings of the Holy Spirit, which imbues the hearts of Christians so that they are able to accept faith.<sup>25</sup> This understanding is in line with the doctrines of *sola fide* and *sola gratia*, and its logical consequence is that it theoretically renders the Christian utterly powerless with respect to the prospect of faith.

However, the way this process is described in the religious instruction of the period suggests, if not agency, then that at least participation is needed from the Christian. Berndt Hamm has argued that the concept of faith, both in the Middle Ages and in the early Reformation, presupposed a cognitive understanding of, and adherence to, religious truth on the part of the individual Christian.<sup>26</sup> This is also apparent in the Swedish texts from the Reformation period. Kajsa Brilkman has argued that the historical context of the Reformation created a need to emphasize knowledge in religious matters, since the reformers positioned themselves against an established Christian tradition while at the same time arguing that there was only one way of grasping Christian faith.<sup>27</sup> In the material, this is apparent both from specific discussions about how the Christian should receive the Word of God in her heart and in the more standardized use of words such as 'understand' or 'right' in the texts.

For example, in one discussion of how faith enters into the heart of a Christian, Olaus Petri states that it is indeed impossible for people to 'rightly understand' God's Word themselves, but that the gift of the Holy Spirit consists in its granting people the ability to consider and grasp the true meaning of God's Word.<sup>28</sup> Here, grace is still the ultimate prerequisite of

24 For a discussion of how faith became the central concept of Lutheranism, see Hamm, 'Why Did "Faith" Become for Luther the Central Concept of the Christian Life'.

25 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', pp. 111-13; L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Söndagen Sexagesime'.

26 Hamm, 'Why Did "Faith" Become for Luther the Central Concept of the Christian Life', p. 172.

27 Brilkman, *Undersåten som förstod*, pp. 96-98.

28 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 230.

faith, but it is also apparent that it results in and is completed by the human ability to understand.

The need to understand in a more general sense is highlighted, for example, in the introductory paragraphs of two of the instruction manuals from the early Reformation. In one, the author claims that people lack the ability to understand the relation between faith and good deeds, and that this is the reason why he has written the instruction manual.<sup>29</sup> In the other, the author explains that he wants to clarify some parts of scripture for those who do not have the opportunity to read it themselves, so that 'each and every sensible Christian person in [*sic*] [given?] right that she might judge what is most right'.<sup>30</sup> In these examples, it is apparent that the Christian is thought to have a general ability to grasp theological truths, and that theological instruction can provide the opportunity to understand.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, in both sermons and instruction manuals, concepts such as faith, understanding, and Christianity are very frequently accompanied by the words 'true' or 'right', such as when Olaus Petri states that he who understands that Jesus is the only true saviour has 'right faith'.<sup>32</sup> These more rhetorical features illustrate that although understanding was thought to be possible for the Christian, the reformers were nevertheless anxious to point out what, according to them, was right and true.

Right ('*rätt*') especially is used very frequently in relation to faith. Most often, it seems to be used as a synonym for true ('*sann*'), although I find the word choice significant. While 'true' seems to function in an ultimate sense, as in 'true Christian faith', the word 'right' instead suggests correctness, and might thus suggest human ability to grasp true faith than true faith in itself. This is an uncertain interpretation, but I have nevertheless consistently translated *rätt* as 'right', when it occurs in the material, the same way as *fel* has been translated as 'wrong', rather than 'false'.

Taken together, these examples show how faith as a practice was perceived in the sermons. Although the achievement of faith was ultimately a question of grace, it seems also to have required the intellectual capacity to grasp the dogma of the Reformation and the intellectual effort necessary to profit by the instruction offered in manuals and sermons.

29 L. Andreae, *Een Kortt vnderwising om troona och godha gerningar*.

30 O. Petri, 'Om Gudz Ordh Och Menniskios Bodh Och Stadghar 1528', p. 527: 'hwar och en rättförstondig Christen menniskio j [*sic*] [*ge?*] retten att ho måå ther döma om hwad rettast wara kan'.

31 The fact that so many instruction manuals were printed during the early Reformation also speaks for the confidence that was placed in theological instruction.

32 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 370; L. Petri, *Postilla*, p. 134 and 298.



In the descriptions of faith that have been discussed above, faith seems to be the result of a linear process, but there are also instances in the texts where faith is described more like a cyclical event, which takes place over and over again. In these instances, the grace of God is bestowed upon humans as a result of Jesus's sacrifice on the cross and faith comes from a human understanding of this circumstance.<sup>33</sup> This suggests that the practice of faith is inconsistent and subject to continual efforts throughout a Christian's life, rather than being a singular transformation at a specific point in time. Moreover, the emphasis on understanding is also noticeable in these descriptions, which means that understanding, as religious practice, should also be understood as a cyclical process rather than a one-time event.

The descriptions of faith thus suggest both that faith was uncertain and beyond the individual's control, and yet it required intellectual effort on the part of every Christian. Furthermore, there were no outer signs that proved one's true faith and no measures one could take to ensure that one had actually understood, according to the texts. However, there are descriptions of how faith could be experienced. They are primarily centred on the theological concept of love and secondarily on the concept of hope. These concepts can give a better understanding of how faith revealed itself and was to be practised.

## Love

Love is a fundamental concept throughout the history of Christianity, and thus not at all unique to the Reformation period. Berndt Hamm has traced its history from the Middle Ages to the early writings of Luther. He argues that love of God became central to repentance during the twelfth century, in the sense that the focus of medieval theology changed from outer acts to the inner will, and thus that the understanding and experience of the love of God became decisive for repentance and salvation.<sup>34</sup> In the late Middle Ages, however, this understanding changed considerably in certain circles, most notably in the Augustinian circles to which Luther belonged. According to the Augustinian theologians of the fifteenth century, people were capable of nothing more than flickers of egoistic emotion, and thus nothing like the kind of strong love needed to atone for sins.<sup>35</sup> This understanding of the nature of human emotion was formative for Luther's emphasis on *sola fide*,

33 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', pp. 232-34; L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Första söndaghen i aduentet'.

34 Hamm, 'From the Medieval "Love of God" to the "Faith" of Luther', pp. 133-34.

35 Hamm, 'From the Medieval "Love of God" to the "Faith" of Luther', pp. 141-42.

according to Hamm. Since human emotion could never be strong enough to affect the inherently sinful human nature, it was only through the grace of God that human beings could ever be saved. Thus, according to Hamm, love lost its importance with regard to salvation and faith replaced it. This, however, does not mean that love was unimportant in Lutheran theology. Faith entailed love of God, and love of God entailed love of one's neighbour according to Lutheran theology.<sup>36</sup>

This is apparent also in the early texts from the Swedish Reformation. It is stated that if one has faith in God, then one will also love him dearly,<sup>37</sup> with a love that should surpass all other feelings.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the human love of God seems to be one part of a reciprocal relationship, since God's love of human kind is also emphasized repeatedly.<sup>39</sup> God's love seems moreover to inspire other positive attitudes in people. When remembering God's love 'sorrow turns to joy' (*and bedröffuelse wendes oss til glädhe*),<sup>40</sup> according to one of Olaus Petri's sermons. This suggests that love functions as a transformative medium with several purposes in the early Reformation texts. God's love of human kind seems to spur faith, alongside understanding, and right faith evokes reciprocal love of God in people.

This is in line with the discussion of the problem of good deeds that we encountered earlier. There, faithless people were described as being in a pitiable state because they were forced to rely on their own actions and could never be certain that these were enough to please God. On the other hand, people who had received faith were certain of God's grace and thus assured of their own salvation. This is a complicated matter in Lutheran theology, as complete confidence in one's own salvation was seen as sinful.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that faith entailed some form of certainty regarding salvation, and that this certainty in its turn produced an emotional transformation from a state of negative feeling to positive, both towards the divine and in general.

The certainty that is embedded in faith can be described as a state of assurance. Assurance has been highlighted in recent studies as central to the Lutheran religious practice. For example, Alec Ryrie has argued that within a Protestant setting, assurance was the individual emotional experience

36 Hamm, 'From the Medieval "Love of God" to the "Faith" of Luther', pp. 147-50.

37 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 112.

38 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 306.

39 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 228 and 234.

40 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 193.

41 Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp. 27-28.

of God's grace.<sup>42</sup> By being emotional, assurance was set apart from the intellectual understanding of the Lutheran dogmas of faith and salvation and was instead the tangible experience that convinced the believer that she was to be saved. Although the examples here are all from instructional texts, and thus rather prescriptive than descriptive, it seems as if assurance was thought to emanate in the positive attitude formulated as the love of God.

As Hamm's discussion of love has shown, love of God leads to love of one's neighbour, according to Lutheran theology. It is this function of love that seems to be most central in the early Reformation texts. In the instruction on salvation from 1535, the author explains that 'the love we should have towards people should have its origin in the love that we have for God'.<sup>43</sup> In another section of the same text, the author explains that right faith works through love. It means, according to the author, that those who have right faith are so happy that God has forgiven their sins that they completely abolish all further thoughts of sin. This faith is righteous and alive, since it bears good fruit, a righteous life for the believer. If, on the other hand, faith fails to produce good deeds, then it is by definition wrong and dead, since right faith always results in the will to do God's bidding, as a good child is willing to abide by her father's commands.<sup>44</sup>

In this passage, it is first stated that faith is shown through love. After that, however, love, as a concept, is not repeated, which suggests that this initial statement sets the theme for the whole of the passage, and thus that the meaning of love in this instance is the actual following discussion. This discussion is enlightening, since it touches upon several central traits in the Reformation understanding of the connection between faith, attitude, and good deeds. It is clear, for example, that love should result in righteous living and not merely reside in the heart. Here again, the importance of good deeds as a result of faith is emphasized, since faith without good deeds is described as wrong and dead. Moreover, the comparison of the attitude towards God with a child's attitude towards her father is illustrative in two ways. First, this comparison serves to show how faith creates a loving attitude towards God. Second, it illustrates how this relationship functions as the foundation of the attitude behind human good deeds. While the good

42 Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, p. 44.

43 O. Petri, 'Een lijten boock ther vthi forclarat warder hwar igenom menniskian fâr then ewigha salighetena 1535', p. 492: 'then kerlech wij skole haffua til menniskior scal haffua sitt vrsprung aff then kerlech som wij haffue til gudh'; O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 275.

44 O. Petri, 'Een lijten boock ther vthi forclarat warder hwar igenom menniskian fâr then ewigha salighetena 1535', p. 475.

deeds in themselves are not described in this paragraph, it is stated that people with right faith do good works *willingly*.

How love of God is supposed to result in righteous living is described more explicitly on several occasions in the texts. Olaus Petri explains that if we have complete faith and hope in God, the Holy Spirit enters the heart and makes it righteous and good, which in turn results in one's holding others in high esteem while depreciating oneself.<sup>45</sup> In another text, the 'character and virtue' (*art och dygd*) of love is described as being patient and mild; it is not envious, not deceiving, nor is it prideful or angry.<sup>46</sup> From these examples, it is clear that love entails a more general set of virtuous attitudes and behaviours, which are supposed to guide people in their relations to one another.

How this guidance is supposed to function is sometimes described by using Jesus as a role model. According to one sermon, the faithful should adopt Jesus's disposition, and like him, show everyone kindness. Friend or foe is unimportant, 'because if we did not love anyone else than those who love us, then we would be no more perfect than the others who are not Disciples of Christ'.<sup>47</sup>

In these examples, love appears to be a principle for outward acts as much as for internal attitude. As such, it replaces the commandments as guidelines for human behaviour. In several instances, the early Reformation texts explain how the commandments are either impossible to fulfil<sup>48</sup> or can only be fulfilled through love. In the passage described above, where Olaus Petri describes the different qualities of love, he concludes by saying that 'in short, love upholds all commandments'.<sup>49</sup> In another text, it is clarified that the law can only be fulfilled if the heart adheres to it, with love, delight, and desire.<sup>50</sup>

Love as a principle is furthermore highlighted in standardized wording in the texts. In one sermon on Luke 14, for example, Olaus Petri describes how Jesus helps the ill man on the Sabbath and then goes on to underline that the habit of sanctifying the Sabbath is Jewish and does not concern Christians.<sup>51</sup> On the contrary, Olaus Petri claims, to refuse to help someone

45 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 296.

46 O. Petri, 'Een lijten boock ther vthi forclarat warder hwar igenom menniskian får then ewigha salighetena 1535', p. 495.

47 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', pp. 265-66: 'For ty om wji icke älskadhe flere än them som oss älska, thå woro wij ey meera, ch ey fulkommeligare än the andre som icke äre Christi läriungar'.

48 O. Petri, 'Een lijten boock ther vthi forclarat warder hwar igenom menniskian får then ewigha salighetena 1535', pp. 457-62.

49 O. Petri, 'Een lijten boock ther vthi forclarat warder hwar igenom menniskian får then ewigha salighetena 1535', p. 496: 'Och med få ord seyandes, Kerleken han haller all gudz budhord'.

50 O. Petri, 'Een nyttwgh wnderwijsning 1526', p. 23.

51 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', pp. 320-23.

during the Sabbath is 'against love' (*emoot kärleken*).<sup>52</sup> Expressions like these, that something is 'against love' or 'according to love', are used repeatedly.<sup>53</sup>

Love of God is thus both a result of faith and an incentive to love of one's neighbour in the early Reformation texts. As such, love provides a link between internal attitude and good deeds and functions as both an emotion and a moral guideline in the early Reformation texts.<sup>54</sup>

## Hope

If the later of the two sermon collections investigated here, Laurentius Petri's *Postilla*,<sup>55</sup> is assumed to be representative of the religious instruction of the later Reformation, the focus is slightly altered and also less distinct. In this sermon collection, hope is salient as well as love, which makes the general argument somewhat different.

Also in Laurentius Petri's sermon collection, love is manifest in the human-divine relationship<sup>56</sup> and acts as a guideline for interhuman attitudes through the appeal to love of one's neighbour.<sup>57</sup> However, the concept of love is embedded in descriptions that set it somewhat apart from its use in the earlier texts. The emotional alteration needed to love, which is the result of faith, is explicitly contrasted with a perilous state of anger and fear that preceded it.<sup>58</sup> Thus, love is embedded in a framework of negative feelings in a way that differs from how it is used in the early texts. There, love of God was arguably also seen as a transformation from negative to positive feelings, but the preceding state was never in focus in the same way as in Laurentius Petri's sermon collection.

This framework might account for the use of *hope* in Laurentius Petri's collection. Hope is a complicated concept in the Swedish language, since the word *tröst* ('comfort') could be used as a synonym for hope in old Swedish alongside its modern meaning of consolation.<sup>59</sup> In the collection, the word *tröst* seems to be used in both senses. The conceptual overlap also testifies

52 O. Petri, 'Een lijten postilla 1530', p. 324.

53 O. Petri, 'Om gudz ordh och menniskios bodh och stadghar 1528', p. 15 and 29.

54 All the texts referred to in the discussion about love were printed during the first ten years of the Swedish Reformation, between 1526 and 1535.

55 L. Petri's sermon collection was revised, translated into Swedish from German, and printed in 1555.

56 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Förspråk', 'Jwladagh', 'Tridie Söndagen effter Tiugunde daghen', 'Söndagen Septuagesime', 'Förste Söndagen i Faston', 'Longa freydagh'.

57 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Een predican om Sacramentet'.

58 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'S. Philippi och Jacobi dagh LXXI'; 'S. Johannis Baptiste dagh LXXVIII'.

59 *Fornsvensk Lexikalisk Databas*, s.v. 'tröst'.

to the fact that the concepts are close in meaning, however. This is apparent from Laurentius Petri's discussion of the parable in which Jesus calms a storm at sea, which is related in Mark 4 and Matthew 8. Laurentius Petri interprets the parable as meaning that faith should lead to limitless confidence in the grace of Christ, and he illustrates this by describing a number of terrors in this life which one can ignore as long as one has faith. Therefore, according to Laurentius Petri, Jesus should be a refuge and a comfort to the Christian in all the perils of this life.<sup>60</sup> Here, both *förhoppning* ('hope') and *tröst* ('comfort') are used, almost interchangeably, and it seems that comfort as consolation is derived from the trust, or hope, in Christ.

It is also apparent that hope reflects backwards in this example. Although hope in the general sense of the concept relates to the anticipation of things to come, in this paragraph it is rather described as a reaction to a previous state of misery. This is evident also from several other sermons in the collection. For example, Jesus is described as a source of hope when someone is in distress and danger,<sup>61</sup> or when people who know their own weakness are said to put their hope in God.<sup>62</sup>

It seems thus that the attitude of hope rather than love is the primary result of faith in Laurentius Petri's collection, and furthermore, hope lacks the guiding quality that was apparent in the love of the earlier texts. In one single instance is hope described as resulting in deeds in Laurentius Petri's collection:

Those who have now received His Word, hope and trust in His suffering and death and hold Him to be their saviour, and then prove this faith manly with subsequent good deeds.<sup>63</sup>

Here, the believer who has hope in Jesus proves this by doing good deeds. This paragraph is detached from discussions of the general role of good deeds, the principle of love, and the commandments, however, and it thus seems as if it is standing free of any reoccurring pattern in the text. Hope seems to thereby lack the connection to more general lines of discussion of the attitude and behaviour of love in the early texts.

60 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Tridie Söndagen effter Tiugunde dagh'.

61 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Tridie Söndagen effter Tiugunde dagh'.

62 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Tridie Söndagen effter Tiugunde dagh: Trettonde dagh'; 'Femte söndagen effter Tiugunde dagen'.

63 L. Petri, *Postilla*, 'Then andra söndagen i aduentet': 'The som nw haffua anammat hans ord, tröst och förlåter sikh på hans pino och dödh, och hållet honom för sin frelsare och sedhan sådana sina troo manliga bewist med effterföliande goda geningar.'

## Conclusion

This investigation has shown that the tension between faith and good deeds that resulted from Lutheran theological dogmas was discussed repeatedly in Reformation texts. This demonstrates that the reformers in Sweden perceived it as a significant problem. Common to all the discussions of this matter was that they served to show how good deeds necessarily have their origin in right faith, and that faith was to correspondingly result in good deeds. By establishing an order of importance between faith and good deeds, the reformers tried to emphasize the importance of both, without forgoing the doctrine of *sola fide*.

This understanding of faith and good deeds entailed that faith could never be proven by good deeds, which meant that the practice of faith remained problematic for the reformers to describe. In the discussions of faith in the material, it was apparent that faith is solely a matter of grace in line with the principle of *sola gratia*. Nevertheless, faith seems to also require the intellectual understanding of the Lutheran dogmas and thus faith as a practice was tied to religious instruction.

Faith was furthermore evident through internal attitudes, according to the material. In texts from the early Reformation period (1526-35), it is primarily love of God that is described as being a result of faith. Love seems to be the defining quality of the believer's relation to God, which also leads to love of other people. As such, love also functions as a guideline for human attitudes and behaviour; it is the principle that defines the good deeds that were supposed to result from faith. Although this is partly circular argumentation, the texts from the early Reformation offer their readers a guideline in faith, via internal devotion, to outward behaviour.

This is somewhat different from the sermon collection by Laurentius Petri, which represents the later Reformation in this investigation. Although love is also prominent in this collection, its connection to right faith, love, and practical conduct is not as well developed as in the earlier texts. Instead, love is embedded within negative aspects of human existence, such as anger and fear, which leads to a discussion of faith resulting in hope, rather than in love. I have tried to prove that although hope is in general progressive, it reflects a regressive tendency in this text. The bridge from internal attitude to external behaviour is thereby lost in the later text, along with the connection to other people that the love of God entails.

Since the later Reformation is represented by one single text in this investigation, it is hard to draw any general conclusions about change over time. However, the study has shown that although the theological foundations were common to the Lutheran tradition, different ideal religious practices

could be formed by word choices and slightly differing emphases. While the early Reformation provided a guideline based on positive attitudes that should ideally affect relations between people in this world, the later sermon collection painted the world in much gloomier colours and failed to provide a guideline for action in this world.

Common to the whole period is the tension between the primacy of faith and the simultaneous necessity for good deeds and the attempts to handle these problems through different adaptations of the three interconnected concepts of faith, hope, and love. The language of theological virtues was lost in the reformers' attempt to separate themselves from the established Church tradition, but the ideal Christian as faithful, hopeful, and loving remained ever present.

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# Fostering civic virtue

Johannes Messenius and Swedish school drama

*Tania Preste*

## Abstract

This chapter investigates the ways in which early seventeenth-century Swedish student theatre was used to educate pupils in civic virtues. The period was characterized by major changes in the educational system as a result of the Reformation, but the pedagogical ideas of the Jesuits were also of central importance in Sweden, despite the confessional divide. Using theatre for educational purposes was an old tradition, which was put to novel uses in fostering Christian virtues as well as practising concrete skills such as rhetoric. The chapter investigates the historical drama of Johannes Messenius (1579-1636) in particular. His plays used ancient (mythical) Swedish history for the purpose of inculcating the virtues of governance during a crucial period of state-building.

**Keywords:** school drama, civic virtue, Gothicism

Using theatre as a means of representing social ideals and moral values is as old as using the theatre as part of a pedagogical strategy in educational establishments. As an educational tool, it satisfied two fundamentally important needs in the society of the Ancien Régime: on the one hand, it was a teaching method which aimed to teach students the contents of the texts performed, and on the other it offered educational opportunities to an often illiterate audience.<sup>1</sup> The same educational tools were amply used in Lutheran Europe and in its German-speaking areas.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zanlonghi, *Teatri di formazione; Gesuiti e università in Europa*; Brizzi, *Strategie educative*; Brizzi, *La formazione della classe dirigente*. All translations in this chapter are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Lidell, *Studier*, pp. 163-246.

Subject matter could differ widely: if medieval scholastic dramatic performances favoured works with openly religious content taken from biblical texts, in the Jesuit colleges subjects ranged from ancient classics to new productions with more commemorative aims and, at times, explicitly political ones.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Jesuit theatre stood out from medieval drama by the lavishness of its set, which was an integral part of the performance.<sup>4</sup>

The use of acting as an educational tool in the Swedish context is associated with two professors from the University of Uppsala in particular: Johannes Rudbeckius (1581-1646),<sup>5</sup> professor of theology, and Johannes Messenius (1579-1636),<sup>6</sup> professor of law. Both ran private colleges in their homes where they pledged to prepare students even in subjects which were not taught at the university. The two were in competition for students who, paying the teachers from their own pockets, enabled the latter to supplement the small salaries that the university bestowed upon them. Hence the open and bitter rivalry which emerged between them, a rivalry which eventually unleashed the wrath of the university chancellor who was often obliged to pacify the two warring professors.<sup>7</sup> The use of theatre as an educational tool was one of the terrains over which Rudbeckius and Messenius clashed.

For the benefit of his students, Rudbeckius staged Terence's plays *Andria* and *Eunuchus*, both in Latin and in Swedish, and Euripides' *Cyclops* in Greek and Swedish.<sup>8</sup> The works chosen demonstrated the virtues deemed necessary for a young man and good citizen, a citizen respectful of laws and authority but still capable of listening to the voice of his own heart. Such virtues corresponded to those deemed indispensable for a good Christian.

While the aim of Rudbeckius did not differ from that which was traditionally ascribed to pedagogical theatre, the means used by Messenius were much more complex and were very much in line with what Jesuit pedagogues were fostering through their educational drama at the time.<sup>9</sup>

3 Zanolghi, *Teatri di formazione*; Lidell, *Studier*, pp. 235-46.

4 Zanolghi, *Teatri di formazione*, pp. 235-59.

5 Sellberg, 'Rudbeckius Johannes'; Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia*, I, pp. 142-45.

6 On Johannes Messenius, cf. the brief autobiographical account found in Reuter Dahl, *Öfversigt af den behandling*, pp. 76-78; for a brief biography, cf. Olsson, 'Messenius Johannes'; Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria*, II, pp. 257-58; for information about his dramas, cf. Lidell, *Studier*; Sauter, 'Messenii liv och teater'.

7 Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria*, II, pp. 257-58; Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia*, I, pp. 135-49.

8 Lidell, *Studier*, pp. 165-66; Sauter, 'Messenii liv och teater', p. 20; Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia*, I, pp. 144, 147.

9 Zanolghi, *Teatri di formazione*, pp. 17-231.

In the introductions to his dramatic works, Messenius offers some important, if not entirely original, reflections on dramatic performance as an educational tool and he specifically concentrates on the reasons why he considered the theatre a fundamental instrument in his pedagogical method. Having studied at the Jesuit college of Braunsberg,<sup>10</sup> Messenius was a proponent of acting not only as a privileged means to study literature and to exercise memory, but also as an indispensable method of learning rhetoric: ‘Through acting in comedies the youth acquires skills and a rapidity in the art of speaking and responding.’<sup>11</sup> In Messenius’s view, one of the most important educational aspects of the use of dramatic performance was its potential as a method for teaching Swedish history: ‘The youth learn, just as the audience does, the ancient, wonderful, and strange history of their Fatherland.’<sup>12</sup>

Messenius saw in history an indispensable tool for forming loyal subjects and civil servants. Hence, he wrote a large number of texts describing the unknown and distant past of the country. His intention was to ‘write the whole story of the kingdom of Sweden in 50 works (comedies and tragedies) and to perform them publicly’.<sup>13</sup> His main source of inspiration came from the work by Johannes Magnus, *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus* (The history of all the kings of the Goths and Swedes),<sup>14</sup> and like this work, many of Messenius’s historical truths are part of that ‘learned poetic construction’ (*en lärd diktning*),<sup>15</sup> which was Gothicism, that is, the collection of myths which trace back the origins of the Swedes to the Goths.

He grafted this tradition on to his desire – which he shared with Rudbeckius – of teaching the ideals and virtues through dramatic performance: ‘it has always been a praiseworthy custom, taken up both by Christians and pagans, to have comedies through which youth can be taught every virtue and honour. Youth can learn good customs and the treachery of the world in such a play. They can learn from this warning not to be deceived by the

10 Now Braniewo in Poland; cf. Garstein, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation*, pp. 175-210.

11 Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, p. 1: ‘För ty uthi Coemediers loflige speel bekommer Ungdomen skickelighet och dristighet till att tala och swara.’

12 Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, p. 1: ‘Ungdomen lärer och uthi sådana speel såsom och Åhörerne, sitt Fädhernes Landz gamble, härlighe och undherlige Historier.’

13 Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, p. 86: ‘Författa heela Sweriges Rijkets historia uthi 50. Coemedier och Tragedier och them offentlig exhibera’.

14 Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria*, I, pp. 290-96.

15 Weibull, ‘Goternas utvandring’, pp. 176-78; Preste, ‘Il goticismo’; Nordström, *Johannes Magnus och den götiska romantiken*; Nordström, ‘Götisk historieromantik’; Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria*, I, pp. 288-309; Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria*, II, pp. 249-56.

world.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, even though such virtues and ideals may rather have been inherited from the classical world and Christianity, Messenius named these virtues 'Gothic' and described his own role as that of 'a special inculcator of noble Gothic virtues in the young men who would someday use these virtues in the service of the Crown and their Fatherland'.<sup>17</sup>

Gothicism, constructed as an 'incredible genealogy',<sup>18</sup> to supply the young and fragile monarchy with a glorious past, was, amongst many other things, a tool for legitimizing the usurpation of Duke Charles and the accession of his son Gustavus Adolphus in opposition to the aims and claims of his cousin Sigismund of Poland.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, it legitimized the Swedish territorial claims in the German lands and in the Baltics.

We Berig, victorious sovereign of the ancient and unvanquished Goths, wish every prosperity and happiness to the nobles gathered here, and we have no doubt that among you there are many who, like us, are roused by their reading of the ancient Goths and are made keen with an earnest zeal and an intent to make us and our subjects famous and recognized in the entire world, thanks to our and your heroic hearts, eager for the glory that the land of our fathers (even with its vast borders) cannot enchain nor contain.<sup>20</sup>

It was with these words that Gustavus Adolphus opened the tournament, held as a form of knightly joust, to celebrate his coronation as King of Sweden on 14 October 1617. The text continued, listing the conquests of the ancient Goths, pointing out that the task of completing the work begun by Berig

16 Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, p. 147: 'Ty thet har alltid varit loflig sed, Christne och hedingar tagit then weedh, hålla comoedier, hwilka lära unge personer all dygdh och ähra. Skicklige seder och wärldzens sweek förnimmer ungdomen i sådan lek. Thär aff the sigh en warnagel taga aff wärlden sigh ey låta bedraga.'

17 Bennett, 'Gothic Justice', pp. 89-90; for the role played by Gothicism in the literary work of Messenius, cf. Lidell, *Studier*, pp. 33-65.

18 Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*.

19 For more about the legitimacy of the accession to the throne of Charles IX and Gothicism see Johannesson, 'Gustav II Adolf som retoriker', pp. 11-30; Bennett, 'Gothic Justice', esp. chs. 1 and 2.

20 In Schück, *Kgl. vitterhets historie och antikvitets akademien*, I, p. 36: 'Wij Berik, thee gamble och oöfwerwinnelige Giöters segherfulle konungh, önske thänne Höglåfflige församlingh all lycko och wälfärdh och hållat för intet twifwell, at iw mångom ibland eder utaff thee gamla Giöters Historiers läsande skall wetterligit wara, huru såsom wij, uptände aff Een synnerlig låfflig nijt och begiärelse till at giöra oss och våra undersäter igenom dygdh och manlige bedriffther öfwer hela wärdenne nampnkunnoge och berömbde, Befinnandes at wårt och theras manlige och ähretorstige hierter sigh innan fädernesslandzens (ehuru wäl älliast och ganska widtbegripne gräntzer) icke kunde inkiätta och stängia låta.'

and his warriors fell to 'our successors', that is to the Swedes under the rule of Gustavus Adolphus, and thus unequivocally stating his intended foreign policy aimed at expanding into continental Europe. The matter next addressed was that of the legitimate nature of Gustavus Adolphus's coronation, decreed by Odin or Mars themselves and by the 'unanimous approval of all classes of the Realm of Sweden'.<sup>21</sup>

Gustavus Adolphus claimed for himself the Gothic legacy, a legacy which consisted of good government, a respect for the laws of the forefathers, and an ability to dispense justice in an impartial manner. The sovereign's departure was itself marked by the Gothic past: when Gustavus Adolphus was preparing to leave Sweden for war in Germany in 1630, he gave a famous speech at the Riksdag (Parliament or Diet), claiming a continuity between the current Swedish war effort and the Gothic conquests of the past. He invited the nobles of (purported) Gothic ancestry to play the part that justly awaited them on the European stage.<sup>22</sup> The significance of the Gothic imagination in Sweden in the time of Charles IX and Gustavus Adolphus can, as these examples clearly demonstrate, hardly be overestimated. Through his plays, Messenius played a central role in providing heroes who could rival those of classical antiquity in terms of virtue and grandeur.

Moreover, as professor of law Messenius had the task of teaching not only Roman law but also native Swedish legislation, a legislation which fully embraced Gothicist rhetoric. Indeed, in the early years of the seventeenth century, the state administration and the chancellery of the realm made an enormous effort to salvage and modernize medieval laws both at a national (*Magnus Erikssons landslag* (Land law of Magnus Eriksson)) and *Magnus Erikssons stadslag* (City law of Magnus Eriksson)) and at a regional

21 The outcome of the tournament was not a happy one for the young sovereign: he was thrown from his horse by his brother-in-law and everyone interpreted this fact as a bad omen. According to Schück, *Kgl. vitterhets historie och antikvitets akademien*, I, pp. 31-39, and Almquist, 'Tornérspellet vid kröningen 1617', pp. 1-7, this is the reason for the reticence about the event, a silence which lasted until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the librarian of the Royal Library, Gustav Klemming, in his archival researches discovered the posters for the event. Dean Bennett, speaking of the Knightly joust, has underlined how 'Few events in Swedish history show more clearly the implicit and explicit connections then being made between Swedish-Gothic identity and noble identity' and how the nobility at which it was aimed wasn't exclusively based upon blood ties but considerations of virtue too (Bennett, 'Gothic Justice', p. 173).

22 Gustav II Adolf, *Tal och skrifter*, p. 240 For a Marxist-inspired reading of this speech, which would become a farewell speech given that the sovereign died on 6 November 1632 on the Lützen battlefield, and about Gothicism as a whole, cf. Strindberg, *Bondenöd och stormaktsdröm*, which Jesper Svenbro briefly summarizes in his essay 'L'Idéologie gothisante et l'*Atlantica* d'Olof Rudbeck', pp. 121-56, esp. pp. 130-32.

(*landskapslagar*) level, because they enshrined a de facto legislative corpus regulating the relations between different powers within the kingdom, but also because they were considered important evidence of continuity between the ancient Goths and modern Swedes. These laws were written down between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, but it was commonly believed that they could be traced back to the time of the ancient Goths. Therefore, they could be said to provide the foundations of modern legislation in Sweden.<sup>23</sup>

Reinstating the ancient laws and declaring them to be a source of inspiration for modern reforms also gave the laws themselves a strong sense of legitimacy and an almost sacred aura. For Gustavus Adolphus, invoking ancient legal systems also meant that the modern form of government, which he and Axel Oxenstierna<sup>24</sup> were constructing, actually represented a return to the past, to the mythical golden age of the kingdom. It was a return to the laws of their forefathers, not an innovation.<sup>25</sup> Extremely important and useful for Gustavus Adolphus and for his father, Karl IX, before him, was the idea that the Goths were masters in good government. It was this Gothic legacy they were hoping to restore more than anything else. Thereby, they could also claim for themselves the merit of having allowed 'a return to the original pristine Gothic liberties that had always prevailed in Sweden'.<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, good government is at the centre of most of the works of Messenius, seemingly linking his role as professor of law to the need to ensure the teaching of rhetoric and national history in the Gothicist vein. In his first dramas, *Disa* and *Signill*, Messenius depicted this very Gothic past and highlighted the role of the virtues and of laws in ancient Swedish society. Characters who symbolize this link with the Goths assume highly prominent roles in both works. Penthesilea in *Disa* and Starkoter in *Signill* represent, in the first case, the link with the myths of classical antiquity, and in the second, the creation of a suitable national hero who could rival Hercules not only in terms of his courage and strength but above all in terms of his virtues.

But what is it that characterizes the Gothic virtues and how do they differ from the Aristotelian virtues? To respond to this question, it is necessary to analyse the dramas in more detail and, in particular, the introductions written for the printed editions of the respective texts. The plays went

23 Preste, 'Il goticismo', p. 491.

24 See the full biography of Wetterberg, *Kanslern Axel Oxenstierna*.

25 Finley, 'Ancestral Constitution'.

26 Bennett, 'Gothic Justice', p. 162.

through several editions in the course of the seventeenth century.<sup>27</sup> Messenius's first comedy, *Disa*, is the first dramatical work with Swedish history as its subject matter. It was staged for the first time in February 1611, during the annual winter fair in Uppsala. According to legend, this fair was established by Queen Disa herself, and the event also took its name from her (*Distingmarknad*).<sup>28</sup> *Disa* was an immediate success,<sup>29</sup> resulting in Messenius receiving an invitation to perform his second drama, *Signill*, at court. This happened the following year and was part of the celebrations of the marriage between Princess Maria Elizabeth and Duke Johan of Östergötland.

*Disa* is partly based on a folk tale and partly taken from Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the Scandinavian peoples).<sup>30</sup> The folk tale, through its re-elaboration by Messenius, became a crucial part of Gothic mythology: Disa, the main character, became the personification of Gothic virtues. The plot contains two main narrative elements: on the one hand, the tale of the wise girl who, having resolved the mystery, marries the prince. On the other hand, there is an emigration myth: A serious famine has beset the kingdom of the Goths, and in response to this, the sovereign, after much hesitation, decides to eliminate 'superfluous mouths': the old, the crippled, the sick, and all those unable to provide for themselves. The king having decided this, a messenger carries the news to all parts of the kingdom. Disa, the daughter of a noble member of the Gothic Diet, feels a sense of outrage at such a solution and declares to the King's envoy that she has a better, and more humane, proposition. Informed of this, the king orders the young woman to come to his court, neither on foot, nor on horseback, nor by carriage, neither by day nor by night, neither naked nor dressed. Disa, having found a means of overcoming this challenge, arrives at court, and proposes that the peasants should be sent to sparsely populated Norrland to clear the forests and cultivate the lands there. This will not only alleviate the famine; it will also generate prosperity and welfare throughout the country. The king is so impressed by Disa's wisdom that he falls in love with her. Like every fairy tale worthy of its name, the two are married and are even praised by Gothic knights long since emigrated abroad in the pursuit of the glory of the Gothic name. Among them is the

27 Messenius, *Samlade dramer*; Lidell, *Studier*.

28 Sauter, 'Messenii liv och teater', p. 23.

29 Sauter, 'Messenii liv och teater', pp. 27, 35.

30 Sauter, 'Messenii liv och teater', p. 23; Lidell, *Studier*, pp. 104-25; Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans*; Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria*, I, pp. 303-6.



Queen of the Amazons, Penthesilea. In *Disa* the role of the classic heroine is to reinforce the links between Swedes and the Goths. Penthesilea tells of having left Svealand with Berig 'the great king and hero' and when her name is revealed, the king exclaims 'your fame has come to our attention, it rings loud among all the Goths'.<sup>31</sup>

*Disa* displays many virtues: she is clearly wise and so possesses the virtue of *prudentia* ('prudence'), which was generally considered the main and most important virtue for sovereigns and rulers, both during medieval and early modern times. She also possesses *fortitudo* ('courage'): when the messenger of the King counsels *Disa* to be courageous during her meeting with the King she replies: 'Do not think of me as a sissy, a little fly fearful even of its own shadow.'<sup>32</sup>

The name of *Disa* is also linked with another important virtue: justice. Messenius describes how, at the inauguration of the fair at Uppsala, King Sigtrud decides that all those who have suffered an injustice in the course of the year shall be allowed to make an appeal to the sovereign in order to attain justice. The solution to the famine that *Disa* proposed is likewise an expression of her pursuit of justice.

The story of Signill has its origin in an old popular ballad, which in written form goes back to the sixteenth century. However, a version of the story is also told by Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus in the late twelfth century, *Gesta Danorum* (Deeds of the Danes).<sup>33</sup> The Norwegian Prince Habor and the Swedish Princess Signill are in love. But Hildegissel, the German suitor of Signill, with the aid of Boolwijs spreads word that Habor's brothers have slandered the brothers of Signill. The latter murder the former and Habor takes revenge by killing the guilty party. Habor is arrested and brought before the Swedish rulers, Cigar and Asta, and is condemned to death. Signill, upon hearing the verdict, commits suicide.

In the first act, we also meet Starkoter, who invites the audience to listen to the story in order to learn the Gothic virtues and honour: 'Earnestly, I wish to teach you honour and the Gothic virtues.'<sup>34</sup> Starkoter, even more so than Penthesilea in *Disa*, personifies Gothic virtues: he is feared by the whole world but is not a violent man, he has the virtue of temperance and a genuine sense of justice.

31 Lidell, *Studier*, pp. 42-49; Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, p. 28: 'Edhert beröm haffue wij nogsampt hört, Iblandh alla Göthar är thedh uthfört'.

32 Messenius, *Samalde dramer*, p. 18: 'Tro ey iagh är sådan mugga som rädas pläger för skugga'.

33 Lidell, *Studier*, pp. 76-83.

34 Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, p. 42: 'Then Göthiske dygdh och ähra/wil iagh edher medh flijt lära.'

If in *Disa* the major virtue is prudence, understood as the ability to govern well, in *Signill* it is justice which is seen as the most important virtue. Act 6 takes place in a courtroom. The judge makes clear what the juridical foundations of the kingdom are: 'Law and justice are at home in Svealand. Here no offender dies before his case has undergone examination and a fair sentence has been pronounced.'<sup>35</sup> While not explicitly mentioned, prudence also plays a major role in the tragedy: princes and kings must exercise this virtue in all of their deeds to avoid causing injury to others. Habor pays the highest price for having refused to listen to Starkoter's advice and for having ignored his duties and disregarded the ways of his forefathers and the advice of his teachers. The Swedish princes die for having given credence to the advice of an impostor. Cigar, the King of the Swedes, trusts an unfaithful servant and, as a result, loses his daughter Signill.

In *Swanhuita*, another work set in the Gothic past, loyalty is the virtue most highly praised along with keeping one's word. In this case too, the drama is inspired by the work of Johannes Magnus, who in his turn had rewritten a tale (again, originally by Saxo Grammaticus) in a pro-Swedish manner.

The virtues described in the works of Messenius evoke, in a more or less open manner, the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Such virtues are often associated with politics and power: they are virtues which abound in the *specula principum* ('mirrors for Princes') and in the political treatises of the entire early modern era.<sup>36</sup>

So Gothic virtues do not differ from Aristotelian virtues: the Gothic ones in Messenius's interpretation are classical virtues, and in particular those that had been used in a political context since antiquity.

The number of actors and extras involved in the staging of the plays by Messenius was considerable. The drama's first editions contain a list of *dramatis personae* and the number of understudies who participated in the staging of the play: 32 are named in *Disa*, 44 in *Signill*, and a total of 60 in *Swanhuita*.<sup>37</sup> Messenius's students were not exclusively from the nobility; on the contrary, the majority belonged to the lower clergy or the mercantile bourgeoisie, for whom education provided the opportunity of launching their offspring into an ecclesiastical, military, or bureaucratic career. Some of them would gain noble status in virtue of those services which they would render the state. Dean Bennett underlines how this ambition conforms to the

35 Messenius, *Samlade dramer*, p. 74: 'Lagh och Rätt är i Swealan. Här döör ingen ogärningzman, för än Saken för Dom är stält, och en rättwijs Sententz är fält.'

36 Preste, 'King's Virtues'.

37 Lidell, *Studier*, p. 284.

Gothicist ideology: 'These students were training for careers in the service of the Crown, and the Gothic History provided ample material for them to use in establishing their effectiveness as promoters of their country's interests.'<sup>38</sup>

Few traces remain of the majority of these students beyond their university enrolment records. However, there are a few whose biographies can be sketched. I will restrict myself to tracking one student whose individual trajectory demonstrates the possibilities offered by education and an administrative career. Moreover, this student was, like Messenius, engaged in educating the country's new elite. While not himself a proponent of Gothicism, he did certainly consider civic virtues central to creating a ruling class capable of ruling and managing the country.

Johannes Matthiae Gothus (1593-1670),<sup>39</sup> son of the vicar of the church of Västra Husby, completed his first studies in the city of Linköping and during the first decade of the seventeenth century began his university career under the wing of Messenius himself. He participated in the staging of both *Disa* and *Signill*. He was able to continue his education by undertaking two journeys to European universities. During his first sojourn (1618-20) he attended Giessen University. His second voyage (1622-25) saw him travelling through France, Holland, and England. Upon his return in 1626 he was nominated as the dean of the newly established Collegium Illustre, an academic institution specifically created for the education of young sons of the Swedish nobility.<sup>40</sup> In his writings and in his inaugural speech for the opening of the college, he clearly expressed the need for an educational establishment which gave the country's elite a suitable education adequate to the administrative and political requirements of the country. According to Matthiae, the Collegium Illustre was to prepare the sons of the aristocracy for their university studies in such a way that would make them best able to serve their country.

In the introduction to his *Gnomologia* (1626), Matthiae writes that he wants

with the greatest commitment and dedication [...] to promote the study of the humanist disciplines, the subjects, which adorn the flower of your age and which not only add refinement to the traditions which have lain fallow, but are also the most elegant and useful servants of the state.<sup>41</sup>

38 Bennett, 'Gothic Justice', p. 198.

39 Göransson, 'Johan (Johannes) Matthiae'; Holmquist, *D. Johannes Matthiae Gothus*.

40 On *Collegium Illustre*, cf. Runeby, *Monarchia mixta*, pp. 182-91; Matthiae, *Ratio studiorum*; Preste, 'Johan Skytte, Johannes Matthiae och *Collegium Illustre*'.

41 Matthiae Gothus, *Gnomologia veterum*, p. 6: 'Dominis ac fautoribus meis benignissimis, quorum consilio & auctoritate hic studia nostra diriguntur, Humaniores literas quibus vestrae

He invites his students to

ennoble your language and your character; embellish your soul with knowledge and virtue! Continue and spare no effort in your studies and in conquering honour for yourselves, be the joy of your family, be of use to your friends, and be a blessing to this Nordic country of yours!<sup>42</sup>

The college also offered physical education and the reason for this, beyond the classical *mens sana in corpore sano*, was the good of the state:

your sons in this noble college will receive good instruction under two aspects, that is they will develop their soul through the study of languages and other noble disciplines, and their body through an instruction such that it will be a defence in times of war and an honour for the Country in times of peace. And since the human being is made of both soul and body, this will mean that the former should be in the service of the country through good counsel, and the latter should defend it with strong limbs during times of danger.<sup>43</sup>

Matthiae does not list the necessary virtues required to fulfil these functions, but extensively explains the importance of *exempla* in teaching. For this reason, the lives of the authors themselves should be studied attentively as well as their works.<sup>44</sup> It is no surprise then, that in the *Ratio studiorum* (Plan of studies) compiled for the Collegium Illustre, a place of prime importance is given to Cicero, not only as an example of the high literary value of Latin literature and the art of rhetoric, but also because

jam flos ætatis excolitur, quæque sunt non modò morum cultrices pravorum, sed etiam rei totius publicæ decoræ maximè & efficaces administræ.'

42 Matthiae Gothus, *Gnomologia veterum*, pp. 7-8: 'Date operam, ut linguam excolatis & mores, animum doctrina & virtutibus exornetis. Pergite, atque in id studium, in quo estis incumbite, ut & vobis honori, & parentibus gaudio, & amicis utilitati & Reip huic septentrionali emolumento esse possitis.'

43 Matthiae Gothus, *Ratio studiorum*, p. A4v: 'In hoc Nobilissimo collegio utraque pars filiorum vestrorum probè informetur: Mens ad bonarum artium & linguarum studia; corpus verò ad ea exercitia, quæ belli tempore patriam tutantur, in pace exornant. Et ideò ferè duabus illis partibus constare videtur homo, Anima & corpore, ut illa consilio, hoc verò lacerto patriæ cum opus fuerit, sub venire possit.'

44 Matthiae Gothus, *Ratio studiorum*, p. A9: 'Non igitur admittendi sunt Nobiles nostri ad quosvis autores obscænos & profanos, nec attingant ea in flore ætatis suæ, ex quibus vitiosum habitum facilimè contrahere possint. Longè enim potior sanctitatis, quam cujuslibet talis Authoris, Nobilibus christianis habenda ratio erit.'

of his individual career: an entire life spent in the service of the fatherland and of the republic.<sup>45</sup>

Messenius often expressed his view that drama was useful as a pedagogical tool for instilling the Gothic virtues in his young students, virtues which, as we have seen, corresponded to civic and political virtues. The question which arises is why Messenius considered the acquisition of these virtues to be so important for his students. Danneskiold-Samsøe writes: 'From now on, the only way for Swedish noblemen to assert themselves politically was through service to the state, either in administration or in the army. A new noble ideology and self-perception emerged that was centred on government of the state'.<sup>46</sup> The state needed civil servants and officers who possessed both military and civic virtues. Peter Englund has used another of Messenius's students as an example to illustrate this. Aegidius Girs was a colleague of Matthiae at the Collegium Illustre.<sup>47</sup> In a treatise with the suggestive title *De vera nobilitate* (On true nobility), written for the inauguration of the Collegium Illustre, Girs examines the nature of nobility and discusses whether it is innate or acquired. He reaches the conclusion that acquired virtues alone render a man truly noble. Above all, political and civic virtues are characteristic of nobility, as the function of a nobleman is to dedicate his life to the good of the state.<sup>48</sup>

To serve the fatherland, courage and fortitude were not sufficient. The virtues which would ensure good government and the administration of justice were those truly worthy of the name. In Messenius's view, the Gothic legacy was a legacy of civility and legality rather than barbaric brutality. Consequently, the Gothic virtues were primarily the political virtues.

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46 Danneskiold-Samsøe, *Muses and Patrons*, p. 278.

47 Runeby, 'Girs Aegidius Laurentii'; Lidell, *Studier*, p. 209.

48 Girs, *De vera nobilitate*. For a more in-depth study of the reflection of Girs on the nobility see Englund, *Det hotade huset*.

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# Dancing virtue

## Educational aspects of Queen Christina's court ballets

*Stefano Fogelberg Rota*

### Abstract

Stefano Fogelberg Rota investigates the court ballet's pedagogic character during the reign of Queen Christina. French *ballet de cour* was introduced to Sweden in 1638 as part of a larger effort to raise the cultural standing of the state. Ballet became a privileged medium for conveying the Queen's political decisions and ambitions. These political messages were constantly communicated through the use of examples, portrayed as ideals of virtue. Virtue was used by Christina to shape an ideal image of her rule. Fogelberg Rota unveils both the underlying purposes of the representations and the rhetorical strategies employed. Finally, he examines the career of some of the noblemen dancing in order to show the importance of these performances for the advancement at court of Christina's young aristocratic favourites.

**Keywords:** Christina of Sweden (1626-1689), court ballet, political propaganda, *galanterie*

The introduction of French *ballet de cour* to Sweden in the 1630s marked an important step in the development of Swedish court theatre. Court ballet reached its height soon thereafter, during Queen Christina's brief, but eventful reign (1644-54). This theatre form in Sweden has received increasing attention, but its educational character has until now been overlooked.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I shall investigate this particular aspect of court ballet in Sweden.

1 On court ballet in Sweden see Fogelberg Rota, *The Queen Danced Alone*. I have published parts of this monograph in some articles devoted to different aspects of court ballet's development: 'Representations of Power'; together with Maria Schildt, '*L'Amour constant et Le Ballet de Stockholm*'; and 'L'Introduzione del balletto di corte francese in Svezia'. On Queen Christina's ballets see also Dahlberg, 'Theatre around Queen Christina', and Lars Gustafsson's two essays: 'Amor et Mars vaincus', and 'Venus förvisning och återkomst'.

In order to study the educational character of Christina's court ballet I shall proceed on two different levels. After a short overview of the introduction and development of this theatre form in Sweden, I shall study the main themes of the ballets by analysing three of the fourteen extant libretti from Christina's time. The analysis of these libretti will show to what extent the representations of certain virtues were employed to promote specific behaviours in the audience. I shall show how the ideal image of Christina as a sovereign devoted only to virtue and rationality is interrelated with the construction of an ideal image of the subjects as obedient and loyal to the Crown.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously, I shall also study the career of the noblemen dancing in two of these three performances. The study of the careers of this representative sample of aristocratic dancers will give us insight into the importance of these spectacles for advancement at court.

French court ballet was established in Sweden primarily for educational reasons. In 1636, Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583-1654) summoned to Stockholm, on behalf of the Council of the Realm (Riksrådet), French *maître à danser* Antoine de Beaulieu (d. 1663), with the explicit purpose of training the young court aristocrats in the art of dancing.<sup>3</sup> The Queen dowager Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg (1599-1655), Christina's mother, promoted Beaulieu's employment. She was in her turn counselled by French diplomat Charles de Bretagno-Dubois d'Avagour (d. 1657).<sup>4</sup> Beaulieu stayed in Sweden until his death in 1663 and was responsible for the choreographies of the great majority of the ballets performed during Christina's time.<sup>5</sup> His employment at court was part of several initiatives taken to improve Sweden's cultural status, in accordance with the country's newly acquired position as a military power in the Baltic, both during the reign of Gustavus Adolphus (1611-32) and the long period of regency that followed it. The motives behind the introduction of court ballet were similar. Dancing was considered – as described, among others, in Baldassare Castiglione's influential *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528) – an essential part of the skills required of an accomplished courtier. The young nobles of the Swedish aristocracy were expected to

2 The same relation between the monarchical power and its subjects is explored by Marie-Claude Canova-Green in several of her works on court ballet, for instance, *La politique-spectacle au grand siècle*.

3 Dahlberg, 'Theatre around Queen Christina'. Beaulieu probably came to Sweden from England thanks to d'Avagour. For this information see Silfverstolpe, 'Antoine de Beaulieu', p. 6. Although Silfverstolpe's article is generally accurate he does not mention any source for this detail of Beaulieu's recruitment.

4 Dahlberg, 'Theatre around Queen Christina', p. 168; Grönstedt, *Svenska hoffester*, I, p. 8.

5 Kjellberg, 'Baletten', p. 544.

benefit from Beaulieu's training in their future careers, which often entailed diplomatic missions to European courts. Beaulieu's boastful statement 'to have refined the whole court' ('d'avoir poli toute la cour') only a year after his arrival in Stockholm reveals both the progression of his work and its essentially pedagogic nature.<sup>6</sup> I shall come back to the purpose of refining the manners of the courtiers, which this declaration alludes to.

The first substantial result of Beaulieu's teachings was the performance of *Le Ballet des plaisirs de la vie des enfans sans soucy* (Ballet of the joys of the carefree children), staged at the Castle of the Three Crowns in Stockholm on 28 January 1638. This is the first of the three ballets I shall analyse in this chapter. Its performance is described in a libretto written in verses. These publications are the best-preserved documents from Queen Christina's court ballets. They were written in French and often translated into Swedish and German, so that we sometimes have up to three different publications for one single ballet. They had an important function in helping the members of the court to understand the allegories and personifications represented on stage. The libretti were also meant to circulate among the European courts. Ballet performances were part of the ceremonial of the court and had an almost official character.<sup>7</sup> Although considered as the conventional expressions of a literary genre of secondary importance, they had the specific function of conveying poetically a message of political character.<sup>8</sup> The libretto of *Le Ballet des plaisirs* is a good testimony of the double function of entertainment and political propaganda that characterized this theatre form since its invention in late sixteenth-century France.<sup>9</sup> This genre reached Sweden in its most extemporary form, the so-called *ballet à entrées*, in which various scenes were held together by a vaguely expressed common theme with allegorical meaning. *Ballet à entrées* were often characterized by a frail narrative and a grotesque-burlesque style.<sup>10</sup> This is the case of *Le*

6 Grönstedt, *Svenska hoffester*, I, p. 9.

7 This aspect has been thoroughly investigated in Canova-Green, *La politique-spectacle au grand siècle*. Canova-Green focuses here on the relations between the French and the English courts. Essential reading on this aspect is also McGowan, *L'Art du ballet de cour en France 1581-1643*. I have a similar approach in my own *The Queen Danced Alone*.

8 Goulet, *Poésie, musique et sociabilité au XVIIe siècle*, p. 282.

9 The first of these performances is generally considered Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx's renowned *Balet comique de la Roynne* (1581), in which he adapted the Florentine intermezzi to the context of the French court.

10 On the *ballet à entrées* see Leconte, 'Introduction'; Franko, *Dance as Text*; and Henri Prunières' classic *Le Ballet de cour en France avant Benserade et Lully*. Louis E. Auld observes how these performances nevertheless corresponded to a certain 'inner logic' determined by the genre's inherent claim to variety. According to Auld the regulating principle of court ballet is to be

*Ballet des plaizirs*. The scenes follow one another with no apparent narrative connection and incorporate a great variety of roles such as Turks, card players, prostitutes, soldiers, drunkards, shepherds, hunters, ancient divinities, satyrs, and nymphs. Although essentially entertaining, *Le Ballet des plaizirs* refers to the ongoing Thirty Years War in its central scenes (*entrées* 4 to 6), where the love of a prostitute, 'La Courtizana double', is disputed by a Spaniard and a Swedish captain. Gustav Oxenstierna (1626-1693), a kinsman of Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, interpreted the Swede who threatens to take to arms as soon as he hears of love ('Le seul subject d'amour me fais prendre les armes').<sup>11</sup> The martial element thus introduced in the performance is reversed in the following scenes in which his adversary, a Spanish soldier, and then a drunkard, appear. The Swedish captain waits for his rival with a sword in his hands. The entry of the Spaniard – interpreted by Axel Åkesson Natt och Dag (1617-1642) – contrasts in tone and content with that of the Swede:

#### 6. *The Spaniard*.

Per dios! Who are you? Don't you know my nobility? Don't you know Don victor the Phoenix of the warriors? Don't you know who I am? Do you have so little adroitness so that you fail to recognize my palms and laurels?<sup>12</sup>

Introduced by a typical Spanish expression, the Spaniard acts arrogantly and challenges the Swedish captain to a duel. The Spaniard is presented in a comical way in his boastfulness, a characteristic of recurrent use in the French ballets of the time.<sup>13</sup> This scene introduces another important element typical of court ballet, namely the fascination for foreign characters, which is a consequence of the role played by diplomacy in these spectacles.<sup>14</sup> Spaniards are often ridiculed in court ballets for their requests of precedence

considered 'metonymic rather than metaphoric or narrative'. Auld, 'The Non-dramatic Art of *Ballet de Cour*', pp. 367 and 392.

11 *Le Ballet des plaizirs*. Gustav Oxenstierna travelled to Holland and France during his youth. In 1648 he travelled to Germany with Carl Gustav of Pfalz-Zweibrücken, the future King Carl X Gustav (1622-1660), and at his return in 1653 he was employed at Christina's court as chamberlain. He later chose to pursue a military career and was appointed first colonel and later general. He became member of the Council of the Realm in 1673. *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, XXVIII, p. 477.

12 '6. *L'Espagnol*./ Per dios qui es tu cognois tu ma noblesse/ Cognois tu Don victor le Phenix des guerriers/ Scais tu pas qui ie suis as tu si peu d'adresse/ De vouloir mescognoistre mes palmes & mes lauriers', *Le Ballet des plaizirs*, f. 4. All translations are by the author.

13 Durosoir, *Les ballets de la cour de France*, p. 62.

14 Canova-Green, *La politique-spectacle au grand siècle*.

and their exaggerated ceremonial concerns. The comic dispute between the Swedish captain and the Spaniard for the love of the prostitute, which echoes the more serious military conflict of the Thirty Years War, is resolved in a grotesque tone by the invitation of the 'yvrogne', the drunkard, interpreted by Beaulieu. He invites the rivals to reconcile with an obscene proposal: 'This beauty can accommodate you both, one will have the front and the Spaniard will have the rear' ('Cette beauté vous peut tous deux accommoder/ L'un aura le devant l'espagnol le derriere').<sup>15</sup> If we consider the presence of the eleven-year-old Christina in the audience, the educational character of this performance appears, at least, ambiguous. The final grand ballet in which all dancers gather on stage shows, on the other hand, a more solemn tone proving the complexity of these spectacles:

14. *Le grand Ballet.*

*The Swedish Cavaliers to the Queen*

Happy to live under your laws, worthy heiress of our Kings, we come to pay homage to you. Accept these untamed hearts which, fleeing all other servitude, will line up under your will, and prostrate at your knees, they confess freely that they are subject to you.<sup>16</sup>

The declaration of faith offered by the Swedish nobles to Christina is total and without reservations. The image of the Swedish reign conveyed in these lines is one of prosperity and stability. The ideal representation of the relation between the monarchy and the aristocracy of the country expressed here gains in importance if we consider who the dancers were that interpreted the different roles. As in the French performances of the time, noblemen interpreted most of the dances, while dancing master Beaulieu took care of the more difficult roles. Among the nobles dancing, the presence of some of the most distinguished aristocratic families of Sweden such as Oxenstierna, Natt och Dag, De la Gardie, and Pfalz-Zweibrücken stands out. The majority of the dancers were born around 1610-15 and were at the time between 23 and 28 years old. This simple fact confutes the idea that the 'enfants' referred

<sup>15</sup> *Le Ballet des plaisirs.*

<sup>16</sup> '14. *Le grand Ballet./ Les Cavaliers Suedois à la Royne/ Heureux de vivre sous vos loix/ Digne heritiere de nos Roys/ Nous venons pour vous rendre homage/ Acceptez ces coeurs indomptez/ Qui fuyans tout autre servage/ Se rangent sous vos voluntez/ Et prosternees à vos genoux/ Avoue librement qu'ils sont soumis à vous', *Le Ballet des plaisirs*, f. 7-8.*

to in the title are the dancers of the ballet.<sup>17</sup> An example of the maturity of the dancers is the first scene in which four ‘volontaires’ appeared on stage and promised to serve the beautiful ladies of the audience. These volunteers were as follows: Bengt Skytte (1614-1683), the above-mentioned Axel Åkesson Natt och Dag, Claës Stiernesköld (1617-1676), and Johan Rosenhane (1611-1661). The four were later to be elected to the Council of the Realm or appointed as diplomats in embassies to foreign countries.<sup>18</sup>

Bengt Skytte deserves a particular mention. He was the son of Johan Skytte (1577-1645), chancellor of Uppsala University and former tutor of Christina’s father, Gustavus Adolphus. He became chamberlain at Christina’s court in 1633. Skytte played an important part in the Riksdag (Parliament) of 1647 in his capacity as Lantmarskalk (Lord Marshal), that is, speaker of the estate of the nobles. During this session of Parliament he introduced the delicate question of Christina’s succession to the Crown. Any decision on this matter was delayed to a later time, and the grounds were laid for the election of Christina’s cousin, Prince Carl Gustav, as her heir. This solution was strongly advocated by Christina, who now began to show her aversion to marriage and to plan for her abdication. The positive outcome of this discussion for Christina is likely to be attributed to Skytte’s adroitness.<sup>19</sup>

Markedly younger were the two dancers of the ninth scene who interpreted two hunters, namely Prince Carl Gustav of Pfalz-Zweibrücken

17 Grönstedt, *Svenska hoffester*, I, pp. 11-12.

18 Bengt Skytte travelled extensively in Europe both for his studies and for diplomatic missions. He visited England (1629); Germany, France, Italy, and England again (1634-35); Amsterdam, Paris, Strasburg, and Montpellier (1641-42); and Turkey (1651-52). He became chamberlain at Christina’s court on 4 December 1633, and later Lantmarskalk (Lord Marshal, i.e. speaker of the nobles) at the Parliament of 1647. He was also governor of the county of Uppsala (1646-49) and of Stockholm (1647-49), and member of the Council of the Realm from June 1648. *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, XXXII, pp. 515-19. Axel Åkesson Natt och Dag was the first son of Åke Axelsson Natt och Dag (1594-1655), Riksmarsk (Lord High Constable) between 1643 and 1651. He studied in Uppsala and Leiden and was appointed chamberlain at Christina’s court. He travelled to Paris and Europe with his cousin Ture Turesson Natt och Dag, thanks to his uncle Axel Oxenstierna. I thank Ola Winberg for this information regarding Axel Åkesson Natt och Dag’s travels abroad. Elgenstierna, *Den introducerade svenska adelns ättartavlor*, p. 407. Clas Stiernesköld was first governor of the county of Västmanland (1643-51) and then of Värmland (1651). He was also assessor in the Bergskollegium (Board of Mines, 1648-51). He was elevated to *frilherre* (baron) in 1651 and became member of the Council of the Realm in 1660. *Nordisk familjebok*, XXVI, p. 1352. Johan Rosenhane undertook study trips to Holland, France, England, and Germany (1631-36). He was Carl Gustav’s *hovmästare* (master of the house) during the prince’s foreign travels (1638-40), and later governor of the county of Viborg (1645) and Östergötland (1655). He was elected member of the Council of the Realm in 1658. *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, XXX, pp. 533-34.

19 Asker, *Karl X Gustav*, p. 84. On these events see also Rodén, *Drottning Christina*, p. 95.

(1622-1660), later on King Carl X Gustav, and Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie (1622-1689). They were only twelve and fourteen years old. De la Gardie was among the closest favourites of the Queen, and it is therefore not surprising that their roles are of a more noble character. The verses describing their characters allude to their privileged condition at court: 'Hunting is a pleasant pastime, very worthy of great men and Princes' ('La Chasse est un playsant deduy/ Tres digne des grandes & des Princes').<sup>20</sup> It is plausible to think that their higher status was the motive of their participation in the ballet with elder nobles.

Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's career is particularly interesting to follow. He was the son of the Riksmarsk (Lord High Constable) Jacob De la Gardie (1583-1652) and climbed rapidly up the hierarchies of the court thanks to Queen Christina's favour. De la Gardie is described in the sources of the time as a young and promising aristocrat of brilliant allure. He represented a new, French, aristocratic model thanks also to his French ancestry.<sup>21</sup> Christina, who had turned her interests towards France, favoured him in different ways. She promoted, for instance, his marriage with Carl Gustav's sister, Maria Eufrosyne (1625-1687), by means of which he attained a princely condition.<sup>22</sup> Another means by which the Queen enhanced De la Gardie's prestige was his election as Extraordinary Ambassador to France in 1646.<sup>23</sup> De la Gardie is thus a good example of the fact that the dancers of the ballets were often employed for diplomatic missions – although he was truly extraordinary in many respects. Several written accounts are preserved from De la Gardie's embassy in which the magnificent character of the French reception is emphasized. An impressive number of theatrical and musical performances were arranged to entertain the Swedish ambassador. De la Gardie attended no less than four French and three Italian comedies.<sup>24</sup> The good deportment and qualities of De la Gardie are praised in Theophraste

20 *Le Ballet des plaisirs*.

21 It was Magnus Gabriel's grandfather Pontus De la Gardie (1520-1585) who established the family in Sweden in the mid-sixteenth century.

22 On Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie's life see *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, X, p. 660. A recent biography on De la Gardie is Ullgren, *En makalös historia*. On his importance as patron of the arts see Ljungström, *Magnus Gabriel De la Gardies Venngarn*.

23 Grönstedt, *Svenska hoffester*, II, pp. 5-6.

24 See Carl Liliecrona's travel diary from De la Gardie's embassy, 'Carl Liliecronas resedagbok', pp. 12 and 39. On 14 September De la Gardie also attended the performance of a court ballet in the residence of the influential Louis Hesselin (1602-1662), 'surintendant des plaisirs du Roi' and one of the foremost patrons of ballets at the court of Louis XIV. On Hesselin see Fogelberg Rota, *The Queen Danced Alone*. See also Weil-Curiel, 'Recherches sur Louis Hesselin (1602-1662)'.



Renaudot's *Gazette de France* dated 28 September, which reports from a ball held by the dowager Queen Anna of Austria:

The 23rd of this month His Eminence [Cardinal Mazarin] splendidly treated the Extraordinary Ambassador of Sweden to dinner. On this occasion were also present the Dukes of Guise and of Joyeuse, the Knight of Guise, the Dukes of Chaunes and of Rochefoucault, the Field Marshal de Bassompierre, and some other Gentlemen of this Court and of the suite of this Ambassador. The table with 30 place settings was set in the galerie des Cerfs, and on it in the middle against a rail there was a superb buffet in golden gilt and in front of it another one even richer. Behind this rail there was a musical surprise by the King's 24 violins, whose harmony aroused no less enthusiasm than all the rest did. All this magnificence was, however, surpassed by the friendly expression and the gracious welcome of His Eminence, for whom nothing is dearer than to second all the wishes of the Majesties. Among all the entertainments with which their Majesties continue to treat this Ambassador they held on the 26th, after having returned from hunting and the French comedy, a ball in the Queen's great cabinet [reception room], where he [De la Gardie] danced with her with such a flair as to reveal that accomplishment is not only to be found in France.<sup>25</sup>

De la Gardie's public appearance proved that refinement could be found even outside France. These lines remind one of the widely spread idea of the essentially moral character of an upright physical deportment in court society. Castiglione's above-mentioned *Il libro del cortegiano* is the foremost example of this view. Georges Vigarello traces, in his article 'The Upward Training of the Body from the Age of Chivalry to Courtly Civility', the ethical principles that underlay a good deportment in seventeenth century courtly

25 'Le 23 de ce mois, Son Eminence traita splendidement à disner l'Ambassadeur Extraordinaire de Süède: ou se trouvèrent aussi les Ducs de Guise & de la Ioyeuse, le Chevalier de Guise, les Ducs de Chaunes & de la Rochefoucault, le Mareschal de Bassompierre & quelques autres Seigneurs de cette Cour & de la suite de cet Ambassadeur. La table de 30 couverts, estoit dans la galerie des Cerfs: au milieu de laquelle, contre un retranchement, il y avoit un superbe buffet de vermeil doré vis-a-vis d'un autre encor plus riche, & derrière ce retranchement une surprise de musique des 24 violons du Roy, dont l'harmonie ne ravissoit pas moins que tout le reste: toutes ces magnificences neantmoins estans surpassées par le bon visage & le gracieux accueil de Son Eminence: qui n'a rien plus au cœur que de seconder toutes les intentions de Leurs Majestez: Lesquelles, entre les autres divertisseme.s qu'elles continüent de faire prendre à cet Ambassadeur, le 26, au retour de la chasse & de la comédie Françoisse, lui donnèrent le bal dans le grand cabinet de la Reine, où il mena dancer Mademoiselle, avec une disposition qui fit voire à la Cour que toute l'adresse n'est pas en France', *Recueil des Gazettes nouvelles ordinaires et extraordinaires*, p. 854.

entertainments. In his investigation of the concept of rectitude in early modern time, Vigarello explains how a certain moral stance could be expressed in typical aristocratic activities such as fencing, riding, and dancing:

Fencing and riding are 'fields' in which the body's uprightness is a sign of good manners. In these 'technical' activities the straight body is filled with a self-controlled politeness. The measure is less and less one of strength, and increasingly one of elegance. In the end, it is dance that sets up models aimed at excellence and distinction. It was to be the foundation for an art of controlled, developed and privileged performance. Dance allows people 'to be taught how to walk well, to curtsy, to carry their body properly and to loosen their arms and legs'. It is an exercise for maintaining and perfecting one's bearing.<sup>26</sup>

The fact that Vigarello quotes, at the end of these lines, the French theologian Nicolas Fontaine (1625-1709) and his *Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire de Port-Royal* (published posthumously in 1756) reinforces the moral quality attributed to such activities during French *grand siècle*. The praise of De la Gardie's distinction in the above-mentioned quotation from the *Gazette de France* serves the double purpose of paying tribute to the Swedish ally and, at the same time, reaffirming French superiority in courtly manners. The primacy asserted in this notice also relates to the seventeenth-century French concept of *galanterie*, which exemplifies the refinement Christina wanted to introduce in Sweden. According to Alain Viala, this specific Gallic phenomenon should be interpreted both as an 'esthétique' and a 'mode de comportement'.<sup>27</sup> The social character of this ideal 'manner of behaviour' stands out as particularly important. Galanterie presupposed an honest and virtuous behaviour – the often referred to concept of *honnêteté* – joined with the requirements of elegance and ease of manners. Its courteous nature is only apparently in contradiction with these requirements, which were perceived at the time as mutually interdependent. These distinguished but yet free and easy manners are, finally, related to Castiglione's ideas of the courtier's *sprezzatura* as an art 'which conceals art'.<sup>28</sup> All these elements are hinted at in the above-mentioned praise of De la Gardie. The Swedish ambassador's

26 Vigarello, 'The Upward Training of the Body', p. 179.

27 Viala, *La France galante*, p. 12. On French influence at Christina's court see Fogelberg Rota, 'Naudé, Bourdelot and Queen Christina's French Court in Stockholm'. On the concept of *galanterie* and its influence on the aesthetic field see also Goulet, 'Louis XIV et l'esthétique galante'.

28 I quote Castiglione's renowned words from Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, p. 31.

success at the French court could also, at least partly, be referred back to Beaulieu's lessons at court and his dancing in the ballets. De la Gardie's highly praised elegant behaviour and posture, with its virtuous implications, were necessary requisites for a successful diplomatic mission. The importance of De la Gardie's embassy for the further diffusion of these ideals in Sweden can be measured by its impact on the development of court ballet in Sweden. As a result of his diplomatic mission, six French musicians, an Italian *macchinista* (set designer) and a French artist arrived in Sweden in order to work with the music, set design, and costumes of the ballets, respectively.<sup>29</sup>

French influence on Swedish court ballet is also evident in the more marked use of political themes in the libretti, which accompanied the performances. *Le Monde Reioivi [Réjouï]* (The world delighted), staged on 1 January 1645 precisely to celebrate Christina's coming of age and the beginning of her rule, is an important step in this development. An important exemplar for this performance was the *Ballet de la Prospérité des Armes de la France*, commissioned by Cardinal Richelieu to celebrate the victories over the Spaniards in the sieges of Casale Monferrato and Arras and danced at the Palais Cardinal in Paris on 7 February 1641. This ballet marked a renewed way of understanding court ballet as a means of political propaganda aimed for the legitimation and affirmation of kingly power. The *Ballet de la Prospérité des Armes de la France* is characterized by the absence of comic scenes in favour of more serious and heroic ones. The libretto of *Le Monde Reioivi [Réjouï]* shows a similarly tangible reduction of comic scenes to the advantage of serious and solemn *entrées*. This is evident, for instance, in the third scene. Jupiter, the king of the Gods, who is here as in several other ballets identified with Gustavus Adolphus, descends to the stage on a coach together with 'la Prudence, & la Justice' (Wisdom and Justice). These two essential virtues of a righteous monarch are followed by Heroic virtue, which is described first in prose and then in verses:

*Heroic virtue* follows on from Wisdom who guides her. She [Heroic virtue] undertakes nothing without her advice. As Temerity sometimes carries

29 The French musicians were as follows: Pierre Verdier, Pierre Guilleroy, Pierre Garset, Nicolas Bigot, Nicolas Picart, and the singer Alexandre Voullon. These joined the French violinist Cuny Aubry and the lutenist Bechon, who were already in Stockholm before 1646. Bigot and Picart returned to France only a few years after their arrival in Stockholm and were replaced by Jacques Feugré, François De La Croix, and his son Adrien. Kjellberg, *Kungliga musiker i Sverige under stormaktstiden*, pp. 508-9; 421; 416-17; 382; 469; 515; 374-75; 378-79. Antonio Brunati was the set designer and worked with the new *Balettsalen* that was inaugurated in 1649. Nicolas Vallari was the French artist who took care of the costumes of the performances. Fogelberg Rota, 'Representations of Power', pp. 65-85.

out some actions as spectacular as hers [Heroic virtue's], in order to prove that she does not engage in dangers blindly as vice does, she foresees these situations and overcomes them with courage receiving the true reward that she deserves. So *honour* follows her step by step in order to crown her, because it is never him [honour], but rather fortune, who rewards Temerity when she succeeds. This heroic virtue and honour come together to follow Christina and render her Reign as glorious as that of Gustavus. He who never decided anything without prudence, never executed anything without Justice, never engaged in any deed that was not counselled by heroic virtue.<sup>30</sup>

Heroic virtue acts always according to Wisdom's advice. Virtue's high reward does not come from Fortune, which randomly rewards the reckless without considering true merit, but from Honour, which always crowns virtue. Heroic virtue's role is to act jointly with Wisdom and Justice to underline the continuity between Gustavus Adolphus's and Christina's reign. As her father was, she will be led by reason and act stoically above her passions.<sup>31</sup> Christina guarantees with her virtue the continuity of his reign. Virtue, and in particular heroic virtue, is thus the unifying element holding together the ballet and giving it a coherent character. The theme of the ballet is hence connected to its aim: the praise of Christina and her kingly virtues. The idea of a heroic virtue presented in *Le Monde Reioivi* [*Réjouï*] stems from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book 7, 1145 a18-21). The heroic is a habit that befits only the most excellent individuals and that by conferring a higher status to all other virtues brings man closer to divinity. Because of its elitist character heroic virtue was particularly appropriate for the representation of an ideal and exclusive image of man particularly meant for monarchs.<sup>32</sup> Christina's appraisal through virtue stands out as particularly suited for

30 'La vertu heroique descend apres la Prudence, c'est sa guide, Elle n'entreprend rien sans ses conseils, Et par ce que la Temerité fait quelques fois des actions aussi Eclatantes que les siennes, afin de faire veoir qu'elle ne se porte point aveuglément dans les dangers comme fait le vice, elle veut les conneestre auparavant & les surmontant apres avec hardiesse elle reçoit les iustes recompenses qui lui sont deuës. Aussi l'honneur la suite elle pas à pas a fin de la couronner, car ce n'est jamais luy mais la fortune qui recompense la Temerité qu'elle a faict reussir. Cette vertu héroïque, & l'honneur viennent ensemble pour accompagner Christine & rendre son Regne aussi glorieux que le fût celui de Gustave, qui ne resolut iamais rien sans la prudence, n'executa rien sans la Justice, ne fit aucune action qui ne fût avouëe par la vertu héroïque', *Le Monde Reioivi* [*Réjouï*], f. 3-4.

31 For a study of Neostoic influence on Swedish seventeenth-century debate see Lindberg, *Stoicism och stat*.

32 Heroic virtue's importance in political philosophy, ever since its conception and until early modern time, is dealt with in *Shaping Heroic Virtue*, ed. by Fogelberg Rota and Hellerstedt.

her role as a young and unmarried queen for whom dynastic claims, after the long rule of the Regency Council, were the core of the legitimacy to the throne. This is also expressed clearly in the verses presenting Heroic virtue's character. Christina is described, now in verses, as the true heir of her glorious and invincible father:

Heroic Virtue.

[...] A girl comes now to take his place, she will maintain the sceptre of his race, treading the path of his glorious deeds, her invincible State places its faith in her youth, and great bravery is to be observed in her, worthy of her Swedish blood, and of her Ancestors, her exceptional qualities make her adorable. I want, on my honour, to be inseparable from her, I want to be the support of her Intentions and that she be loved by other nations, that she punishes the insolence of her Enemies and that she demonstrate with her great heart that she is a daughter, but Gustavus's, and that she bears in her breast a male strength.<sup>33</sup>

The young Queen is the rightful heir of Gustavus Adolphus because of her 'male strength' ('masle vigueur') that makes her virtuous. It is thanks to her extraordinary virtue that Christina overcomes the weaknesses of her sex and raises herself as the worthy heir of her victorious father. A seventeenth-century misogynistic attitude shines through in these lines, but of even greater importance is the dynastic bond by which Christina is attached to Gustavus Adolphus – an aspect that is deeply connected to virtue – and by which she is legitimized in her new status as ruling queen. Heroic virtue appears as inseparable from Christina and as the ground on which her reign is based. It is in particular the counselling function of this virtue that is underlined, as in the above cited passage where it is mentioned as 'the support of her Intentions' ('l'appui de ses Intentions'). Virtue is the pillar on which Christina's reign leans, and it thus has a function similar to that of the Regency Council,

The praise of Christina's heroic virtue would also become one of the privileged themes of her Accademia Reale founded in 1674 in Rome. Fogelberg Rota, *Poesins drottning*, pp. 95-124.

33 'La Vertu Heroique. / [...] Une fille à présent vient de remplir sa place/ Elle va soutenir le sceptre de sa race,/ Marchant sur le sentier de ses faits glorieux/ Son invincible Estat espere en sa jeunesse,/ Et l'on remarque en elle une haute hardiesse,/ Digne du sang suedois, digne de ses Ayeux,/ Ses rares qualités la rendent adorable./ Je veux, honneur, je veux en estre inséparable,/ Je veux estre l'appui de ses Intentions/ Et qu'elle soit l'amour des autres nations/ Que de ses Ennemis l'insolence elle brave/ Et qu'elle fasse voir enfin par son grand coeur,/ Qu'elle est fille, mais de Gustave,/ Et qu'elle porte au sein une masle vigueur', *Le Monde Reioivi* [Réjouï], f. 8.

which manifestly inspired the messages conveyed by the ballet. The libretto of *Le Monde Reioivi* [*Réjouï*] ends with a clear invitation to marry in order to guarantee the succession to the throne: 'And finally to give some Kings to Sweden, together with our Amazon, it is necessary to have an Alexander.'<sup>34</sup> This exhortation was directly derived from the Regency Council and its leading personality, Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, who had ruled for thirteen years and was finally returning the reign of the country to Christina.<sup>35</sup> The explicit political message of *Le Monde Reioivi* [*Réjouï*] is concentrated in these lines in which Christina's marriage is presented as a compelling necessity and the Queen's absolute duty towards Sweden and her subjects.

An important change occurred in the messages conveyed in the ballets that were performed immediately after the beginning of Christina's sovereign rule. Lars Gustafsson shows how what he defines as Christina's 'personal politics' determines these performances, that is, her strong will to free herself from the necessity of marrying in order to guarantee the succession to the throne.<sup>36</sup> Three ballets performed in 1649, the most prolific year in the history of court ballet in Sweden, had a major importance for the affirmation of Christina's personal politics: *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues* (Passions victorious and vanquished; April 1649), *Le Vaincu de Diane* (The victory of Diana; November 1649), and *La Naissance de la Paix* (The birth of peace; December 1649). Finally, I shall, focus on the first of these three performances in order to show how the image of the virtuous Queen was used by Christina to legitimize her decision not to marry.

*Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues* was performed on 4 April 1649 in the Castle of the Three Crowns. Christina had, shortly before its performance on 23 February, finally announced in the Council of the Realm that she

34 'Et qu'enfin pour donner à la Suede des Rois,/ Avec nostre Amazone, Il faut avoir un Alexandre', *Le Monde Reioivi* [*Réjouï*], f. 27.

35 Gustafsson, 'Amor et Mars vaincus', p. 88.

36 'To the extent in which the ballets danced at Christina's court had a political leaning, this was of course "inspired", and that inspiration came, in one way or another, "from above". The ballets from the later period unambiguously pleaded the cause of the personal politics of the Queen. Those that preceded them, especially the ballets performed before Christina had reached her majority, also reflect other opinions circulated at court, and show in particular the desire to persuade the young Queen to marry.' ('Dans la mesure où les ballets dansés à la cour de Christine avaient une tendance politique, celle-ci était bien entendu "inspirée", et l'inspiration venait, d'une façon ou d'une autre, "d'en haut". Les ballets de la dernière période plaident sans ambiguïté la cause de la politique personnelle de la Reine. Ceux qui les précédèrent, surtout les ballets exécutés avant que Christine ne fût déclarée majeure, reflètent aussi d'autres opinions répandues à la cour, et laissent transparaître en particulier le désir d'inciter la jeune Reine à se marier.') Gustafsson, 'Amor et Mars vaincus', p. 88.

would not marry under any circumstances. The 23-year-old Queen stated on that occasion that:

if it was possible for me to marry I would do so readily [...] I state it clearly that for me it is impossible to marry. So it is with this matter. The reasons for this I cannot say. But I am disinclined toward it. I have earnestly prayed to God that I would become inclined toward it, but this has not happened.<sup>37</sup>

Christina's decision was allegorically rendered on stage through a praise of duty towards the country, a theme that runs as a thread throughout *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues*. This libretto is the first one to give printed information on the interpreters of the dances, whose Swedish names are misspelled by the anonymous French author. The theme of *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues* is outlined in the opening song, *récit*, which introduces the story of the Horatii and the Curiatii, inspired by Pierre Corneille's tragedy *Horace* (1640):<sup>38</sup>

Complaint by the Sister of the Horatii.

*For music.*

Sacred destiny moderate your endeavour, I shall die either because of love or because of friendship. If my misfortune moves pity to cure the evil which constrains me, Alba will die together with my love, or Rome will be eclipsed along with my happy days.

The blood of the Curiatii must be shed to elevate Rome to the heights of Honour; Alba can attain happiness only through the death of the Illustrious Horatii. Love or Piety, which one among you will win? And whose victory will be sweeter to me?

Alba, for you I offer sacrifices; Rome, for you I present my wishes, you can only die in my fires. Who can thus alleviate my suffering? Only death can cure me, let us die then love, since you must die.<sup>39</sup>

37 '[...] om det stodo i min förmågo at giffta migh, vill jagh thet gerna göra. [...] Jagh säger det uthryckeligen, at det är migh ömöjeliget att giffta migh. Således är migh denne saken beskaffat. Rationes härtill förtijger jagh. Men mitt sinne är dertill inthett. Jag hafver bedet flitigt till Gudh derom, at jagh mått få det sinnet, man jag hafver det aldriugh kunnat få,' *Svenska riksrådets protokoll*, p. 349.

38 Corneille, *Horace, Tragedie*.

39 'Plainte De la Soeur des Horaces:/ *Par la Musique*./ Sacré destin modere ta poursuite/ Le vay mourir d'amour, ou d'amitié:/ Si mon malheur pour toucher la pitié/ Gueris le mal ou je me vois

Camille, the sister of the Horatii, is torn between love and honour, or better, between love towards her beloved and love towards her homeland. Camille finally assumes the necessity of her death, as the only solution to the destroying power of her passion. *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues* is, essentially, a critique of the power of excessive passions. Three more passion-driven characters – Nimrod, Paris, and Mahomet – appear on stage in the next three scenes. Their actions are considered as devastating because they have, in order, confounded language by the construction of the Tower of Babel, endangered the Spartan empire because of the beautiful Helen, and challenged the Christian faith. The disorder represented by these three personages is counterbalanced by the appearance of three women from Antiquity known for their virtue: Zenobia, Pulcheria, and Lucretia.<sup>40</sup> These are interpreted by three of Christina's pages: Erik Appelgren (d. 1701), Wolter Stackelberg, and Abraham Göransson Pistolekors (d. 1699). It was a common practice in the ballets from Christina's time to let young pages play female characters. The virtue and sense of duty, which characterize the three women, are another example of that 'severe moral' of Corneille, which according to Gustafsson gives a 'certain coherence' to *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues*.<sup>41</sup> Women's pre-eminence in virtue over men is

reduite;/ Albe perit avecque mes amours./ Ou Rome Ecclypse avecque mes beaux jours.// Il faut verser le sang des Curiaces/ Pour eslever Rome au comble d'Honneur;/ Albe ne peut acquerir le bon'heur/ Que par la mort des Illustres Horaces:/ Amour, Pieté, lequel vaincra de vous,/ Et quel vainquer me sera le plus doux.// Albe, pour toy l'offre des sacrifices,/ Rome, pour toy je presente des voeus,/ Vous ne pouvez perir qu'avec mes feus,/ Qui pourra donc aleiger mes suplices?/ La seule mort à droit de me guerir,/ Mourons amour puisque tu doibts perir', *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues*, f. 2.

40 Zenobia (241-after 274) was queen of Palmyra in the third century AD. She conquered Egypt and much of Asia Minor. After she had proclaimed her son emperor, she was defeated by the Roman emperor Aurelian. She was a patron of literature and created a court of intellectuals. Stoneman, 'Zenobia', pp. 274-75. Pulcheria (c.399-453) was the second child of Eastern Roman Emperor Arcadius and Empress Aelia Eudoxia. On the death of her father her brother Theodosius II became Emperor at the age of seven years. In 414 when she was aged fifteen she proclaimed herself regent over him. She took a vow of virginity and became Augusta. However, she married Marcian in 450. She died in 453 and was later beatified by the Catholic Church. *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale*, IV, p. 540. Lucretia (d. 510 BC) was a legendary Roman woman who took her life after being raped by the son of Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin the proud). This led to the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome during Lucius Junius Brutus's rebellion. Connors, 'Lucretia', p. 291.

41 '[...] severe moral of the tragedy of Corneille: love must surrender when confronted with duty towards country. It is necessary to win over passions, ruin of hearts, and especially of the well-born hearts; this is the common theme that gives a certain coherence to the scenes of the ballet in which appear thereafter some female roles renowned for their virtue and sense of duty: Zenobia, Pulcheria, and Lucretia' ('sévère morale de la tragédie de Corneille: l'amour doit céder devant le devoir envers la patrie. Il faut vaincre les passions, perdition des coeurs et surtout des



stated in these lines in which the formers' right to rule is also affirmed. The three women are praised for the exemplarity of their virtue. The third-century Syrian Queen Zenobia is described as: 'Miracle of virtue, mirror of chastity: Marvel of wisdom, excellent beauty, infinitely lovable, equally loved'.<sup>42</sup> Virtue, chastity, and wisdom are qualities used to represent an ideal image of Christina in her court ballets. Two exempla stand out for their importance for the representation of the Queen: the goddess of chastity and hunting Diana and the goddess of wisdom Pallas Athena. The first goddess was particularly significant for the image of the Queen. In fact, the connection between Christina and Diana was unequivocally rendered in the performance of the above-mentioned *Le Vaincu de Diane* when she herself danced in the role of Diana.<sup>43</sup> The theme of sacrifice for the benefit of the state also recurs in the sixth scene in which Cicero appears on stage. The Roman statesman and orator appears on stage in the sixth *entrée* where he is praised for his sacrifice for the state, an act of generosity that survives his death and reaffirms the ideal of freedom:

*Cicero.*

[...] I preserved the freedom of the people whose hearts would win the world. My days were but a tissue of virtue, honour, and glory, and knowing that I was engendered by a King of pious memory I thought that I owed to Rome everything I had, and stopping a storm that threatened it with misfortune I died happily sacrificing my heart and my head.<sup>44</sup>

'Virtue, honour, and glory' are the leading ideals of Cicero, whose defence of the Roman Republic against Caesar survives its fall and inspires Roman citizens long after his lifetime. The capacity of literature to preserve the memory of great men and their deeds is aimed at here. Death is sweet to Cicero who dies happily for his country. It is noteworthy that Svante Sparre

coeurs bien nés; tel est le thème commun qui donne une certaine cohérence aux scènes du ballet dans lesquelles apparaissent ensuite, notamment, des personnages féminins célèbres pour leur vertu et leur sens du devoir: Zénobie, Pulchérie et Lucrèce'), Gustafsson, 'Amor et Mars vaincus', p. 92.

42 'Miracle de vertu, miroir de chasteté:/ Merveille de sçavoir, excellente beauté,/ Amyable infiniment, ésgalement aymée', *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues*, f. 6.

43 Grönstedt, *Svenska hoffester*, I, p. 53.

44 'Ciceron./[...] Je conservay la liberté/ Au peuple dont le coeur devoit vaincre le monde./ Mes jours ne furent qu'un tissue/ De vertu, d'honneur, & de gloire/ Et sachant que j'estois issu/ D'un Roy de pieuse memoire/ Je creus aussi que je devois/ A Rome tout ce que j'avois/ Et arrestant une tempeste/ Qui la menaçoit de malheur/ Je peris avec le bon'heur/ De luy sacrifier, & mon coeur & ma teste', *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues*, f. 8.

(1623-1652), the successor of Bengt Skytte in the office of Lantmarskalk (Lord Marshal) in the Riksdag of 1649 and 1651, interpreted the role of Cicero. It was precisely during these two parliaments that the question of Christina's succession was resolved in her favour.<sup>45</sup> His role as the virtuous Cicero was probably a reward for his contribution in this delicate issue for Christina. The refusal of the passions is finally praised once again in the concluding *récit* through yet another reference to the ancient heroes. Their inability to reject the power of the passions is summarized in this song:

*For music.*

Stanzas.

The most false Tyrants of life: Venus, vanity, love, ambition, and jealousy sojourn on earth, and the heroes are busy ruining them with their contraries [to contrast them]

Cyrus, Alexander and Pompey, the Caesars and the Scipios, permitted these passions to easily enter their souls and saw them subjugated to these cruel enemies.

In this century two great Queens, [who reign] over minds and over our souls, entirely and always sovereigns, know of no winners. They make us see those dangerous enemies subjugated.<sup>46</sup>

Many ancient heroes have fought against the tyranny of the passions, among which love takes a pre-eminent place, as it is referred to here by three of five words ('Venus', 'l'amour', 'la jalousie'). However, few have managed to overcome

45 Svante (Larsson) Sparre (1623-1652) studied at Uppsala University from 1636 and in Leiden in 1644 together with his brother Gustav. He was chamberlain at Christina's court between 1645 and 1647. He was the brother of Christina's favourite Ebba Sparre. In 1649 he was elected Lantmarskalk (Lord Marshal and speaker of the Riksdag), a position which was confirmed in 1650 and 1651. He was later elected governor of the county of Stockholm and Uppsala (1649-1652). *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, XXXII, p. 697, and *Nordisk familjebok*, XXVI, p. 575.

46 '*Pour la Musique./ Stances./ Les plus faux Tyrans de la vie/ Venus, la vanité, l'amour,/ L'ambition, la jalousie/ Font dans le monde leur séjour,/ Et les Heros ont bien a faire/ A les ruiner par leur contraire// Cyrus, Alexandre, Pompée,/ Les Cesars, & les Scipions/ Permirent aisement l'entrée/ De leur ame, a ces passions,/ Et les virent assugeties/ A ces cruelles Ennemies.// En ce siecle, deux grandes Reynes/ De nos Esprits, & de nos coeurs,/ En tout & tousjours Souveraines,/ Ne connoissent point de vainqueurs:/ Et nous font voir assugeties/ Ces dangereuses Ennemies', *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues*, f. 19-20.*

them. Christina and her mother Maria Eleonora are praised as being above the same passions, which they have managed to defeat. The two queens have succeeded where all other heroes have previously failed. They neglect their personal happiness for the higher good of the Kingdom and stand invincible above passion. The ideal image of Christina expressed in these lines is evident. She is here represented as a superior being completely devoted to reason. The praise of the two queens reminds us of the aim of court ballets in Sweden and elsewhere in early modern Europe, that is to defend monarchical power against the claims of the nobles and its importance in establishing absolutism.

Also, this last example from *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues* reveals the main aims and goals of the introduction of court ballet in Sweden. This theatre form was introduced and developed during Christina's time both to refine the manners of the Swedish court and to represent an ideal image of the Queen as wise, virtuous, and raised above the passions. The complement to this image was that of her subjects as loyal and obedient to the Crown. Moreover, these performances seem to have furthered Christina's interests through the establishment of a network of favourites, which was to become instrumental in carrying out her political plans. For instance, the Queen rewarded the courtiers who stood closest to her with such appointments as that of Lord Marshal (Lantmarskalk), conferred first on Bengt Skytte and then on Svante Sparre. The noblemen who danced in the ballets, whose career paths I have discussed in this chapter, appear to be sufficiently homogeneous to permit us to draw some conclusions. First of all, the participants were often members of the noblest families of Sweden (Oxenstierna, Natt och Dag, De la Gardie, and Pfalz-Zweibrücken, etc.). These aristocrats were later employed in diplomatic missions, after which they were usually elected to the Council of the Realm. The presence of a considerable number of Christina's pages also reinforces this pattern by indicating that the dancers most often had close relations with the Queen. Consequently, court ballet stands out as Queen Christina's privileged medium to convey her political propaganda, both because of the themes treated in the ballets and the network of persons who interpreted these ideas on stage with their bodies. While *Le Monde Reioivi* [*Réjouï*] still conveyed the politics of the Regency Council, Christina seized the stage, literally and metaphorically, at the beginning of her sovereign rule to further her personal politics. The performance of *Les Passions Victorieuses et Vaincues*, with which she aimed at freeing herself from the necessity of providing an heir to the throne, reveals her use of this theatre form for propagandistic objectives. Finally, the praise of virtues such as self-control and chastity were aimed at representing Christina as a superior being completely devoted to reason.

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# The path to virtue

Dancing the education of Achilles and the Nereids

*Kristine Kolrud*

## Abstract

This chapter explores the representation of male and female education in a *ballet de cour* (court ballet) performed in Turin in 1650. Princely education was the central theme of the ballet, *L'Educatione d'Achille e delle Nereidi sue sorelle nell'isola Doro* (The education of Achilles and the Nereids, his sisters, on the island of Doro), and it celebrated a marriage alliance between the houses of Savoy and Bavaria. The performance was based on the ancient myth of Achilles' education by the centaur Chiron, and also included the instruction of the hero's sisters. Kolrud focuses on the written and visual documentation of the ballet in order to examine the presentation of educational ideals as well as the particular emphasis placed on the role of the mother.

**Keywords:** House of Savoy, ballet de cour, art history, court culture

The ballet *L'Educatione d'Achille e delle Nereidi sue sorelle nell'isola Doro* (or: The education of Achilles and the Nereids, his sisters, on the island of Doro) was a Savoyard variant of the French *ballet de cour* (court ballet). It was performed in Turin, the capital of the duchy of Savoy, in 1650 on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Adelaide (1636-76) to the Electoral Prince Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria (b. 1636, r. 1651-79).<sup>1</sup> The ballet was the work of the courtier count Filippo di San Martino d'Aglié, and it consisted of recitatives (or sung verses) performed by unnamed and professional singers as well as dance entries performed by the Duke, his sisters, and

<sup>1</sup> The bride is also known as Henrietta Adelaide, Enrichetta Adelaide/Enrichetta Adelaida, or Adelaide Enrichetta.



other members of the court.<sup>2</sup> The subject of the ballet is the ideal education of the prince and to a lesser extent that of princesses, and the performance served to exalt the virtues of the members of the ducal House of Savoy. Order and harmony emerge as central concepts, as does the role of the mother.

Here, I will focus on how educational ideals are presented, and discuss the relationship between the performance and its documentation. While the musical score of *L'Educatione d'Achille* has not been preserved,<sup>3</sup> written accounts of the performance have come down to us, and a manuscript that combines the decorated text of the libretto with images in watercolour and tempera exists.<sup>4</sup> This manuscript provides valuable insight into the staging of the ballet, and it belongs to a series of fourteen codices made in connection with performances at the court of Savoy.<sup>5</sup>

The manuscript is ascribed to Tommaso Borgonio (1628-91) and was presumably made after the performance.<sup>6</sup> It is impossible to know how well the volume corresponds to the actual ballet, but such detailed visual documentation of court ballets from the period is rather unusual. The manuscript also clearly functioned as a work of art in its own right. It does not appear to have been intended as a gift, and it remained at the court of Savoy.<sup>7</sup> In the manuscript the illustrations in colour correspond more closely to the text than the pen drawings on the text folios. Although the latter are by no means insignificant, I will concentrate mainly on the former in the following essay. These mostly alternate between overviews of the stage (Fig. 1) and close ups of the dancers and sometimes singers (Fig. 2). In the latter, the backgrounds are left blank and emphasis is placed on detailed

2 The architect Amedeo di Castellamonte was probably responsible for the execution of the scenery and the elaborate machines used. The ballet was performed in the San Giovanni palace. Castiglione, *Himenei*, p. 70.

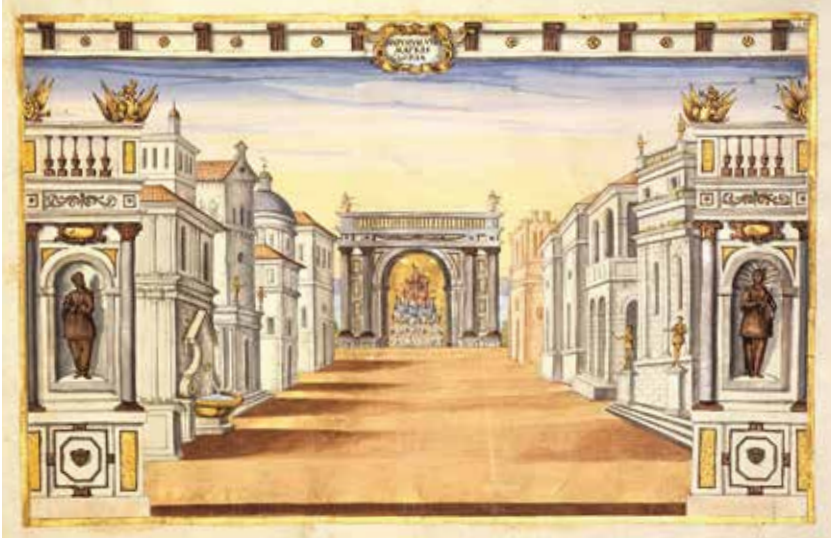
3 It is clear from the libretto that greater emphasis was placed on music in this performance than in other Savoyard ballets. Maria Letizia Sebastiani points out that it involved ten soloists as well as the choir. Entry on the ballet in *Feste barocche*, p. 103 (2.19). See also Bouquet-Boyer, 'Musical Enigmas', for the use of music in the Savoyard ballets.

4 [Tommaso Borgonio], *L'Educatione d'Achille*, BNT q.V 58. The mediums are watercolour, tempera, and pen and ink on paper, and the use of gold leaf is extensive.

5 They were performed between 1640 and 1681. The following are among the most important works on the manuscript: Viale Ferrero, *Feste*; McGowan, 'Les fêtes'. *Feste barocche*, edited by Arnaldi di Balme and Varallo, contains an extensive bibliography.

6 Some of the albums clearly appear to be collaborative works. The nature of this collaboration nevertheless remains unclear. The names of Onoratio Tiranti and Carlo Conti are known but other artists may also have contributed. Arabella Cifani and Franco Moretti propose that Carlo Conti only participated on the later albums. In *Feste barocche*, p. 98 (2.15). See their discussion on pp. 98 and 100. See also Viale Ferrero, *Feste*, pp. 36-39, and the description of plate 31.

7 The albums were recorded there in an inventory of 1682. See *Feste barocche*, p. 84.

**Figure 1 Appearance of the Nereids**

Tommaso Borghonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.V. 58, fol. 110, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

renderings of costumes, while one is also able to gather an impression of movements and gestures. As is common in this type of illustration, the performers are not individualized, but the dancers are named in the text, and the names of their characters appear beneath them in the illustrations, as seen in Figure 2.<sup>8</sup>

The Duchess of Savoy, Marie Christine (1606-63) – who, although her son had come of age two years previously, in reality continued her regency – corresponds to the goddess Thetis in the performance (Fig. 3).<sup>9</sup> Marie Christine's abilities as educator is a central message, clearly geared both to the court itself, the Bavarian delegation as well as Savoy's important ally,

<sup>8</sup> The manuscript originally consisted of 119 folios, and a few of these are now lost.

<sup>9</sup> BNT q.V 58, fol. 9. Thetis is the crowned figure in the foreground. The libretto incorporates a complex web of allusions and references to classical sources. It is beyond the scope of this essay to give a detailed account of the manuscript. Generally, names of gods follow the Roman convention. When citing Greek sources, I use the Greek names and add Roman equivalents (see Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, repr., *Perseus Digital Library*, Tufts University, [www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/abbrevhelp](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/abbrevhelp)).

**Figure 2 Ballet of the Masters of the Arts: a Corybante and a Curete**



Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Education d'Achille*, q.V. 58, fol. 36, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

France, represented by the French ambassador, the Comte de Servient.<sup>10</sup> The part of Thetis is not performed by the Duchess, and it is sung, not danced. Thetis is the mother not only of Achilles – danced by the Duchess's son, Duke Carlo Emanuele II (b. 1634, r. 1638-75) – but also of the Nereids.<sup>11</sup> The latter are performed by her daughters, including the bride Adelaide and other ladies of the court. In the ballet, Thetis sends Achilles to be educated by Chiron, and the young hero and his companions are trained in various disciplines. The Nereids are educated by the Muses, but the ballet focuses considerably less on them, and they only dance towards the end of the

10 If it made an impression on the French ambassador remains unclear. There is no direct reference to the performance in his correspondence but that can hardly be taken as proof that he was not intrigued by it. See ADC Sardegna cote 114CP/44. Unsurprisingly, his interest in the marriage alliance as such is reflected in his correspondence. For the connection between the ballet and other works on the Duke's education, see also Kolrud 'Prolonged Minority'. The Duchess's education of her son had been celebrated already in the allegorical dialogue *Teti e Chirone* (Thetis and Chiron) by Lorenzo Scoto, published in conjunction with her birthday in 1649. See Doglio, 'Letteratura e retorica', p. 592, n. 35; Bouquet, *Il teatro di corte*, p. 53.

11 The exception is fols. 69 and 70 with the lute-playing *Fratelli la Volta*, where one represents Achilles.

**Figure 3 Prophecy of the Oracle of Apollo, Thetis to the right in the foreground**

Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.v. 58, fol. 9, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

performance. However, the separation of male and female dancers, as well as greater focus on the performances by male courtiers, was common.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the emphasis on the education of princesses, who were not heiresses, is by no means inconsiderable in the ballet. As far as I know, this was innovative as a subject matter at the time.

The choice of the subject of Achilles' education by Chiron is hardly surprising. It was frequently used and had been employed earlier at the court of Savoy. Chiron was also a clear reference to the young Duke's grandfather and namesake, whose star sign was the Sagittarius.<sup>13</sup> The employment of Chiron could therefore be a means of emphasizing how Carlo Emanuele's education was sanctioned by his ancestor. Moreover, Carlo Emanuele II himself is often referred to as Achilles.<sup>14</sup>

12 For instance in the ballet *L'Unione per la peregrina Margherita Reale e celeste*, danced on the occasion of Margherita of Savoy's marriage to Ranuccio Farnese, Duke of Parma, in 1660, the bride and other ladies of the court appear only at the end of the performance. See the entry on the ballet by Sebastiani in *Feste barocche*, p. 107 (2.24).

13 See Castellani Torta for Carlo Emanuele I's emblem, 'Tra ludus e azione', p. 51. See also BRT, *Storia Patria* 949, fols. 54, 63.

14 Castiglione, *Himenei*, p. 68; Tesauro, 'Il Diamante', pp. 118-120.

**Figure 4 Ballet of the Masters of the Arts: Agesidamus and Glycon**



Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Education d'Achille*, q.v. 58, fol. 47, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

In the ballet, Thetis leaves Achilles with Chiron on the island of Doro. The Nereids, we learn, are already there with the Muses.<sup>15</sup> In a series of entries, grouped together in a separate ballet within the ballet, we are then given an overview of the education of Achilles and his companions. The latter appear to be almost on an equal footing until the making of Achilles' armour. The emphasis is above all on fighting techniques (Fig. 4), although it also includes other skills, such as music (Fig. 2) and painting. Some additional theoretical skills are mentioned in the text but they are not performed.<sup>16</sup> Music may therefore have been a means of representing 'Letters', but the part called the Ballet of the Masters of the Arts, a series of interconnected entries within the performance, includes only two entries with musicians and nine that demonstrate physical skills, six of which focus on various forms of combat.<sup>17</sup>

15 BNT q.v. 58, fols. 25, 26, 29, 31. It may also be worth noting that Chiron describes himself as more of a guide and follower than master, fol. 32.

16 See, for instance, BNT q.v. 58, fol. 93.

17 Jeanice Brooks has suggested how, at the court of France in the sixteenth century, instruction in music could stand for letters in the context of the complete nature of Achilles' education by Chiron. Brooks, *Courty Song*, p. 139. Castellani Torta refers to how this is based on the classical Greek concept of *paideia* in that the ballet emphasizes the balance between the education of

It may have been easier to perform mock fighting on stage than the study of philosophy – and it may also have been a reflection of the exigencies of the time as well as the young Duke's interests.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, the *sujet* of the ballet is learned and complex, and could be characterized as a separate learning process. Also in the case of the Nereids, bookish learning is referred to in the text but not explicitly associated with their performance.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that they are all to be educated on the same island appears significant. It may also be noted that the island of Doro and the character performed by the bride Doris (or *Dori* in Italian) share the same name, which, the text explains, means gift of the gods.<sup>20</sup> One might add that the choice of name serves to further emphasize the greatness of the ducal house. Despite their shared geographical location, there is virtually no focus on the education of the Nereids. Needless to say, perhaps, they do not participate in Achilles' programme. What they do have in common is the use of the palace where virtue resides – and the virtue of the Nereids is stressed.<sup>21</sup>

After the entries that focus on Achilles' education, it is Juno, not Thetis (as is the case in the *Iliad*) (Fig. 5), who asks Vulcan for armour for Achilles.<sup>22</sup> At the same time the goddess requests colours from her messenger Iris to adorn sceptres, mantles, and crowns for the Nereids – they are in other words to be given regalia, a clear sign of their status.<sup>23</sup> Juno ends her song by stating that arms and love will shine equally.<sup>24</sup> The making of armour is directly connected to virtue, whereas the simultaneous request on behalf of the Nereids could be related to the equally virtuous task of the restoration and consolidation of peace through marriage.<sup>25</sup>

body and soul. 'Tra *ludus* e azione', p. 53, esp. n. 51. For the tradition of pyrrhic dance at the court of Savoy, see Samard, 'Les danses guerrières'. In fact, even the Corybante and Curete of the first entry of musicians are associated with armed dancers. See Robertson, 'Ancient Mother' pp. 292-94.

18 See Viale Ferrero, *Feste*, p. 49. See also the discussion in Kolrud, 'Prolonged Minority', pp. 201-2.

19 See BNT q.V 58, fols. 25, 111, 117.

20 BNT q.V 58, fols. 23 and 111.

21 BNT q.V 58, fol. 23 and for instance, fol. 32.

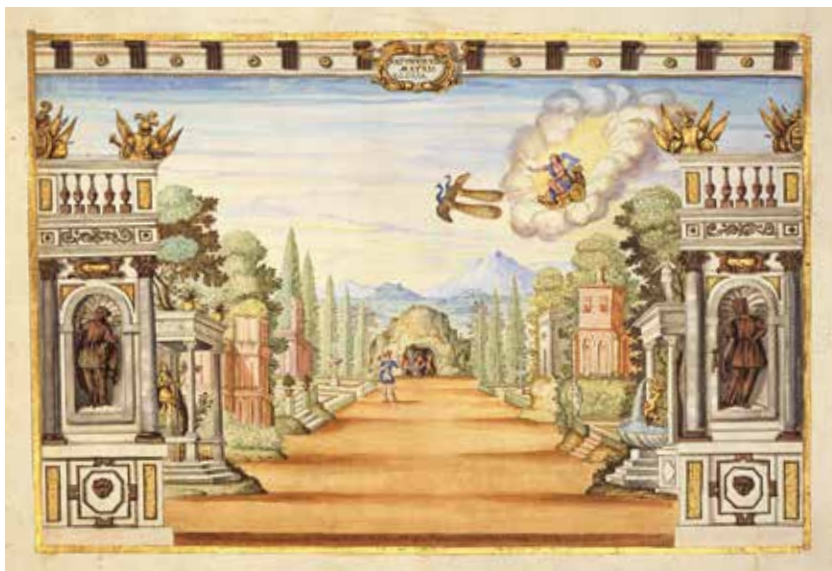
22 BNT q.V 58, fol. 76; Hom. *Il.* 18.427.

23 Iris is the goddess of the rainbow, and in Italian her name *Iride* is also the common word for rainbow. Tesauro likens the radiance of the diamond, Marie Christine's device, to the rainbow and, citing Pliny the Elder, establishes a connection between the lily of the Duchess and the iris flower; 'Il Diamante', pp. 29-30. The fleur-de-lis of the French monarchy (or indeed the fleur-de-lis as such) may well have derived from the iris.

24 BNT q.V 58, fol. 76.

25 The goddess Iris was considered a restorer of peace, and Tesauro praises the Duchess as a peace-bringing Iris. 'Il Diamante', p. 30.

**Figure 5 Juno with Vulcan in the background**



Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.v. 58, fol. 77, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

Iris is not described as appearing on stage in the text, nor is she represented in the illustrations. The exchange of Thetis for Juno in the ballet could have been a means of accentuating the importance of marriage – and therefore of one of the daughters in particular – and Juno's role as goddess of marriage. Juno's proximity to Thetis, attested to by classical sources, including the *Iliad*, possibly also influenced this choice. Emphasis is placed on the fact that Vulcan provides Juno's husband with lightning; yet, Jupiter's name is not mentioned.<sup>26</sup> The text does not allude to blood ties between Juno and Vulcan, but it cannot be ruled out that it was considered to be of some importance – and although the Duchess is primarily associated with Thetis, Margaret McGowan has suggested that both Juno and the personification of Virtue are references to her.<sup>27</sup> Other goddesses in the performance must have served a similar function, but the choice of one heroic female character over another can hardly be considered a mere variation on the theme.

<sup>26</sup> BNT q.v 58, fol. 78.

<sup>27</sup> 'Les fêtes,' 201.

**Figure 6 Ballet of the Nereids: Philyra, Doris, Callirrhoe, and Eurynome**

Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.v. 58, fol. 112, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

It is also worth mentioning that while Achilles dances with his *companions*, little distinction is made between the actual daughters of the Duchess and other ladies at court. They all perform as Nereids and sisters of Achilles but, as pointed out by Valeriano Castiglione in his official account of the marriage celebration, the princesses lead the dances in the ballet of these sea goddesses (Fig. 6).<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, despite the fact that Doris is singled out as the bride of Ajax (who represents the groom, Ferdinand Maria), sceptres, mantles, and crowns are made for all of the Nereids – while Achilles is selected as the only receiver of impenetrable armour.

The connection between virtue and the soldier or various parts of armour and weapons was a commonplace at this point in time. It was mentioned by ancient sources and used throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>29</sup> In the text, the qualities associated with Achilles' arms and armour are spelled out as the

<sup>28</sup> Castiglione, *Himenei*, p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> See Seneca, *De beata vita* 15.5; St. Paul's passage on the armour of God, Ephesians 6:10-17. The need for armament is also mentioned by Ripa, in the first edition of his highly influential *Iconologia* (1593), p. 290, as well as subsequent editions. The 1645 edition, closest in time to the performance, is cited here (unless otherwise indicated). *Iconologia* (1645), p. 672. See also Braunfels-Esche, *Sankt Georg*.



**Figure 7 Virtue**

Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.V. 58, fol. 91, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

**Figure 8 Ballet of Achilles and his Companions: Odysseus, Menelaus, Agamemnon, and Polydamas**

Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.V. 58, fol. 100, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

virtues of a great hero. It reads like a list of virtues and their subcategories, or variations in which virtues needed in battle are emphasized, but it also includes other typically princely virtues.<sup>30</sup>

In the performance, this catalogue of virtues is soon followed by the appearance of Virtue (Fig. 7), who, the text makes clear, had been the inseparable companion of young Achilles all along and inspired him.<sup>31</sup> Virtue is equipped with a spear, in conformity with the military tradition. She in fact combines attributes found in different descriptions of Virtue in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*.<sup>32</sup> Virtue wants Achilles to triumph at Troy, and after her song Achilles and fifteen of his most valorous companions take part in the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions (Fig. 8).<sup>33</sup> The education of Achilles has now come to an end, and the dancers perform as armed heroes.<sup>34</sup>

After the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions, Ajax – who, as already mentioned, represents the young groom – is hurt by Amor's arrow, and the gods rejoice at Achilles' victory in battle and the happy union of Ajax and Doris, the bride.<sup>35</sup> The Nereids then perform their ballet (Fig. 6), which they have learnt in the Temple of Neptune. The Nereids are presented and described, and emphasis is placed on their beauty but also on particular capacities. For instance, Eurynome (who is actually an Oceanid, rather than a Nereid) is singled out for her vast knowledge.<sup>36</sup>

In mythology Doris is in fact the grandmother of Achilles and mother of Thetis, whereas the latter is the leader of the Nereids. The mother of the Oceanids was Tethys, the daughter of Uranus and Gaia, and both goddesses could be referred to as *Teti* in Italian.<sup>37</sup> In the ballet the two goddesses appear

30 BNT q.V 58, fol. 86. See also Kolrud, 'Gem and the Mirror', p. 85.

31 BNT q.V 58, fol. 90.

32 Ripa, *Iconologia* (1645), pp. 671-72. These first appear in *Iconologia* (1603), pp. 510-12, though most of the characteristics of the Virtue of the ballet are found in variants of the first edition, *Iconologia* (1593), pp. 290-91.

33 BNT q.V 58, fols. 92-99.

34 The ballet celebrates their triumph, but the libretto also incorporates comments on the fictional character of the dance (in the description of the first entry), by emphasizing the importance of training during peacetime and by noting how the performance prepares them for real triumphs, as well as in the presentation of Virtue (where the dance is said to consist of mock battles and simulated assaults), BNT q.V 58, fols. 90 and 93.

35 BNT q.V 58, fol. 107. Unlike Adelaide, Ferdinand Maria was not present and Ajax was danced by the marchese of S. Damiano. BNT q.V 58, fol. 93.

36 BNT q.V 58, fols. 109, 111-18.

37 Generally, the Nereid is referred to as Teti and the Titan goddess as both Teti and Tetide. This distinction appears to have been less clear in the seventeenth century, and both Teti and Tetide are used in the libretto, with reference to the mother of Achilles. Vincenzo Cartari does not distinguish between Teti and Thetide (/Tetide). *Le Imagini de gli Dei*, pp. 68, 188, 190, 294,

**Figure 9 Ballet of the Zephyrs: grand ballet**



Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.V. 58, fol. 22, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

to merge; this may explain why quite a few of the Nereids who appear are Oceanids. Doris is the name both of a Nereid and the Oceanid who was the mother of the 50 Nereids. This is no doubt intentional and a reference to fertility and her wifely duties. It is also a means of singling out both the Duchess and the young bride.

The dance entries are arranged into six separate *ballets* in *L'Educatione d'Achille*, and the fact that they are characterized as ballets in the libretto may cause some confusion. The first of these is the Ballet of the Zephyrs (Fig. 9), which precedes the already mentioned Ballet of the Masters of the Arts (Fig. 4). The next set of dance entries are presented as the Ballet of Children's Games (Fig. 10). Subsequently, the Ballet of the Smiths of Vulcan (Fig. 11) is danced, followed by the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions (Fig. 8), and finally, the Ballet of the Nereids (Fig. 6). These ballets were interspersed with sung verses, and the centrality of the figure of the mother may have been stressed throughout the performance through an inscription on the proscenium arch.

and the unpaginated index. The first version of Cartari's work was published in 1556 but it went through numerous editions and remained popular in the seventeenth century, although the learned are unlikely to have relied on him.

**Figure 10** Ballet of Children's Games: Achilles and Patroclus

Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.v. 58, fol. 69, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

**Figure 11** Ballet of the Smiths of Vulcan

Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.v. 58, fol. 85, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

**Figure 12** Detail of the inscription on the proscenium arch (detail of Figure 1)



Tommaso Borghonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.V. 58, fol. 110, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

## The mother as ideal educator

In the manuscript, this inscription (Fig. 12), NATORUM VIRT(U)S MATRIS GLORIA, Children's Virtue – Mother's Glory, is found on the proscenium arch in all of the overviews of the stage.<sup>38</sup> In order to achieve glory one must choose the path of virtue, as is even explicitly stated in the *argomento* (or explanation of the subject) of the ballet; it therefore also says something about the virtue of the mother.<sup>39</sup> It appears to be both a description of the Duchess and a message to the young bride. Nevertheless, it is not mentioned in any account of the performance, but whether or not it was added to the manuscript as something of an afterthought it stresses the significance of both the mother and virtue. If the whole performance was *framed* by these words on virtue, it would also have reinforced the message of the mother's importance. The inscription would have emphasized the Duchess's abilities *and* those of her children; it would moreover have been a means of reassuring the Bavarian delegation about the bride's potential.<sup>40</sup>

The inscription may allude to the exemplary figure of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi.<sup>41</sup> In his *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, Valerius Maximus contrasts Cornelia with her ostentatious female guest and describes how, instead of displaying her jewellery, the Roman matron said of her children, 'these are my jewels'.<sup>42</sup> The inscription above the proscenium arch is not lifted directly from Valerius Maximus, and it may have been invented for the

<sup>38</sup> The word *virtus* is always truncated.

<sup>39</sup> BNT q.V.58, fol. 2.

<sup>40</sup> It could even refer to the second performance, given to celebrate Marie Christine's birthday in February 1651, but the manuscript is explicitly linked to the first staging of the ballet. BNT q.V.58, fol. 1 (frontispiece).

<sup>41</sup> I am grateful to Professor Emerita Siri Sande who suggested to me that the inscription could be related to Cornelia.

<sup>42</sup> 'haec [...] ornamenta sunt mea', V. Max. 4.4.

occasion.<sup>43</sup> Yet, Emanuele Tesauo, who is likely to have contributed to the performance, compares Marie Christine and Cornelia in 'Il Diamante', a panegyric dedicated to the Duchess and published in 1659.<sup>44</sup> Unsurprisingly, Tesauo makes it clear that Marie Christine's virtues surpass even those of this Roman prototype, but his work may in fact shed some light on the performance and Marie Christine as a modern Cornelia. Tesauo recounts Valerius Maximus's anecdote but claims that Cornelia presented four children to the other woman.<sup>45</sup> The number is not specified in Valerius Maximus, but it is often interpreted as a reference to the two sons who survived into adulthood.<sup>46</sup> Suzanne Dixon points out that Cornelia's children are presented as small at the time.<sup>47</sup> If the event took place, her husband may therefore have been alive, and Cornelia could in fact have paraded four of her twelve children in front of the Campanian woman.

Although Tesauo explicitly emphasizes this famous story, he conflates it with Plutarch's account of an unknown Spartan matron. The latter showed her four sons to a woman from Ionia who was immensely proud of her weaving. The Spartan woman admonishes the other that she should focus on the upbringing of her children and that they should be the source of her pride.<sup>48</sup> There is no mention of personal ornament in this story. It is hardly by chance that Tesauo combines the two accounts; after all, the subject of the panegyric is Marie Christine's personal device, the diamond. The comparison with this so-called ordinary Spartan woman may, however, have appeared particularly appropriate.<sup>49</sup>

43 I have been unable to find an exact classical precedent for the inscription.

44 Tesauo, 'Il Diamante'. For Tesauo's contribution to ballets at the court of Savoy, which has not been sufficiently studied, see Viale Ferrero, *Feste*, pp. 32-33, the text to plate 11 (which deals specifically with *L'Educatione d'Achille* where she also mentions Tesauo's 'Il Diamante'), and her 'Le feste e il teatro', p. 75, and Doglio, 'Letteratura e retorica', p. 573, n. 8.

45 'Il Diamante', p. 122.

46 See, for instance, Hallett, 'Women Writing', p. 15.

47 Dixon, *Cornelia*, p. 44.

48 Tesauo, 'Il Diamante', p. 122; Plut. *Lacae*. 6.9. Tesauo refers to 'Plut. in Apophth. Lacan', 'Il Diamante', p. 122. This could be interpreted as a reference to Plutarch's *Apophthegmata Laconica*, rather than the *Lacaenarum Apophthegmata*, but, undoubtedly, the reference is to the latter. Tesauo also mentions the Ionian woman's pride in her *lavori* (works), a term that could refer to her production of beautiful woven textiles.

49 The fact that the Spartan woman was associated with someone who could dedicate herself to fine weaving, suggests that she did not come from a humble background. Tesauo's description of her as ordinary appears to imply that her situation was not comparable to that of the Duchess. Tesauo also refers to Cornelia elsewhere in the context of the joys of motherhood, 'Il Diamante', p. 59. She was seen as a prototype widow and good educator of children and generally used as an example. Much less was known about the anonymous Spartan woman.

Tesauro elaborates on the joy these children afforded the anonymous woman. They seemed to her the four corners of the world, the four elements, and the four cardinal points. It is worth noting that Tesauro emphasizes how the four corners of the world comprise its *empires*.<sup>50</sup>

He then juxtaposes these *ordinary* figures with 'a heroic princess' and her education of 'four heroes', noting the superiority of the Duchess's achievements.<sup>51</sup> The fact that the story actually includes four sons suited Tesauro's purpose. Marie Christine had four surviving children and *Figliuoli* could also be understood as a reference to the Duchess's offspring; undoubtedly, this was the intention.<sup>52</sup>

This idea of the mother's virtual world dominion through her children is also reflected in the ballet. The number four and its multiplications was not an uncommon structural element in court performances, but considering Tesauro's insistence on the blessings to be had from four children, it is reasonable to assume that it was of particular importance in this case. Achilles dances with fifteen of his companions, and they are divided into four squadrons (as explained in the libretto); there are sixteen Nereids who first appear in entries of four, then in one of eight, and finally all sixteen are joined on stage. The Ballet of the Masters of the Arts is divided into twelve entries; in turn, these are performed in groups of four entries. The Ballet of the Smiths of Vulcan consists of three entries only, but the first two of these are danced by two performers and the last by four. Thus, eight dancers appear together in the final grand ballet. The eight zephyrs appear in four entries.<sup>53</sup>

## The four elements

It is worth taking a closer look at the Ballet of the Zephyrs, the first of the series of ballets. At first glance it may appear to be no more than a separate performance or, possibly, an ill-fitted introduction, unrelated to the theme

50 'Il Diamante', p. 123. He speaks of *the* four corners of the world, but relates the elements and cardinal points more directly to the immediate surroundings of the matron.

51 Tesauro, 'Il Diamante', p. 123.

52 The masculine plural *figliuoli* (sons) also covers a combination of several daughters and only one son.

53 See BNT q.V.58, fols. 13-22, 35-64, 80-87, 93-102, and 111-18. For the explanation of the squadrons, see fol. 92. The pattern is not entirely consistent. The Ballet of the Nereids only consists of three entries (but four performances if their grand ballet is included). The Ballet of Children's Games, however, consists of three entries and nine dancers in all. BNT q.V.58, fols. 68-75.

of princely education. It should be noted, however, that a fresco by Isidoro Bianchi, titled *The Birth of Flowers*, shows Flora, a young Zephyr, Apollo hovering in the sky, Chiron (who had himself been instructed by the god and Diana), and presumably the nine Muses, as well as other female figures. It is part of the decoration of the Valentino room in the Valentino palace, and a representation of the palace is included in the background. Decoration of the room started after the birth of an heir, that is Francesco Giacinto, Carlo Emanuele's elder brother in 1632.<sup>54</sup> A connection between the zephyr and education was therefore already established in Savoyard iconography and associated with Marie Christine's son.

Before Achilles is sent to the island for his education, the libretto describes how Thetis calls forth the zephyrs to perform a ballet (Fig. 9). The background for her action is her joy at hearing the prophecies of a great future for her offspring from the oracle of Apollo (Fig. 3).<sup>55</sup> The inclusion of the west wind is hardly unusual and Zephyr (or even zephyrs in the plural) was popular in various art forms. What is particularly interesting here is that, although they are clearly presented as zephyrs and thus westerlies, their names suggest that they cover the whole spectrum. For instance, one of the zephyrs is called Leuconotus, a southerly to south-westerly wind; two of Aeolus's sons, Iokastos and Pheraimon, are also among the dancers. Moreover, the winds represent the four elements and by implication, other quadruplets, such as the four cardinal virtues.<sup>56</sup>

Clearly, the zephyrs suggested hope and prosperity, but one may wonder why it is not ostensibly turned into a ballet of the four winds, not least considering the straightforward representation of the seasons and the four elements. Flora as Marie Christine appears to be the answer. Zephyr was easily associated with her son and the continuity of the dynasty. Here the westerlies probably represent all of her children, and the ballet demonstrates their ubiquity, a clear reference to their conquests of new empires through war and marriage. The Duke dances the role of Zephyr and is paired with his

54 The decoration is dated 1633-37. For the decoration, see Griseri, *Il Diamante*, pp. 121-29, who refers to the nine Muses (p. 121). More than nine figures are included; a greater number of Muses may have been represented or, possibly, these are attendants. Griseri also notes that Apollo, Flora, and Chiron appear in other contexts at the court of Savoy (p. 126). It is worth bearing in mind that Favonius, the Roman equivalent of Zephyr (or Zephyrus), was said to be Flora's husband, mirroring Zephyr's union with Chloris. The zephyrs are specifically referred to as the children of Flora in the libretto, however (BNT q.V.58, fol. 12), and the zephyr in the fresco is also shown as Flora's son, not her husband.

55 BNT q.V.58, fol. 12.

56 See BNT q.V.58, fols. 12-22. Leuconotus is also known as Libonotus.



Roman counterpart Favonius, thus suggesting dominion of both the Greek and Roman worlds and, hence, omnipresence. Iokastos was the legendary founder of Reggio Calabria; the theme of both procreation and the foundation of new settlements is therefore integrated into the ballet. Wind is a potent symbol for the spread of ideas or, as in this case, the growth and multiplication of a dynasty. The ballet might be classified as educative in itself. It incorporates the four elements, the constituents of all matter, and wind as such could represent the element of air. The zephyrs appear as air, water, earth, and fire, and their final, joint appearance seems to insist on the perfect harmony of the elements. Although the notion of the four elements was not unchallenged, it remained important, and certainly functioned as a symbolic representation of, among other things, natural philosophy.<sup>57</sup>

The perfect balance of the elements could even allude to the importance of a harmonious education. Winds are associated with travel and are suitably placed at the beginning of Achilles' educational voyage; the winds of spring are also often associated with facilitation of navigation.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Homer claims that Zephyr fathered Achilles' horses, which were swift as the wind, like the hero himself.<sup>59</sup> The wind is therefore connected both to the speed with which the hero moved and his means of travel. In fact, when Achilles is received by Chiron, the centaur refers to the ocean, the waves, and the shore, and then continues to describe his sisters as bright stars who eagerly await the sun, that is, Achilles.<sup>60</sup> Again, the elements, or at least what could be understood as symbols of them, are included, and the force of the wind is implicit in the association between the young hero's passage and waves. Explicit reference to favourable wind is also made during Achilles' voyage.<sup>61</sup>

Even the elements of fire and water have their own ballets, since Vulcan is associated with the element of fire and the Nereids with that of water. Only the element of earth is not thematized in a separate ballet. However, the text insists on the fertility of the various areas to which we are introduced in the performance.<sup>62</sup> In as much as they cross the sea, with the help of the wind, in order to travel between various parts of the classical world, the role

57 Alternative views are discussed in Garber and Ayers (eds.), *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, esp. I, ch. 18, Garber et al., 'New Doctrines of Body'.

58 See, for instance, Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.46-49.

59 Hom. *Il.* 16.150. Philostratus the Lemnian mentions Zephyr in the context of the education of Achilles, but the wind's ability to (becomingly) ruffle the young boy's hair does not appear particularly relevant here. See Philostr. *Maj. Im.* 2.2.

60 BNT q.V.58, fol. 32.

61 BNT q.V.58, fols. 31-32.

62 BNT q.V.58, fols. 3, 23, 88.

played by the element of earth (in the form of an island as well as mainland Europe and Asia) is central, but it is not pointed out in a comparatively explicit manner. Nonetheless, as will be seen below, it is emphasized in the libretto.

### Harmony between heaven and earth

Indeed, the ubiquity of the sea is emphasized, and the point of the transformative capacities of sea deities is also stressed in the descriptions of the Nereids.<sup>63</sup> In some respects, their ballet therefore parallels that of the zephyrs, and it seems reasonable to understand this as an emphasis on the complete nature of their education (and their excellence per se). It therefore also establishes a connection between the first and the last ballets of the performance. The relationship between heaven and sea is particularly important in the Ballet of the Nereids, as is how the sea reflects the light. Doris is described, not only as a heavenly gift, but also as princess of both the earth and the sea.<sup>64</sup> This theme of harmony between heaven and earth is emphasized in particular in the Ballet of the Nereids; it seems suitable in the context of the happy union of Doris and Ajax, as well as the celebration of Achilles' victory. As soon as Amor is introduced, the joy of the earth is paired with the glory of the heavens and the choir of the gods.<sup>65</sup> In the final entry of the Ballet of the Nereids, the libretto incorporates references to all of the elements, as well as the celestial sphere. In addition to water in various forms, river banks, adorned with the flowers of Liriope's son Narcissus, are included. Ephyra's name is linked to the element of fire, and she is said to have the capacity to ignite the fires of love in the middle of the ocean. Also included among the dancers in this entry is Ocyrrhoe, whose speed is immense and who therefore married the north wind, Boreas.<sup>66</sup> Wind, the main theme of the first ballet, is consequently related to the concluding entry of the performance of the Nereids. In fact, it is associated with the

63 BNT q.V.58, fol. 108.

64 BNT q.V.58, fol. 111. In this she parallels Thetis, whose dominion (as queen, not princess) is equally extensive, see fol. 5.

65 BNT q.V.58, fol. 105.

66 BNT q.V.58, fol. 115. *Osirroe* in the libretto (the name is spelt as either Ocyrrhoe or Ocir(r)oe in present-day Italian) could refer to several different mythological characters. It seems most likely that the nymph also known as Melanippe or Euipe is intended here. She was the daughter of Chiron and conceived with Aeolus. However, Orithyia, daughter of King Erechtheus, was raped by Boreas. A conflation of the two characters may have been intended.

very last dancer mentioned in the libretto. The last entry also picks up the theme of the four elements, although, as with the description of Ocyrrhoe, this emphasis may not have been as evident in the actual dance.

Castiglione also insists on the celestial connection in his description, in which he claims that the princesses appeared in the guise of parhelia (or sun dogs) and he, moreover, compares them to the aurora.<sup>67</sup> The libretto says of the dancers of the first entry, which included Doris, that they appeared as auroras and suns.<sup>68</sup> Parhelia had been observed in Rome in 1629 and 1630 and Castiglione's version therefore, together with the references to meteors in the libretti, appears to testify to the interest in astronomy at the court of Savoy.<sup>69</sup>

The appearance of the Nereids is introduced by a description of the sea as a pervasive element that not only constitutes oceans and rivers but also reaches springs on the highest mountains through subterranean routes. Moreover, as present in meteors it enters the air and even reaches the stars.<sup>70</sup> This is why, so the text maintains, Homer calls them 'heavenly Pleiades and Hyades and souls of the spheres'. An etymological explanation is thus offered and these mountain and rain nymphs are associated with the sea and the Nereids.<sup>71</sup> By associating the two constellations (or groups of nymphs) with the souls of the spheres, the libretto appears to equate them with the Muses who rule the celestial spheres and, when they take hold of the souls of poets, cause poetic fury.<sup>72</sup> Already upon Achilles' landing on the island of Doro his sisters are 'almost rotating among spheres of virtue', clearly the result of their education by the Muses.<sup>73</sup>

After the completion of his training by the masters of the arts, the parallel between Achilles' lute playing and Apollo's handling of his lyre is evident in the first entry of the Ballet of Children's Games, and the text explicitly refers to the harmony of the spheres.<sup>74</sup> Apollo is Achilles' antagonist; like the god

67 Castiglione, *Himenei*, p. 75.

68 BNT q.V.58, fol. 109.

69 Meteors are mentioned in the same context on BNT q.V.58, fols. 108 and 115. It was believed that meteors were atmospheric phenomena at the time.

70 BNT q.V.58, fol. 108.

71 Only the word Hyades or Huades means the rainy, but the Pleiades were also associated with rainy weather.

72 Marsilio Ficino's elaboration on Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Ion* were essential for the Renaissance revival of the concept of *furor poeticus*. 'Jupiter [...] is the understanding of God [...], on whom depends Apollo as the understanding of the world-soul. The nine Muses consist of the world-soul and the souls of the eight celestial spheres.' This is linked to the concept of the harmony of the spheres and poetic inspiration. Allen, 'Soul as Rhapsode', pp. 144-147 (p. 144, quote).

73 BNT q.V.58, fol. 32: 'Quasi trà sfere di virtù volgendo'.

74 BNT q.V.58, fol. 68.

of poetry himself, the hero is specifically associated with the art form. In the ballet, the music played by Achilles (and Patroclus) (Fig. 10) appears to result in the unity of heaven and earth.<sup>75</sup> Thus, universal harmony is evoked, and this theme is emphasized in the Ballet of the Nereids (Fig. 6), which, unlike the Ballet of Children's Games, is performed after Achilles' victory at Troy. The making of Achilles' armour (Fig. 11), however, follows the Ballet of Children's Games. Homer mentions the Pleiades and the Hyades in his ekphrasis of the shield that Hephaestus (Vulcan) makes for Achilles; they are therefore part of a famous passage in the *Iliad*, linked to the poet's own inspiration, which is undoubtedly what the libretto alludes to. However, they are not described as souls of the spheres. Along with other constellations they are described as part of an all-encompassing totality: 'Therein he wrought the earth, therein the heavens, therein the sea, and the unwearied sun, and the moon in the full, and therein all the constellations wherewith heaven is crowned – the Pleiades, and the Hyades and the mighty Orion, and the Bear [...].'<sup>76</sup> The decoration of the shield of Achilles is extremely multifaceted and described at great length in the *Iliad*.<sup>77</sup> It seems to offer a microcosm of society as a whole, including the celestial spheres. In the ballet, the star clusters function as a connection between heaven and ocean, and, implicitly, also between Achilles and the Nereids. The opening lines of Homer's description emphasize the completeness of the shield's decoration, and the libretto's much briefer depiction of the ubiquity of the sea has a similar function.

Although Achilles' arms and armour are not portrayed in a comparable manner in the libretto, they represent a comprehensive list of virtues and are linked to his great conquests.<sup>78</sup> The traditional connection between the Nereids and Achilles' armour is not only established through their leader, Thetis. For instance, in Quintus Smyrnaeus's description of the shield of Achilles, Thetis is shown, led by the other Nereids to her wedding with Peleus.<sup>79</sup> In one account, the *Fabulae* previously attributed to C. Julius Hyginus, Thetis first requests the armour from Hephaestus (Vulcan); subsequently, it is transported to Achilles by the Nereids.<sup>80</sup>

75 'scese à festeggiar con le loro armonie cortesissime le sfere', BNT q.V.58, fol. 68.

76 Hom. *Il.* 18.483-86.

77 Hom. *Il.* 18.478-608.

78 BNT q.V.58, fols. 86, 88, 90-92.

79 Q.S. 5.73-75. In the first *stasimon* of *Electra*, Achilles receives the weapons made by Hephaestus from the Nereids before he departs for Troy. Torrance, *Metapoetry*, p. 76.

80 Hygini, *Augusti Liberti*, p. 25 (CVI).

## Fire and earth

Attention is drawn to the relevant element also in connection with Vulcan and the Ballet of the Smiths of Vulcan.<sup>81</sup> The tradition of Cyclopes as helpers of Vulcan is post-Homeric. In the ballet, the Giant Cyclopes Steropes (lightning bolt) and Brontes (thunder) dance the first entry, and Achilles' armour appears to be made by the god's assistants only (Fig. 11), whereas no mention is made of helpers in the *Iliad*.<sup>82</sup>

The Vulcan of the ballet, however, turns Ionia into the Troad, including the capital of Troy.<sup>83</sup> By doing so, he copies Thetis's previous transformation of Thessaly into Ionia, and a parallel is also found in the metamorphosis of Mount Pierus into Doro.<sup>84</sup> Subsequently, Asia is praised for her riches, 'metals, gems, and minerals' as well as 'herds of animals, plants, birds, and colours'. The Troad and Troy are then singled out.<sup>85</sup> By praising the territories where the ballet is set, the theme of the earth's abundance is evoked.<sup>86</sup> In conjunction with the transformation of Ionia into the Troad, a list of Achilles' past conquests is included. They are compared to Vesta's crown of turrets.<sup>87</sup> Vesta could stand for the earth herself, and the crown of turrets is generally associated with Rhea or Cybele (the former is equivalent to Ops in the Roman pantheon). Vesta, goddess of the hearth, is connected both with Vulcan's element of fire and the earth.<sup>88</sup> By associating Vesta with the imminent destruction by fire of Troy as well as the earth and Achilles' future world dominion, a play on her two functions is clearly intended.<sup>89</sup> Vincenzo Cartari explains the symbol of the crown by referring to the many 'cities, castles, villages, and other buildings' of the earth's circumference.<sup>90</sup> The crowning element of Achilles' career is the victory at Troy, and the crown of

81 BNT q.V.58, fol. 78

82 BNT q.V.58, fols. 78-88; Hom. *Il.* 18.468-613.

83 BNT q.V.58, fol. 88. Folio 89 is missing and would perhaps have shown the Troad and Troy.

84 See BNT q.V.58, fol. 23 and the discussion below.

85 BNT q.V.58, fol. 88.

86 For Thessaly and Doro, see BNT q.V.58, fols. 3 and 23.

87 BNT q.V.58 fol. 88.

88 See Ov. *Fast.* 6.267.

89 A burning city with a Trojan horse is illustrated on BNT q.V.58, fol. 86, in other words the calligraphic plate placed before the folio showing the final ballet of the smiths of Vulcan.

90 Cartari, *Le Immagini de gli Dei*, p. 149 (in his description of Ops). He claims that the Great Mother is the same as Ops, Cybele, Rhea, Vesta, and Ceres, as well as others, p. 148. Several goddesses could be identified with the Great Mother. Hestia (Vesta) was the daughter of Rhea and (although this does not occur in the earliest sources) could be confounded with, for instance, Cybele and Demeter. However, Cartari also maintains that there were two separate goddesses by the name of Vesta and that they were often confused, p. 160.

turrets here clearly alludes to the *corona muralis*, given to the soldier who, in the words of Aulus Gellius, 'is first to mount the wall and enter by force into the enemy town'.<sup>91</sup> Clearly, honours from the much later Roman army could not be bestowed upon the Greek hero Achilles, but the ballet is rife with carefully chosen incongruities that add to its complexity. In addition to Vesta, the two goddesses Flora and Pomona are associated with Thessaly and 'eternal autumns' as well as 'immortal springs'.<sup>92</sup> As seen above, Flora subsequently appears as the mother of the zephyrs, and the fertility of the earth is relevant to the west wind.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, life on Earth is connected to the passage of the seasons.<sup>94</sup> The association of Vesta with earth and fire may also be seen as a reminder of the wider context, how the earth consists of fire, water, and soil, as well as the necessity of the air surrounding it. It is hardly irrelevant that Vesta is introduced as soon as Achilles' armour is finished, bearing in mind that the hero's shield (as it is described in the *Iliad*) appears to comprise a miniature version of the world. Directly preceding the association of Achilles with Vesta, the Troad with Troy is in fact described as a compendium of the wonders of the world.<sup>95</sup>

The earth's significance is also emphasized in the opening entry of the Ballet of the Masters of the Arts, which is performed by one of the Corybantes and one of the Curetes (Fig. 2).<sup>96</sup> These are followers of Rhea/Cybele. In the ballet they play tympana, a type of hand drum, and (as indeed they could be) they are credited with being the inventors of this instrument as well as *krotala*, which were similar to castanets.<sup>97</sup> The instruments illustrated

91 Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 5.6.16. Quoted in Maxfield, *Military Decorations*, p. 76. Maxfield drily notes that '[i]t is unlikely that the crown was awarded very frequently, for few can have been the first to scale an enemy wall and have lived to enjoy the distinction which their courage had earned', *ibid.* Unsurprisingly, the ballet makes no mention of Achilles' tragic fate at Troy. This would hardly be suitable in the context of princely celebration.

92 The two goddesses are mentioned in the presentation (*Ordine della festa*), BNT q.V.58, fol.3.  
93 BNT q.V.58, fol. 12.

94 Cartari explains that although Ops is immobile, she has a carriage (*carro*) because that which takes place on Earth is related to the rhythm of the seasons ('sono con certo ordine variate per le quattro stagioni dell'anno'), p. 151.

95 The word used is *ristretto*. BNT q.V.58, fol. 88.

96 BNT q.V.58, fols. 35-36.

97 BNT q.V.58, fol.35. In the *Bacchae*, Euripides mentions their association with Rhea and refers to the Curetes as parents of Zeus, whereas he credits the Corybantes with the invention of tympana, *Eur. Ba.* 120-26. The Curetes used music to drown the crying of little Zeus when Rhea had left him with the nymphs, in order to save him from being eaten by his father, Cronus. This story is mentioned by numerous sources. A comparison with Marie Christine who protected her young son during the civil war of 1639-42 is possible. However, this could be risky, considering the potential for misreading the myth as implicit criticism of the late Duke, Vittorio Amedeo I.

have little in common with tympana shown in classical works of art, but the inclusion of satyrs suggests awareness of the association of both Curetes and Corybantes with fertility rituals.<sup>98</sup> Nonetheless, the text relates how they imitate the sound of antique triumphs.<sup>99</sup> The hemispherical shape of the instruments in Figure 2 may well correspond to contemporary views on the shape of the instrument. In his entry on Ops, Cartari explains the tympana as symbols of the earth's roundness, claiming that one of them is the upper hemisphere 'where we live', while the other is home to the antipodes.<sup>100</sup> In other words, the instruments represent the shape of the earth itself. Placed at the beginning of Achilles' education by the masters, the entry also addresses the question of mythic origin and reflects the theme of the Great Mother. The combination of the opening ballet of the fertile winds of spring and the repeated references to the abundance of the earth appear to serve both as a celebration of the Duchess as Mother Earth and an affirmation of the great future of her offspring.

## The labours of Hercules

Harmony could be considered the organizing principle of the ballet. In fact, the Ballet of the Masters of the Arts not only consists of groups of four entries, which all terminate in a final joint ballet, it also includes a sense of balance within these internal divisions. Each of the first four entries is performed by two dancers, and they combine music with fighting techniques.<sup>101</sup> Subsequently, in the next group of entries, the martial aspects of princely education are balanced by painters and leapers; the latter appear to represent theatre and dance.<sup>102</sup> The last four entries are similar; here, fighting is combined with horse dressage.<sup>103</sup> However, the very last entry is different, and the text stresses the importance of surprise and variation. Only three

98 BNT q.V.58, fols. 35 and 36. Satyrs are illustrated on the calligraphic plate, fol. 35. Compare for instance with the krater, showing a maenad playing a tympanum with a handle, c.440-430 BC. Harvard University Art Museum, inv. no. 1960.343. The dancers also carry wind instruments described as *tuba ritorta*, as if they were quivers (BNT q.V.58, fol. 35). In the illustration on fol. 36 these look rather fanciful and there is a certain resemblance with the *buccine ritorte* blown by the tritons, fols. 29-30. As a noisy instrument, it may serve the purposes of the Curetes.

99 However, they are also accompanied by violones. BNT q.V.58, fol.35.

100 Cartari, *Le Imagini de gli Dei*, pp. 149-51.

101 BNT q.V.58, fols. 35-44.

102 BNT q.V.58, fols. 45-54.

103 The horses are danced by two *garzoni* (servants), according to the text (BNT q.V.58, fol.58), but from the illustration on fol. 59 one might be led to believe that there were four dancers.

of the vaulters of the final entry are named, but they are apparently also joined by two more dancers and a winged *pegasus*.<sup>104</sup> Pegasus as a symbol of wisdom and poetic inspiration may appear appropriate at the end of this series of educative dances.<sup>105</sup> The Muses also implicitly refer to Pegasus in the final chorus of the performance; they mention the tribute paid to the Nereids by their sacred spring of Hippocrene, which was said to have been created by a blow of Pegasus's hoof.<sup>106</sup> However, the sudden appearance of the winged horse was clearly also meant to entertain and delight, and probably create a link with the following Ballet of Children's Games.<sup>107</sup>

The Duke's position in the Ballet of the Masters of the Arts is central; he appears in the sixth entry and performs the noble art of fencing (Fig. 4).<sup>108</sup> Bearing in mind that there are twelve entries, an allusion to the labours of Hercules may also have been intended. Although this may seem far-fetched, considering the inclusion of, for instance, painting, the masters are training heroes, and Chiron makes it clear that virtue is acquired through exertion.<sup>109</sup> The connection between excellent masters, heroes, and virtue is also spelled out in the libretto.<sup>110</sup> Thetis asserts that Chiron will turn the young hero

104 Only three dancers are illustrated, but the horse is also shown without wings, BNT q.V.58, fol. 62. The horse is described as 'vn pegaso alato', rather than simply *Pegaso*, fol. 61. Nonetheless, the final grand ballet includes eight figures, fol. 64. If all of the dancers of the last four entries actually did appear together, there would have been twelve dancers (presuming that the servants who performed as stand-in horses did not join).

105 A play on the combination of winged horse and poetry is clearly intended in the performance, as is made clear in the description of the dancers or vaulters, 'quali per l'eccellenza del volteggiare co' i Caualli furono dai Poeti finti loro stessi Caualli alati'; BNT q.V.58, fol. 61.

106 BNT q.V.58, fol. 119. Ocyrrhoe, who appears as one of the Nereids, was (if she is to be identified with Chiron's daughter) apparently turned into the constellation of Pegasus. For Ocyrrhoe's appearance in the ballet, see fol. 115. Yet, Pegasus was also apparently placed among the stars as the same constellation.

107 The Ballet of the Masters of the Arts ends with what could be seen as an allusion to the late Duke. BNT q.V.58, fols. 61, 62. The last master mentioned is Bellerophon (or Bellerophons), and this well-known hero was associated with Vittorio Amedeo I in the horse ballet, BRT, Storia Patria 949, fols. 48 and 63. The theme of horsemanship and inclusion of a *pegasus* (although it is not *the* famous horse Pegasus) seems relevant and could even suggest ascent to heaven. Bellerophon shown in the act of killing the Chimera could symbolize virtue. See Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, fol. 2v. (*Alciato at Glasgow*, Glasgow University Emblem Website, [www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A31a101](http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A31a101)). It is illustrated in some later editions. See also Ripa, *Iconologia* (1645), pp. 672-73; the illustration is based on the one included in the first illustrated *Iconologia* (1603), p. 509. However, Bellerophon's heavenly flight was associated with *hubris*. North, *From Myth*, p. 31.

108 BNT q.V.58, fols. 47-48.

109 BNT q.V.58, fol. 32.

110 BNT q.V.58, fol. 33.



into a Jupiter where Justice is concerned and a Mars in matters of war, and the Apollonian oracle prophesies that he will have the ‘face of Amor and the heart of Hercules’ (Fig. 3). This is directly connected to his (good) fortune and valour, as well as the Pillars of Hercules.<sup>111</sup> In other words, the hero’s tenth labour, which made him undertake his longest journey to the end of the known world, is implied. The oracle declares that the Pillars of Hercules will shield Achilles, and he will be guided by his great ancestors.<sup>112</sup> The pillars also specifically alluded to the Duke’s Habsburg forebears.<sup>113</sup>

Although the circumstances were radically different, Hercules had asked Apollo for guidance, and subsequently embarked upon the twelve labours. The education performed by the dancers is hardly suggestive of Hercules’ torturous labours, but he is the perfect example of the idea that only a strenuous journey can lead to virtue. Even intellectual endeavours, and indeed the acquirement of most skills, require hard work and resilience. Moreover, as soon as these exercises are completed, Nestor appears to suggest that they included wrestling with lions, dragons, and leopards, thus alluding to their Herculean nature.<sup>114</sup>

It is only after the favourable prophecy that Thetis invites the zephyrs to dance; and it also seems to function as a prologue to the educative journey. Winds are associated with travel, and the journey is a well-known trope for the rite of passage. In the performance, the training of the young heroes accumulates with the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions (Fig. 13), and their attainment of heroic virtue attests to their ability to follow the example of Hercules.<sup>115</sup> Nonetheless, Chiron also stresses the importance of diversion and leaves the young heroes in the care of Nestor, who often functioned as

111 BNT q.V.58, fol. 29 (Thetis); fol. 8 (Apollo). The text refers to the rocks of Calpe (Gibraltar) and Abila, also known as Abyla or Abylica (Ceuta).

112 BNT q.V.58, fol. 8.

113 The pillars with the motto *Plus Ultra* (or *Plus Outre*) was the device of Emperor Charles V, conceived when he was still Duke of Burgundy (and the king designate of Spain) in 1516. ‘According to most historians and emblematisers of the mid-sixteenth century, Charles’s device was invented – some thought divinely inspired – to foretell the extension of his rule “beyond the Columns of Hercules” into the New World’, Rosenthal, *Plus Ultra*, p. 204. Whether or not the device was associated with imperial expansion from its inception, this is the most likely association at the court of Savoy in the mid-seventeenth century. At the time, the motto appears to have been understood as an inversion of *Non (or Nec) Plus Ultra*, the warning against travelling beyond the strait, said to have been inscribed on the pillars in antiquity. If the pillars were to shield the Achilles of the performance, adventurous exploration (and expansion of his realm) is emphatically condoned.

114 He actually contrasts the games ahead of them with their previous exertion, saying: ‘Non più si trattin spade, o archi, o dardi / Non s’atterin Leoni, ò Draghi, o Pardi’, BNT q.V.58, fol. 66.

115 See BNT q.V.58, fol. 100.

**Figure 13** Ballet of Achilles and his Companions: grand ballet

Tommaso Borgonio, attr., *L'Educatione d'Achille*, q.V. 58, fol. 102, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Photo: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No further reproduction allowed.

their adviser in the *Iliad*.<sup>116</sup> Chiron's education of Achilles is the exemplary model, in which music was incorporated, and the wise centaur was well aware of the necessity of comprehensive instruction. Achilles' education in the company of other heroes is in fact in line with ancient tradition, although, as is also the case elsewhere, liberties are taken in the performance.

### Play and battle

Playfulness and games, in the form of the Ballet of Children's Games (Fig. 10), function to some extent as a break for the audience. The theme of variation is introduced in the last entry of the Ballet of the Masters of the Arts. According to the text, the grand ballet where the participants of the four preceding entries dance together functions as an *intermedio*, performed as dialogues of pantomime; it marks the completion of training in the arts and physical exercises.<sup>117</sup> The significance of diversion is further stressed in an

<sup>116</sup> BNT q.V.58, fol. 65. See, for instance, the introduction of Nestor, Hom. *Il.* 1.247-53.

<sup>117</sup> BNT q.V.58, fol. 63.

edifying manner by a reference to Alexander the Great and Alcibiades.<sup>118</sup> Consequently, it is hardly surprising to find that Achilles' lute playing, in the first entry, is described as a highly virtuous exercise.<sup>119</sup> It also fits well with the reference to the Greek lyrical poet Anacreon and the ancient tradition of accompanying lyric poetry with music, most often the lyre, with which the lute was associated in the early modern period.<sup>120</sup> The reference to Homer's description of Achilles' playing is explicit, and in addition to Achilles, the entry is performed by Patroclus. The latter does not play the lyre in the *Iliad*, but he fulfils the function of ritual substitution for the greater hero and dies wearing the armour of Achilles.<sup>121</sup> By letting him appear as a musician alongside Achilles, the performance incorporates an inventive reminder of Patroclus's function.

As if to insist that the warrior really must engage in recreational activities (and also argue that games prepare the young for great tasks), the text stresses the link between play and battle. In the second entry, the dancers play pall-mall and run like Atalanta and Hippomenes. The balls are likened to the golden apples of their race, and the game is connected to the valour of the Greek and the flight of the Trojans.<sup>122</sup> *Jeu de volant* or battledore is played next. In the libretto, the parallel with the destruction of Troy is emphasized, but two of the dancers, Castor and Pollux, did not take part in the war.<sup>123</sup> The entries may function as something of a break, but they

118 BNT q.V.58, fol. 66.

119 BNT q.V.58, fol. 68.

120 BNT q.V.58, fols. 66, 68.

121 They are also accompanied by some theorbos in the ballet, BNT q.V.58, fol. 68. According to the *Iliad*, Patroclus listens to Achilles who 'sang of the glorious deeds of warriors'; Hom. *Il.* 9.185-90 (9.189, quote). Achilles' refusal to fight, and subsequent rage, is never mentioned in the libretto. A reference to the elimination of the 'anger of war' is included (BNT q.V.58, fol.105), but this is not associated with Achilles' madness. Patroclus is Achilles' *therapōn*. Leonard Mueller explains how 'Patroklos's death in Achilles' stead on behalf of the host of fighting men is an enactment of Aristotle's definition of friendship: he is a "he" who has become "another I." *Anger of Achilles*, p. 160. Patroclus is unlikely to have functioned as a reference to the Duke's late brother, Francesco Giacinto, in the ballet. The latter, who had succeeded their father prior to Carlo Emanuele II, would then have come across as subordinate to his brother.

122 BNT q.V.58, fol. 70. If an allusion to Ovid's version of the story is intended, the golden apples would be those of the apple tree of Tamassus or Tamassos in Cyprus. Venus describes the tree and how she picked three of its golden apples to help Hippomenes, Ov. *Met.* 10. 638-51. The connection of victory in battle to Cyprus would appear particularly suitable at the court of Savoy. Although it was not recognized, the title of 'King of Cyprus' had been in use since 1632 by the House of Savoy. See Oresko, 'House of Savoy'.

123 BNT q.V.58, fol. 72. The two twin brothers are also included in the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions. One may therefore get the impression that they really did participate in the war. BNT q.V.58, fols. 97-98. However, they are presented as Argonauts in the libretto, fol. 97.

also prepare the spectators for Achilles' victory.<sup>124</sup> This demonstration of how play and great deeds on the battlefield are, as it were, two sides of the same coin is also reflected in their costumes with their double message of youthfulness and Greek gravity.<sup>125</sup> The Ballet of Children's Games is danced by the youngest performers, and variation is shown even in the number of dancers. The first entry is performed by two dancers, the second by three, and the third by four; finally, all nine perform a playful grand ballet, and it is probably not coincidental that their number corresponds that that of the Muses.<sup>126</sup>

## Reconciliation

*L'Educatione d'Achille* incorporates an impressive range of characters, and many of these are presented in a concise and didactic manner, in almost encyclopedic fashion.<sup>127</sup> For instance, the masters in the Ballet of the Masters of the Arts are drawn both from history and mythology and are all great characters from antiquity. They represent excellence in a wide range of skills, mostly in fighting techniques, and among them we find Olympic victors such as Milo of Croton and Agesidamus of Epizephyrian Locris, the latter danced by the Duke himself (Fig. 4). They also include the two innovative painters Cleophantes of Corinth and Apollodorus Skiagraphos.<sup>128</sup> Yet, as seen above, the series of entries actually starts off with two rustic *daimones*, a Corybante and a Curete (Fig. 2), and, in the role of Agesidamus, the Duke

124 One may also ask if it was meant to silence those who thought the Duchess spent too lavishly on entertainments and counter any criticism of her educational standards. Concerns about the cost of the marriage celebrations were voiced in France. See the letter from the agent Giovan Battista Amoretti to the principal Secretary of State, the Marquis of San Tommaso, dated 6 January 1651. ASSt Lettere ministri Francia, m. 56, n. 4, 123/1. For the idea that the education of the Duke was insufficient, see Kolrud, 'Prolonged Minority', pp. 200 and 207.

125 BNT q.V.58, fol. 74.

126 BNT q.V.58, fols. 68-75. The text comments on their young age twice, fols. 68 and 74.

127 Nonetheless, these introductions are not necessarily coupled with the character's first appearance. This even applies to Achilles whose presentation coincides with his performance in the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions, when the Duke appears in the role. He is presented as the 'son of Thetis and Peleus, king of Thessaly, who was immersed in the Styx in order to become invulnerable. From Chiron he learnt the art of war, astrology, and music. With the enchanted spear, made by Vulcan, he could wound and heal in an instant, and killed the Trojan Hector.' BNT q.V.58, fol. 93.

128 BNT q.V.58, fols. 47-50 and 57-58. The latter is described as 'Apollodoro Ateniese' (fol. 49). This would normally refer to the scholar but the painter must be intended here.

appears alongside the snake god Glycon (Fig. 4).<sup>129</sup> The two leapers appear to be the playwright Aeschylus and Telestes, a dancer used in the former's tragedies. The text describes them as Theban; this could be an allusion to Aeschylus's famous *Seven against Thebes*, and thus possibly also to the recent civil war between the Duchess and her two brothers-in-law, Prince Tommaso and Prince Maurizio.<sup>130</sup>

In this context, it is worth taking a closer look at the roles danced by Prince Emanuele, the son of Prince Tommaso, whose relationship with the Duchess remained problematic. In the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions, Prince Emanuele dances the part of Phoenix, son of Amyntor.<sup>131</sup> According to Apollodorus, Phoenix was blinded by his father and fled to Peleus. The latter took him to Chiron who restored his eyesight; Phoenix also helped raise the young Achilles.<sup>132</sup> The libretto makes no reference to his passing blindness. Prince Emanuele was too young to participate in the war himself, but an underlying theme of temporary loss of sight on the part of the Duchess's adversaries cannot be ruled out. However, in the *Iliad*, where the story of Phoenix's blindness is not included, he, along with Ajax and Odysseus (Ulysses), tries to convince Achilles to return to the battlefield.<sup>133</sup> The libretto makes no mention of this and simply states that he is a 'most valorous follower of Achilles'; the meaning of the hero's name, however, and the phoenix's ability to rejuvenate 'in the midst of the flames of war' is emphasized.<sup>134</sup> The phoenix may symbolize reconciliation and new hope, and it was often used as a symbol of regeneration, including in the Savoyard context, where it was associated with Marie Christine herself. The end of the civil war had been celebrated in the ballet *La Fenice rinovata* (The renewed phoenix), performed

129 BNT q.V.58, fols. 35-36 and 47-48. The performer who appears with the Duke is described as *Glicone* in the text and this could refer to three other characters, a Greek poet, a sculptor, or a Roman doctor, but none of them were known to be valiant fencers. The text also refers to Horace's description of the god as an invincible fighter, BNT q.V.58, fol. 47.

130 BNT q.V.58, fols. 51-52. For the 1639-42 war, see Ricotti, *Storia della monarchia*, V, pp. 206-361; Claretta, *Storia della reggenza*, I, pp. 342-887. The peace settlement of the 1639-42 civil war also included a marriage alliance that was meant to ensure the consolidation of the ducal house. In 1642 the Duchess's eldest daughter, Ludovica, was married to her uncle, Maurizio.

131 BNT q.V.58, fols. 95-96. The role must have been danced by Prince Tommaso's third-born son, Giuseppe Emanuele (1631-56). The Prince is consistently referred to as Emanuele by Castiglione, who uses Filiberto whenever his elder brother, Emanuele Filiberto (1628-1709), is intended. *Himenei, passim*. Prince *Emanuel* di Savoia is used in the manuscript, BNT q.V.58, fols. 59 and 95.

132 Apollod. 3.13. The story is also mentioned by other sources, but the blinding of Phoenix is not always included.

133 For Phoenix's passionate speech, see Hom. *Il.* 9.435-619.

134 BNT q.V.58, fol. 95.

on the Duchess's birthday in 1644.<sup>135</sup> The character of Phoenix, danced by Prince Emanuele, therefore appears related to the theme of reconciliation and new hope, indeed to the restoration of order and harmony.<sup>136</sup>

The inclusion of Hector's friend Polydamas among the companions of Achilles comes across as more surprising (Fig. 8).<sup>137</sup> He is the only character in the ballet who undoubtedly fought on the Trojan side, and he is the last of the heroes mentioned in the last entry of the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions.<sup>138</sup> Polydamas is positively described in the text as the one who opened the passage to the Greeks.<sup>139</sup> Perhaps the point here is to end on a reconciliatory note. The dancers wear the colours of the Imperial House, and the marriage celebrated is the direct result of the Peace of Westphalia.<sup>140</sup> The alliance signals a new course; the entry perhaps obliquely suggests that the imperial crown itself could be within reach. In Quintus Smyrnaeus's *Fall of Troy* Polydamas suggests handing Helena back to the Achaeans, with the result that Paris calls him a deserter.<sup>141</sup> In other words, Polydamas represents a negotiator in the Trojan camp and is portrayed as someone who is willing to go to great lengths to put an end to the war in order to preserve Troy. This may be read as acknowledgement that the Greek cause is just, and that the Trojans must surrender. In Savoy the description of Polydamas could also be understood in light of the recent civil war.

135 Viale Ferrero, *Feste*, p. 40. See also Emanuele Tesauro's earlier panegyric, 'La Fenice'. In 'Il Diamante' he describes her as 'the phoenix of queens' (*Fenice delle Reine*), p. 118.

136 In the Ballet of the Masters of the Arts, Prince Emanuele presumably performs the part of the Spartan king and reformer Cleomenes III. He is referred to as *Cleocene* and dances alongside *Dussò*; BNT q.V.58, fols. 59-60. Cleomenes III, who may have played a role in the assassination by poison of his uncle, appointed his brother, Eucleidas, co-ruler. Although he was eventually defeated by Doso, Cleomenes was a highly successful military strategist who conquered almost the entire Peloponnese. A comparison with Prince Tommaso may therefore be intended.

137 BNT q.V.58, fols. 99-100.

138 The legendary archer Acestes, king of Sicily, is included among the masters of the arts, BNT q.V.58, fols. 39-40. The character appears in Virgil's *Aeneid*, especially in Book 5. He is the child of a Trojan woman and a Sicilian river. When his arrow catches fire, Aeneas understands it as the will of Jupiter, and a link between Troy and Rome; Ross, *Virgil's Aeneid*, pp. 100-1 (commentary on 5.485-544). In his *Antiquitates romanae*, however, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who claims that both his parents were Trojan, describes how Acestes (or Aegestus as he calls him) returned to fight on the Trojan side during the war. D.H. 1.52.3. In the ballet, it seems most likely that he symbolizes supreme archery but a certain ambivalence cannot be ruled out. The great Trojan warrior Euphorbus is also mentioned, BNT q.V.58, fol. 33. He is clearly cited as an example of a valiant fighter, but it is worth noting that heroes on the Trojan side are in fact included. Euphorbus does not dance in the ballet, however – he is merely listed – yet the context appears puzzling. Polydamas is also mentioned here.

139 BNT q.V.58, fol. 99.

140 See Claretta, *Adelaide di Savoia*, pp. 14-23.

141 Q.S. 2.54 and 2.68.

## Just war

Even the theme of the wind could be related to war.<sup>142</sup> In the 1613 and subsequent editions of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, an entry on the cleanliness or purity of air is included.<sup>143</sup> Ripa refers to Isidore of Seville's ninth-century *De natura rerum*, explaining that according to some authors, the winds are generated by the air, which they can both purify and infect. The zephyr, Ripa continues, is the most benevolent wind. The very name signifies life-giver, and it blows away pestilence and clears the sky. According to Ripa, it is particularly favoured by the poets, and he quotes the fourth book of Homer's *Odyssey* to prove his point.<sup>144</sup> He moreover refers to Plutarch's comment on Homer, where the former discusses the cleansing properties of the west wind.<sup>145</sup> Purity of air is pictured by Ripa as a female character who holds a zephyr, among other attributes. The west wind is placed in an elevated position and, Ripa explains, the air is at its purest when it is furthest away from the earth, where it is in fact 'similar to celestial purity'.<sup>146</sup> The idea of both renewal and purification is associated with marriage and fecundity, and Thetis sings of 'happy times and eternal springs' in her realm.<sup>147</sup> The Ballet of the Zephyrs (Fig. 9) therefore celebrates this promise of a great future; and, bearing in mind that the winds could cleanse as well as pollute, one may wonder if there was also a need for decontamination. When Juno appears in order to request arms for Achilles (Fig. 5), the text refers to how she had previously demanded a storm from Aeolus to ensure the destruction of the Trojan fleet.<sup>148</sup> This is a reference to Book 1 of Virgil's *Aeneid* and not entirely logical in the context of the ballet; it is, after all, related to Aeneas's voyage to Italy and takes place after the fall of Troy.<sup>149</sup> In the *Aeneid*, Neptune quells the storm requested by Juno; this famous first simile is generally understood as the great statesman's calming of the mob. In other words, violence is vanquished by words, rather than force. It was also much used

142 In fact, Prince Tommaso celebrated the Duchess's birthday in 1640 (when they were at war) with a performance titled *La Battaglia de' Venti* (The battle of the winds). Viale Ferrero, *Feste*, p. 35.

143 *Iconologia* (1613), pp. 202-4. See also *Iconologia* (1645), pp. 540-42.

144 *Iconologia* (1645), p. 541. In Homer, however, the west wind is generally viewed as tempestuous.

145 Ripa, *Iconologia* (1645), p. 542. See also Plut. *Quaes. Nat.* 34 and Hom. *Il.* 19.415.

146 Ripa, *Iconologia* (1645), p. 542.

147 'Tempi felici, e Primaverae eterne', BNT q.V.58, fol. 12. In his account of the ballet, Castiglione also emphasizes how the Duke's performance in the Ballet of the Zephyrs is linked to hope for the house and his own great future; *Himenei*, p. 69.

148 BNT q.V.58, fol. 76.

149 Verg. *A.* 1.65-70.

as a metaphor for the putting down of civil strife.<sup>150</sup> Interestingly, here it appears to be viewed positively, and it is therefore more adapted to Juno's role as supporter of the Greek cause in the *Iliad*.

The storm provoked by Juno is only referred to in the libretto; it is not performed. Nonetheless, the ballet does in fact open with something of a tempest, but it is the turbulent weather associated with the prophecy of the oracle of Apollo (Fig. 3). His prediction of the great future of Thetis's children is preceded by thunder and lightning as well as the appearance of a great number of birds. Priests interpret both the weather and the flight of the birds.<sup>151</sup> Apollo was the sun god, and lightning was normally the attribute of Jupiter, who, the text proclaims, was Thetis's father (although she is normally considered to be the daughter of Nereus).<sup>152</sup> The oracle in fact addresses her as the invincible daughter of Jupiter.<sup>153</sup>

As seen above, when Thetis asks Neptune to take her son to Chiron, she sings that the centaur will help him emulate both Jupiter and Mars.<sup>154</sup> This combination of justice and war could be interpreted as an allusion to the idea of just war and how it may bring or restore peace. Thus, Marie Christine the peace-bringer and life-giver may also go to war if necessary.<sup>155</sup> Her son will be both a great warrior and a just ruler. The west wind at the beginning of the performance could also suggest the clearing of the sky and return to peace. Civil strife had been blown away with the marriage of Marie Christine's eldest daughter to Prince Maurizio; now her youngest daughter's marriage was also related to the end of war and the Peace of Westphalia. The reference to the storm initiated by Juno emphasizes her unswerving support for the Greek side and ability to fight the enemy.<sup>156</sup> By analogy, the Duchess's loyalty to and defence of the true Savoyard cause is

150 See Christine Perkell's comments on Verg. *A.* 1.148-56, Perkell, '*Aeneid* 1', p. 37.

151 BNT q.V.58, fols. 3, 8-11. Augury, divination through the study of the flight patterns and voice of birds, was practised in antiquity. Birds are also associated with the element of air, and immediately after the prophecy the zephyrs are invited to dance, fol. 12.

152 This could be inspired by the *Achillaid* where Poseidon (Neptune) comments on Achilles' future greatness and reassures Thetis that he will be considered begotten of Zeus. Stat. *Ach.* 1.91.

153 BNT q.V.58, fol. 8, see also the description on fol. 7. This would entail that she was Apollo's sister, considering that he is the son of Zeus.

154 'Nel giusto un Gioue, e nella Guerra un Marte', BNT q.V.58, fol. 29. Neptune's helpfulness in the ballet could perhaps be seen as an inversion of his behaviour in the *Achilleid*, where he tells the goddess to accept fate. Stat. *Ach.* 1.80-94.

155 See also BNT q.V.58, fol. 76, where, as seen above, Juno asks Vulcan for armour and simultaneously calls on Iris, the restorer of peace. This appears to emphasize the idea of necessary war in order to restore peace.

156 The text emphasizes her constant animosity towards the Trojans and support of the Greeks; BNT q.V.58, fol. 76. Neptune's intervention is not mentioned in the libretto.



emphasized.<sup>157</sup> The combination of the Ballet of the Zephyrs and allusion to Juno's hatred of the Trojans appears to imply that Marie Christine could both call the storm and calm it.<sup>158</sup>

## Spears and Dorians

In the performance, Achilles' victory at Troy is associated with virtue by the personification of Virtue herself (Fig. 7).<sup>159</sup> The Ballet of Achilles and his Companions celebrates their triumph, but it is also – as a whole – a ballet performed in honour of the bride and the alliance. Achilles and his companions are divided into four squadrons who sport the colours of the houses of the bride's father and mother as well as those of the groom's parents (Fig. 13). Reference to this is made in the presentation of the first entry, where the dancers are said to appear in the colours of Doris, that is, those of the House of Bavaria.<sup>160</sup> The audience would have been familiar with this use of heraldic colours, and the same device of four squadrons in the colours of the four houses had been used in the horse ballet performed a week earlier. In the earlier spectacle, the House of Savoy was introduced first, followed by that of Bavaria, then France and Austria.<sup>161</sup> The houses of France and Austria appeared in the same order also in *L'Educatione d'Achille*, but here the House of Savoy was placed second.<sup>162</sup>

In the final entry, where the dancers sport the colours of Austria, their breastplates display mirrors of heroic virtue (Fig. 8).<sup>163</sup> Moreover, they are

157 Critical voices saw her as a supporter of France.

158 In the *Iliad*, Apollo did in fact support the Trojans. His appearance in the ballet, as a god who is only related to Achilles' (and his sisters') good fortune differs radically from the role played by the god in the epic. Apollo, who was instrumental in Paris' killing of Achilles, apparently foretold the great future of Thetis's children, but Thetis was upset with him for lying, complaining that he in turn took her son's life. Aesch. *Frag.* 350 from Plat. *Rep.* 2.383b. Hera (Juno) also chides Apollo for being untrustworthy, reminding him that he attended the wedding of Thetis and Peleus, and that Hector (whom Achilles had slain) could not be compared to Achilles, the child of a goddess, who had been raised by Hera herself. Hom. *Il.* 24.55-63.

159 BNT q.V.58, fols. 90 and 92, see also fol. 86 for the virtues of Achilles.

160 BNT q.V.58, fol. 93. Folio 94 illustrating their costumes in colour is missing but they are included in the illustration of the grand ballet (the group of dancers to the left, fol.102).

161 BRT, *Storia Patria* 949. The horse ballet was performed on 15 December and the court ballet on 22 December.

162 BNT q.V.58, fols. 93-100.

163 BNT q.V.58, fol. 99. See also Kolrud 'Gem and the Mirror', pp. 82-84.

equipped with light javelins (*dardi*).<sup>164</sup> Achilles and three of his companions were also armed with spears in the first of these entries (for which the illustration is missing) and, as seen above, Virtue herself held a spear.<sup>165</sup> Finally, it is the last weapon mentioned in the description of Achilles' equipment; it is reasonable to interpret it as a reference to the famous ash spear that only Achilles could carry and that had been given to his father, Peleus, by Chiron and later to Achilles himself.<sup>166</sup> It is particularly well suited to the Savoyard context and the young Duke's grandfather, Carlo Emanuele I, who identified with Chiron. In the text, the spear is specifically associated with greatness of soul, magnanimity, and clemency.<sup>167</sup> In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle suggests that magnanimity enhances other virtues.<sup>168</sup> The characteristic is doubly emphasized in the spear described here, given that the virtue is referred to as greatness of soul *and* magnanimity. Moreover, both magnanimity and clemency are qualities associated with rulers.

In the last entry of the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions, the light javelins are described as apt at striking not only the Trojans but even the most beautiful nymphs, both of the earth and the sea.<sup>169</sup> The specific connection between this ranged weapon, which has much in common with an arrow, and love is thus emphasized. Possibly, it even alludes to the double nature of Achilles' spear, in the sense that a marriage alliance can heal the wounds of war.<sup>170</sup> This concluding entry is directly linked to the appearance of Amor, which takes place after the grand ballet danced by Achilles and his companions.<sup>171</sup> Amor emerges from the clouds and strikes Ajax; Doris has already been subjected to the same treatment on the island of Doro.<sup>172</sup> That the *weapons* of love are more potent than those of war is spelled out in

164 According to the 1623 edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*, the length of the *dardo* was around two *braccia*, p. 245. The exact length of the *braccio* varied but the Florentine Accademia della Crusca probably used the *braccio fiorentino* or *braccio a panno* of 0.5836 metres. Normal javelins would be considerably longer. Although the word *dart* could also be used to describe certain ranged weapons in English, these had feathers on the tail. The *dardi* shown in the illustration are not equipped with feathers. BNT q.V.58, fol. 100.

165 The first entry of the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions is described on BNT q.V.58, fol. 93.

166 BNT q.V.58, fol. 86; Hom. *Il.* 16.140-44.

167 Greatness of soul and magnanimity can both be considered translations of the Greek term *megalopsuchia*.

168 *NE* 4.3.1124a1-2.

169 BNT q.V.58, fol. 99.

170 The fact that Achilles could both wound and heal with the same spear is mentioned twice in the libretto, BNT q.V.58, fols. 86 and 93.

171 The grand ballet is described and shown on BNT q.V.58, fols. 101-2.

172 BNT q.V.58, fols. 2, 103 and 105.

the text. Amor outshines Jupiter, Mars, and Hercules.<sup>173</sup> As is well known, only Venus could conquer Mars, and the small spears in the last entry of the Ballet of Achilles and his Companions clearly provide a link between the two. Not only Amor's arrows but even spears and lances (as well as other weapons) could serve similar purposes.<sup>174</sup> Arrows and various forms of spears are all ranged weapons and therefore share some characteristics. Prior to the Ballet of the Nereids, the chorus of the gods proclaims the victory of both Amor and Mars; Jupiter declares that Achilles will possess his newly conquered realm in eternity, and he marries Doris and Ajax with the approbation of the other deities.<sup>175</sup> Amor's arrows are also associated with Apollo; the simulacrum of the god at his oracle is equipped with a lyre and arrows, so that he may wound both 'eye, ear, and heart'.<sup>176</sup> In other words, his prophecies, music, and arrows may affect his surroundings.<sup>177</sup>

The name Doris (*Dori* in Italian) may also have been chosen to emphasize the connection between the Nereids and armour. *Dory* or *doru* (δόρυ), in the meaning of spear, is mentioned on numerous occasions throughout the *Iliad*. The choice of the name Doro could therefore also function as a means of establishing a connection between Achilles' ash spear and the island where he was trained, and hence further stress the bond between him and his sister. The audience may not have been familiar with the many repetitions in the Greek text, but they would have been acquainted with the term *doriforo* and its connection to the Greek word for spear (or lance). Although no copies of Polykleitos's *Doryphoros* had been identified in the seventeenth century, the statue was mentioned by Pliny and was well known at the time of the performance of the ballet.<sup>178</sup> In his never-completed mid-fifteenth century *Commentari*, the famous Florentine sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti possibly made use of 'a flawed copy of Pliny which led him to cite Polykleitos as the bronze-caster who produced a youth bearing gifts rather than a spear (δῶρα for δόρυ [...]).'<sup>179</sup> The ancient Greek word for gift (δῶρον) is transliterated as

173 BNT q,V 58, fol. 103.

174 For the use of various weapons as phallic symbols in Latin, see Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, esp. pp. 19-22. See also Patricia Simons discussion of various phallic symbols used in the Renaissance, *Sex of Men in Premodern Europe*, pp. 112-22 and *passim* for the use of weapons in various sexual contexts.

175 BNT q,V 58, fol. 107.

176 BNT q,V 58, fol. 3.

177 The representation of the Apollo included in the fresco in the Valentino palace is similar.

178 Plin. *Nat.* 34.19.55. The Latinized variant *Doryphorus* had a long history, but it may be noted that Vasari uses the Italian term *Doriforo* in his highly influential *Vite*. Vasari, *Vite*, III ('Lettera di M. Giovambatista di M. Marcello Adriani a M. Giorgio Vasari', n. pag.).

179 Bober, 'Polykles and Polykleitos', p. 322.

*doron*, which is similar to Doro. The transliteration of δόρυ, however, is *dory*, akin to *Dori*, the Italian variant of Doris, used in the libretto.

At the beginning of the performance, Thessaly turns into Ionia and Mount Pierus becomes the island of Doro.<sup>180</sup> This in part reflects the eastward movement of the Thessalian Achilles and, in the text, Thessaly is presented as *bellicose*.<sup>181</sup> Doris is described as born in Thessaly and raised in Doro, which appears to be placed in the Aegean Sea, close to the Ionian city of Smyrna.<sup>182</sup> The island of Doro could therefore be located in Ionia and represent the merging or integration of opposites. It is even a fitting image of reconciliation. In Virtue's song *Dori* is associated with Ionia and opposed to the Greek March.<sup>183</sup> Indeed, this seems to fit with the traditional view of the Ionians as artistic, interested in intellectual endeavours rather than warfare, and appreciative of luxury and elaborate garments. Doris represents beauty and grace, and is the gift of the gods. This actually reflects the myth of how Sparta came to be associated with the Dorians. In his discussion of a fragment by the mid-seventh-century poet Tyrtaios, Jonathan M. Hall comments that 'for Tyrtaios, Sparta is a divine gift granted by Zeus and Hera'.<sup>184</sup> He also suggests the possibility that it may be 'connected with *doron* – the Greek word for "gift"'.<sup>185</sup> The idea of a chosen people is well-suited to the Savoyard self-image as rightful rulers of Cyprus. The connection with the river Dora, in close proximity to where the ballet was performed, as well as the association with the Italian word for golden, *d'oro*, serves to emphasize this point.<sup>186</sup> Admiration for so-called Spartan values probably played a part, but the island in the ballet appears to unite *feminine* and *masculine*

180 BNT q.V 58, fol. 23.

181 BNT q.V 58, fol. 107.

182 See BNT q.V 58, fols. 25 and 29. The link between Doro and Ionia is less clear on fol. 23, whereas the *Argomento* explains that the Ionian Sea is crossed in order to reach Doro, fol. 2.

183 BNT q.V 58, fol. 108. 'Del Greco Marte, e de l'Ionia Dori', fol. 92. March must here allude to Achilles, not Ajax.

184 It is given to the Herakleidai. Hall, *Hellenicity*, p. 87. Hall continues, 'In a variant tradition, Sparta is a gift to Herakles that is entrusted to his descendants.'

185 Hall, *Hellenicity*, p. 88. Yet, it is more commonly believed that their name was associated with their region of origin. 'The standard assumption that the name of the Dorians is derived from the region of Doris presumes the authenticity of the tradition on the invasion.' *Ibid.*, p. 87.

186 *Oro* means gold but *d'oro* should normally be translated with golden, as in *l'isola d'oro* (golden island), which the name of the island clearly plays on, see also fols. 31 and 32. Amor in fact claims that Doris is named after the river, BNT q.V 58, fol. 105. Moreover, the performance concludes with the choir of the Muses who explicitly connect her with the river Dora, fol. 119. It may even refer to the island of Polidora, part of the park created by Carlo Emanuele II's great-grandfather, Emanuele Filiberto. For the park see Scotti, 'Il Parco Ducale', p. 258. A wedding had been celebrated with a tournament at the Polidora in 1602. Franca Varallo mentions the

virtues.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, Ionian and Dorian appear reconciled; the name Doris may allude to this (if both gift and spear are suggested), whereas even the activities of Achilles and his companions draw on both Ionian and Dorian values. It may also be viewed in the context of the more traditional and expected alliance of Venus and Mars.

When the Nereids appear it is within a triumphal arch (Fig. 1), and the sea goddesses are invited to celebrate the wedding of their sister, Doris, and Ajax.<sup>188</sup> According to the libretto, the arch is in the Corinthian order.<sup>189</sup> Thus, the ballet combines the Dorian (linked to the Doric Order) and the Ionian (connected with the Ionic Order) and then precedes with young (nubile) girls, who were often associated with the tenderness of Corinthian columns.<sup>190</sup> That this gracious order comes last and implicitly may be understood as placed on top of the Doric and Ionic, in turn appears to emphasize balance and harmony. Venus and nymphs are connected with the Corinthian order by Vitruvius, whereas Mars and Minerva are associated with the Doric and Diana and Juno with the Ionic, etc. The standard is clearly gendered but not necessarily along biologically gendered lines.<sup>191</sup> Renaissance theorists were inspired by Vitruvius, and the general idea was that the most significant buildings should be constructed in the Doric order. However, as Dörte Kuhlmann rightly points out,

In general, the most important public buildings and temples were built according to the Corinthian order or a composite order because from an economic perspective the most decorative order is the most expensive and therefore the most valuable. Those two opinions were always in opposition to each other over the centuries, but it seems that the most expensive order was usually regarded as the highest order, and the sexual evaluation that it is 'female' and not 'masculine' was not taken into account.<sup>192</sup>

celebration in 'Dall'isola Polidora all'isola Doro', p. 510. Varallo does not suggest that the later performance may somehow refer to the earlier celebration.

187 It was probably not intended as an allusion to Achilles' sojourn on the island of Skyros. Tesaurò's passionate depiction of how much more manly the Duke would have acted under similar circumstances seems unrelated to the ballet. 'Il Diamante', p. 120.

188 BNT q.V 58, fols. 2 and 108. The arch that gradually rose from behind the stage must have been an impressive sight, see also Castiglione's description, *Himenei*, p. 75.

189 BNT q.V 58, fol. 109, see also the illustrations on fols. 110 and 113.

190 A reference to the Peloponnesian War between Sparta (Dorians) and Athens (Ionians), which ended with the surrender of the latter, could also be intended. However, the role of Corinth in the conflict does not fit well with the theme of the ballet, and Athens did not remain under Spartan rule for long.

191 Vitr. 1.2.5

192 Kuhlmann, *Gender Studies in Architecture*, pp. 98-99.

Here, the Corinthian order really does appear to symbolize feminine values, and indeed young girls; it is also clearly associated with love and Venus, as recommended by Vitruvius. The arch is described (and shown) as elaborate and the use of gold and bronze is emphasized.<sup>193</sup> As goddesses the Nereids are indeed important, and they are celebrated as empresses by the Muses, who crown them at the very end of the performance.<sup>194</sup>

Presumably, their training is as complete as that of the young heroes, although with a different emphasis; fighting techniques have no part in their curriculum.<sup>195</sup> Tesauro likens them to the three Graces, an allusion that is also made in the libretto, and the Graces sometimes appeared in company with Apollo and the Muses.<sup>196</sup> Tesauro speaks of the significance of the Graces, noting that ‘there is no virtue without beauty and no beauty without virtue’.<sup>197</sup> It is equally emphasized by Castiglione who describes the three princesses as ‘emulators of the three Graces’.<sup>198</sup> Nevertheless, these epitomes of grace and beauty are also grouped together with Carlo Emanuele as *heroes*, and their qualities appear more complex.<sup>199</sup> The young bride may be associated with the Corinthian order but her name alludes to the *graver* Doric order. In his comparison of the Duke to Achilles and the princesses to the three Graces, Tesauro also emphasizes Marie Christine’s superiority as educator; she, much more than Chiron, deserves heavenly glory.<sup>200</sup>

193 BNT q.V 58, fol. 109.

194 BNT q.V 58, fol. 119.

195 After the Ballet of the Nereids, the libretto describes the Muses as daughters of Apollo, ‘father of the sciences, master of all the arts’, and adds that they taught the sciences to the heroines, the daughters of Nicomedes and those of Ulysses and also the Nereids, BNT q.V 58, fol. 117. They are, in other words, described as educators of women, but their educational standards appear to have been high, as attested to also on fol. 25, where their description as most wise is reassuringly related to the virtue of the Nereids.

196 They are not only educated by the Muses but even nourished among the Graces, ‘Trà le gratie nodrite’, BNT q.V 58, fol. 25. For the association of the Graces with Apollo and the Muses, see for instance Homeric Hymn 3, to Pythian Apollo. HH 3.192-196. They are more generally associated with Aphrodite (Venus); here they dance with her (and others) while Apollo plays the lyre and the Muses sing.

197 ‘ne Virtù senza Beltà, ne Beltà senza Virtù’, ‘Il Diamante’, p. 121. This combination of Graces and education was also found in Rubens’s representation of *The Education of the Princess* (from the Maria de’ Medici cycle, now in the Louvre, 1622-25). Thus it was present in a work of art showing the education of the Duchess’s mother.

198 Castiglione, *Himenei*, p. 75.

199 Tesauro, ‘Il Diamante’, p. 123.

200 Tesauro, ‘Il Diamante’, p. 120. Chiron had been elevated to the stars as the constellation of Sagittarius or Centaurus.

By focusing on the Duchess's abilities as educator of her son and daughters, the ballet emphasizes her competence both as mother and regent and shows how the House of Savoy will continue to prosper in the future. The performance addressed several different audiences, but one of its functions must have been to serve as a guide for the young bride.

The manuscript itself may also have had a particular educational value and functioned as an aide-memoire for members of the court. Through it they would be reminded not only of the performance as such and the excellence of the ducal house but, in the case of this particular ballet, also of educational ideals. Greater emphasis may have been placed on practical skills in the actual performance, but the manuscript itself accentuates learning. The history and philosophy that were not danced could be gathered from the narrative and descriptions of characters. The libretto as well as other accounts were also available elsewhere, but the numerous images in addition to the text must have facilitated the act of remembering and guided the reader. One might argue that the dancing of the ballet and the studying of the manuscript functioned as different ways of acquiring knowledge.

It should be added that the libretto was printed after the first performance, so that the performance itself may have appeared less complex to some members of the audience.<sup>201</sup> Reading about it would have provided them with new layers of meaning. The juxtaposition of text and images, found in the manuscript, would not only serve to refresh the memory of those who were present at the performance, but even give them a means of experiencing the event differently – and thus reinterpreting it.

It was also an example of living mythology. The text is dense with information; yet, as was common in this type of early modern performance, the ballet was not based on a rigid retelling of ancient sources. The mythological characters were moulded to suit the court's purposes. In a sense, it therefore provides a lesson in a combination of ancient history, literature, and mythology as well as current affairs at the court of Savoy. In his account of the ballet, Castiglione also emphasizes that, although the performance was invented, it was performed in a room which was appropriately decorated with equestrian portraits of all the princes of Savoy as well as the triumph of the house.<sup>202</sup>

201 A brief description was published before the event in the anonymous [Socini], *Relatione delle solennita*.

202 Castiglione, *Himenei*, p. 73.

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# Virtue and duty

Academic moral discourse in seventeenth-century Sweden

*Bo Lindberg*

## Abstract

Although virtue is not a key concept in natural law and Christian theology, these two doctrines are included in my analysis of the moral discourse at seventeenth-century Swedish universities, alongside, of course, Aristotelianism and Stoicism. There were differences and conflicts between these four 'languages', Stoicism being considered less useful for society, and natural law eventually replacing Aristotelianism as the dominant theory. But all of them could serve the education of the clergy and civil servants of the expanding Swedish Lutheran monarchy. My sources are mainly dissertations and orations, which were produced within the pedagogic context of university teaching; that means that they do not necessarily present the personal convictions of the authors. Stoicism is partly an exception, represented here by a chastened ex-academic.

**Keywords:** Aristotelian virtues, *Vita activa*, Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), patriotism, cosmopolitanism, Samuel von Pufendorf (1632-1694)

This chapter examines the moral discourse at Swedish universities in the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> That moral discourse consisted of various doctrines, or 'languages',<sup>2</sup> as I prefer to call them and there were five such languages. In three of them, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and political humanism, the concept of virtue was fundamental together with a vocabulary originating in classical antiquity. The other two were Christianity and natural law. In

<sup>1</sup> There were five of them within the Swedish realm: Uppsala, founded in 1477, revived in 1593, Dorpat (Tartu) in Estonia, founded in 1632, Åbo (Turku) founded 1640, and Lund, founded in 1668. Greifswald in Pomerania, founded already in 1456, ended up in Swedish territory in 1648.

<sup>2</sup> The term seems to have been introduced by J.G.A. Pocock, 'Concept of Language'.

them the word virtue was rarely used, and they do not quite belong under the heading of 'teaching virtue'. Still, they are necessary parts of the subject of this chapter, the former because Christianity in its Lutheran version was the superior ideological framework of university teaching throughout the seventeenth century, and the other because it replaced Aristotelianism as the dominant theory of ethics and politics in the latter part of the century. From the perspective of modern moral philosophy, Christian ethics and natural law may be regarded as deontological theories when compared to the virtue ethics of the other three, but that distinction is of minor importance in the historical context that concerns us here and could not justify the exclusion of Christianity and natural law.

The moral discourse at the universities was subject to the ideological restrictions of the Swedish Lutheran monarchy. Students were to be inculcated with good values and convictions in order to be loyal and useful members of society and servants of the kingdom and the church. This is to say, the different languages were often used to corroborate the same values and principles. To some extent, the languages were about the same topics. In addition, they were often mixed; eclecticism was not only practised, it was a recommended scholarly attitude. Still, the languages are discernible. There are obvious theoretical and methodological differences between the five languages and some of them reflect social, political, moral, and even scientific tensions in the historical context.

Except for two important texts, the sources are academic genres: dissertations, orations, and lecture notes, all of them in Latin. They are marked by the pedagogic aim of academic studies. The formal outfit of the text is important. The Latin language was expected to be correct – and so it is, usually. Latin was a vehicle for thoughts for which there was not yet an established vocabulary in Swedish. On the other hand, Latin entailed a restriction in that the frame of reference and examples were those of classical antiquity. Swedish cases and circumstances were seldom dealt with, partly because of the Latin restriction, and partly because open discussion of Swedish political issues was more or less forbidden.

The dissertations vary in quality and quantity. They often have peritexts where the respondent thanks his benefactors and sponsors and is congratulated by his friends and colleagues. The genre fulfilled social functions besides the scholarly aim and did not necessarily present the personal opinion of the author; their sincerity is sometimes difficult to determine.<sup>3</sup>

3 The dissertations quoted in this study are catalogued in J.H. Lidén, *Catalogus disputationum* (1778). For perspectives on the genre, Gindhart et al., *Frühneuzeitliche Disputationen*.

Still the dissertations were substantial enough to provide material for scholarly controversy and academic *odium*; there were controversies and scandals, more so, however, in the fields of politics and natural philosophy than in ethics proper.

The following analysis will stay within the texts; I have not tried to trace the actual effects of the teaching of virtue. The sources indicate what was taught and sometimes why, but say very little about how the message was received by the students. The knowledge we have of student behaviour in the seventeenth century does not suggest that that moral teaching was particularly effective. Disturbances in the streets, fights between gown and town, and other disciplinary problems were frequent, expressing a culture of delinquency among the students.<sup>4</sup> The teaching of political virtue was more successful, insofar as it included understanding the nature and aim of the state and the importance of loyalty.

The student population was not homogenous, and the majority of the students were destined for an ecclesiastic career in church, school, and university. An important minority were future civil servants, often of noble birth. To some extent, the teaching of virtue was modified after these categories in an effort to specialize studies. Political virtue was for the prospective servants of the state, and virtue as taught within the language of political humanism had a clear accent to that effect. Another category was the less known number of students who interrupted their studies. How they appropriated the different languages of morality is difficult to grasp in the sources used here and will mostly be left out in the following.

## Christian ethics

The dominant ethical doctrine at the time, much more widespread and influential among the population than the philosophies of classical antiquity, was of course the Ten Commandments of the Bible as commented on in the catechism of Martin Luther. The Decalogue and the Bible do not in general talk of virtues, but the Christian tradition had recognized the so-called cardinal virtues (wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance) and laid particular stress on the specific ‘theological virtues’ of faith, hope, and love.<sup>5</sup>

4 About student discipline at German universities, see for instance Rasche, ‘Cornelius Relegatus und die Disziplinierung der deutschen Studenten’; for Sweden, Geschwind, *Stökiga studenter*.

5 *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, X (2001), col. 298. As appears from the contribution by Eyice in this volume, the Swedish reformers of the sixteenth century seldom used the Swedish

In general, virtue was not a favourite theological topic. Aristotelian moral philosophy, where virtue was the central concept, was regarded with scepticism by several Lutheran theologians because of its pagan origin. Laurentius Paulinus Gothus (1565-1646), who wrote a comprehensive and in several respects remarkable work in Swedish entitled *Ethica Christiana*, talked of 'Aristotle's Ethics and his other vain books'.<sup>6</sup> Paulinus could not avoid Aristotelian concepts in his own work, including the word *dygder* ('virtues'), but he avoided all references to Aristotle, drawing on the Bible and Luther. To Paulinus, and to several theologians, studies in ethics and politics at the universities were fundamentally vain unless their aim was to serve the church.<sup>7</sup> This principle, which would have reduced the universities to theological seminaries, could not be upheld, but throughout the seventeenth century, and well into the eighteenth, there remained a Christian framework around the academic activities that affected the way one talked of moral philosophy. Professors lecturing on practical philosophy felt obliged to fence off the objection that moral philosophy is unnecessary since the revealed truth of the Bible contains all that is needed for salvation.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, it was appropriate in discussions related to the aristocratic virtue of magnanimity, to point out that it was not opposed to Christian humility.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, liberality could be illustrated with the biblical example of the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44), which is remote from the Aristotelian context.<sup>10</sup> In general, philosophical discourse presupposed Christian religion. The ultimate aim of virtue is the glory of God, as was often pointed out. That the final aim of human existence is salvation and eternal life was taken for granted. As we will see, Christian opinion also held back the tendencies towards moral relativism that followed the language of political humanism. Theories that cast doubt on the conviction that society and morality are ordained by God were rejected more or less energetically and their instigators were excluded from the corps of 'sound philosophers'. Epicureans, sceptics, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Spinoza belonged to these outcasts.<sup>11</sup>

word for virtue, i.e. *dygd*, when talking about hope, faith, and love.

6 Paulinus Gothus, *Praxis specialis ethicae christianae* (1628), p. 26. At the same time, Paulinus, inspired by ideas about the popular foundation of government proposed by the German theorist Johannes Althusius, defended mixed monarchy.

7 Paulinus Gothus, *Praxis specialis ethicae christianae* (1628), p. 58.

8 Scheffer, 'Annotata quaedam in Ethicam', 1678 (ms. P11, Uppsala University Library), p. 11, and by Erik Benzelius (the Elder), 'Explicatio in libros Nichomachaeos', 1666 (ms. Rålabm 48:40, National Library), fol. 7r.

9 Bringius, *De magnanimitate et modestia* (1636), one of the corollaries.

10 Behm, *De liberalitate* (1644), thesis 19.

11 Lindberg, *Naturrätten i Uppsala 1655-1720*, pp. 92-94.

## Aristotelian virtue

Aristotle provided the standard theory of virtue. During the seventeenth century, at least fifteen dissertations about 'virtue in general' were defended in Uppsala (one of them in Greek).<sup>12</sup> Thrice as many dealt with the individual Aristotelian virtues or concepts closely related to them, such as friendship or happiness. This makes Aristotelian ethics one of the most cherished topics in the dissertation genre. It was easily divided into handy pieces to write a thesis about. This may to some extent explain its popularity, but it was certainly considered as an important part of the students' moral education.

The dissertations may quote Aristotle himself occasionally, but usually the account of the theory is derived from some contemporary compendium. They describe the theory, but rarely discuss or criticize it, except for Christian amendments of the sort mentioned above, usually added without comment. When the contents are extracted from various dissertations and stripped of the scholastic methodology of definition, object, subject, and efficient, formal, and final causes – also derived from Aristotle – they offer no surprises.<sup>13</sup> Virtue is an acquired *habitus*, which is to say that there are no inborn moral principles, nor is morality dependent on one's temperament. Instead, it is the result of habituation, i.e. one becomes virtuous by performing virtuous actions. Such actions are initiated by the will that makes the right choice between alternatives. It does so under the guidance of reason that prevents passions and desire from distracting the will from the right choices.<sup>14</sup> Passions are not negative in themselves; however, they carry the seeds of virtue but must be checked by reason.<sup>15</sup> In choosing how to act and behave, the individual should aim at the intermediate between two extremes. This famous theory of 'the mean' in Aristotelian ethics is barely mentioned in the general accounts of Aristotle's theory but appears in the treatment of the particular virtues.<sup>16</sup>

Of the individual virtues, four have a more extended function than the others, notably courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom, the so-called cardinal virtues. Temperance (*temperantia*) and courage (*fortitudo*) are particularly busy with the fundamental psychic phenomena of pleasure (*voluptas*) and fear (*metus*). Temperance (*temperantia*) regulates the desire

12 For instance Magni, *De definitione virtutis moralis* (1615); Brunnerus, *De virtute in genere* (1664); Ausius, *Dialexis ethice peri tes aretes genikes* (1658).

13 I abstain from references for each moment.

14 Bringius, *De imperio rationis* (1646); Behm, *De liberalitate* (1644), thesis 11.

15 Ausius, *De virtute morali in communi* (1652), thesis 13.

16 Ausius, *De virtute morali in communi* (1652), thesis 16; Fontelius, *De natura virtutis in genere* (1667), thesis 6; Liungh, *De mansuetudine* (1659).



for external pleasures, courage restrains from excesses in either direction when the human being confronts death or other risky experiences.<sup>17</sup> Attached to these two virtues are two 'half-virtues' (*semi-virtutes*), continence (*continentia*) and endurance (*tolerantia*), which are mentioned by Aristotle but seem to have been regarded as particularly important in the virtue discourse we are dealing with here. They are not subject to the principle of the mean but they serve to accomplish the intermediate by restraining the emotions of lust and pain related to pleasure and fear.<sup>18</sup>

Justice (*iustitia*) is the virtue that will regulate relations between people, finding what everyone is entitled to and what measures should be taken against particular human actions (so-called distributive and retributive justice, only touched upon in the dissertations). Being a personal virtue (Swedish, *rättrådighet*), it is nevertheless close to justice in the abstract sense of the idea of right; the treatment of the virtue thereby tends to become legal rather than moral.<sup>19</sup>

Wisdom is important, and as an intellectual virtue it is distinct from the moral virtues. Intellectual virtue in its turn is twofold. On the one hand, it is concerned with theoretical science (*speculativa cognitio*), i.e. the study of unchangeable reality. It is a purely intellectual activity, practised by philosophers and, according to Aristotle, representative of the highest form of virtue. The dissertations pay little attention to it, however, and instead concentrate on that part of the virtue of wisdom that deals with human action.<sup>20</sup> Theoretical study – *speculatio* – it is pointed out, is just for fun, whereas the practical virtues are cultivated for the sake of utility.<sup>21</sup> Practical wisdom is called prudence, *prudentia* in Latin and *phronesis* in Greek. The task of practical wisdom is to determine the right intermediate in every moral action. As such it is used by all human agents, but under the label of prudence it is particularly associated with deliberation on political matters. Prudence, then, is first and foremost the virtue of those who govern.<sup>22</sup>

The remaining moral virtues are liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, and modesty. Liberality and magnificence regulate the bestowing of favours on people and restrains passions for property and wealth. Magnanimity

17 Magni, *De definitione virtutis moralis* (1615), theses 14-15.

18 Magni, *De virtutibus fortitudine et temperantia* (1616), thesis 15; Brunnerus, *De virtute in genere* (1664), § 10; Liungh, *De virtute morali in genere* (1660), § 30.

19 H. Ausius, *De iustitia* (1650), theses 5, 31; Ausius, *De iustitia et ejus effectu* (1653), thesis 11.

20 Bringius, *De natura virtutum in communi* (1648), §§ 7, 9.

21 Bringius, *De imperio rationis* (1646), thesis 1.

22 Magni, *De virtutibus intellectualibus et appetitiva in genere* (1614), theses 5, 9, 13; Gylle, *De prudentia civili* (1634).

and modesty modify the enjoyment of the immaterial objects of glory; the magnanimous man does not hanker after posts of honour and does not accept petty favours or easy assignments. Modesty (*modestia*, sometimes *mansuetudo*) restrains excess in punishment and revenge.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from the usual catalogue of virtues, there is another group of half-virtues, the task of which is to facilitate social conversation: truthfulness (*veracitas*), affability (*jucunditas*), and gentleness (*comitas*).<sup>24</sup> They are sometimes treated under the common label *humanitas*. These virtues are to be practised towards everyone. Different from them is friendship (*amicitia*), which is more affectionate and possible only with those you know. It also presupposes a degree of equality between those involved; perfect friendship is possible only between the good and men who are fully equal; affability alone is not sufficient.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, there is heroic virtue (*virtus heroica*), which surpasses all the others but has no particular content. It is a special gift of God, belonging to extraordinary characters, usually warriors, kings, or prophets in the Bible, but also intellectual heroes, of which a dissertation from 1616 names, among others, Socrates, Aristotle, and – somewhat remarkably – Copernicus.<sup>26</sup>

Aristotelian virtue, as presented in the dissertations, is social. It presupposes the Aristotelian conviction that man is a political animal and that the individual is a citizen. Moral philosophy is often called *philosophia civilis*, civil philosophy, and ethics cannot be isolated from politics. The political bias of ethics, well founded in Aristotelian theory itself, suited the state authorities who wanted to promote loyalty and patriotism. Aristotelian ethics was also marked by an aristocratic ethos; the emphasis on courage and political prudence bear witness to that and perhaps even more so the social 'half-virtues' and the explicitly aristocratic virtues of magnanimity and magnificence. The ethics of the Greek gentleman were transposed onto Swedish soil, although wrapped up in scholastic terminology and humanist etymology. There was no explicit reference to contemporary circumstances. Obviously, however, the virtue of magnanimity could serve as an ideal for a seventeenth-century nobleman, and was personified as he who accepts important commitments and has the strength to endure adversity while at the same time moving and speaking in a dignified manner and showing great spiritedness vis à vis the mighty and benevolence towards the humble.<sup>27</sup>

23 Magni, *De definitione virtutis moralis* (1615), thesis 15; Liungh, *De mansuetudine* (1659).

24 Liungh, *De virtute morali in genere* (1660), § 30; Brunnerus, *De virtute in genere* (1664), § 10.

25 Liungh, *De amicitia* (1659), § 2; Liungh, *De amicitia* (1666), thesis 14.

26 Magni, *De virtutibus fortitudine et temperantia* (1616), thesis 15; Jonae, *De virtutum moralium eminentia, quam heroicam appellant* (1628); Norcopensis, *Character heroum* (1685).

27 Bringius, *De magnanimitate et modestia* (1636).

The aristocratic flavour of Aristotelian ethics is obvious. The majority of the students were not aristocrats, however, and there is no preponderance of aristocratic youths among those who defended the dissertations quoted above. The aristocratic temper of Aristotelian ethics was modified by topics suiting a broader audience by addressing the common condition of human beings. This becomes clear if one takes the genre of orations into consideration. The orations rarely deal with aristocratic virtues. Instead, they focus on self-control, moderation, humility, and low expectations. Continence and endurance, the 'half-virtues' that we saw emphasized in the Aristotelian system, are praised in orations; others titled constancy or patience have the same message.<sup>28</sup> These texts are more or less about the same thing: one should not let oneself be depressed by adversities; on the other hand one should beware of exalted joy on occasions of success. An adjacent virtue is humility.<sup>29</sup> From this perspective, calamities are not necessarily to be deplored since they give you the opportunity to be virtuous.<sup>30</sup> Close to this topic is the conviction of the mutability of everything. Nothing is stable, not even nature; floods, earthquakes, and storms cause turmoil in nature, and in the human sphere, crumbling empires, war, and individual failures create the same insecurity.<sup>31</sup> Facing all this imminent misery one can only endure, carry one's cross, and trust in God, exclaims an orator who seemingly forgot that change according to this theory of mutability also opens the possibility of change for the better.<sup>32</sup>

The mentality articulated in the orations is not aristocratic. Rather, it is a defensive attitude developed to support people of ordinary social rank in coping with the misfortunes of an insecure existence. Nor is it Aristotelian, even if the virtue of endurance was pointed out in peripatetic ethics too. Rather, the attitude behind the message of the orations is Stoic. I will come back to Stoicism, but first we will look into the ethical language that had a clear political tone and could appeal to aristocratic students, i.e. the language of political humanism.

28 Frisius, *Oratio de invicta virtute patientia* (1651); Petrejus, *Oratiuncula de constantia* (1652); Schepperus, *Oratio de tolerantia* (1638).

29 Palm, *Oratio encomium humilitatis continens* (1638); Portulinus, *Oratio de humilitate amplectanda* (1650); Utraelius, *Oratio de humilitate* (1641).

30 Bergling, *Oratio de calamitatibus generis humani* (1627); Gladerus, *Oratio de calamitatibus hujus temporis ferenda* (1633); Laechlin, *Oratio de cruce et calamitate* (1642).

31 Åkerman, *Oratio de inconstantia rerum terrarum* (1646); Transchöld, *Oratio de rerum inconstantia et mutationibus* (1679).

32 Torinus, *Oratio de constantia* (1664).

## Political humanism

By political humanism I mean the endeavour to extract political experience and know-how from the study of ancient historians. In research, it is sometimes called Tacitism, after the most cherished of the Roman historians.<sup>33</sup> Political humanism was hardly a coherent theory, but it harboured topics highly relevant to the formation of the early modern European states, such as reason of state, and the limits of morality in politics. Political humanism was also a method in that it was based on examples extracted from ancient texts; *ars excerpenti*, i.e. reading the texts, excerpting telling examples, and ordering them under useful headings, was a fundamental humanist technique that could be applied to politics.

The political humanists were numerous. They started in Italy where Machiavelli should be numbered among them, although this is seldom accepted because of his open recognition of the clash between political expediency and morality. Justus Lipsius was a more cautious political humanist, drawing on Tacitus above all and only becoming entangled in discussions of the role of dissimulation, fraud, and expediency in political practice. This is symptomatic of his elusive attitude, whereby he separated prudence from virtue. Both were important for government, he asserted, but virtue consisted in the purely moral qualities of piety and honesty (*pietas* and *probitas*), whereas prudence was the more practical faculty of understanding in choosing what to avoid and what to strive after.<sup>34</sup> The distinction gave more space to the analysis of the strategies of power. It was important that Lipsius, like most political humanists, favoured monarchy and talked about the practical aspects of power, avoiding constitutional issues of fundamental laws and the division of power. The same holds good for two prominent political humanists in Uppsala, Johann Boecler (1611-1672) and Johann Scheffer (1621-1679), both coming from Strassburg in Germany. Boecler stayed only a few years, but Johann Scheffer became a leading professor in Uppsala, holding the prestigious chair of eloquence and politics between 1648 and 1679. Scheffer tutored several sons of the top nobility, conveying moral philosophy, rhetoric, and historical examples. He lectured on Aristotle and Cicero, the usual fundament of moral philosophy, but also

33 For discussions of the concept of Tacitism, see Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651*, and Waszink, 'Tacitism in Holland'; for Tacitism in Sweden, Lindberg, 'Tacitism in Theory and Practice'.

34 Lipsius, *Politicorum seu civilis doctrina libri sex* (1599 [1589]), Book 1, chs. 2, 6, and Book 2, ch. 7.

on Livy, Caesar, Florus, and not least on Curtius, whose history of Alexander the Great was an important text in political humanism. Scheffer was a man of great erudition and his comments in the lectures sometimes went into philological detail, but as professor he subordinated research to the education of the elite under his tutelage, always pointing out the moral and political usefulness of ancient moral philosophy and history. Moral philosophy aims at teaching how to live, he argued; mere knowledge of various theories and topics does not make a philosopher. The ancients never taught moral philosophy just for the sake of knowing (*solius cognitionis causa*).<sup>35</sup>

Supervised by Scheffer, young noblemen practised the art of excerpting in dissertations. Basing the argument on Roman historians they dealt with matters of immediate interest for politics. Johan Gyllenstierna wrote about the prudence required in governing a newly conquered province, setting out from Tacitus's description of the Roman pacification of Britain. (In fact, Gyllenstierna was to end his career as governor of the province of Skåne, newly conquered from Denmark.) Carl Ekehjelm defended a text on the fate of the Roman Empire, based on Sallustius, and Axel Fleming compiled a piece on declarations of war.<sup>36</sup> More closely to the Tacitean strain in political humanism, Count Nils Brahe's dissertation concerned 'the popularity of the prince'. Starting out from a passage in the *Annals* of Tacitus on the skilfulness of Tiberius in manipulating public opinion, the author described the various strategies for checking unrest, using typically Tacitean phrases like 'appearances of equality and freedom', and 'instruments and secrets of governing'. The example of Tiberius showed, according to the author, that the only aspect of freedom that is important in a monarchy is the security of life and possessions.<sup>37</sup>

Dissertations like these went into some depth on political practice. They were cautious, however, about the ethical aspects of their topics. The conflicts underlying the language of political humanism between political expediency and fundamental laws, between reason of state and natural law, utility and honesty, and between dissimulation and sincerity, were not driven to extremes. The challenges to morality inherent in the realism of political humanism were held back. In 1639, when the chancellor and the archbishop inspected the University of Uppsala, the study of Tacitus was criticized on the ground that he was too difficult and dealt with a

35 Scheffer, 'Commentarii in Quintum Curtium Rufum', s.a. (ms. A 500:13, Uppsala University Library), pp. 26 *et seq.*

36 Scheffer, *De necessaria et singulari prudentia principis* (1654); Scheffer, *Rota fortunae Romanae* (1668); Scheffer, *De clarigationibus bellicis* (1677).

37 Scheffer, *De popularitate principis* (1652): 'simulacra aequalitatis'; 'simulacra libertatis'; 'instrumenta et arcana imperandi'.

depraved period where there was no virtuous action. The inspectors – one of them was Archbishop Paulinus Gothus, who as outlined above was an enemy of secular moral theory in general – wanted a more edifying study of history, concentrating on ecclesiastical and Swedish history.<sup>38</sup> This was before the appearance of the German political humanists in Uppsala and the increasing emphasis on royal power in the teaching of politics in the middle of the century.<sup>39</sup> However, even during the following decades and the era of absolutism, the realistic and amoral implications of political humanism were castigated or at least played down. Justus Lipsius was criticized for his oversophisticated idea of ‘mixed prudence’ that allowed for different degrees of licit fraud in politics. Expediency and morality could not be separated.<sup>40</sup> In 1678, the theological faculty made complaints concerning a dissertation whose author seemed to accept the argument of Lipsius that a drop of fraud is acceptable if used for a good end; such may become a follower of Machiavelli but not a future university professor.<sup>41</sup>

Machiavelli himself is seldom mentioned, and when it happens, the judgements are negative and short. He is the evil spirit behind the unsolvable conflict between morals and political utility, always present but not allowed to appear on the stage. Scheffer, commenting on Machiavelli’s argument that the prince shall feign to be pious for reasons of state utility, is a bit more articulate. Government becomes more stable when it is founded in piety. People see through hypocritical piety. No one can carry a mask for a long time. A state dressed in false clothes is not secure, and reason of state based on cunning devices is futile.<sup>42</sup> At most, Machiavelli can be quoted without negative comment. In a dissertation on government in times of peace, Machiavelli appears occasionally in a crowd of references without being castigated. None of these references pertain to controversial issues, however; the author declares himself to be aware of Machiavelli’s recommendation of feigned piety as a political instrument and that he has been criticized for it, but does not pass any judgment of his own.<sup>43</sup>

38 Minutes from an examination in Uppsala 1639; on the study of Tacitus, pp. 351-52.

39 The slow transition from the ideal of a mixed monarchy to emphasis on royal power is analysed by Runeby, *Monarchia mixta*.

40 Loccenius, ‘Animadversiones in Lipsium’ (1633), p. 278; Boecler, ‘Observationes quaedam in Politicam Lipsii’, 1650 (ms. P 3 National Library); Arrhenius, *Patria et ejus amor* (1671), p. 7.

41 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia* (1909), II.2, p. 175.

42 Scheffer, *Kununga ok Höfdina Styrelse: hoc est Regum principumque institutio [...] in sermonem Latinum vertit notisque necessariis illustravit Johannes Schefferus* (1669), pp. 36(a)-37(b): ‘Non est segura politia quae dolis se vertit, nec firma ratio status, quae technis nititur.’

43 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula imperii togati* (1681), pp. 7, 27, 37; on feigned piety, p. 16.

Behind such a neutral handling of Machiavelli one may perceive an attitude of sympathy, particularly in an author who, like the *praeses* of this very dissertation, Andreas Norcopensis, was to be the tutor of the crown prince of Sweden, the future Charles XII.<sup>44</sup> Part of the complaint concerning Machiavelli and the *statistae*, i.e. the advocates of reason of state, may have been lip service to the overarching Christian ideology in a pedagogic context that demanded a morally edifying teaching. On the other hand, to accept Machiavellian political behaviour would have paved the way for the opinion that the state and the social order was devoid of moral and religious sanction. That was something that political humanists and Tacitists were not prepared to do, nor were their employers, i.e. the state authorities. That religion was the firmest bond that held society together was not only a widespread conviction among the elites of seventeenth-century society but also a social fact.

There remained the problem of how to explain the many examples of violated moral principles in the past and in present society. For the past, at least, political humanists could excuse them with the help of the concept of fate or providence. Evil deeds could be justified by the greater perspective they were part of. Thus, the evil deed committed by Romulus, who killed his brother Remus, could be excused by the ensuing founding of Rome; without Romulus, who was not willing to share power with his brother, the Roman Empire would not have come into existence. Romulus was a ‘*vir fataliter magnus*’, a man fated to greatness, destined to formative deeds in history, to whom ordinary moral principles did not apply.<sup>45</sup>

## Stoicism

Ancient Stoicism was variegated, applicable in different contexts and social levels.<sup>46</sup> Kings could be Stoic and so could beggars. It concerned the wisdom of the individual and taught how to cope with life by controlling the

44 That interpretation is confirmed by Andreas Hellerstedt who has studied the text of Norcopensis in the context of the instructions given to him for the teaching of Prince Charles, and found a more frank political realism that surpasses what was allowed for in the academic political discourse. Hellerstedt, ‘Praeses and praeceptor’, in *Early Modern Academic Culture. Proceedings from a Symposium in the Royal Academy of Letters History and Antiquities in Stockholm*, to appear in 2018.

45 Scheffer, *Exercitationum politicarum in Titum Livium* (1659), pp. 4, 6-9.

46 The literature on Stoicism is overwhelming. For an overview, see Inwood (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*.

passions that arise from desire and fear and cause the soul to be unstable, ill at ease, disturbed, and unhappy. This was achieved by reason, which keeps the passions out by judging everything that is not in our control as *adiaphora*, i.e. indifferent things that are of no real importance to our well-being. Property, career, family and other things conventionally regarded as desirable were indifferent things, yes, even death was an *adiaphoron* when critically inspected by reason. Reason was not only the thinking of the individual, it was the outflow of the universal reason ('Logos', often identified with God) that upheld and governed the world. The rational world order was predetermined by Fate. The virtuous Stoic realized, by the help of his reason, which participates in universal reason, that all that happens – personal triumphs and adversities as well as the rise and fall of empires or disasters in nature – is unavoidable and has to be endured as necessary moments in a cyclical process that constitutes the world order. Strengthened by this insight, the Stoic was secure, self-sufficient, and content with himself. Virtue consisted in this state of mind that in its turn generated virtuous actions.

Society and politics were of no primary concern to the Stoics of antiquity, but their rational aloofness to the world entailed a critical potential that resulted in seminal ideas of cosmopolitanism and the unity of mankind. Both these tendencies were abstract and of little political consequence, however. Stoic utopianism was individual and located in the soul, not in society.

Late Renaissance scholars reactivated Stoic thought more or less in a Christian setting. Justus Lipsius was the most influential of the Neostoics. His treatise *On Constancy* (1584) became a favourite handbook in the art of living for the political elites in Europe, and he wrote extensive introductions to Stoic philosophy. To make Stoicism attractive, certain Stoic convictions had to be modified or avoided. The pantheistic notion of God as the all-penetrating Logos was unacceptable to Christian thought, as was the idea of predetermined fate. Likewise, the presumptuous self-sufficiency of Stoic virtue deviated from the Christian ideal of humility. Still, there were similarities. Predetermined fate was rather easily modified to divine providence, where the free will of God was granted. Stoic acceptance of fated necessity was not much different from Christian submission to the will of God. Likewise, Stoic neglect of mundane goods was compatible with Christian other-worldliness. The vanity of the world was a common attitude. Finally, Christian belief in life after death could be confirmed in some Stoic statements in antiquity. Compared to irreligious Epicureanism, Stoicism was a tolerable and manageable part of the ancient philosophical heritage.



In the academic discourse here under scrutiny, Stoicism was far from unknown.<sup>47</sup> It was not part of the philosophical curriculum, as Aristotelian virtue was, but there were lecture series on Stoicism and dissertations with Stoicism on the title page. Lipsius was frequently quoted, of course, but his role as transmitter of Stoicism should not be exaggerated. The assumption of Gerhard Oestreich, that Neostoicism as communicated by Lipsius became the linchpin in a mentality of moral discipline for the ruling elites who forged the early modern state in Europe, is not confirmed in the sources of this study.<sup>48</sup> Lipsius was a source of knowledge about Stoicism but hardly regarded as a Stoic and not particularly quoted in debates about Stoicism. Rather, he was a political humanist, approved of for his extensive advice on warfare and his support of monarchy, but, as we saw above, blamed for his idea of prudence mixed with drops of fraud. In fact, Stoic arguments were adduced against this aberration of Lipsius. Johannes Loccenius, another immigrant German professor, rejected the Lipsian idea of mixed prudence by appealing to Cicero and the Stoics. Fraud is vicious in itself, he argued, and cannot be excused with reference to reason of state; expediency must be consonant with justice and honesty and with natural law.<sup>49</sup> Others mobilized the theory of natural law of Grotius to refute Lipsius, which in turn was derived from the ancient Stoics. It is noteworthy that Lipsius, the father of Neostoicism, was criticized by reference to the Stoics.

In other respects, Stoicism was less appreciated and quite often criticized, although not totally rejected. The pagan origin of the ancient Stoics and their philosophical shortcomings with regard to fate and predetermination were duly castigated; not only did Stoicism deny the free will of God, it also jeopardized human endeavour in politics.<sup>50</sup> The rigour of Stoic virtue that demanded the total rejection of the passions and depreciation of all that ordinary people find worth desiring was not attractive. The claims that the wise Stoic is always happy and unable to lie or even to be ironic were absurd, as was the elevation of virtue to an absolute level that made all vice equally evil.<sup>51</sup> In short, Stoicism was unrealistic. The Stoics idealize, Scheffer remarked in a lecture: 'they describe most things not as they are

47 Lindberg, *Stoicism och stat*, pp. 211-75.

48 Oestreich, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*.

49 Loccenius, "Animadversiones", 1633, p. 278.

50 Skunk, *De fortuna et ejus fato* (1671), § 5; Skunk, *De fato* (1672), thesis 7; Arrhenius, *De fortuna* (1683), p. 29.

51 See, for instance, Norcopensis, *De sapiente stoico* (1678).

but how they should be, i.e. they put them in an idea'.<sup>52</sup> By consequence, Stoic philosophy is unsuitable for the state, he concluded.

Here was the main problem with Stoicism, and its decisive disadvantage compared to Aristotelian ethics: it did not encourage the life of an active and loyal member of society. The authors of dissertations were firm on that. Man is a social and political animal, as Aristotle taught, and Stoic aloofness towards society is blameworthy, whether resulting in rural isolation or in abstaining from politics because of its corruption. Contempt for the world is a laudable attitude, but it must be moderate.<sup>53</sup> Stoic firmness of principle is deleterious: the Stoic heroism of Roman republicanism is dismissed. Cato of Utica, the Stoic hero who committed suicide rather than surrendering to Caesar, deprived society of a useful member. Helvidius Priscus, who repeatedly defied the authority of the emperors and was finally executed, was 'obstinate in his constancy and abusive in his courage'. One must accommodate to the situation, and the monarchic form of state does not allow for stubborn and empty harping on liberty.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, Stoic cosmopolitanism was problematic. It undermined loyalty to the state and the fatherland. Justus Lipsius had deconstructed the love of fatherland as a sentimental invention of poetic imagination; furthermore, he argued, it was only the rich who loved their hometown or country, not the poor.<sup>55</sup> Such ideas were definitely at odds with the patriotic commitment to one's fatherland that permeated contemporary political discourse. Not surprisingly, they were attacked at the universities.<sup>56</sup>

Still, however, cosmopolitanism was apparently such an established topic in the academic repertoire that accounts of it were possible at least as long as loyalty to the political fatherland was not explicitly challenged. A dissertation from 1682 deals with philanthropy, i.e. the general benevolence between all human beings, translated into Latin as *humanitas*.<sup>57</sup> Another interesting text is the preface to an oration delivered in Dorpat in 1638 arguing that to the good man, any place is a fatherland. Wherever you go, there are human beings like yourself, having the same passions (!) and the same language (different languages are just dialects). To the wise man, all countries offer what is necessary. The oration does not question the political

52 Scheffer, lectures on Cicero, *De officiis*, 1652 (ms. Rålamb 40:4-5, National Library), p. 37.

53 Arrhenius, *Tetraeklektikos sive De constantia libera* (1680), § 40: 'moderata illa Despicientia rerum mundanarum.'

54 Arrhenius, *Helvidius Priscus seu civilis ministerii candidatus* (1673), fol. B 4v, C.

55 Lipsius, *De constantia libri duo* (1675), Book 1, chapt. 10.

56 Scott, *De Livonia* (1639), fol. A iv v; Arrhenius, *Patria et ejus amor* (1670).

57 Norcopensis, *De philanthropia* (1682).

fatherland but makes the crucial distinction between the civic duties to the fatherland and the human duties one is obliged to observe when abroad.<sup>58</sup>

If Stoicism was less appreciated and perhaps deliberately counteracted, it was highly relevant in seventeenth-century society from one important point of view. Stoic arguments were appreciated for inculcating the mentality of endurance and low expectations that we already encountered in the orations. Constancy, patience, and preparedness for private misfortunes and public disasters are ingredients in an attitude that was fundamental to the moral code taught at the universities. In the seventeenth century, that code was combined with Christian exhortations to trust in God and biblical examples of constancy.<sup>59</sup> It was a harsh and gloomy message. No doubt, it was partly an ideological instrument to promote contentedness and obedience. On the other hand, such a mentality was adequate in premodern times when everyday life was more risky than nowadays and the remedies for medical, economic, and social hardship less potent than in the modern welfare state.

### Stoicism outside the university

If Stoicism, unlike Aristotelianism, was not the moral philosophy adopted at the universities, it met with more of a response than Aristotelianism among individuals in elite circles outside academia. For example, Stoic texts were edited: the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus was printed twice and the leading aristocrat Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie had three of Seneca's texts edited together with *On the Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius. Stoic topics were often articulated in sentences and maxims, sometimes in combination with pictures: Stoic sentences appear together with emblems and decorations in books and wall paintings.

These manifestations of Stoicism had no immediate pedagogic purpose. There is one text, however, that is dedicated to 'former pupils' of aristocratic origin and thus aims at teaching virtue, at the same time being a fairly personal account of a Stoic conviction. It is also explicitly Stoic in that it comments on a particular philosopher, namely Epictetus and his *Enchiridion*. The author, Johan Widekindi (c.1620-78), had a varied career serving the

58 Andreae, *Oratio in themate quod omne solum viro bono patria* (1638), praef. The context was cosmopolitan: the preface was written by the student's teacher Lars Ludenius, a Danish subject, born in Germany and serving the Swedish king in the province of Estonia.

59 Gladerus, *Oratio de calamitatibus hujus temporis ferenda* (1633); Hallmannus, *Declamatio brevis de hoc praeclaro dicto Patienter pati* (1635); Laechlin, *Oratio de cruce et calamitate* (1642).

principals of the kingdom in various scholarly functions – King Charles X Gustavus is said to have called him ‘my philosopher’<sup>60</sup> – but he also took part in the copper trade and married into a fortune. In 1675, however, he made incautious remarks about the government in a tavern, which cost him two months in jail. Apparently, the sojourn in jail led him to make an annotated edition of Epictetus; apparently, imprisonment is a fertile place for Stoic philosophizing. The volume appeared the year after in 1676, written for ‘advanced’ students in Stoicism.<sup>61</sup> It contains a dedication, an introduction directed to students of Stoicism, some information about the life of Epictetus, a preface to the edition, and Epictetus’s text in Latin translation, with Widekindi’s *scholia* commenting on each chapter of the text.<sup>62</sup>

Widekindi dedicates his *opus* to six prominent aristocrats, whose interest in Stoic philosophy he claims to have observed when they were students in Uppsala. His connection to these aristocrats seems somewhat laboured, and he has not much to say about the use of Stoicism for the ruling elite in particular. The political Stoicism ascribed to Lipsius is absent. Stoicism teaches how to rule others, Widekindi notes, but above all, it teaches how to rule oneself,<sup>63</sup> and that ruling consists of enduring and accepting the adversities of life. The affinity of Stoicism to Christianity is emphasized: after the revealed truth of Christianity, Stoic *apatheia*, i.e. the absence of the passions of the soul, is the main road to a happy life.<sup>64</sup> No specific Christian element, however, is added to his account of Stoic philosophy, which is founded on reason alone. He sets out from Epictetus’s fundamental distinction – worth considering even today – between that which is in our power and that which is not. What we can control is the judgment of our reason that discerns what is likely to arouse passion; if we judge rightly, the tranquillity of the soul will follow. Outside our control are the external things (*externa opera*), economic resources and things that aim at our pleasure: all these depend on Fortuna and are therefore unstable, caducous, and foreign (*aliena*). You may lose wife, children, friends, or the grace of the prince; your happiness depends on how you judge those external things. They should be loved, but only as temporary goods, subject to fate. In that way, the tranquillity

60 On Widekindi, see *Svenska män och kvinnor*, VIII.

61 Widekindi, *Epicteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676).

62 All in all 164 pages. Widekindi says nothing about what version of Epictetus he has used in his translation. Epictetus’s text has 61 chapters in Widekindi’s edition, but only 51 in modern editions.

63 Widekindi, *Epicteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676), ded., p. 2.

64 Widekindi, *Epicteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676), praef., p. 1.

of the soul can be maintained.<sup>65</sup> Not only losses of things but also change, including disasters and difficult conditions, should be met with compliance. Accepting change is yielding to God. One should not wish that to happen which one wants, but rather want that which really happens. Yield to God and yield to the times, is the message. If under pressure or attack, one should resist as long as there is hope, but acquiesce if one's cause is hopeless. Not even freedom and fatherland are worth suffering meaningless death for. Why be obstinate? They may rise again another time.<sup>66</sup>

The Stoic attitude is unassuming, obsequious and humble. At bottom, however, it means freedom. It elevates you above all contingencies, affects, wishes, and ambitions, liberates you from the prison of external things, and makes you a free man in your own right, the ruler, moderator, king, and doctor of yourself.<sup>67</sup> Such contempt for the world is something early modern Stoicism had in common with Christianity; the temper of ancient Stoicism was somewhat different, however, laying more stress on the self-sufficiency and the 'security' of the perfect Stoic, which was illicit presumptuousness from the Christian point of view.

To those who regard Stoic contempt for the world as too austere and harmful to society, Widekindi responds by pointing out the difference between genuine, internal values and the shallowness and vanity of external goods that appeal to ordinary people. Power, luxury, and beauty are vain, and even erudition can direct desire towards things that are not in our power and thus noxious. In fact, the rich and mighty are not truly happy, nor are those with a beautiful wife or a handsome body. A pleasing face often hides a sad mind, the mask of pleasure disguises depravation; a beautiful body shelters a perverse soul, and a good-looking woman is not truly beautiful, unless she is virtuous.<sup>68</sup> In Widekindi's argument, Stoic contempt for the world tends to end up in the philosophy of sour grapes.

Widekindi admits that a Stoic attitude usually does not foster conspicuous contributions to the glory of one's country, but there are other ways to serve the fatherland, as many, in fact, as there are human crafts. Shoemakers provide the state with shoes, smiths deliver arms; it is enough if everyone

65 Widekindi, *Epiceteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676), pp. 8 et seq., 17, 44.

66 Widekindi, *Epiceteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676), pp. 29 et seqq., p. 32: 'Cede Deo, cede tempori, velis fieri sicut fiunt. [...] Periiit libertas, corruiit Patria; resurgere poterit alio tempore. Quid enim proficis, si obstas.'

67 Widekind, *Epiceteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676), 'Philosophi Stoici studiosus', p. 14: 'liber et tantummodo sui Juris [...] sui Princeps, moderator, Rex, medicus'.

68 Widekindi, *Epiceteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676), pp. 10 et seqq.

fulfils his task.<sup>69</sup> Besides, prestigious crafts like warfare and rhetoric do not always contribute to the welfare of the state, as can be shown by examples from ancient Rome and Greece. To the philosopher, however, Widekindi assigns an important pedagogic function: he teaches the youth with precepts and examples; he educates the citizens, excites the soldiers to virtue, points out decadence and discord, and restores harmony.<sup>70</sup> Widekindi seems to suggest a role for (Stoic) philosophers that heralds that of intellectuals in the modern era.

That may be an incidental novelty in Widekindi's Neostoicism; otherwise it does not differ from contemporary versions of the Stoic message. The contempt for the world, the modest expectations of life, and the humility are to be found in other accounts of Stoicism, modified and constrained as they are by the Christian framework. In the eighteenth century, the Christian restriction was sometimes broken, as Stoic tranquillity by sole individuals was regarded possible without the belief in God and a transcendent existence.<sup>71</sup> That attitude is absent in the seventeenth century. Still, Stoicism was an attractive complement to orthodox Christianity – be it Catholic or Protestant – providing concepts for a dignified existence in an insecure world. However, the language was not necessarily as submissive and lamenting as Widekindi's wordings occasionally are. Stoic tranquility could consist in a less other-worldly demeanour, pointing out a commendable attitude to everyday life and fellow human beings. An example of that is found in an oration delivered to the memory of the Uppsala professor Petrus Lagerlöf in 1699. Among the harangues of praise of the deceased is the following:

He was content with a modest standard of living. Perspicacious, not suspicious. He could not deceive, nor be deceived. He was no one's addict or servant, not even Fortune's. But free. Erect. His own. The same in seriousness and joking. The same in prosperity and adversity.<sup>72</sup>

69 Widekindi, *Epicteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676), p. 64: 'satis autem est, si suum quisque opus impleat'.

70 Widekindi, *Epicteti stoici philosophi Enchiridium* (1676): 'Annon munus aliquod confert Philosophus, cum praeceptis exemploque iuventutem docet, cives format, milites virtute accendit, labem et discordias indicat, Harmoniam reducit?'

71 On eighteenth-century Stoicism, see Gay, *Rise of Modern Paganism*.

72 Normannus, 'Laudatio funebris summi viri Petri Lagerlöfvii', 1699 (1728), p. 202: 'Sed modico cultu apparatuque contentus. Perspicax idem, non suspicax. Tam fallere quam falli nescius. Nulli, ne fortunae quidem, addictus, aut serviens. Sed liber. Sed erectus. Sed suus. Idem per seria et jocos. Idem secundis et adversis.' (My translation.)

Whether this description was correct or not is irrelevant; the genre is notoriously unreliable and full of borrowed vocabulary.<sup>73</sup> The rhetorical phrases point out an ideal, describing a commendable attitude of a man, not of high rank but an academic in modest circumstances. It is not a modern ideal but partly recognizable as something that we today call integrity.

## Natural law

During the second half of the seventeenth century, Aristotelian moral philosophy at the Swedish universities was gradually replaced by the doctrine of natural law. Virtue was not a key concept in natural law, and the philosophical foundations of the new doctrine were different.

It was not quite new, however. It had its origins in Stoicism and was an integral part of scholastic philosophy in the tradition stemming from Aquinas, and there are dissertations about natural law from the early 1600s.<sup>74</sup> With Grotius and Pufendorf, natural law was modernized in its theoretical foundations and became an influential part of the university curriculum, first with Grotius, focusing on international law; then with Pufendorf, as a fully fledged alternative to Aristotelian ethics and politics. In contrast to political humanism which relied on historical examples, natural law was a philosophical theory, based on rational deduction that followed a method sometimes called 'geometrical'. From fundamental moral principles, considered inherent in human nature, rules were deduced that contributed to peaceful social intercourse. Grotius saw such a fundamental principle in the maintenance of society (*custodia societatis*), and Pufendorf called it sociableness (*socialitas*). The rules deduced from these principles were not only true; according to Pufendorf they were also binding since given by God, the creator of human nature. Both of them referred to the ancient Stoics as originators of the idea of the social inclination in human nature, but the theory gained its decisive intellectual momentum through its method that resembled that of the ascending natural philosophy of the time. Cartesian philosophy and natural law were allies. Furthermore, natural law was universal and regarded applicable to human society in all countries

73 A Google search finds the combination of *liber, erectus*, and *suus* in a Dutch dialogue (in Latin) on marriage from 1643 and in two funeral orations for professors in Lund 1832 and 1834; the latter two, probably borrowed from Normannus.

74 For instance, Magni, *De lege aeterna et lege naturae* (1624).

and all times. The language of natural law was partly philosophical, partly juridical; it talked of rights, obligation, and duties, not virtues.

Natural law was quickly introduced at Swedish universities, and broke through to prominence when Samuel Pufendorf was recruited to the new university of Lund in 1668. He belonged to the faculty of law but regarded his discipline as a theory of moral philosophy, challenging Aristotelian ethics and politics. In 1673, he published his textbook of natural law, *De officio hominis et civis* (On the duty of man and citizen). Immediately, he started lecturing on it, and in the *prooemium* to the lecture series, he delivered a fundamental critique of conventional moral philosophy, i.e. that of Aristotle.<sup>75</sup>

Pufendorf's argument in removing Aristotle was historical. Aristotelian ethics and politics were not apt for contemporary society. This was not a new insight; Renaissance scholars were more or less conscious of the differences between ancient societies and contemporary Europe. French jurists had been explicit about this with regard to Roman law. In moral philosophy, historical consciousness grew more slowly, and Aristotle's authority remained almost unchallenged until the middle of the seventeenth century. During the course of the century, however, stimulated by the attacks on Aristotelian natural philosophy, the awareness grew that ancient ethics and politics were not quite adequate to contemporary society. Scheffer, for instance, in his lectures on Cicero in 1652, admitted that we do not live in Sparta or Rome; still he preferred the ancients to the moderns.<sup>76</sup>

Pufendorf, for his part, explicitly rejected Aristotle. He did so by pointing out that the Aristotelian ethics did not aim at instructing human beings in general but only the Greek citizen. Pufendorf set out to show that the Aristotelian virtues were adapted to the particular needs and circumstances of the Greek state. The importance of courage reflected the role Plato ascribed to the warriors in his ideal state, which influenced Aristotle. Temperance was necessary to prevent the military from terrorizing their fellow citizens. Liberality and magnificence reflected the Greek habit of letting the rich contribute voluntarily to public expenses. Modesty aimed at restraining citizens who held public office from being avaricious, and justice was a virtue only for the judges in the courts. Even the virtues that

75 The lectures have been published by Bo Lindberg in Pufendorf, *Pufendorf Lectures*. For the circumstances around the lectures, see pp. 14 *et seqq.*

76 Scheffer, lectures on Cicero, *De officiis*, 1652 (ms. Rålamb 40:4-5, National Library), p. 30. In fact, Scheffer, sensible of change as he was, came to lecture on natural law as well in the 1660s, although never abandoning Aristotle.



facilitate social intercourse – Pufendorf called them courtesy, friendliness, and humanity – were specific to the Greeks, who were a remarkably witty and humorous nation.

Furthermore, and more serious than the other inadequacies of ancient moral philosophy, the Greek states were democracies. Aristotle was averse to monarchy and loved democracy and all the precepts in his *Politica* were adapted to that form of government.<sup>77</sup>

Pufendorf's arguments concerning some of the virtues may seem odd, but his critique of Aristotelian moral philosophy is an unusually clear example of seventeenth-century historical contextualization. Ancient knowledge was the product of a different society and no longer relevant. He did not argue, however, that natural law was the product of contemporary society – which would have been in accordance with his historical approach. Instead, it was universal, the ectype of human nature and applicable to all times and countries. Moreover, he did not denounce historical tradition. As just mentioned, the very idea of natural law was Stoic and the word duty (*officium*) recalled Cicero's much read *De officiis*. There were duties towards God, towards oneself, and towards other human beings.

Pufendorf's theory of natural law met with strong criticism from Lutheran theologians, who did not accept the separation of natural law from revealed theology. To them, natural law was epitomized in the Ten Commandments of the Bible and its ultimate end was located in the life hereafter. There was an obvious moment of secularization in Pufendorf's theory, in line with the corresponding tendency in Cartesianism and natural philosophy in general at the time. Still, Pufendorf's version of natural law had more in common with Lutheran Christianity than with Aristotelianism. It presupposed an obligating God, recognizable by reason, and it grouped the duties in a way that resembled that of the Decalogue, separating the duties to God from those to other people. Furthermore, Pufendorf admitted that revealed moral theology was also useful for social morality.<sup>78</sup> Significantly, references to the Bible are much more frequent in Pufendorf's lectures on natural law than in those of Scheffer on Aristotelian moral philosophy.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, natural law in Pufendorf's version was in better accordance with Christianity than the disputes around it suggest. It eliminated the

77 Pufendorf, *Pufendorf Lectures*, p. 76: 'nam prout ille erat Graecus, ita amore flagrabat *Democratiarum*, atque omnia sua praecepta in *Politica* tradita in earundem usum conferebat, aversans maxime *monarchiam*'.

78 Pufendorf, *De officio hominis et civis* (1673), praef., p. 7.

79 Introduction to Pufendorf, *Pufendorf Lectures*, pp. 35 et seq.

skewedness that hampered Aristotelian moral philosophy in that it was heathen, and basically republican. At the same time it was in harmony with the rationalist philosophical style of the time. One could also say that it corresponded to a more structural concept of the state that established itself with the growth of bureaucracy. The early modern state was a mechanical apparatus rather than the personal property of the king.

Those who taught moral philosophy saw a particular pedagogic advantage in natural law. In 1701, in a conflict between jurists and philosophers in Uppsala about the right to teach natural law, the philosophers stressed the pedagogic efficiency of natural law. It was a clearer, quicker (and therefore cheaper) way to convey moral knowledge, since it made moral rules demonstrable and binding. Natural law had improved moral doctrine with astonishingly forceful demonstrations and found a better method to teach the students fear of God and the desire of a blameless life. Not least did natural law show what constitutes royal power; that could be drawn from other sources, but when it comes to explaining and proving 'how it is and must be, so that nobody may say against it, i.e. to demonstrate', then one has to stick to natural law.<sup>80</sup>

### What happened to virtue?

The concept of virtue did not disappear from academic moral philosophy, but rather quickly, natural law became the fundament of the teaching of ethics and political theory, replacing not only Aristotle but also the ancient historians that had given practical examples of moral and political prudence.

Outside the universities, however, virtue became a fashionable word during the eighteenth century, as in other European countries. That happened in the sphere of public debate that developed during the so-called Age of Liberty that replaced royal absolutism in the 1720s. The debate was conducted in the Swedish vernacular and the Swedish words for virtue and virtuous were *dygd* and *dygdig*. A synonym, even more frequent and with a more collective meaning, was *nyttig* (useful).<sup>81</sup> The meaning of these words was essentially patriotism. It was a broader concept than in the seventeenth century, and it stressed economic industry and commitment to the welfare of the fatherland more than military bravery and loyalty to the crown. It

80 Quoted from Lindberg, *Naturrätten i Uppsala 1655-1720*, pp. 86 *et seq.*

81 For the concept of virtue in this sense, with application to Swedish economic thought in the eighteenth century, see Runefelt, *Dygden som välståndets grund*.

was a virtue of citizens rather than of subjects that was in better accordance with Greek and Roman civic virtue than the type of virtue fostered during seventeenth-century royal rule. As we saw, Aristotelian virtue was preferred to Stoicism during the seventeenth century because it was more realistic and dealt with political life in the service of one's country. Aristotelian virtue was compatible with patriotism; that it was a republican patriotism rather than royal was left out of account (except by Pufendorf who pointed to it as a problem with Aristotle). The moulders of public opinion of the eighteenth century did not refer so often to Aristotle and did not dwell so much on his catalogue of virtues as the academics of the previous century. Nevertheless, the temper of eighteenth-century civic virtue was in better accordance with Aristotelian virtue, and with ancient virtue in general, than the climate of the previous century.

In spite of the intellectual changes following the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and the continued development of the early modern bureaucratic state, the moral codes and values in which public affairs were debated remained very much within the conceptual framework of ancient republicanism and an idea of cyclical historical change. Politics was practised according to 'the logic of moral politics', as has been suggested in recent research.<sup>82</sup> Basically, it was the art of maintaining the liberty of the state by virtuous action and restoring it when it was in danger. Political actors were expected to be honest, patriotic, and inclined to secure the public welfare, and political debates consisted of accusations of self-interest, envy, corruption, and treason. Such political discourse continued until the end of the early modern era, when the experience of deep-seated historical change paved the way to forward-looking ideologies in politics.

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82 This perspective is suggested by Bodensten, *Politikens drivfjäder*, pp 14-21 and *passim*.

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# The Royal Rhetor

Princely and common virtues in the operas and plays of Gustavus III

*Jennie Nell*

## Abstract

This chapter analyses how King Gustavus III of Sweden, who was a talented writer, utilized the cardinal virtues in his dramatic works, considering both princely and common virtues. The king used the idea of the exemplum as a tool for educating his people. In fact, the communication can be said to have been two-way: an interplay of ideals and expectations between the King and his subjects, expressed through art. Using a variety of historical material, Gustavus preferred to use the famous Gustavus I and Gustavus Adolphus (his 'Gustavian' ancestors) as exempla, and as mirrors for and of himself. Perhaps even more importantly, he used the stage for royal rhetoric, presenting an image of an ideal king as well as ideal subjects.

**Keywords:** Gustavus III (1746-1792), rhetoric, exemplum, theatre

In a previous research article, I wrote about the virtues of Gustavus III (1745-1792) as interpreted in eulogies by Swedish poet Carl Michael Bellman (1740-1795).<sup>1</sup> Honour and glory were two central concepts used in the eulogies, and they were closely tied by the poet to the favoured celebrated virtues of *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *prudentia* ('clemency', 'justice', and 'prudence'). These virtues also dominated the King's early political speeches, which I discussed using the preferred pedagogical instrument of the time: the exemplum.

I decided that it would also be fruitful to explore the opposite route of communication: the King's own use of the cardinal virtues. Gustavus III is a king famous for his interest in the theatre as a pedagogical tool. He was

1 Nell, 'Ärans beröm och Dygdens låf'.



not only a dedicated spectator; he wrote several plays himself – mostly tragedies but also some comedies – and several opera librettos, in which he illustrated both exemplary princely virtues and exemplary common virtues. While his plays have been amply discussed from the perspective of his French role models and historical sources<sup>2</sup> – as well as his use of rhetoric and theatricality for political means<sup>3</sup> – his use of and views on virtue, as communicated in his plays, have not previously been researched in depth. In this chapter, I thus aim to investigate which virtues the king employs and how he employs them in his most popular plays. I will use Stephen Greenblatt's term 'social energy' to examine in which ways the King's plays fit within the framework of the exemplum, and how the arts were used for teaching purposes both by the court and by the people.

Greenblatt uses 'social energy' – which he derived from the Greek rhetorical term ἐνέργεια (*energeia*) and which he defines as something 'manifested in the capacity of certain verbal, aural, and visual traces to produce, shape, and organize collective physical and mental experiences' – to explain the continuous negotiation and exchange between art and society.<sup>4</sup> I find it suitable for this investigation to adopt the approach of seeing literature both as the reflection and the co-creator of a given historical setting, wherein literary creation can be viewed as a reciprocal process of historical influence and cultural production.<sup>5</sup> The literary work thus expresses a collective experience and mirrors the ideals and values of a society, while also playing a part in the forming of these ideals through 'a subtle, elusive set of exchanges, a network of trade-offs, a jostling of competing representations, a negotiation between joint-stock companies'.<sup>6</sup>

When it comes to the particulars of panegyric, it has been shown that poets in eighteenth-century Sweden not only celebrated what the King expected and asked for, but also used eulogy to elicit certain behaviour from him, thus mirroring the ancient notion that poets had power over the sovereign. This stems from the idea that the literary work of art is the most long-lasting and prestigious monument of a person. What the poet records is what determines how posterity views the sovereign, a thought famously held by Italian court poets such as Pietro Aretino (1492-1556) and Ludovico Ariosto

2 See for instance Friedlander, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*; Warburg, *Om förebilderna till Gustaf III:s dramer*; Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*; and Skuncke, *Sweden and European Drama*.

3 See for instance Alm, *Kungsord i elfte timmen*; Tandefelt, *Konsten att härska*; and Berlova, *Performing Power*.

4 Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p. 6.

5 Ibid. Greenblatt suggests the same view in *Learning to Curse*.

6 Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p. 7.

(1474-1533). In France the debate was conveyed by writers and philosophers such as Joachim Du Bellay (1522-1560), Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585), Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), and Jean Racine (1639-1699). Gustavus III's own role model King Louis XIV (1638-1715) had to suffer reminders of the power of the written word in a number of poems. For example, in an 'Ode au Roi' by Edme Boursault (1638-1701) from 1668 it is stated that:

Ce n'est pas toujours sur le cuivre  
 Qu'à la race future on transmet son destin;  
 Ce que trace une plume et que conserve un livre  
 Trompe l'orgueil du bronze et l'espoir du burin.

(It is not always with the help of copper  
 That one conveys one's destiny to future generations;  
 The trace of a quill and what is conserved in a book  
 Supersedes the vainglory of copper and the hope of the burin.)<sup>7</sup>

Panegyric and eulogy were thus used in several ways: to manifest and propagate a certain image of the sovereign, and as a formative tool by the poets in an effort to stamp out unwanted behaviour and elicit desired behaviour in the sovereign. In this ongoing negotiation of the image and the actions of the sovereign, we find the workings of both the rhetorical term *evidentia* and Greenblatt's elusive 'social energy'.

'Teaching virtue' was actively practised during the Age of Liberty and the Gustavian era in Sweden. As crown prince, Gustavus was raised to be a great man (*grand homme*) and an exemplum to his people, greatly concerned with his reputation for posterity. His tutors, Counts Carl Gustaf Tessin (1695-1770) and Carl Fredrik Scheffer (1715-1786) instilled in him a reverence and a love for history and genealogy, and his mother, Queen Louisa Ulrika (1720-1782), compiled her own collections of examples to be used in the education of young Gustavus, focusing on Swedish role models such as Gustavus Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus.<sup>8</sup> Tessin taught the Prince, using Plutarch's *Vitae parallellae* ('Parallel Lives') to implant in him the view that history teaches us to separate virtue from vice and honour from dishonour through good and

<sup>7</sup> Delblanc, *Åra och minne*, pp. 76-84, quote on p. 79. Horace's verse 'I have erected a monument more lasting than bronze' ('exegi monumentum aere perennius') from Ode III:30, is a famous early example. All quotes in translation are translated by the author of this chapter unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>8</sup> Delblanc, *Åra och minne*, pp. 137-49; and Hennings, *Gustav III som kronprins*, pp. 46-49. Also see Skuncke, *Gustaf III – det offentliga barnet*.

bad examples. In his adult life, Gustavus III strove to imitate his favoured predecessors, as can be seen in a speech to the Estates from 1771: 'The hearts of grateful subjects is the greatest reward for good Kings, and the tears that You now shed, are the most glorious monuments You could ever erect, and the foremost encouragement to me, to follow the path, that great Kings and a beloved and ever missed Father have trailed for me'.<sup>9</sup>

Oscar Levertin has noted how the young prince's tutors exploited his love for theatre.<sup>10</sup> Count Tessin in particular, modelled his teachings on François Fénelon's (1651-1715) education of the Duke of Burgundy (1682-1712). Like Fénelon, Tessin wrote fables and dialogues about historical figures exhibiting heroic and royal virtues.<sup>11</sup> Fénelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (The adventures of Telemachus; 1699) had a huge influence on the Crown Prince both as a boy and later in life as king and playwright.<sup>12</sup> In his early childhood writing exercises, he summarizes the importance of virtue: 'nothing but Virtue alone can raise a Throne or monument in the human soul'.<sup>13</sup> The concept of virtue – a well-known key concept in the French Enlightenment debates – was discussed at length by the Crown Prince and his tutors.<sup>14</sup> At this time in Sweden, the concept was used as 'a collective term for ethical ideality and the human pursuit of perfection in the way of life'.<sup>15</sup>

I have chosen to study four of the King's dramatic works, all tragedies; *Gustaf Adolfs Ädelmod*, *Gustaf Adolph och Ebba Brahe*, *Gustaf Vasa*, and *Siri Brahe*. In these works, the author explores all the cardinal virtues to a different extent. These four tragedies received the most stage time in Swedish theatres, both in Stockholm and in Gothenburg, during the Gustavian era, and there are records of them being staged well into the nineteenth century

9 'Tacksamma undersåtars hjertan äro goda Konungars största belöning, och de tårar J nu fällen, äro de präktigaste äreminnen I kunne uppressa, och den yppersta uppmuntran för mig, att följa den väg, som så store Konungar och en kär och i alla tider saknad Fader för mig banat', 'TAL till Rikets Ständer på RiksSalen, vid Riksdagens början, den 25 Juni 1771', in *Konung Gustaf III:s Skrifter*, I, pp. 73-74. For this particular multivolume edition, which is a collected works of King Gustavus III published between 1806 and 1812, I will henceforth use the abbreviation KGIIIS plus volume number in roman numerals for ease of reference.

10 Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, ch. 1: 'Ungdomsarbeten'.

11 Ibid., pp. 8-10.

12 Ibid., pp. 10-16.

13 Quote in Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, p. 14. In Swedish: 'ingenting upprättar en Thron eller ärestol uti menniskans siäl utom Dygden allena'.

14 Sven Delblanc comments on the emphasis on virtue versus vice in connection with honour and dishonour in the education of the Crown Prince in his *Ära och minne* (see ch. 2).

15 SAOB (*Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*), s.v. 'dygd', <http://www2.saob.se/osa/index.phtml> (accessed 29 October 2016): 'ett sammanfattande uttryck för etisk idealitet o. människans sträfvan efter fullkomlighet i sättet att lefva'.

too.<sup>16</sup> I will read these plays partly against a biographical and historical backdrop to establish the possible didactic value of the plays, and will then compare the words and actions of virtue in the plays with the King's use of virtue in some of his political speeches and other writings.

## The plays

During 1782 and 1783, Gustavus III wrote five dramas in a bid to create a national, Swedish repertoire for the stage.<sup>17</sup> The first of these was *Märta Banérs och Lars Sparres Kärlekshandel* (The love-dealings of Märta Banér and Lars Sparre), later renamed *Gustaf Adolphs Ädelmod* (The magnanimity of Gustavus Adolphus).

### *The Magnanimity of Gustavus Adolphus* (1783)

The main plot in this play was borrowed from a divertissement by Voltaire, *Charlot ou La Comtesse de Givry*,<sup>18</sup> but transferred to Sweden in the early 1600s. It focuses on the King's favoured theme: duty above love.

The Countess Magdalena has arranged a marriage between her two young protégées Lars Sparre and Märta Banér, who were both orphaned in the Linköping Bloodbath of 1600. She is unaware of the fact that Lars Sparre is really the son of the nurse Lucia who, on the orders of Sparre's mother, exchanged Lars for her own son Erik Johansson in an effort to save him from being killed by the vengeful King Charles IX. The real Lars Sparre thus grows up with the nurse, as a servant, under the name Erik Johansson.

16 See Berg, *Anteckningar om Göteborgs äldre teatrar*; Personne, *Svenska teatern*, esp. I-V; Blomkvist, *Nöjeslivet i Stockholm 1773-1806*; and Carlborg-Mannberg and Hjerstrand-Malmros, *Gustaf III:s skötebarn*.

17 Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, p. 55. The plays are: *Gustaf Adolphs Ädelmod* (The magnanimity of Gustavus Adolphus); *Helmfelt*; *Oden och Frigga* (Odin and Frigg); *Gustaf Adolph och Ebba Brahe* (Gustavus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe); and *Christina och Magnus De la Gardie* (Christina and Magnus De la Gardie).

18 Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, p. 62. In effect, all plays by Gustavus III had models in other plays, usually French. The sources and modes of adaptation – a common practice in Sweden at the time, just as the Roman practice of *aemulatio* – have been carefully investigated and traced by Levertin, Skuncke, and others. What has not been investigated in depth are the end results – what the plays are in themselves, as independent works of art: their purpose, their aesthetic, and so on. I have recently started writing a monograph on this particular subject under the working title *'A King among the Muses: A study of dramaturgy, history, and pedagogy in Gustavus III's plays, operas, and carousels'*.

The false Lars Sparre is portrayed as a coarse, ill-mannered, uneducated, lazy, petty, cowardly rogue while the false Erik Johansson is portrayed as an eloquent, mild-tempered, brave, honest, dutiful, noble, and delicate soul full of love for his king; a perfect example of the contemporary belief, that 'blood will out'.

Märta Banér is attracted to Erik, but her sense of duty and loyalty towards her benefactor, Countess Magdalena, prompts her to accept her fate and be married off to the brutish Lars. At the same time, preparations for the marriage, which are to be overseen by the King, are in full swing, and the peasants on the estate of Hörningsholm prepare songs and dances in the King's honour.

Erik at one point admits his love for Märta, but his virtue prevents him from acting upon it, and Märta insists that duty and virtue must come before personal feelings. Lars being brutal, mistrusting, and jealous, finally shoots Erik, who falls to the ground, seemingly dead. However, it transpires that the gunshot had merely grazed Erik's temple, and that he had just passed out. Gustavus Adolphus, who knows the real identities of the two young men, and who has earlier tested both Märta and Erik to find out who they truly love, finally steps in to reveal the truth, and champions the marriages of the children whose fathers had been victims of his own father's tyranny.<sup>19</sup> It ends with a feast, turning the play from a tragedy into a comedy, while underscoring the King's ability to heal and consolidate.

### *Gustaus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe (1783-88)*

The action here takes place in Kalmar Castle and on the island of Öland during the war with the Danes. Gustavus Adolphus has been in love with Ebba Brahe ever since she arrived at court as a young girl after her mother's death. Once he takes the throne, he promises to marry Ebba as soon as he gets back from the war. However, the Queen Dowager, Christina of Holstein, opposes this union, and while the King is away during the war with the Danes, she convinces the celebrated war hero Count Jacob De la Gardie (unaware of the King's feelings and promises) to propose to Ebba, and manipulates Ebba into accepting his proposal by making her doubt the King's honesty.

Ebba sends an emissary to the King to ask him to help her in her predicament. The King rushes back only to find that the marriage has already taken

19 Parts of this synopsis can be found in Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 64-65.

place. The dishonest manoeuvrings of the Queen Dowager are uncovered, and the cruel tragedy strikes the King, De la Gardie, and Ebba as they realize what has happened and the consequences thereof. Gustavus Adolphus pleads with Ebba to divorce De la Gardie, but Ebba insists on her virtue, obligation, and the sanctity of marriage, convincing them all of the righteousness of leaving things as they are, and accepting their fate.

In a parallel story, servants and siblings Sigrid and Sven, celebrate a double wedding with servants and siblings Erik and Maria. This is all done with the King's blessing, Sven having saved the King on the battlefield and the King having saved Erik from drowning.

The King, witnessing their happiness, professes a death wish, but his people's love and their pleas for him to remain their father and protector fills his heart with a renewed love for them and for his country, which overcomes his heartbreak. He reconciles with De la Gardie, making him Marshal of the Realm. Husband and wife, Lars Sparre and Märta Banér, characters from the previous play, reappear as the King's and Ebba's confidants.

### *Siri Brahe (1788)*

The action in this play takes place around midsummer 1611 in Ebba Bjelke's jointure near the town of Christianopol in the easternmost part of the region Blekinge (a part of Denmark at the beginning of the seventeenth century) during the Polish-Swedish conflict.

Siri Brahe, a friend of Ebba Bjelke, is engaged to Erik Turesson Bjelke, the Steward of Kalmar County serving King Charles IX. However, she is secretly married to Johan Gyllenstierna, Ebba's eldest son who serves the deposed king Sigismund III Vasa, but who is now a declared outlaw. Siri, Ebba, and Ebba's daughter Anna are anxiously awaiting news of the youngest son Göran Gyllenstierna's return from the battlefield, where he serves as an officer in Charles IX's army. The women are guarded by Peder Stolpe, an old officer who served under Ebba's husband Nils Gyllenstierna and who is now Ebba's most trusted servant. Stolpe's daughter Stina, also a servant, grew up together with Anna, and they are confidants.

While waiting, Ebba is preparing the wedding between Erik Bjelke and Siri, destined to take place immediately upon Erik's arrival. Meanwhile, Johan Gyllenstierna arrives in disguise, urging Stina to forward a letter to Siri saying he is alive and waiting for her. Stina, a young, flimsy, nosy, and naively intrigant girl, fails to deliver the letter to Siri. Anna, an equally nosy and intrigue-loving girl, intercepts Stina and forces her to share her secret. Anna, unaware of the clandestine marriage between Siri and Johan,

and thinking Siri has a secret lover, decides to play mind games with her, desperate to find out who he is.

At the same time, the lowly, vicious, and greedy Erik Göranson Tegel, Charles IX's Inspector General, is scouting for traitors. He learns that there may be a traitor hiding somewhere on Ebba Bjelke's estate, and so he decides to exact revenge on the family, as he feels wronged and mistreated by the nobility in general and by the Bjelke family in particular. Stolpe discovers that his 'son' Gyllenstierna is alive, and vows to hide and protect him. Stolpe also protects the interests of Siri, who finally learns of her beloved husband's return, keeping them both out of harm's way, and hiding Gyllenstierna in a secret vault in the house.

Anna, forever snooping, finds a concealed entrance to the vault, and realizes that the stranger who gave Stina the letter might be the same person now hiding in there. She decides something suspicious is going on, and together with Stina they confront Stolpe. He persuades them that the man in hiding is an emissary sent to negotiate peace and he asks them to keep quiet about it. However Anna, still not convinced, decides to inquire of Tegel about the surreptitious emissary, and thereby unknowingly reveals Johan Gyllenstierna's identity and his hiding place to the distrustful Inspector General, and by that, also unknowingly betrays her own brother and the whole family. Tegel tries to coax the truth out of Stolpe; however, he refuses to betray his masters. Stolpe finally reveals everything to the girls. Anna realizes the full consequences of her actions and runs away mortified.

The tension grows, and Tegel threatens the family. Siri decides to confide in her fiancé and throw herself and Gyllenstierna at his mercy, confident in Bjelke's honour and virtue. Heartbroken, Bjelke decides that magnanimity and honour supersede romance, and offers his protection. Tegel attempts to invade the jointure but is kept at bay by Bjelke and Stolpe. Gyllenstierna appears, wanting to sacrifice himself for the family, but his mother Ebba throws herself around her son's waist, and Stolpe tries to stop the soldiers getting to Gyllenstierna.

At the last minute, the young Crown Prince Gustavus Adolphus appears in the belief that he is to celebrate his friend Bjelke's wedding. Siri, Ebba, and Stolpe plead for Johan Gyllenstierna's life. Gustavus Adolphus is impressed by Gyllenstierna's virtue, honour, and courage, and grants him clemency, even though he has chosen to serve the 'wrong' king. Ebba embraces all her children vituperating Anna for her meddling, stating that 'to inquire about other people's secrets is a crime against the common weal'.<sup>20</sup>

20 *Siri Brahe*, in KGIIS, II, p. 267.

### *Gustaf Vasa* (1786)

Christiern Tyrann ('tyrant'; Christian II of Denmark) is holding Gustavus Vasa's mother Cecilia af Eka (Cecilia of Eka), his sister Margareta Vasa, and a host of Sweden's foremost noblemen, along with their wives and children, captive in a dungeon prison in Stockholm Palace.<sup>21</sup>

Christiern revels in his victory after the Stockholm Bloodbath, certain of his claim to the throne, while his adviser, Grand Admiral Sevrin Norrby (Søren Norby or Severin Norbi) advocates caution: Gustavus Vasa is on the march determined to avenge his father and reclaim his country.

Christiern states that using fear and terror is the best and most efficient way to rule, ensuring the obedience of the conquered subjects, whereas Norrby insists that the King should practise clemency.

Norrby is disgusted when he learns that Christiern does not intend to spare even the women and children, but instead to use Gustavus Vasa's mother and Christina Gyllenstjerna (the widow of Regent Sten Sture [the Younger]) as bait, forcing Gustavus to give up his cause in front of all his people. Threatening to kill her young son, he coerces Christina to act as an emissary telling Gustavus Vasa that if he does not give up, Christiern will decapitate his mother. Norrby takes Christina to the Vasa camp, informing him of Christiern's offer. Christina is forced to deliver the letter that tells of Christiern's plans for Gustavus's mother.

Gustavus Vasa is faced with a gruesome dilemma: to betray his people and seal Sweden's fate as an occupied state, or to sacrifice his own mother's life. Initially he cannot find a resolution: 'Damned be my revenge and my victory, if they are to be soiled by a mother's blood',<sup>22</sup> but Christina, and later all the soldiers, berate Gustavus Vasa for his selfish reasoning; all of them have lost loved ones fighting for freedom, and they are willing to bet their own lives as well. After an internal struggle, Gustavus resolves to refuse Christiern's offer, and resume his fight to liberate Sweden. In a sweet dream he sees Glory, Victory, and Pallas erect a monument to him in the Temple of

21 For this chapter, I use Oxenstierna's edition of the text, based on the King's manuscript(s) from c.1783, not the revised opera libretto by Johan Henric Kellgren, 1787-88. For a discussion of the making of the libretto, see Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 164-69. Oxenstierna's version is, according to Levertin, and as far as I can tell, closest to the King's older manuscripts, and might even be a transcription of a French or Swedish version by the King himself. Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 150-69. For another examination of the genesis of this opera, see Breitholz, *Studier i operan Gustaf Vasa*.

22 *Gustaf Vasa* in KGIIS, II, p. 25: 'Förbannad vare hämnnden och min seger, om de skola fläckas af en moders blod'.



Immortality. At the same time, Christiern has a poisonous dream in which Treason, Contrition, and Hate crush his crown.

Christiern commands Norrby to kill Gustavus's mother as soon as he appears, but Norrby, deeply moved by Gustavus's and Christina's virtue, and claiming his honour as his own, refuses and is thrown into prison. Christiern is plagued by the bloody ghosts of the two young Ribbing boys (sons of the nobleman Lindorm Knutsson Ribbing), as well as by Sten Sture the Younger, Joachim Brahe, and Erik Vasa – all of whom he has previously murdered during the Stockholm Bloodbath – calling for revenge, causing him to lose control of his troops.

Meanwhile, Gustavus Vasa advances with his army, and wins a crushing victory. The Danish soldiers flee, and so does Christiern when Christina Gyllestjerna announces the Swedish victory from within the palace. Gustavus Vasa vows to rule with clemency, and is celebrated by the people, and Norrby releases Cecilia af Eka to be united with her son.

### Princely virtue

In the majority of his tragedies, Gustavus III focuses on Gustavus Adolphus, in whom he saw the role model for, and the mirror image of, his own actions during his *coup d'état* in 1772. The birth of the Crown Prince Gustavus was a major event in Sweden. He was the first heir to the throne born in Sweden since Charles XII (1682-1718), something that was heavily used as a political instrument by the court. Counts Carl Gustaf Tessin and Carl Fredrik Scheffer were responsible for crafting the image of the future king of Sweden. Count Scheffer minted medals that manifested this most important symbol. Gustavus was shown as the rising sun over Sweden, a prince whose great love for his people inspired the love of his subjects. Marie-Christine Skuncke has shown the importance of these medals, which combined a striking image with a quote in Latin, and which early on manifested the image of Gustavus as the sun and as the 'third Gustavus'.<sup>23</sup> Comparing the sovereign with the sun was a common device seen already in antiquity and in Graeco-Roman mythology, and perpetuated throughout the Renaissance and the Baroque period, the most prominent example perhaps being Louis XIV.<sup>24</sup>

Count Tessin launched the Crown Prince as 'the third Gustavus' in a poem in French:

23 Skuncke, *Gustaf III – det offentliga barnet*, p. 78.

24 See for example Peter Burke's discussion in 'The Demise of Royal Mythologies', p. 252.

Deux GUSTAVES chéris ont régné dans le Nord,  
L'Amour de leurs Sujets, l'honneur du Diadème:  
A qui le prix est dû, le monde est peu d'accord:  
Dieu, pour en décider, nous donne le troisième.

(Two beloved Gustavians have ruled in the North,  
The love of their subjects, the glory of the Crown:  
The world is not in agreement on who is worthy of the prize:  
God, in order to decide, has given us the third.)<sup>25</sup>

Hereafter, the rising-sun motif became the most popular both in eulogies and in lampoons during the Gustavian era,<sup>26</sup> and heavily used by the King himself. It manifested the dynastic ties between Gustavus III, Gustavus Adolphus (II), and Gustavus Vasa (I).<sup>27</sup>

At the time of the Crown Prince's birth, the ancient notion of the magic qualities of the blood line was revived: the belief that past, present, and sometimes even future generations were linked through blood. Thus, Gustavus III would, as heir to Gustavus I and Gustavus II, be able to recreate the glories of his predecessors. The newborn Crown Prince was used as a unifying, national symbol, 'as a link between a glorious past and coming days of greatness' in a time when the political climate was strained and insecure in Sweden.<sup>28</sup>

Gustavus III used these images himself, both in his political speeches and in his historical operas and plays. It is hardly surprising, then, that the subject for his first play is the ideal monarch Gustavus Adolphus.

In *The Magnanimity of Gustavus Adolphus*, we first hear of the King's character by his people. In Act I, scene 2, Elin, the twelve-year-old young foster child of the Countess, on learning that the King will attend the wedding, jumps up and down and runs around shouting 'O, we get to see the King! We get to see the good Prince, the brave Sir, the swift, the good King.'<sup>29</sup> In Act I, scene 7, there is a comical scene with Märta Banér, Erik Johansson, Elin, the overbearing teacher Frigelius, and peasants of the estate preparing a divertissement for the King. They erect a Maypole and

25 Quoted in Skuncke, *Gustaf III – det offentliga barnet*, p. 72.

26 Annie Mattsson discusses this in her dissertation *Komediant och riksförädare*, esp. in ch. 5.

27 Skuncke, *Gustaf III – det offentliga barnet*, p. 79.

28 Ibid., p. 80. Cf. Nell, *Vivat vår monark!*, pp. 69–72.

29 *Gustaf Adolfs Ädelmod*, in KGIIS, III, p. 168: 'Ack, vi få se Kungen! Vi få se den goda Prinsen, den tappra Herrn, den raska, den goda Kungen'.

instruct the peasants to dance and sing the King's praise. Frigelius wants to open with a long-winded eulogy in the pathetic style riddled with Greek and Latin words and references, and have the peasants sing in Latin and Greek. Erik protests asserting that 'a simple expression of our love, pleases the King more, than all the pompous Latin erudition'. However, Frigelius's humorously tedious eulogy serves the purpose of enumerating the King's virtues: he is brave, chivalrous, intelligent, and prudent, and his court is dominated by 'Jus' and 'Pietas', 'Fides' and 'Aequitas', 'Pax' and 'Sapientia', 'Spes' and 'Prudentia'.<sup>30</sup> His Latin tirades nonetheless fail to impress. Instead, the peasants are instructed to sing a song in Swedish praising the King's magnanimity and his courage in battle. The song ensures that his people are dependent on his well-being and love, and that they love him in return.<sup>31</sup>

This little tableau serves as comic relief in the midst of the tragedy, and despite its nonsensical nature, it helps to stress the idea that the love of the lower classes is a king's highest reward. It also underscores that a Swedish king should be praised in Swedish – a nod to the ongoing project of creating a national Swedish stage in a bid to strengthen the Swedish language.

The greatness of the King is also hinted at in the beginning, when Märta Banér – a child of one of the noblemen murdered by Gustavus Adolphus's father – expresses admiration and love for the King even before she has met him:

My aunt has surely heard everything that Erik Johansson has said about the King? When he speaks of him, it is always with tears in his eyes, and especially when he tells of the great mercy the King shows towards the children of the unfortunate Noblemen his father killed: with what care he advances their happiness: with what tenderness he takes them under his protection. For myself I do not know if it is my friendship with Erik Johansson that makes me love the King so much, but I can never hear the name Gustavus Adolphus without being moved.<sup>32</sup>

30 Ibid., pp. 181-87. '[E]tt okonstladt uttryck af vår kärlek behagar Konungen mer, än all den granna latinska lärdomen' (p. 184).

31 Ibid., pp. 183-87.

32 Ibid., p. 172: 'Min moster har säkert hört allt hvad som Erik Johansson om Kungen berättar? När han talar om honom, så är det alltid med tårarna i ögonen, och i synnerhet när han förtäljer all den nåd Konungen visar för de olyckliga Herrarnas barn, som hans fader uppoffrade; med hvad omsorg han befrämjar deras lycka: med hvad ömhet han tager dem i sitt beskydd. För min del vet jag icke om det är min vänskap för Erik Johansson, som gör att jag håller så mycket av Konungen; men jag kan aldrig höra Gustaf Adolph nämnas, utan att känna mig rörd'.

The true magnanimity of the King is implied early, but not properly shown until the very end of the play. The King enters as a *deus ex machina* to unwind the ball of tangled yarn: he reveals the secret of the exchanged identities, marries Märta and the real Lars Sparre, proclaims himself the 'father' of the orphaned Lars, and bestows on the groom the estates that had been taken from his father by Charles IX, thereby righting the wrongs of his tyrannical predecessor. The Countess exclaims: 'O, my King! O King, worthy of thy crown! O that our recognition, our gratitude our love be a worthy recompense for thy virtue!', to which Gustavus Adolphus replies: 'That is the highest reward for a good king'.<sup>33</sup> Thanks to the King, however, the tragedy never happens; his prudence and sense of justice even heals the wounds of the past and relieves the sins of his father. Indirectly then, Charles IX is portrayed as an *exemple à fuir*.

This corresponds both to the image of Gustavus III as the great unifier that permeated Swedish society already at his birth, and to the image he wished to convey of himself during his first speech to the Estates when he came to power in 1771. The King sought to unite the Riksdag, which disagreed on the King's rights, and to unite the Fatherland – just as Gustavus Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus had.<sup>34</sup> In his speech to the Estates on 25 June 1771, Gustavus III urged for unity and harmony for the public good.<sup>35</sup> A Swedish king delivering a speech in Swedish was somewhat of a sensation. He declared himself ready to 'assemble your scattered minds, unite your dispersed hearts' ('samla tillbaka edra strödda sinnen, förenda edra åtskilda hjertan'). It is said, even by his critics, that the speech moved the audience to tears and that immediately the whole speech was printed and distributed to all the parishes in the country. It was also translated into French by Count Scheffer and sent to France to be published in the *Gazette de France*.<sup>36</sup>

In Act II, scene 7, when Gustavus Adolphus arrives at the estate, he declares: 'I would consider myself happy, if my presence could eradicate from your memory, and especially from your hearts, the prejudices that our joint

33 Ibid., p. 233: 'O, Min Konung! O Konung, värdig din krona! Ack att vår erkänsla, vår tillgifvenhet, vår kärlek må vara ett värdigt pris för din dygd!'; 'Det är en god konungs största belöning'.

34 See for instance Lönnroth, *Den stora rollen*, pp. 37-38. Cf. Nell, *Vivat vår monark!*, p. 76.

35 Lönnroth, *Den stora rollen*, p. 39.

36 Quote from Gustavus III, 'TAL till Rikets Ständer på Riksalen, vid Riksdagens början, den 25 Juni 1771', in KGIIIS, I, pp. 73-76, quote on p. 76. See also Odhner *Sveriges politiska historia under Konung Gustaf III:s regering*, p. 28. Cf. Nell, *Vivat vår monark!*, p. 76. Both Mikael Alm and Henrika Tandefelt thoroughly and commendably discuss at length in their previously mentioned dissertations how the royal apparatuses concerning speeches, images, and ceremonies all contributed to spreading the King's self-image, however neither of them consider the role of the King's own plays in this respect.

misfortunes that the dispute which has torn asunder the Fatherland, has printed in your mind'.<sup>37</sup> This is very close, as noted also by Oscar Levertin, to the wording in Gustavus III's real-life speech to the Estates after the revolution in August 1772, where he claimed autocratic power in order to restore peace and harmony to a disjointed Sweden.<sup>38</sup> It is also noticeable that many of the panegyric verses written during this time carry the same message: like his predecessors Gustavus Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus, the third Gustavus unites and saves the nation. In my dissertation, I analysed the panegyric verses by poet Carl Michael Bellman before, during, and after the King's *coup d'état*, showing that many of these poems closely followed the symbolism created by the court in 1746 portraying the King as a unifying force, following in the footsteps of the previous Gustavians. Already in 1771, when Gustavus III rode into Stockholm as the new king of Sweden after the death of his father, Bellman argued for the new king's greatness by alluding to his bloodline in his celebratory poem 'Käre bröder, drickom Gustafs skål' (Dear brothers, let us toast to Gustavus), in which Bellman relates the feats of both Gustavus Vasa, who fought and conquered the 'tyrant' Christian II of Denmark, and Gustavus Adolphus who won considerable victories for the Protestant cause, asking Heaven to make Gustavus III just as great as his two predecessors.<sup>39</sup>

The image-making that took place at the birth of the Crown Prince thus created a kind of reciprocal relationship between political rhetoric, poetry, and actual events, that could be seen as an example of the 'social energy' that Greenblatt identifies.<sup>40</sup>

The play was staged first only within the court circle, where it received mixed but fairly good reviews. It was staged for the general public (albeit shortened from five acts to three) at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in 1789, performed five times that year, twice in 1790 and three times in 1791.<sup>41</sup> In 1789, Sweden was at war with Russia, and the King was heavily opposed by the nobility and by the advocates for Enlightenment. The King felt

37 *Gustaf Adolphs Ädelmod*, in KGIIS, III, p. 198: 'Jag ansåge mig lycklig, om min närvaro kunde utplåna ur ert minne, och i synnerhet ur ert hjerta, de fördomar, som våra samfålta olyckor, som den oenighet, som sönderslittit fäderneslandet, intryckt i edert sinne'.

38 The whole speech is printed in KGIIS, I, pp. 87-94. Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, p. 56.

39 *Carl Michael Bellmans skrifter*, VII, p. 8, in *Carl Michael Bellmans Samlade Verk*, Bellmans-sällskapet [Swedish Bellman Society], <https://archive.org/stream/diktertillgustafunse#page/no/mode/2up> (accessed 29 October 2016).

40 Nell, *Vivat vår monark!*, pp. 75-97.

41 Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 73-74. Carlborg-Mannberg and Hjertstrand-Malmros, *Gustaf III:s skötebarn*, pp. 136-77.

duty-bound to go to war – *fortitudo* as in bravery on the battlefield being one of the royal virtues he had not yet demonstrated during his reign. The King saw an opportunity to ‘save’ his people, as he had during the *coup d’état* in 1772, and by that, regain his popularity.<sup>42</sup> Opponents of the war, on the other hand, feared it would tear the nation asunder; Gustavus III therefore tried to portray it as something unifying. In the play *The Magnanimity of Gustavus Adolphus*, he reminds the audience of the consolidating and restorative efforts of the second Gustavus as well as of his own – an act of persuasion through theatre – through *mimesis*, or *showing*.

*Gustavus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe* is perhaps the King’s most well-known tragedy in the pathetic style. It too carefully explores the age-old theme of duty above love, the main theme of many of the Greek tragedies and of the *Aeneid*, and the linchpin of French classical drama represented by Fénelon, Corneille, and Racine.

In this play, the virtues of *fortitudo*, *prudentia*, *pietas*, and *clementia* are featured most frequently. The major virtues of the protagonists featured are demonstrated in the dialogues in the third and final act, scenes 6 and 7, after Gustavus Adolphus has learned that Ebba is now married to his friend and officer, De la Gardie. All three lead characters display virtue, Ebba being the main advocate for duty and honour, which will be discussed below under ‘Female Virtue’.

Gustavus Adolphus’s first reaction to the news is shock, sadness, and anger. He feels betrayed and abandoned by both his lover and his friend, and he lashes out against De la Gardie vowing revenge. De la Gardie responds with *fortitudo* (as in patience and perseverance), and replies that he is worthy of Ebba not only because of his heroism, but because he entered the union unaware of the secret liaison between her and the King. In a lengthy monologue he argues his case: he has fought – and won – for the King honestly, and valiantly, using only bravery and no underhanded deeds. His love for Ebba is true, and he was promised her hand as a reward for his victories, made to believe that Ebba entered into the union by her own free will. Discovering he was lied to and manipulated, he feels, is punishment enough, and that they all now must suffer their fate.<sup>43</sup> Gustavus Adolphus will not be reasoned with, and urges divorce – maintaining that true love is holy. In a closing argument with Ebba, her virtue, sense of duty and respect for the sanctity of marriage, finally convinces the King of the truth. In his words: ‘Trembling I forfeit my love, I feel all the bitterness of this sacrifice;

42 Cf. Nell, *Vivat vår monark!*, pp. 123–24.

43 *Gustaf Adolph och Ebba Brahe*, in KGIIS, II, p. 132.

but your honour, my duty demands it; I bow to its law [...] War and glory shall show me the path upon which I shall seek an end to my torment; it is among enemy troops, on the fields of victory I shall look for death'.<sup>44</sup>

In the seventh and final scene of the play, Gustavus Adolphus is confronted by the happiness of his newly-wed servants. He confesses his heartbreak to them, and reveals his plans to go to war and seek out an honourable death on the battlefield. They all protest:

**Sigrid:** No, live for us.

**Sven:** No, forsake us not, we who are your children.

**Maria:** No, without you, what will happen to us?

**Johan:** No, live for us, for us who are your children. Our joy has turned, because You cannot share it; but think about us, on your entire people, who cries for their Father, their King. (*All on their knees around the King:*) No, forsake us not, no, live for us, our good father, our good King!

**Gustavus Adolphus:** God! What a sight! What love! What a moving tableau! My entire soul is thereby affected! [...] O Heaven! I confess your mercy, You show me the love of my people to strengthen my heart broken by love and grief. Soul of my soul! you who guide all my actions: Love for the Fatherland! for Glory! come and enliven, fill my heart, erase from it all weakness, steady my courage, and make me worthy of my people's affection. Yes, they show me my duty; I shall fulfil it.<sup>45</sup>

He then reconciles with De la Gardie, declaring that Ebba's lover has shown his rage and bad temper, whereas Gustavus Adolphus has shown his appreciation and gratitude. He displays prudence and clemency by making De la Gardie Marshal of the Realm. He has realized that his duties as King far

44 Ibid., p.137: 'Jag uppoffrar darrande min kärlek, jag känner all bitterheten af detta offer; men din heder, min skyldighet fordrar det; jag underkastar mig dess lag. [...] Kriget och äran visa mig den stig, på hvilken jag skall söka slut på min plåga; det är bland fiendens öfvervunna troppar, på segerns fält jag skall söka döden'.

45 Ibid., pp. 138-39: '**Sigrid:** Nej, lef för oss./ **Sven:** Nej, öfvergif oss ej, vi som äro edra barn./ **Maria:** Nej, utom Er hvad blef det väl af oss?/ **Johan:** Nej, lef för oss, för oss som äro edra barn. Vår glädje är förvandlad, efter Ni ej den kan dela; men tänk på oss, på ert hela folk, som ropar efter sin Far, sin Kung. (*Alla på knä omkring Kungen:*) Nej, öfvergif oss icke, nej, lef för oss, vår goda far, vår goda Kung!/ **Gustaf Adolph:** Gud! Hvad syn! Hvad kärlek! Hvad rörande taf! Hela min själ är däraf betagen [...] O Himmel! jag erkänner din nåd, Du visar mig mitt folks kärlek, att styrka mitt hjerta krossadt af kärlek och sorg. Själ af min själ! du som styr alla mina gerningar: Kärlek för Fäderneslandet! för Åran! kom och upplifva, uppfyll mitt hjerta, utplåna derur all svaghet, stadga mitt mod, och gör mig värdig mitt folks tillgifvenhet. Ja, de visa mig min skyldighet; jag skall den följa.'

exceed his personal feelings, however true and pure his love has been. His final words are directed toward the peasants at the wedding: 'Be content; it is your happiness, your love, and the well-being of my people that shall comfort me and stamp out the memory of my grief'.<sup>46</sup> The message is clear: a man of true virtue is someone who can rise above his passions, echoing the famous reflections on virtue featured in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1718-1778) *Émile* and in his *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, both much read at the Gustavian court. Passion, fire, is needed to generate a great man, but the wise man knows how to balance it with virtue, so that he can accomplish great deeds.<sup>47</sup>

This text was versified by the King's librettist Johan Henric Kellgren (1751-1795), set to music and performed as an opera during the years of war with Russia, premiering in 1788. It was disliked by the nobility but received favourably by the Middle Estate – whose favour Gustavus III was courting in order to proceed with the war.<sup>48</sup> Levertin asserts that this piece was used to encourage royalist sentiments among the Middle Estate; it was, for instance, staged during the celebrations of the victory of Grand Admiral Prince Charles (later Charles XIII, 1748-1818) at the naval Battle of Hogland in 1789.<sup>49</sup>

In *Siri Brahe*, there is no king other than the vile Charles IX, who is never seen in the play but only represented by the brutish and vengeful Inspector General Tegel. However, Gustavus Adolphus emerges as the ideal king, even though here he is still only Crown Prince. Although playing only a minor part, Gustavus Adolphus represents clemency and justice, echoing the same virtues manifested in the nobleman Erik Bjelke, the slighted fiancé, who, after a ten-year-long engagement to Siri, on their wedding day learns

46 Ibid., p. 140: 'Varen tillfreds; det är er lycka, er kärlek och mitt folks väl, som skall trösta mig och utplåna minnet af min sorg'.

47 This can be illustrated by quotes such as: 'Qu'est-ce que donc que l'homme vertueux? C'est celui qui sait vaincre ses affections' ('Who then, is the virtuous man? He is the one who knows how to conquer his affections'), see Rousseau, *Émile*, Bk. 5, p. 818; and 'il n'y a que les ames de feu qui sachent combattre et vaincre. Tous les grands efforts, toutes les actions sublimes sont leur ouvrage; la froide raison n'a jamais rien fait d'illustre, et l'on ne triomphe des passions qu'en les opposant l'une à l'autre. Quand celle de la vertu vient à s'élever, elle domine seule et tient tout en équilibre; voila comment se forme le vrai sage, qui n'est pas plus qu'un autre à l'abri des passions mais qui seul sait les vaincre par elles-mêmes' ('it is only ardent souls that know how to fight and win. All great struggles, all sublime actions are their doing; cold reason has never achieved anything illustrious, and passions are surmounted only by being set against each other. When passion arises, it rules alone and keeps everything in balance; that is how a wise man is formed, who no more than any other is sheltered from the passions, but alone is able to overcome them', see Rousseau, *Julie, ou La nouvelle Héloïse*, pt. 4, Letter 12, p. 493).

48 Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, p. 129-30.

49 Ibid., p. 130.



that she is actually married to the outlawed Gyllenstierna, and that they now need his help. He has but minutes to choose what is right. In Act III, scene 12, Siri pleads:

I have no right to ask of you anything; but I dare expect everything. I know your magnanimity, I know its value, I know what a noble heart is capable of, and I believe yours too big, too honourable to fear anything that would not resemble it. O! May you instead of the love, that my heart denies you, settle with its esteem, with its reverence of your virtue!<sup>50</sup>

Bjelke is mortified, but as he is a true *grand homme*, duty wins:

By so many deadly stings wounded, paralysed: overburdened by bewilderment, resentment, grief, love, admiration, I am as by thunder struck ... love ... despair ... duty ... Ah Siri! ... Cruel Siri! ...

[...]

What cruel state! ... What conflict! I see everything ... my misfortune ... my obligation ... Honour speaks: it is enough ... I shall obey its terrible voice. O cruel one! ... You shall venerate the heart you rip to pieces...<sup>51</sup>

In the final scene, Crown Prince Gustavus Adolphus appears once again as a *deus ex machina* just as Tegel has ordered his soldiers to take Johan Gyllenstierna away. Ebba Bielke, Siri, and Anna all fall to their knees pleading for mercy for their son, husband, and brother. Gustavus Adolphus exclaims: 'All rise and be assured: you shall have justice. I have come to protect the safety of the realm, and not to undermine it'.<sup>52</sup> He listens patiently to all parties, and decides to practise clemency; Sigismund is not a threat, and enough blood has already been shed, he states. Tegel's evil doings are exposed and punished, and Johan Gyllenstierna is given his freedom. Gyllenstierna

50 *Siri Brahe* in KGIIS, II, p. 250: 'Jag har ingen rätt att något af er äska; men jag vågar vänta allt. Jag känner ert ädelmod, jag vet att värdera det, jag vet hvad ett ädelt hjerta är mäktigt att göra, och jag tror ert för stort, för ädelmodigt, för att frukta något som ej skulle likna det. Ack! Mätte ni i stället för den kärlek, som mitt hjerta er nekar, nöjas med dess aktning, med dess vördnad för eder dygd!'

51 *Ibid.*, p. 253: 'Af så många dödliga sting sårad, orörlig: tryckt av förundran, harm, sorg, kärlek, beundran, är jag som af tordön slagen ... kärlek ... förtviflan ... skyldighet ... Ack Siri! ... Grymma Siri ... [...] Hvad grymt tillstånd! ... Hvad strid! Jag ser allt ... min olycka ... min skyldighet ... Hedern talar: det är nog ... Jag skall följa dess förfärliga röst. Grymma! ... Du skall värda det hjerta som du söndersliter.'

52 *Ibid.* p. 262: 'Stigen alla opp och varen tillfreds: eder skall ske rätt. Jag är kommen att skydda allmän säkerhet, och ej att den störa.'

expresses his great admiration for the Crown Prince and claims that the only reason he does not come back to Sweden is that he has pledged allegiance to Sigismund, and will honour his king until he dies. Gustavus Adolphus replies: 'I admire your way of thinking but I do not approve of it',<sup>53</sup> anachronistically echoing Voltaire and the Enlightenment ideal of tolerance.<sup>54</sup>

*Siri Brahe* was also staged during the war years. It was performed almost 30 times at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm between 1788 and 1792, and was, according to Levertin, the greatest success next to *Gustaf Vasa* during the Gustavian era, and favourably received especially by the Middle Estate.<sup>55</sup>

It is not hard to see how this play could have been used as a didactic and political tool. It serves as a reminder of the genealogy, the bloodline between the second and third Gustavus; it shows Gustavus Adolphus (and Erik Bjelke) practising *clementia* and *iustitia*, and to a degree also *prudentia*. These are virtues that Gustavus III was heavily praised for during his first years on the throne, and, according to his speeches, the very reasons for which he carried out the *coup d'état* in 1772.<sup>56</sup> In the character of Peder Stolpe, the steadfast soldier (discussed below in 'Virtuous Villains and Commoners'), the Middle Estate was given an exemplum of the model citizen, unswervingly loyal and trusting towards his masters and his king. Similarly, the moral and self-sacrificing Erik Bjelke sets an example for the nobility, showing honour and duty as its own reward. The Crown Prince Gustavus Adolphus too recognizes and praises virtue and loyalty, even when they happen to be directed towards the wrong sovereign; steadfastness and strength of character emerge as virtues in themselves.

The foremost princely virtues prompted by the protagonist in the opera *Gustaf Vasa* are fortitude and prudence. We see a very similar dramatic structure in *Gustavus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe*, where a noble woman is the one talking sense to the protagonist (discussed below in 'Female Virtue'). Looking at this piece solely from the aspect of virtue, we can see

53 Ibid., pp. 262-66, quote on page 266: 'Jag vördar ditt tänkesätt, utan att det gilla'.

54 During all of his life, the King had studied texts, not only by Voltaire, that claimed that the love and loyalty of the lowliest subjects is the truest confirmation of a king's greatness. It is said that Gustavus III could recite Voltaire's *La Henriade* by heart, and it is likely that Voltaire's portrait of Henry IV of France was the model for the protagonists in the King's plays featuring Gustavus Adolphus: 'a forgiving conqueror who ends all political fraction'. See Lönnroth, *Den stora rollen*, p. 79.

55 Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 193-94; Carlborg-Mannberg and Hjerstrand-Malmros, *Gustaf III:s skötebarn*, pp. 136-77. See also Nell, *Vivat vår monark!*, pp. 129-32.

56 See for instance his speech from 21 August 1772, in KGIHS, I, pp. 87-94.

that Gustavus III is working around a hub that explores virtue, vice, and personal sacrifice. As in the King's other tragedies, and naturally in most tragedies from antiquity and onwards, virtue is shown to be innate to the great man, although frequently it has to be wheedled out when emotion and irrationality temporarily blind him.

This is also the case in *Gustaf Vasa*. In Act II, scene 3, when faced with the choice of either giving up the fight for freedom or sacrificing his own mother, he rages:

Damned be revenge and my victory, if they are soiled by a mother's blood... what abyss threatens me! ... should I silence nature's voice and remain deaf to the call of honour? I fight for my Fatherland, and send my mother to her grave; and if I wish to spare her, I cause Sweden's demise – O no! – break my promises; become a traitor and a slave ... rip the breast who gave me life ... O God! send a ray of Your light into this heart, which has always humbly honoured your laws, and tell me what sacrifice You demand.<sup>57</sup>

Torn between saving his country and committing the moral and religious sin of matricide, Gustavus Vasa turns to his soldiers and asks: 'If one of you were asked, to forsake protecting your fatherland, or lose a wife, a sister, or a mother, what would be your answer?' The soldiers reply that they have all left their wives, sisters, and mothers behind to fight for freedom, and if so much as one of them would dare to violate their sacred duty, he would be killed on the spot, forever considered a disgrace to his family name.<sup>58</sup>

This is the final moral push the hero needs, and after displaying due grief over his decision, he is comforted by Sweden's guardian angel, descending on Gustavus in his sleep, showing him the honour and glory that awaits, while the usurper Christiern is shown his shameful fate in a nightmare (Act II, scenes 6 and 7).

In scene 8, Gustavus awakes, and revived and restored in his resolve and courage, he assures in his monologue that his intention is not vainglory, but true glory: 'If I am led by a vain quest for glory, by the desire to make

57 *Gustaf Vasa*, in KGIIS, II, pp. 25-26: 'Förbannad vare hämnden och min seger, om de skola fläckas af en moders blod ... hvilken afgrund hotar mig! ... bör jag qväfva naturens röst och vara döf för ärans bud? Jag strider för mitt fädernesland, och störtar min moder i grafven; och då jag vill skona dess dagar, hastar jag Sveriges fall – Dock nej! – bryta mina löften; blifva förrädare och slaf ... sönderslita det bröst som skänkte mig lifvet ... O Gud! sänd en stråle af Ditt ljus i detta hjerta, som alltid i undergifvenhet vördat dina lagar, och säg hvilket offer Du fordrar'.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 28f., quote on p. 28: 'Om man fordrade af någon ibland eder, att försaka fosterlandets beskydd, eller att förlora en maka, en syster, eller moder, hvad bleve edert svar?'

a name and acquire a shiny crown: o then let me fall! [...] If again a noble zeal guides my steps; if the reverence for Your name and the love of my fatherland possess my soul: o then snatch the spire from the tyrant's hand, equip my arm with Your might, strengthen my courage, and Your power shall conquer my enemies!<sup>59</sup>

In this piece the image of vice is as prominent as the imag(es) of virtue. The portrait of Christiern is a rather blunt, but effectively malicious one of an *exemple à fuir* (an example to be avoided). Everything Gustavus is not, Christiern is. He is the counter image of the enlightened despot – Voltaire's ideal sovereign that was the model for Gustavus III's reign.<sup>60</sup> Gustavus Vasa, despite being the protagonist, is in fact not heavily featured in this piece. He appears in the second act, as seen above, and then in the final act when hailed as the victor and the legitimate king. It is the plight of the imprisoned noblemen, women, and children, the cruelty and maliciousness of Christiern's reasoning, and the objections of the virtuous Sevrin Norrby that instead serve as the haute-relief that further enhances the virtues of Gustavus Vasa. The nastiness of Christiern's character is achieved by centring on the appalling circumstances under which his prisoners are held: that he imprisons (and in the past has murdered) the elderly and children, that he considers clemency to be a 'weak' virtue, that he has a predilection to rule by fear, that he disregards justice, and that he is a coward to the very end. All this combines to generate a clear portrait of a tyrant, and gives a sound justification for Gustavus Vasa to reclaim the throne despite the horrible sacrifice he must be prepared to make.

The opera premiered in 1786, as Gustavus III prepared for a war against the Danes. Its success was immediate and long lasting, well into the nineteenth century. It was reportedly mostly celebrated and loved by the Middle Estate, a constant reminder of Swedish patriotism that had led to past glories, and that would certainly, in the hands of the third Gustavus, also lead to future glory.<sup>61</sup> The Swedish poet Bellman, a prominent royalist panegyrist during these years, borrowed a melody from the opera for his famous drinking

59 Ibid., pp. 54-55: 'Om jag ledes af en fåfång ärelystnad, om begäret efter ett namn, och glansen af en krona upplifva mig: o då stupe jag! [...] Om åter en ädel ifver styr mina steg; om vördnanden för Ditt namn och kärleken till mitt fädernesland intaga min själ: o ryck då spiran ur tyrannens hand, väpna min arm med Din kraft, styrk mitt mod, och Din makt störte mina fiender!'

60 See for instance the discussion in Skuncke, Marie-Christine, *Gustaf III – det offentliga barnet*, pp. 36-39.

61 Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 167-68. Cf. *Gustaf Wasa och andra pjäser från svenskt 1700-tal*, ed. Marie-Christine Skuncke, pp. 11-13.

song Fredman's Song no. 21, 'Away we trot soon ev'ryone',<sup>62</sup> thus spreading the references and connotations, however faint, in ever wider circles and contexts.

The popularity of the motif 'the third Gustavus' never waned during the Gustavian era. Appearing at his birth, and perpetuated by the court, by the poets, and by himself, it was the strongest image of the King, produced and reproduced during his reign. It was also the least criticized symbol (even though it was also used for criticism, as shown by Annie Mattsson<sup>63</sup>). Due to their figuration in widespread legend and broadside ballads, Gustavus Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus were both popular, almost mythical figures throughout the eighteenth century, doubtless due to Gustavian 'propaganda'.<sup>64</sup>

At the time of this opera, Gustavus III's national programme was in full swing. The Swedish Academy, based on the French, was founded in 1786 with the aim of improving the Swedish language to the point of being able to compete with Latin, Greek, and French to produce great, eternal art. The Royal Swedish Opera had been founded in 1773, and plans for the Royal Dramatic Theatre were in the pipeline. The plays and operas all featured the virtues of Swedish warrior kings and noblemen as well as of the Swedish people, steadily moulding the Swedish 'national character', embodied in the king and comprising the cardinal virtues.

## Female virtue

As a spectator Gustavus III was reportedly most concerned with female roles, and as a child, he memorized the lines of female characters in all the plays he saw, later re-enacting them in his playroom, much to his tutors' discontent.<sup>65</sup>

In his own plays, many of the female characters speak of virtue and are depicted as virtuous. A woman (mother, sister, fiancée, or other significant

62 Carl Michael Bellman, Fredman's song no. 21, trans. by Paul Britten Austen (1999), <http://litteraturbanken.se/#!/forfattare/BellmanCM/titlar/FredmansEpistlesSongs/sida/III/faksimil>, pp. 155-57 (accessed 29 October 2016). Cf. Swedish original, *Fredmans sånger*, in *Carl Michael Bellmans Samlade Verk*, Bellmansällskapet [Swedish Bellman Society], <https://archive.org/stream/fredmanssnger199unse#page/54/mode/2up> (accessed 29 October 2016).

63 See note 27.

64 See for instance Levertin's account of the popular novellas treating the subject of the love affair between Gustavus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe in Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 101-18 and p. 121.

65 See for instance Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 15-17 and pp. 23-24.

relative) is usually the driving force behind the hero's virtuous choices. Most female protagonists are equipped with fortitude, prudence, and razor sharp logic. In fact, it is the male protagonists who are overcome by affection and sentiment to the degree that they need to be reminded of their duties – just as Aeneas in Virgil's epic.

A common theme in the plays featured in this chapter is the virtue of fortitude, as in forbearance and accepting one's lot in life. As we have seen, the female protagonists in all pieces studied, apart from *Gustaf Vasa*, are married off to someone they do not truly love, which was clearly an everyday reality among royals and nobility at the time. This is the case for Märta Banér in *The Magnanimity of Gustavus Adolphus*, for Ebba Brahe in *Gustavus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe*, and to a certain degree for the eponymous *Siri Brahe*. Siri Brahe's case is slightly different, however, because there is the complication of her already being secretly married to the outlaw Johan Gyllenstierna. She is afraid to speak out and betray her husband. She is portrayed as being bound by gratitude to both Ebba Bjelke and Erik Tureson Bjelke and therefore reluctant to disclose her secret. In this play, she evokes the virtues of her fiancé by showing her fidelity and loyalty to her husband.

Of all the female characters in these four pieces, Ebba Brahe is dealt the cruellest fate; deceived by the scheming Queen Dowager into thinking her fiancé Gustavus Adolphus has betrayed her, she marries De la Gardie almost out of spite – an impulsive decision that she regrets but for which she takes full responsibility. In Act III, scene 5, she hastens to defend herself when confronted by De la Gardie, who hears the King confess his love for her at his return and shames her for letting him think she married him out of free will while really being in love with someone else:

From the youngest age, having been taught to follow the laws of virtue, sacrificing all for her [i.e. virtue], honour is my guide, and it commands me to sacrifice for you, a flame more likely to cloud it [honour].

De la Gardie insists that she will not be able to forget her other love, but Ebba retorts:

The Queen's pride, her will, my fate has brought me to the Lord's altar, to there give you the hand that was meant for your King, to there promise you eternal faith; and that promise I shall keep [...] Ebba Brahe's heart is too big, too noble, not to follow its laws of duty, not to extinguish a flame that would be a crime to you and to her.

Still in doubt, De la Gardie maintains that she will not be able to get over her grief. She replies:

It shall be suppressed. Virtue, obligation, time, yes, your great qualities shall quench it, and the tender sadness I see you suffer, the beauty with which your love is expressed, shall conquer my heart eventually.<sup>66</sup>

Gustavus Adolphus rages against their fate, and as we have seen, refuses to accept it. Ebba is the one who reasons with him: 'My promise has been made, my honour cannot shy away from it; my virtue is known to you, it is constant'.<sup>67</sup> After the King suggests divorce, she again argues from the point of view of virtue:

O God! My Prince, can love then so blind you? See your obligation, hear the voice of honour, it tells you that it is for You a crime to see me, to love me, to use your despair to soften a heart that belongs to another, whose duty only allows her to regard you as her King, whose obligation commands her to flee your sight.<sup>68</sup>

Again the King insists and says that divorce is not a crime, the law allows it, but she retorts: 'Honour forbids what the law allows' ('[H]edern förbjuder hvad lagen tillåter'). Then, she uses the argument of *pietas*, claiming that the whole sorry affair has been the work of God, who wants another to share the King's throne; that marriage is the holiest of bonds and that she will never break them.<sup>69</sup> It is Ebba's strength of character, her steadfastness, and her

66 *Gustaf Adolph och Ebba Brahe* in KGIIS, II, pp. 129-31: 'Ifrån spädaste åren undervist att följa dydgens lag, att allt uppoffra för henne, är äran mitt rättesnöre, och den befäller mig att uppoffra för er en eld, som nu mera kunde den fördunkla; 'Drottningens högmod, hennes vilja, mitt öde har fört mig till Herrens altare, att der gifva er den hand, som eder Konung var ämnad, att der er svärja en evig tro; den skall jag er hålla [...] Ebba Brahes hjerta är för stort, för ädelt, att ej följa dess skyldighets lag, och att ej utsläcka en eld, som både mot er och mot henne vore brottslig'; 'Den skall qväfvas. Dygden, skyldigheten, tiden, ja, edra stora egenskaper skola den utplåna, och den ömma sorg jag ser er uti, den grannligheten, med hvilken er kärlek sig yttrar, skola segra till slut öfver mitt hjerta'.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 133: 'Mitt löfte är gjordt, min heder kan det ej rygga; min dygd är dig känd, den är oföränderlig'.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 134: 'O Gud! Min Prins, kan kärleken Eder så förblinda? Se er skyldighet, hör ärans röst, den säger Er, att det är för Er ett brott, att återse mig, att älska mig, att vilja med er förtviflan beveka ett hjerta som hör en annan till, hvars pligt endast tillåter att vörda Er som sin Kung, hvars skyldighet befäller att fly er åsyn'.

69 *Ibid.*, pp.134-37.

virtue that makes the King see the error of his emotional reasoning, and give her up to instead serve his country and live for his people.

In *The Magnanimity of Gustavus Adolphus*, the false identities add to the intrigue of virtue versus love. Gustavus Adolphus has a different heroic role in this play. He knows the truth about the switched identities, but before disclosing it he takes the rather unexpected role of love-broker in Act II, scene 9. He wants to learn Märta Banér's true feelings, fearing her youth and innocence might have led her to fall in love with the false Lars Sparre anyway, and he – professing to know what it is to live with a broken heart – does not want to cause her perpetual heartbreak.<sup>70</sup> In their conversation, Märta confesses:

It is my aunt who has decided about my marriage. She has been a mother to me: I should submit to her will and believe she knows best what will make me happy.

. . . . .  
I owe my aunt everything; her friendship with Sparre's father is the cause of all the arrangements she is now making to institute this marriage. I would kill her if I refused his hand: I would rather sacrifice my own happiness; it is to do all I can to show her my gratitude.<sup>71</sup>

In the conversation, however, she lets slip that her heart belongs to another, but assures the King that she is ready to go through with the marriage and fulfil her duty. The King promises to make her happy and that she will indeed be married to Sparre, making her sad and confused, thinking he is playing with her, mortified that he might have discovered her true feelings for Erik.

<sup>70</sup> *Gustaf Adolfs Ädelmod*, in KGIIIS, III, pp. 204-5. It has been suggested that Gustavus III identified with Gustavus Adolphus's legendary broken heart. There is an unsubstantiated rumour that the King had a brief affair in 1768 with noblewoman Charlotte du Rietz (1744-1820), and that she was the love of his life; however she was both already married and allegedly unfaithful to the King during their affair, which supposedly caused him severe heartbreak. The nature of this affair is not yet fully disclosed; interpretations are founded on a few letters from the King to Charlotte du Rietz and on letters and memoirs by people in the court circle. Speculations are made in several biographies: see for instance Ribbing, *Gustav III:s hustru Sofia Magdalena*; Erdmann, *Vid hovet och på adelsgodsen i 1700-talets Sverige*; and Landen, *Gustaf III*.

<sup>71</sup> KGIIIS, III, p. 204: 'Det är min moster som beslutit mitt giftermål. Hon har varit en moder för mig; jag bör underkasta mig hennes vilja och tro att hon bereder bäst min lycka [...] Jag är skyldig allt åt min moster; hennes vänskap för Sparrens fader är föremålet, är orsaken till alla de steg hon gör, att stifta detta giftermål. Jag gaf henne döden, om jag nekade honom min hand: jag vill hellre uppoffra min lycka; det är allt hvad jag kan göra, till att visa henne min erkänsla.'



In Act III, scene 3, Märta and the false Erik are left alone to practise a dance performance for the King. Erik carelessly confesses his love for her. Märta is moved but steadfast: she will consider him only a friend, a brother, since she is promised to another, and berates him for stirring her heart. Erik falls to his knees, heartbroken, and asks for forgiveness. The false Lars Sparre sees them, and accuses Märta of infidelity. She defends her honour:

It is on my aunt's command I am here: this room is the King's antechamber; and if I were so weak as to give my heart to an unlawful love, I would not choose this room to declare it. You are free to practise all your bitterness, but be sure I will never give my hand to a fiancé who so little respects my virtue.<sup>72</sup>

Her forbearance and prudence are rewarded: the King reveals the truth about Lars's and Erik's switched identities, although not yet to the real Lars. After surviving the attempt on his life, false Erik shows magnanimity and clemency by pleading for Lars's life: there has been enough bloodshed in the family. The King is impressed by the real Lars's virtues, and revealing Lars's true birth and status, he marries the young lovers.

In this play, the age-old belief that one cannot hide one's nobility, that it shines through even the most elaborate disguise, is manifest. Conversely, the simple mind and brutish manner of the servant's son, even though raised in a noble family, cannot be masked. Märta's attraction to the real Lars is 'natural', so is the real Lars's magnanimity and fidelity towards the King. This play then, like the others, serves as a mirror for princes; it showcases Gustavus III's ideal king and ideal subjects. Märta Banér's forbearance and loyalty is shown as an honour to her sex – just as Ebba Brahe's reasoning makes her an exemplary noblewoman.

It is fair to say that most female characters in these plays are passive. The virtues attributed to them belong to the realm of philosophy, rather than to action. *Fortitudo* for the women in these plays almost always means forbearance or patience rather than courage. Siri Brahe is allowed one small act of courage in Act III, scene 15, when she, as Tegel orders the soldiers to tear down the tapestry covering the door to the secret vault where Johan Gyllenstierna is hiding, puts herself in their way crying: 'No you will trample me first – No, no ... I will ... I die ...'<sup>73</sup> but then, predictably, she faints.

72 Ibid., p. 219: 'Det är på min mosters befallning jag finner mig här: detta rum är Konungens förmak; och om jag vore nog svag att lemna mitt hjerta till en brottslig kärlek, så skulle icke detta rum väljas att den förklara. Jag lämnar er frihet att utöfva all er bitterhet, men var säker att jag aldrig ger min hand åt en fästman, som så litet vet att vörda min dygd'.

73 *Siri Brahe*, in KGIIS, II, p. 256: 'Nej förr ska ni förtrampa mig. – Nej, nej [...] jag skall [...] jag dörr ...'.

A different kind of courage is displayed in the character Christina Gylenstjerna in the opera *Gustaf Vasa* and her intense rebelliousness towards the usurper Christiern. Already in the first act, she challenges the tyrant: 'Barbarian, who never established your power by any other means than through betrayal and murder, soon you shall recognize a hero who knows how to conquer through bravery and virtue.'<sup>74</sup> Because of her defiance, he picks her to deliver the news that Gustavus Vasa may choose between surrendering and watching his mother being executed. At first she refuses: 'It is not enough for you to have murdered my whole family, now you want me to corrupt a hero's virtue and hand him the shackles that would enslave my fatherland; no, barbarian! you know me not!'<sup>75</sup> Only when Christiern threatens to kill her young son does she comply after a brief moment of hesitation, however, secretly resolved to sacrifice her child and urge Gustavus to keep fighting.

In a long monologue following Vasa's initial doubts about sacrificing his mother, she lights the first spark that rekindles his heroic virtue:

I share your despair; I fear for a son's, and you, for a mother's days. But you, Sweden's only hope, can you fault in your fidelity, and would you thereby save your mother? Tell me, brave Gustavus: when you are not afraid to violate such holy promises, what truth can you expect from a tyrant? Can the God you beseech more clearly demonstrate His will than through the victories He grants your weapons? The cries of the oppressed and the disgrace of our fatherland have awoken His sense of justice. See Sweden, and see nothing else; may your heart be raised above ordinary virtues; and if Heaven has decided that our freedom is to be gained by precious blood, do not deny your mother an honour that shall evoke the heroes' envy and the world's admiration. Be sure that she, under the axe of the executioner, will bless the stroke that at once ends her life and crushes Sweden's yokes. Fear for your glory, if you are more concerned about her life than about our freedom; fear that her heart will break at the sight of a deplorable son. What have I said? O! ... I forget whose death sentence I sign, when I give you this advice. O my husband! [Sten Sture the Younger] forgive me for condemning your son to be sacrificed for a

74 *Gustaf Vasa*, in KGIIS, II, p. 16: 'Barbar, som aldrig grundat din makt på annat än svek och mord, snart skall du lära känna en hjälte, som vet att segra genom mod och dygder'.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 17: 'Icke nog att du mördat hela min släkt, vill du äfven att jag skall förleda en hjältes dygd och räcka honom den boja, som skulle förslafva min fosterbygd; nej, barbar! du känner mig icke'.

people, whose pillar you once were; I saw your blood flow for Sweden:  
your son should follow in your footsteps; my days will end with his, but  
I have fulfilled my duty.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, Christina is the one at the end of the play who, driving out the usurper king from Stockholm Palace, castigates him:

Flee, tyrant! Evade the punishment for your crimes; all your hope is gone;  
this castle is no longer yours. The people who have worn your shackles  
have reclaimed their rights ... Flee! I hate you too much to fear your death.  
Go, and bring with you in your disgrace the terror your crimes instil.<sup>77</sup>

It is also Christina who is given the final solo part in the play, spurring the people to crown their liberator Gustavus Vasa. In the first act, she is even recognized by Norrby as being endowed with heroic virtue: 'The brave Christina, who with all the virtues of her sex combines those of a hero, Christina, so beloved by the people, revives their courage'.<sup>78</sup>

Christina Gyllenstjerna is an 'older' woman, and the honourable widow of Regent Sten Sture the Younger. Historically, she would have been near 30 years old at the time of the Swedish War of Liberation. Her status and position is therefore different from the younger Märta or Siri, whereas Ebba falls somewhere in between; historically, she was married to De la Gardie at the age of 22. Their predicaments differ too: Märta and Siri are young wards,

76 *Gustaf Vasa*, in KGIHS, II, pp. 26-27: 'Jag delar din förtviflan; jag bäfvar för en sons, och du för en moders dagar. Men du, Sveriges enda hopp, kan du fela i din trohet, och skulle du väl därigenom frälsa din mor? Säg mig, tappre Gustaf: då du ej räds att kränka så heliga förbindelser, hvad trohet kan du vänta af en tyrann? Kan den Gud du anropar, tydligare förklara sin vilja, än genom den framgång Han skänker dina vapen? De förtrycktes suckar och vårt fäderneslands förnedring hafva väckt Hans rättvisa. Se Sverige, och se inget annat; måtte ditt hjerta höjas öfver vanliga dygder; och om himmelen beslutit att vår frihet skall lösas med ett dyrbart blod, så betag ej din moder en ära, som skall väcka hjeltars afund och verdens beundran. Vet, att hon under bödelns bila skall välsigna det hugg, som på en gång slutar hennes lif och krossar Sveriges bojer. Räds för din ära, om du är mera mån om hennes dagar än om vår frihet; räds att hennes hjerta brister vid åsynen af en brottslig son. Hvad har jag sagt? Ack! ... jag glömmet hvars dödsdom jag fäller, då jag gifver dig dessa råd. O min maka! Förlåt att jag dömmet din son att offras för ett folk, hvars stöd du fordom var; jag såg ditt blod rinna för Sverige: din son bör följa dina spår; mina dagar skola slutas med hans, men jag har uppfyllt min pligt'.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 48: 'Fly, tyrann! Undvik straffet för dina brott; allt hopp är dig betaget; detta slott är icke mera ditt. Det folk, som burit dina fjättrar, har återeröfrat sina rättigheter ... Fly! Jag hatar dig för mycket, att ej befara din död. Gå, och för med dig i vanäran den fasa dina brott ingifva'.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 13: 'Den modiga Christina, som med alla sitt köns dygder förenar en hjertes, Christina, så älskad af folket, upplifvar dess mod'.

bound by loyalty and gratitude, which gives them a limited range of action. Ebba is deceived and guilty of the flaw of distrusting her king. They are all confined to displaying virtues befitting their social standing, their sex, and their moral dilemmas, and their virtue is rewarded by them being allowed to settle into married life with heroes. Christina's acts of courage and defiance against the tyrant are befitting her predicament: jailed by a usurper and a tyrant. As a representative of the nobility, her husband, the Swedish people and their character, it is appropriate for her to speak as harshly as she does; it is an act of patriotism. She is thereby an exemplum of an ideal citizen defending the nation. She can also be seen as a female mirror image of Gustavus Vasa, sharing his ardent love for the fatherland and his profound love of freedom. It is not uncommon among Enlightenment thinkers to approach patriotism from the point of view of virtue, or to count patriotism among the virtues: de Jaucourt, author of the article 'Patrie' (Fatherland) in *L'Encyclopédie*, calls it 'a political virtue, by which one renounces oneself, preferring the public interest to one's own',<sup>79</sup> and Rousseau, also in an article in *L'Encyclopédie*, states that: 'It is certain that the greatest prodigies of virtue have been produced by the love of country: this gentle and lively feeling, which combines the power of self-love with all the beauty of virtue, gives it an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes it the most heroic of all passions.'<sup>80</sup>

Both Ebba and Christina are catalysts for their Kings' true virtue; it is their speech, their virtue, and their spirit of self-sacrifice that make the protagonists see the error of their ways. Love is honourable, true love even more so, but it is always portrayed as second to duty, especially for a sovereign, a theme heavily represented in the French classical dramas so cherished by Gustavus III. This view might also be traced back to the teachings of Count Scheffer, who in 1756 replaced Count Tessin as tutor to the Crown Prince. His pedagogy included letter-writing, giving the prince different subjects to read about and then asking him to argue his standpoint.<sup>81</sup> In a

79 Jaucourt, 'Patrie', in *L'Encyclopédie*, XII: 'c'est une vertu politique, par laquelle on renonce à soi-même, en préférant l'intérêt public au sien propre'. See 'L'Encyclopédie/1re édition/PATRIE', *Wikisource*, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%27%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re\\_%C3%A9dition/PATRIE](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%27%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re_%C3%A9dition/PATRIE).

80 Rousseau, 'Economie', in *L'Encyclopédie*, V: 'Il est certain que les plus grands prodiges de vertu ont été produits par l'amour de la patrie: ce sentiment doux et vif, qui joint la force de l'amour-propre à toute la beauté de la vertu, lui donne une énergie qui, sans la défigurer, en fait la plus héroïque de toutes les passions.' 'L'Encyclopédie/1re édition/ECONOMIE ou OECONOMIE', *Wikisource*, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%27%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re\\_%C3%A9dition/ECONOMIE\\_ou\\_OECONOMIE](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%27%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re_%C3%A9dition/ECONOMIE_ou_OECONOMIE).

81 This has been treated extensively by Marie-Christine Skuncke in her book *Gustaf III – det offentliga barnet* and by Beth Hennings in *Gustav III som kronprins*.

series of letters of February and March 1760, the Crown Prince and Scheffer discuss, among other things, Rousseau's views on theatre, prompted by the philosopher's famous and infamous *Lettre à M. D'Alembert sur les spectacles*, in which he argues that the degenerate and unnatural Paris theatres have a detrimental effect on people's tastes and morals. In one of these letters, the Crown Prince argues that Rousseau may be right in that some plays can be considered to be demoralizing, but overall defends the theatre and its ability to show the citizens good exempla. He then asks Count Scheffer to put forth his own view in a response, which he does in a letter from 1 March 1760:

The only thing I can add for my own part is that I would like Love to be entirely banished from theatre plays. When this passion is treated well, as in some of the tragedies of Racine or Monsieur de Voltaire, it carries into sensitive souls, especially those of young persons, a perturbation and an agitation that, if not dangerous for morals, because virtue in these pieces always remains victorious, at least become so for their tranquillity and repose. [...] [L]ove on stage prepares and necessarily inclines these young men towards sensibility or gallantry. Both have their dangers. [...] The only time where it seems to me warranted to show love on stage is when it can be represented as ridiculous.<sup>82</sup>

Scheffer's view, obviously derived from Voltaire's, that the primary role of theatre is to inspire virtue by portraying *grands hommes* seems to have guided Gustavus III as playwright; not only is love treated rhetorically rather than emotionally in his tragedies, but in his comedies, such as *Den ena för den andra* (The one for the other), romantic love and infatuation

82 'La seule chose que j'aurais à y ajouter pour mon propre compte, c'est que je voudrais que l'Amour fût entièrement banni dans des pièces de théâtre. Quand cette passion est bien traitée, comme dans quelques-unes des tragédies de Racine et de Monsieur de Voltaire, elle porte dans les âmes sensibles, surtout dans celle des jeunes personnes, un trouble et une agitation qui s'ils ne sont pas dangereux pour les mœurs, puisque la vertu, dans ces pièces demeure toujours victorieuse, le deviennent au moins pour leur tranquillité et pour leur repos. [...] [L]'amour sur le théâtre prépare et dispose nécessairement ces jeunes gens ou à la sensibilité, ou à la galanterie. L'une et l'autre ont leur danger; [...] Le seul cas où il me semble donc permis de mettre l'amour sur le théâtre, c'est quand on peut le représenter comme un ridicule.' See Scheffer, *Correspondance entre Son Altesse Royale le Prince Gustav de Suède et Son Excellence le Sénateur Comte de Scheffer, Greifswald, 1772*, quoted in Launay, 'J.-J. Rousseau et Gustave III de Suède', p. 504. The same quote is used by Molander Beyer in 'Bland kungligheter, diplomater och vetenskapsmän', in a discussion of the Crown Prince's views on Rousseau's *Lettre à d'Alembert*.

are usually depicted as folly, sure to cause embarrassment (albeit amusing) to all parties involved.<sup>83</sup>

### Virtuous villains and commoners

The ever-popular theme of virtue in the lower classes, which enjoyed increased popularity after 1789 (when the King sought support from the Burgher and Peasant Estates during the Russo-Swedish War), is well represented in all four plays.

In Sweden at this time, the use of the exemplum was widespread and highly debated. It was believed that it should work at all levels of society, and not be something solely for princes or noblemen. In true Aristotelian spirit, all Estates should have their *magnanimi*, great souls, to look up to and emulate, so that each and every one could be inspired to become the greatest within their social class. In the 1760s, there was even a suggestion that the Stockholm Stock Exchange building should be converted into a pantheon for great men from the Burgher Estate. Sven Delblanc calls this movement 'the democratization of glory'. Well-known authors and historiographers such as Anders Botin (1724-1790), Anders Schönberg (1737-1811), and Carl Christoffer Gjörwell (1731-1811), authored their own collections of great men, with varying success.<sup>84</sup>

As we have seen, Gustavus III was raised in the belief that the praise of the lowliest subjects was a king's highest reward, and during the war with Russia, he sought and received the most support from the Burgher and Peasant Estates. It is not surprising then to note several examples of this in the King's plays.

The soldiers in *Gustaf Vasa* are obvious examples. Christina's speech on self-sacrifice, representing the view of the elite, is followed by the soldiers' rebuttal of Gustavus Vasa's question whether they would choose to save a loved one or their homeland. Their speech on sacrificing their families for the sake of their homeland, and their own life in the name of the King, is a short but very telling representation of the desired view of the lower classes. This demonstrates their fortitude. In two strokes the audience catches a view

83 When it comes to female vice in these plays, it can be mentioned that it is rather conventionally displayed through evil, scheming women such as Christina of Holstein in *Gustavus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe*, or young, flimsy, nosy, and overly talkative girls such as Anna and Stina in *Siri Brahe*. These characters, however, can be said to exemplify inappropriate behaviour rather than actual vices.

84 Delblanc, *Åra och minne*, pp. 111-16.

of the relentless Swedish national character, high and low, across the board, which ignites in Gustavus the courage and resolve he momentarily loses.

In *Siri Brahe*, it is mainly the old officer Peder Stolpe who represents the virtues of the common man. Granted, Stolpe once served as an officer in the army under Nils Gyllenstierna, late husband of Ebba Bjelke, but he is now working as a faithful servant to her, and his daughter Stina, although Anna's confidant, is clearly seen as a servant girl and not an equal to the noblewomen in the house. Also, Stina is used as a counterimage to her father: he is steadfast, discreet, and keeps quiet, while his daughter is flimsy, nosy, and overly talkative. As an ex-soldier, it is not surprising that courage and bravery are Stolpe's foremost virtues. He is seen distributing weapons in the first scene to protect the estate from roving bands, and in the third act he throws himself in front of the soldiers that are ordered to arrest Johan Gyllenstierna.

He is also depicted as loyal – a trait given to most virtuous characters in Gustavus III's plays and one that is treated almost like a cardinal virtue in itself. He refuses to cooperate with Tegel who tries to prise the location of Gyllenstierna's hideout from him, trying to bribe Stolpe with 500 pieces of silver, to which Stolpe replies: 'Do you think that you with fair words or promises of riches can seduce an old soldier, who has served with honour all of his days? No, I would rather see my old wife and my daughter beg and starve to death, than to see them rich at the cost of an unfortunate one, whose well-being I would have sought at the expense of the happiness of my family'.<sup>85</sup> Stolpe protests against Tegel's rough methods. Tegel asks: 'Is it brutality to defend the King's right, the safety of the realm? How would you like the ruler of justice to be? Do you want him to be weak, indulgent, wavering?', to which Stolpe replies: 'No, but I want him to be fair, incorruptible, not virulent, not hard, but steadfast: that he shall protect innocence and defend virtue; in a word: that he shall not abuse the citizens, in order to exact his own, personal revenge'.<sup>86</sup> Here, Stolpe describes how the ideal monarch Gustavus III himself wished to be seen.

In 1776, Gustavus III was involved in a highly publicized incident. A certain Colonel Gyllensvan was fired by the Council after due pressure from the

85 *Siri Brahe*, in KGIIS, II, pp. 239-40: 'Menar ni att kunna med dessa fagra ord eller med rikdomar förföra en gammal soldat, som med heder tjent i all sin tid? Nej, jag såge hellre min gamla hustru och min dotter tigga och hungra ihjel, än att se dem rika på bekostnad af en olycklig, hvars välfärd jag hade sökt på bekostnad af de minas lycka'.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 241: 'Nej. Men jag vill att han skall vara rättvis, oväldig, ej hätsk, ej hård, men ståndaktig: att han skall beskydda oskulden och försvara dydgen; med ett ord: att han ej skall missbruka det allmännas namn, för att utöfva sin egen enskilda hämnd'.

King for high-handed interference in a recruitment. Many protested against this harsh punishment and questioned the King's professed clemency. The King made a statement in the Council on 13 May 1776:

Clemency is my most valued Royal virtue, and if a just posterity reviews my actions from the moment I was entrusted the government of the Realm it will not doubt my heart's inclination; but all virtues have their limits, and when clemency in a Sovereign obscures such faults that pertain to safety of the realm, then this inclination is turned into indulgence, dangerous to the common weal. But this indulgence becomes most harmful, when it covers up such crimes that are being perpetrated [...] against the laws and rights of the common man, that is, the fraction of citizens who are the weakest, whose rights it is a Sovereign's first obligation to protect.<sup>87</sup>

Gustavus III portrays himself as more of a defender of the weak than a righter of wrongs. He thereby connects his own image to that of Gustavus Adolphus, famous for his concern for the lowest of his subjects, amply alluded to in the second act of *Gustavus Adolphus and Ebba Brahe*.<sup>88</sup>

The second act of this play focuses on the home of the ferryman Johan, whose sister Catharina was Ebba Brahe's nurse. Johan's daughter Sigrid is engaged to Catharina's son Erik, and Johan's son Sven is engaged to Catharina's daughter Maria. Catharina, Johan, and Maria are waiting for Sven, Erik, and Sigrid to get back. Sigrid and Erik have been sent to deliver flowers as a wedding gift to Ebba Brahe, and Sven is serving as a horseman in Gustavus Adolphus's army. At her return, Sigrid describes all of the preparations for the noble wedding, but she cannot understand why Ebba did not look happy on her wedding day – Sigrid herself cannot wait to wed her beloved Erik and the feeling is mutual; Sigrid says she will cry, and Erik that he will jump for joy in church. The scenes show the innocence and naiveté of the lower classes, and it is also an idealization of simple, uncomplicated country life.

87 Gustavus III, *YTTRANDE till Protokolltet i Rådskammaren, den 13 Maj 1776, i anledning af den emot Öfversten Gyllensvahn för Embetsförseelser anställda Fiscaliska Action*, in KGIIS, I, pp. 219–20: 'Mildhet är af alla Konungsliga dygder den jag högst skattar, och om en billig efterverld granskar mina gerningar allt ifrån den stunden, då Rikets styrsel sattes i mina händer, lär den ej tvifla om mitt hjertas böjelse; men alla dygder hafva sin gräns, och då mildhet hos en Regent öfverskyler sådana fel, som röra samhällets säkerhet, då förfandlas denna egenskap i flathet, farlig för det allmännas lugn. Men denna flathet blifver högst skadlig, då den öfverskyler de brott, som förfövas af sjelftagen tilltagsenhet emot hemfrid och säkerhet, emot Allmogens rätt och lugn, nemligen emot den delen af medborgare, som äro de svagaste, hvilkas rätt Regentens första skyldighet är att beskydda, och hvilkas bestånd och välmakt gör Rikets väsendtligaste styrka'.

88 See comments by Levertin, *Gustaf III som dramatisk författare*, pp. 121–22.



The whole family is deeply concerned for the safety of the King. Although tired from having rowed back and forth between Kalmar on the mainland and Färjestaden (the ferry town) on Öland all day, Erik resolves to row out in an old logboat to make sure that the enemy fleet has sailed away.

Meanwhile, the King and Lars Sparre arrive at the ferry town desperate to get across to Kalmar, as the King is hurrying back to marry Ebba, but a storm is rising and Johan decides it is too dangerous to try. The King insists, and Johan says they can wait for his son to take them over. Not recognizing the King, Johan asks the noblemen if the king is safe and tells them how much he has worried for him. Gustavus Adolphus secretly delights in being so loved by his subjects, and when Johan asks about his son Sven, the King almost gives himself away by explaining how Sven at one point had saved him from being captured by the enemy.

Suddenly the women cry out: the logboat has capsized in the storm, and Erik is drowning. Gustavus Adolphus jumps into Sigrid's boat, rows out into the storm, and brings the unconscious Erik back to their house. All believe Erik to be dead, but Gustavus Adolphus announces that he is alive and asking for Sigrid. Meanwhile Sven has returned and recognizes the King. They all bless him for his kindness and valour, and Erik falls to his knees in gratitude. The King replies: 'I have done nothing more than my duty; the least of my subjects' lives is dearer to me than my own'.<sup>89</sup> Sven protests saying that the King has already done more than enough, saving Sven in return when he was surrounded by enemies. Gustavus Adolphus replies: 'It was very simple. We fought next to each other, I was surrounded by the enemy, you stabbed your way in and saved me; you were surrounded after me, I stabbed my way in and saved you; no comrade, we are equally good, we have served each other respectively'.<sup>90</sup>

When the King learns that Sigrid and Erik are engaged and planning to have a double wedding with Sven and Maria, he bestows on them two 'Crown farms' ('kronohemman') as a wedding gift: loyalty, devotion, and love are their virtues. The episode showcases the King as the protector of the weak. The image of the kind, unassuming, simple, trusting, naive country-dwellers is typical for the era.

89 *Gustaf Adolph och Ebba Brahe*, in KGIIS, II, pp. 112-13: 'Jag har då ej gjort mer än jag dig var skyldig; den minsta af mina undersåtars lif är mig kärare än mitt'.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 113: 'Det var helt simpelt. Vi stridde bredvid hvarann, jag blef omringad af fienden, du högg dig in och frälste mig; du blef omringad efter mig, jag högg mig in och frälste dig; nej, kamrat, vi äro ju lika goda, vi har ju tjent hvarann på ömse sidor'.

In my dissertation, I showed how Bellman and other poets frequently used the image of royalist country-dwellers as a testament to or proof of the benevolence of the King.<sup>91</sup> This trope, then, is used by both the king and the poets, a symbol negotiated and renegotiated already in antiquity.<sup>92</sup>

Also in these plays, the subjects know their place, and are happy with their lot in life. They do not envy their masters; in fact, the episode with Sigrid visiting Ebba Brahe on her wedding day shows that the lower classes should be happy in their freedom and innocence, unbothered by stately affairs and the workings of the world.<sup>93</sup>

The operas and plays also usually contain some depiction of 'virtue versus vice'. In *Siri Brahe*, vice is represented by bad guy Tegel, who harbours most of the capital vices; he is proud, greedy, small-minded, envious, wrathful, and vengeful. The same can be said about King Christiern in *Gustaf Vasa*: a clear *exemple à fuir*. However, in *Gustaf Vasa*, we have another character, Sevrin Norrby, the Danish Admiral and King Christiern's adviser and confidant. Norrby walks a moral tightrope throughout the play, having to obey his king while objecting to almost all his actions. Johan Gyllenstierna in *Siri Brahe* is considered a bad lot and an enemy because he swore allegiance to the wrong king, but Gustavus III complicates the image.

In the case of Johan Gyllenstierna, he is portrayed as an unfortunate rather than a villain. He simply happens to belong to the wrong side. In the play, Charles IX is not portrayed as an ideal king at all, rather the opposite. Gyllenstierna also defends his choice by alluding to the wrongdoings of the reigning king:

Sigismund is my lawful King, I have followed his banner; and if Charles did rightfully accept the crown belonging to his nephew, he has soiled it with too much blood. I know I am declared an outlaw; but an unjust verdict cannot touch an unspoiled honour.<sup>94</sup>

91 See Nell, *Vivat vår monark!*, ch. 5. For an overview of views on, and use of, nature and country images in Swedish eighteenth-century poetry, see Lewan, *Arkadien*, and Sjödin, *Landets SångGudinna*.

92 See for example Horace, Ode IV:5.

93 This image of the loyal and loving subject, is also amply manifest in the King's medal history, as shown by Alm, *Kungsord i elfte timmen*, pp. 119-28.

94 *Siri Brahe*, in KGIIS, II, p. 259: 'Sigismund är min lagkrönte Konung, dess baner har jag följt; och om Carl kunnat med rätt emottaga en krona, som endast hör dess brorson till, har han den med för mycket blod bestänkt. Jag vet att jag är fågelfri förklarad; men en orättvis dom kan ej röra en obefläckad ära'.

Moreover, when Gustavus Adolphus grants Gyllenstierna his freedom, the count exclaims: 'My Prince! My Prince! O, if your father had your virtues, who would have been able to resist him?';<sup>95</sup> signalling that Charles IX is not a worthy king, compared to his son. Gyllenstierna is so captivated by the Crown Prince that he is almost prepared to switch sides, but then calms himself; his duty tells him to stay true to his king, to not break a confidence of ten years. He confesses that he wishes to be Gustavus Adolphus's subject and that he would choose to be if the choice was free.<sup>96</sup> The Crown Prince lets Gyllenstierna leave with his wife, and says: 'remember, that in Sweden you leave a Prince, who knows your virtues and knows how to value them'.<sup>97</sup>

Gyllenstierna's betrayal of his fatherland is therefore justified, and almost celebrated; he is honest and true to the king he has sworn allegiance to, and for that he cannot be faulted; he recognizes the virtues and greatness of the ideal king, and because of that, his own virtues are highlighted. He becomes an unfortunate victim of political circumstance who allows his sense of duty to rule over personal sentiments. Again, steadfastness is portrayed on par with cardinal virtue, and Gyllenstierna is loyal, both to his King and to his wife, as well as to his family; he is willing to risk his life for all of them in different parts of the play. Ever ready to make the ultimate sacrifice, he is an exemplum of correct noble and virtuous behaviour navigating in a moral and judicial grey zone.

Sevrin Norrby serves as another, different example of virtue operating amidst vice. Grand Admiral and adviser to King Christiern, he has a key role in the play, counterbalancing the image of the Danes served in the portrayal of Christiern as the ultimate tyrant. In the first act, we find Christiern relishing his victory. In his first monologue, his character is summarized:

After sixteen years of troubles and war a just revenge and fortune have secured my victory: and deceit has served me better than strength. The proud Swedes are downtrodden; Sten Sture is dead; his widow and son are in my chains. I have revenged my family and my indignity, when I by the use of the axe have caused the fall of the rest of my enemies. The most honourable blood in Sweden has flowed: the nobility is crushed, and my

95 Ibid., p. 256: 'Min Prins! Min Prins! Ack, om din far hade dina dygder, hvem hade kunnat emotstå honom?'

96 Ibid., p. 266.

97 Ibid.: 'kommen ihåg, att j lemnen i Sverige en Prins, som känner edra dygder och vet dem värdera'.

throne secure; the terror I instil protects my power. [...] The victory has no value, unless the oppressed Swedes feel the whole weight of my hatred.<sup>98</sup>

Norrby is the first to recognize the greatness of Gustavus Vasa: he tells Christiern not to be too secure in his victory, since Vasa is reported still conquering several of Christiern's troops. Norrby advises Christiern to give up before things get worse. Christiern trusts his methods of murder and mayhem to subdue the Swedes, but Norrby remarks on 'how unsure is the obedience enforced by executioners', and advises him to change his tactics: '[...] these days of blood are over; let them now be followed by clemency; yes, my King, only clemency should define your dominion'.<sup>99</sup> Christiern replies that he believes clemency to be a 'weak' virtue, and that he will only rule by fear and terror, for it is the best way.

Norrby is appalled to learn that Christiern uses Christina Gyllenstjerna as an emissary, and Christina also recognizes that Norrby is hesitant towards his king's methods and reasoning. However, Norrby stays true: 'I fear – but I obey' he concedes.<sup>100</sup>

Throughout the play, he suffers with Gustavus Vasa and Christina and even vows to care for Vasa's mother who is prisoner under his charge. In the third act, he is commanded by Christiern to fetter Cecilia af Eka to a ship, which he does, and to kill her as soon as Vasa appears, which he refuses to do:

No, Christiern! it is not my duty; I am a soldier, and cannot be an executioner. I know I have to obey you, but without shame and blame; command! I defy a thousand deaths, if necessary; spare neither my property nor my life; all that belongs to my King – my honour belongs to me alone.<sup>101</sup>

98 *Gustaf Vasa*, in KGIIS, II, p. 9: 'Efter sexton års mödor och krig har en rättvis hämd och lyckan tryggt min seger: och sveket har tjent mig mera än styrkan. De stolte Svenskarana äro kufvade; Sten Sture är död; hans enka och son i mina bojor. Jag har hämnat min slägt och min skymf, då jag genom bilan störtat de öfriga af mina fiender. Det ädlaste blod i Sverige har flutit: adel är förstörd, och min thron säker; den skräck jag ingifver gör mig trygg i mitt välde. [...] Segern har för mig intet värde, om de kufvade Svenskarne icke känna hela tyngden af mitt hat'.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 12-13: 'huru osäker är ej en lydnad som förestafvas af bödlar [...] Dock, dessa dagar af blod äro förbi; låt dem nu följas af din mildhet; ja, min Konung, endast mildheten bör stadga ditt välde'.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 18: 'fasar jag – men lyder'.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 37: 'Nej, Christiern! det är icke min pligt; jag är soldat, och kan icke vara bödel. Jag vet att lyda dig, men utan blygd och förebråelse; befall! jag trotsar tusen dödar, om så fordras; spar hvarken min egendom eller mitt lif; allt tillhör min Konung – min heder ensam tillhör mig'.

He rejects that order, but at the same time swears to defend his king to the death. Christiern is cuffed, and Norrby pities him: 'This hand was not meant to wear chains ... but no ... your blind rage should not arouse my anger; it kindles only my pity ... if you can forget my service and my zeal, then I shall at least not forget my honour and my duty'.<sup>102</sup> Norrby is steadfast in his loyalty to his king throughout the play. In the middle of the third act, during the battle between the Swedes and the Danes, Norrby hastens to aid Christiern despite his earlier treatment. At the same time, Norrby frees Vasa's mother and sends her back to him before escaping with Christiern. An emissary announces:

The noble Norrby sends your mother back. Moved by your virtues, he wishes to prove to you that they also exist at Christiern's court, and that he knows enough to protect his King against his own rage.<sup>103</sup>

In return, Vasa releases all the Danish prisoners into Norrby's care before celebrating his victory.

Norrby is portrayed as torn between his duty to be loyal to his king, and his own virtue, his own moral values. Since Christiern is shown to be a true tyrant, an *exemple à fuir*, Norrby's refusal to carry out the most abominable orders is justified. Norrby has to walk a moral tightrope throughout the play, fulfilling his duties towards a sovereign who does not recognize the royal virtues. Like Johan Gyllenstierna, he confesses his admiration for the sovereign who possesses all the good qualities, but is duty-bound to serve another, making him an exemplary subject under impossibly difficult circumstances.

The characters Norrby and Johan Gyllenstierna prove that virtue, as argued at length in the *Éncyclopédie*, is not arbitrary but rather elusive and compound; it is closely connected to such concepts as morality and duty, yet separated from goodness. True virtue, according to the *Éncyclopédie*, can be discerned by motive and interest:

Distinguish carefully, then, between two types of interest, one low and misperceived, which reason reproves and condemns; the other noble and prudent, which reason acknowledges and commands. The first, always too active, is the source of all our errors; the other could not be too lively,

102 Ibid., p. 58f.: 'Denna hand var ej gjord att bära bojor ... men nej ... din blinda vrede bör ej reta min harm; den väcker blott min ömkan ... Om du kan glömma mina tjänster och mitt nit, skall jag åtminstone ej glömma min heder och min pligt'.

103 Ibid., p. 51: 'Den ädle Norrby sänder eder moder tillbaka. Rörd af edra dygder, önskar han öfvertyga eder, att de äfven finnas vid Christierns hof, och att han vet att skydda sin Konung mot dess eget raseri'.

it is the source of all that is beautiful, honest, and glorious. Do not fear to dishonour yourself by desiring your happiness with too much enthusiasm; but know how to recognize it: that is a summary of virtue.<sup>104</sup>

This exact belief is manifest in *Gustavus Vasa*: Christiern's quest for power is fuelled by vainglory and revenge, turning him into a tyrant, while Gustavus Vasa pursues glory in the interest of his people's freedom – he has an altruistic motive; he does not *take* the crown, it is *given* to him by the people as a sign of trust and gratitude. This echoes the ideals of power expressed by the Enlightenment thinkers. Under the word 'Sovereign' in the *Éncyclopédie* one can read: 'One sees that their power and their rights are founded only on the consent of the people; those who establish themselves by violence are only usurpers. Sovereigns become legitimate only when the consent of the people has confirmed the rights which they have seized.'<sup>105</sup>

## The Royal Rhetor

According to the *Éncyclopédie*, it is appropriate to try to emulate virtue. The pedagogy of exemplum is strongly advocated: 'Finally, O you, who aspire to do well, who dare to pretend to virtue, cultivate avidly those respectable

104 Romilly, 'Virtue', *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. by Mary McAlpin, Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2005, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.115> (accessed 22 October 2016), originally published as 'Vertu', *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, XVII, pp. 176-82 (Paris, 1765). Cf. the original French edition: 'Distinguez donc avec soin deux sortes d'intérêts, l'un bas & malentendu, que la raison réproûve & condamne; l'autre noble & prudent, que la raison avoue & commande. Le premier toujours trop actif, est la source de tous nos écarts; celui-ci ne peut être trop vif, il est la source de tout ce qu'il y a de beau, d'honnête & de glorieux. Ne craignez point de vous deshonorer en desirant avec excès votre bonheur; mais sachez le voir où il est: c'est le sommaire de la vertu.' 'L'Encyclopédie/1re édition/VERTU', *Wikisource*, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%E2%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re\\_%C3%A9dition/VERTU](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%E2%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re_%C3%A9dition/VERTU) (accessed 22 October 2016).

105 'Sovereigns', in *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. by Marc Lombardo, Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2008, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.924> (accessed 22 October 2016), originally published as 'Souverains', *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, XV, pp. 423-25 (Paris, 1765). Cf. the French original: 'On voit que leur pouvoir & leurs droits ne sont fondés que sur le consentement des peuples; ceux qui s'établissent par la violence, ne sont que des usurpateurs; ils ne deviennent légitimes, que lorsque le consentement des peuples a confirmé aux *souverains* les droits dont ils s'étoient emparés.' 'L'Encyclopédie/1re édition/SOUVERAINS', *Wikisource*, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%E2%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re\\_%C3%A9dition/SOUVERAINS](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%E2%80%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re_%C3%A9dition/SOUVERAINS) (accessed 22 October 2016).

men who walk before you in this brilliant career; young painters thrill and tremble with admiration before the masterpieces of the Raphaels and the Michelangelos; before the models that history or society present to you, you will similarly feel your heart soften and burn with the desire to imitate them'.<sup>106</sup> Already Lord Bolingbroke (1678-1751), in his much read *Letters on the Study and Use of History* from 1735, argues the same point:

That the study of history, far from making us wiser, and more useful citizens, as well as better men, may be of no advantage whatsoever; that it may serve to render us mere antiquaries and scholars; or that it may help to make us forward coxcombs, and prating pedants, I have already allowed. But this is not the fault of history: and to convince us that it is not, we need only contrast the true use of history with the use that is made of it by such men as these. We ought always to keep in mind, that history is philosophy teaching by examples how to conduct ourselves in all the situations of private and public life; that therefore we must apply ourselves to it in a philosophical spirit and manner; that we must rise from particular to general knowledge, and that we must fit ourselves for the society and business of mankind by accustoming our minds to reflect and meditate on the characters we find described, and the course of events we find related there. Particular examples may be of use sometimes in particular cases; but the application of them is dangerous. It must be done with the utmost circumspection, or it will be seldom done with success. And yet one would think that this was the principal use of the study of history, by what has been written on the subject. I know not whether Machiavel himself is quite free from defect on this account: he seems to carry the use and application of particular examples sometimes too far.<sup>107</sup>

Gustavus III was raised in exactly this vein, as shown by Sven Delblanc and Marie-Christine Skuncke. He believed in the power of example and in the image of himself fabricated at his birth by the court, transmitting and retransmitting it to his people, and receiving its reflection back through

106 Romilly, 'Virtue': 'O vous enfin, qui aspirez à bien faire, qui osez prétendre à la *vertu*, cultivez avec empressement ces hommes respectables qui marchent devant vous dans cette brillante carrière; c'est à l'aspect des chef-d'œuvres des Raphaëls & des Michel-Anges que les jeunes peintres s'enflamment & tressaillent d'admiration; c'est de même en contemplant les modèles que l'histoire ou la société vous présente, que vous sentirez votre cœur s'attendrir & brûler du désir de les imiter.' 'L'Encyclopédie/1re édition/VERTU', *Wikisource*, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%2E%80%99%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re\\_%C3%A9dition/VERTU](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L%2E%80%99%99Encyclop%C3%A9die/1re_%C3%A9dition/VERTU) (accessed 22 October 2016).

107 Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, p. 191.

panegyric poetry and eulogy. In this sense, it is understandable why the King as well as his contemporaries found it natural, even commendable, to believe that Gustavus III imitated the actions of his Gustavian predecessors. In this sense, it is also understandable why these two kings are so prominent in the King's plays.

It is possible then to argue that the image of the 'third Gustavus' and the connotations that it elicited in the contemporary audience is an example of the exchanges, networks, and trade-offs that Greenblatt claims to be at the core of the concept of 'social energy'. As for instance Peter Burke has shown in his monograph *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, and Marie-Christine Skuncke in her article 'Medier, retorik och känslor' (Media, rhetoric and emotions),<sup>108</sup> the same image or set of images was frequently reproduced in different media and different genres in order to guarantee staying power and longevity.

In a previously mentioned letter to his teacher Scheffer, the fourteen-year-old Crown Prince Gustavus echoes the words in the *Encyclopédie* and in Lord Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and Use of History*. When in a *refutatio* exercise on 17 January 1760, confronted with the idea purportedly in Rousseau's *Lettre à M. D'Alembert* that theatre can be detrimental to the mores of the people, Gustavus responds:

He [Rousseau] wants to demonstrate that the theatre instead of improving people, makes them wicked, and therefore is detrimental to morals. This question, as you know, has been the subject of many works. Some have shared M. Rousseau's opinion, others have wanted to prove, that the theatre makes people more virtuous by showing them their flaws and making them hate vices. I do not think that M. Rousseau intended to condemn the theatre in general, but only the spectacles of today.

One has to agree, that there are many plays one could eliminate from the theatre. M. Rousseau mentions several that he rightly condemns, but there are many others that at once entertain and demonstrate virtue and evoke aversion for vice. When one watches the beautiful tragedy *Cinna*, one cannot but be moved by the magnanimity of Augustus, one is in ecstasy. At least I would have liked to be in the same situation in order to have been able to act in the same way.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*; Skuncke, 'Medier, retorik och känslor'.

<sup>109</sup> In the original French:

Il veut démontrer que la comédie au lieu de corriger les hommes, les rend plus méchants et par conséquent qu'elle est préjudiciable aux moeurs. Cette question, comme vous le savez a été



Theatre was for Gustavus III the preferred medium for teaching – and learning – virtue. In a time when didactic poetry was held in high regard, and when the belief in the ability of the exemplum to create model citizens and model states was predominant, it is no surprise to find discussions on virtue and vice, right and wrong, in the works of a royal playwright. Gustavus III clearly found an effective way to be a Royal Rhetor with these plays and operas, to use theatre as a means to convey his view of the ideal sovereign and the ideal subject, and to explore the boundaries of different cardinal virtues, especially at times when these values were challenged or put to the test. He took an active role in the ongoing debate on virtue, and he needed to communicate to his contemporaries which virtues he believed to be the most important for a sovereign to possess, and to ensure that he possessed them himself, carefully choosing historical events for his plots that held a parallel to his own reign. With theatrical means he could use the rhetorical device *evidentia* with full force, *showing* examples in proper situations, rather than just *telling* of them, as he would in a political speech.

He aimed to teach his people in the same way as he had been taught by his tutors, advisers, parents, and his people – by exemplum. He perpetuated a set of images of the king, the elite, and subjects that would hold sway until the given of enlightened despotism, and its unquestioned social order, was no longer.

In the classical tradition of Aristotle and Cicero, virtue was understood to be innate in the elite. This belief was to a large degree sustained during the Enlightenment. However, virtue eventually became a concern for all people, providing the framework for discussions of character and social relations. In his operas and plays, Gustavus III provides moral examples for all social classes, and by that, in effect, he creates his own collection of examples.

l'objet de plusieurs ouvrages. Les uns ont été pour le sentiment de M. Rousseau, d'autres ont voulu prouver qu'au contraire la comédie rendrait les hommes plus vertueux en leur montrant leurs défauts et en leur faisant haïr les vices. Je ne crois pas que l'intention de M. Rousseau a été de condamner en général la comédie, mais seulement celle qui subsiste à présent.

Il faut avouer qu'il y a bien des pièces qu'on pourrait rayer du théâtre. M. Rousseau en remarque plusieurs qu'il condamne avec raison, mais il y en a une grande quantité d'autres qui en même temps amusent, portent à la vertu et donnent horreur pour les vices. Quand on voit la belle tragédie de *Cinna*, on ne peut qu'être touché de la grandeur d'Auguste, on est extasié. Du moins pour moi, j'aurais voulu être dans le même cas pour avoir pu faire la même action.

von Proschwitz (ed.), *Gustave III par ses lettres*, pp. 27-28.

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# Antagonistic parents in Frances Brooke's *The Old Maid* and *The History of Julia Mandeville*

Michaela Vance

## Abstract

This chapter explores the theme of virtue and education in the early works of English writer Frances Brooke (1724-1789): the periodical *The Old Maid* and the novel *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*. Brooke's thoughts on education were formed in response to Rousseau and Locke, whose ideas she believed contained a harmful supervisory element. In contrast, Brooke cultivated the notion of the child's virtue as innate, and consequently argued for liberty and individual agency. In her writings on education, Brooke experimented with fiction's ability to stir the reader's sympathy for the child's and the parent's perspectives alike, an approach that ultimately sought to reduce the distance between them by diminishing the latter's reliance on authority.

**Keywords:** Frances Brooke (1724-1789), innate virtue, supervisory education

This chapter explores education and virtue in the context of eighteenth-century British author Frances Brooke's early writing. In the periodical *The Old Maid* (1755-56) Brooke focuses on contrasting abusive methods of education with a non-invasive one that depends on the idea of inborn virtue, while in the novel *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* (1763), she develops her argument by framing it in a dystopian version of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile*. In this chapter I will compare Brooke's thoughts on education, first in the periodical and then in the novel, with the ultimate aim of situating her educational agenda in the contemporary debate on education and thereby nuancing her modern-day reception, which has tended to

overlook her progressive aspirations. In order to do this, I will first give a short biographical account of Brooke and then contextualize her contribution to educational writing by contrasting it with those of Locke and Rousseau.

Brooke was raised in Lincolnshire, the eldest of three children of Thomas Moore, rector at a Lincolnshire parish church, and his wife Mary. During her early years Brooke received a 'most excellent education', as she learned Italian and French, and 'was introduced to a wide range of English literature'.<sup>1</sup> Around 1748 Brooke moved to London in order to pursue a literary career. Although her first work, the tragedy *Virginia* (1755), was turned down by actor and theatre manager David Garrick, she quickly established herself as a writer by launching the periodical *The Old Maid*. Writing under the pseudonym of Mary Singleton, Brooke published essays on diverse subjects ranging from contemporary political concerns and social injustices to international affairs and cultural events. In addition, the periodical included a fictional frame narrative, told from Singleton's point of view, about her efforts to educate her niece on questions relating to marriage, friendship, and citizens' duties to society.

For her next project, Brooke developed aspects of the periodical's fictional narrative into her first full-length novel *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*, published in 1763. The similarities between the periodical's fictional frame narrative and the novel's central themes and characters indicate Brooke's early writing processes, pointing also to the genre fluidity that marks much of her literary output and eighteenth-century writing in general. Apart from featuring an identically named protagonist, the novel addresses issues similar to those discussed in *The Old Maid*, but the opportunities that the emerging form of the novel offered added depth and complexity to the story which, like the periodical, illustrated the negative effects of supervisory education.

Although the aims of her own educational plan and those of Locke and Rousseau are frequently similar, Brooke argues that the latter's endorsements of supervisory methods had devastating effects on the child. If inborn virtue is allowed to remain unspoiled, Brooke argues, it guides the child more successfully than any taught principles or staged experiences are capable of doing. Her affirmation of Rousseau's ideas on inborn virtue is also the source of her criticism regarding his methods. In her opinion these methods, with their insistence on the centrality of the teacher, to some extent negate the guiding principles of education, which can be described as aiming to reconcile the inclinations of the individual with the demands of

1 Edwards, 'Brooke, Frances'.

the collective without subjecting the child to the corrupting effects of adult society.<sup>2</sup> By placing herself within a tradition of educational writing that develops around notions of nature, innocence, and art, Brooke challenges eighteenth-century conceptions of the role of the teacher by arguing that the child does not need improvement, only a safe environment in which to develop undisturbed.

The following section focuses on issues connected with abusive education that Brooke addresses in *The Old Maid*, while the second section discusses the negative effects of supervisory education and the unconventional but ultimately successful *Bildungs*-like journey to personal and moral awareness undergone by the main correspondent in the epistolary *Lady Julia Mandeville*.

### *The Old Maid*

In *The Old Maid* Brooke assumes a fictional persona, Mary Singleton, who devotes large sections of the periodical to discussing the education of her orphaned niece Julia. The rhetorical position that Brooke claimed by writing from the perspective of an old maid has been explored by Manushag N. Powell, Mary Waters, and Iona Italia, who all discuss her contribution to eighteenth-century periodicals in the light of gender.<sup>3</sup> As Waters points out, Brooke had spirited responses to those of her readers who criticized her. She cites three illustrative examples from issues 1, 3, and 18, where Brooke proclaims her right to publish as an 'Englishwoman' who 'has a natural right to expose herself as much as she pleases' and defends herself against the (male) coffee-house crowd by referring to them as 'witches round a conjuring cauldron'. Brooke also reflected on the profession of writing and criticism by linking 'literary criticism to a concern for public affairs'.<sup>4</sup> Although she was arguably aware that the satirical tone with which she replied to her detractors enticed further attacks,<sup>5</sup> Brooke continued to use irony, albeit

2 See for example Allan Bloom's 'Introduction' to *Émile*, pp. 3-4 and 24, and James Sambrook's *Eighteenth Century*, pp. 43-44.

3 See Powell, *Performing Authorship*, pp. 135-63; Waters, 'Periodical Writing', pp. 232-33 and 422-3; and Italia, *Rise of Literary Journalism*, p. 166.

4 Waters, 'Periodical Writing', p. 233.

5 In an annotated copy of *The Old Maid* belonging to one of her main contributors, John Boyle, fifth Earl of Cork and Orrery, wrote that Brooke's response to an attack by the rival publication *The Connoisseur* 'ought to have been humorous, not virulent' (quoted in Powell, *Performing Authorship*, p. 163).



in a more subtle form, in order to underline prejudices in societal attitudes towards women and their literary portrayals. When Singleton introduces her niece Julia in issue 2, she writes

I shall begin this paper with the character of my niece Julia, but as the face is often, indeed I believe generally, the index to the mind; and it is the fashion to describe the persons of all modern heroines, I shall begin there. Julia then is of the middle stature, rather inclined to tall, finely proportioned, and has much the look of a woman of distinction, her eyes blue, her hair a very pale brown, and her complexion so extremely fair, that added to an inexpressible sweetness in her countenance, it has often occasioned a doubt of her understanding.<sup>6</sup>

However, she goes on to correct this misunderstanding: 'Her mind is the seat of every grace and every virtue: she is so innocent herself, that it is almost impossible to make her believe ill of others; so gentle that I can make her tremble by a look of anger'.<sup>7</sup> Deviating from what she calls 'the fashion' of describing women, Singleton underlines the intellectual virtues of Julia, pointing out the absurdity of basing assessments of her mental capacity on her appearance, and she connects the misunderstanding to that of Julia's 'innocence'. This is a theme that Brooke frequently returns to in her later writings, but here, in one of the first instances of Brooke mentioning a young protagonist's innocence, she makes an explicit connection between virtue and innocence.

The comment on Julia's gentleness is also a statement on her upbringing, which Singleton is responsible for. It is enough to give Julia 'a look of anger' to make her 'tremble', and her behaviour with respect to the gentleman by whom she is addressed further indicates the positive outcome of Singleton's effort to preserve Julia's natural innocence: 'She has too much respect for me, to engage without my consent; and too much sincerity to deny she likes him'.<sup>8</sup> Devoid of any impulse to deceive, Julia voluntarily confides in her guardian to the extent that Singleton is at complete ease with regard to Julia's relationship to friends and admirers, something that gives her a large amount of freedom compared to other characters of Brooke's invention. In a comment on her stance on child-rearing, Singleton states that

6 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

7 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

8 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

I am well convinced every ingenious mind is to be won by confidence, and am apt to believe the contrary conduct in parents has been the ruin of half the unhappy women in England: were children used like reasonable creatures and friends, I cannot but think it would have a much better effect than the distance and fear in which they are too often educated.<sup>9</sup>

This paragraph is worth looking at more closely as it to some extent summarizes Brooke's educational agenda. Even compared to liberal educationalists, Brooke takes an unusually optimistic position regarding children's mental and moral capacity, and she consequently challenges the need to instruct and surveil children in their journey toward adulthood. With this, she aligns herself with a major trend in eighteenth-century education which strove to reduce 'a sense of prisonlike austerity in the schooling of middle- and upper-class pupils', which for some, like Locke, 'could be achieved by emphasizing private tutors, while for others, like Mary Astell, it could be realized in establishing a private retreat for women that would institute a pedagogical policy of gentle encouragement and disciplinary ease'.<sup>10</sup> However, '[i]t could well be', writes Barney,

That the sense of freedom early modern educators intended to foster was illusory, only the appearance of choice in the process of indoctrinating students all the more powerfully in normative behavior. And yet, as a component repeatedly stressed as a new requirement in the education of children, individual liberty needs to be taken seriously as part of the matrix of 'modern' subjectivity, which during the eighteenth century was becoming increasingly conceived as part of a system of civil rights for individual citizens.<sup>11</sup>

Brooke was undoubtedly among these educators who attempted to make individual liberty a guiding principle in education, but the method she promoted went further than most others in its implementation. By interfering as little as possible with the child's development, Brooke argues, his or her inborn virtue will be preserved and hence be able to guide her better than any parent would.<sup>12</sup>

9 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

10 Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, p. 12.

11 Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, p. 12.

12 An additional example of Brooke's stance on this question can be found on page 45 in the later *The Excursion* (1777) where the child's virtue is referred to as a moral 'taste' which is 'natural' while that of the parent is imperfect, as it is 'acquired'.

Brooke does not seem to hold that the mind is a blank slate, since she connects virtue with the cognitive powers of rationality. Thus, in comparison to contemporary educational thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau, she claims that the mind is pre-equipped with the ability to judge without being subjected to educational schemes. In contrast, Locke takes as a starting point for his discussion of innate principles that children do not bring such ideas with them into the world: '[i]f we will attentively consider new-born children, we shall have little reason to think, that they bring many ideas into the world with them' except 'hunger, and thirst, and warmth'.<sup>13</sup> He continues: '[o]ne may perceive how, by degrees, afterwards, ideas come into their minds; and that they get no more, nor no other, than what experience, and the observation of things, furnish them with; which might be enough to satisfy us, that they are not original characters stamped on the mind.'<sup>14</sup> Rousseau, who begins *Émile* with the words '[e]verything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man', nevertheless emphasizes the need for rigorous schooling, as 'everything would go even worse' if man was not equipped to participate in the corrupted society of mankind.<sup>15</sup> 'We are born weak, we need strength', writes Rousseau, and similarly, 'we are born stupid, we need judgment'.<sup>16</sup> Somewhat inconsistently, Rousseau claims that 'we are born with the use of our senses'<sup>17</sup> while arguing, a few pages later, that if 'a child had at its birth the stature and the strength of a grown man' he would 'see nothing, hear nothing, know no one, would not be able to turn his eyes toward what he needed to see'.<sup>18</sup> This example illustrates the contradictoriness of Rousseau's argument as he develops it in *Émile*: as he adjusts his views depending on the context and the point he wishes to make, the unresolved tension between his ideas of the child's inherent virtue and the need for rigorous schooling is exposed. In summary, although Locke and Rousseau strongly emphasized the corrupting effects of the adult world on the child, they set up programmes of education that nevertheless to a large extent depend on the teacher's authoritative methods, while Brooke abstained from such measures.

Singleton argues that the non-authoritative and caring role of a friend is the most beneficial position that a parent can take. However, compared to proto-feminist educational thinker Mary Astell (1666-1731), Brooke does not

13 Locke, *Essay*, p. 91.

14 Locke, *Essay*, p. 92.

15 Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 37.

16 Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 38.

17 Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 39.

18 Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 61.

consider friendship to be a means of surveillance and judgement of moral behaviour. Thus, although both women emphasize the value of friendship between parents and their children as well as between children, it has a supervisory function for Astell, as it is 'without doubt, the best Instructor to teach us our duty to our Neighbour, and a most excellent Monitor to excite us to make payments as far as our power will reach', and nothing 'shou'd hinder them from entring into an holy combination to watch over each other for Good, to advice, encourage and direct, and to observe the minutest fault in order to its amendment. The truest effect of love being to endeavour the bettering the beloved Person.'<sup>19</sup> Brooke does not share the idea that the truest effect of love is the impulse to try to improve the other person. Instead, she sees friends as non-judgmental companions who can advise and guide, but not more.

To some extent the role of friend and the rhetorical position it grants Singleton is available to her because of her status as an aunt rather than a mother. Ruth Perry writes that aunts, which 'sentimental novels are full of examples of', have the effect of a "bracing tonic" on the text':

Usually respectable – although often unconventional – learned, wise and mature, she advises the heroine and helps her through her most difficult times. Doing for the heroine what she cannot do for herself, she adds another kind of energy to the text, an energy that is not decorous or 'feminine' but strong and unafraid of confrontation [...] She rarely has any other narrative function or any story of her own: if she were removed from the text the story line would not be altered – except that the ingenue heroine would stumble more hesitatingly through the world without this older woman's understanding of life to supplement her inexperience. In a sense, her presence confirms the innocence of the heroine.<sup>20</sup>

However, unlike the aunt-like figures in Frances Burney's *Evelina* and Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, Singleton is the central character in Brooke's *The Old Maid*, something that gives her a rhetorical position from which she can address fellow educators and instruct them on how to relate to their wards in a way that is neither invasive nor negligent.

In issue 7, Singleton describes how she has 'prohibited' Julia from showing her the correspondence between herself and her friend Rosara 'lest it should be a restraint upon their pens', trusting instead to the 'little voluntary

19 Astell, *Serious Proposal*, pp. 99, 100. Also quoted in Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, p. 75.

20 Perry, *Novel Relations*, p. 348.

information' Julia sometimes gives her about the contents of their letters. Here, the value of communication between friends is underlined at the same time as the importance of privacy is emphasized: the aunt, knowing the value of unrestrained pens, encourages it to the extent that she removes herself from the narrative. Thus, the parent does not only ask the child to take her into her confidence, but also has enough confidence in the child to not require absolute transparency. Brooke also discusses the value of friendship in issue 17, where she describes how Julia receives Rosara into her home 'with all the open, undissembled warmth of genuine friendship', and their 'amiable and virtuous regard' for each other prompts Singleton to complain about the 'present too great neglect of this, and all other social affections'.<sup>21</sup> She compares the low status of friendships in contemporary England to the 'warmth and enthusiasm' with which it was treated by 'all writers in times of simplicity and virtue' who celebrated it 'almost equally with public spirit'.<sup>22</sup> By connecting the centrality of friendship to virtuous public life, Brooke promotes her own educational agenda as beneficial not only to those who receive a domestic education, but to the public in general. In issue 4 of *The Old Maid*, Singleton again widens the scope of her thoughts on authority and domestic education to include society at large by associating the benevolent rule of Queen Elizabeth with that of her own methods. The state's relationship to the people, like that between parent and child, needs to be based on mutual trust and freedom: 'if to obey from love, not fear, be freedom, the subjects of Queen *Elizabeth*, were free, in the most literal sense of the word' she writes, and borrows from David Mallet's *Life of Lord Bacon* when she in turn describes the ruler's duties to the loving citizen: 'she could expect to reign with security, only by deserving and gaining the love of the nation: and that, in order thereto, she must propose to herself no other end of ruling, but the happiness and honor of all her people'.<sup>23</sup> Included in the quotation from Mallet is the comment that the success of Elizabeth's policy was connected to her gender: it was a 'simple' system, 'glorious in its consequences, and yet by princes so seldom pursued'.<sup>24</sup> Deviating from the established manner of locating and limiting women's place to the home, Singleton makes sure to place emphasis on the centrality of female capacity in the public as well as the private domain. By drawing parallels between female authority inside and outside the home she also

21 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

22 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

23 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

24 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

challenges conceptions of women's roles as writers and educators: discontent with the idea that domestic education implies a limitation in scope because gendered, *The Old Maid* argues for a broader application of the method and values that Singleton embraces. Rebecca Davies writes that '[w]hen understood as a feminine concern, education implied domestic education rather than a publically defined system of schooling. Any discussion relating to the supervision of education in the eighteenth century is thus implicitly gendered.'<sup>25</sup> Refusing to separate the domestic from the public, Brooke wished instead to emphasize that a public education and a public life would benefit from drawing on the domestic education received and taught by women. Thus, when Davies writes that '[c]entral to the gendered nature of the discourse of education is the debate raised by Locke, and continued throughout the long eighteenth century, about whether domestic or public education would create better citizens',<sup>26</sup> it is important to note that Brooke thought the dichotomy of public and private to be unnecessary. Instead, they were intimately linked: 'If we will set up for reformers, let us begin at home; and when we are ourselves without fault, we shall have a better right, though I believe less will, to censure others', she writes in issue 5 of *The Old Maid*, thereby blurring the borders and aims of gendered education.<sup>27</sup>

Singleton does not associate female authority with virtue without reflecting uncritically on examples of how mothers may have the opposite effect on their children. She introduces Julia's friend Rosara and her mother, Mrs. Montague, as a foil to herself and the relationship she has with Julia. Mrs. Montague is described as 'a widow of a decent, but not affluent fortune, though she is what is generally called a good sort of woman, [and] is severe to a degree of cruelty'.<sup>28</sup> Thus, after having made a distinction between what is 'generally' considered to be signs of being 'a good sort of woman' and what is actually, in her view, proof of being one, Singleton continues by explaining that 'though she loves her daughter, [she] has brought her up in such painful awe of her, that she can scarce ever approach her without terror, not that of offending a friend, at once honoured and loved, like my niece feels for me, but the dread which a scholar has of an ill-natured tyrannical master'.<sup>29</sup> Here Singleton emphasizes that the respect Julia has for her, which makes her tremble from 'a look of anger' stems from a fear of offending

25 Davies, *Written Maternal Authority*, p. 7.

26 Davies, *Written Maternal Authority*, p. 7.

27 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

28 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

29 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

a loved and honoured friend, while the ‘very unfortunate’ Rosara dreads offending her mother because of the tyrannical, even cruel, behaviour she is subjected to whenever she approaches her.<sup>30</sup> The differences in Singleton’s and Montague’s attitudes are further emphasized by the language that Singleton uses with respect to their roles as educators: while Singleton’s ‘treatment has so much engaged [Julia’s] confidence’ that she believes she has ‘scarce a thought, that she desires I should be a stranger to’, Rosara is in ‘painful awe’ of the ‘ill-natured tyrannical master’ that is her mother. Thus, while ‘treatment’, ‘engagement’, and ‘confidence’ describe Singleton’s method, ‘terror’, ‘dread’, ‘scholar’, and ‘master’ characterize Montague’s. With her choice of words, Singleton defines the methods and aims of education to reflect her own purposes, steering it away from hierarchical authority with her disdain for titles (scholar and master versus friend) and institutional power (tyrannical control versus confidence). She aims instead at a sort of education that capitalizes on the advantages of uncensored communication and friendly advice. Going back to Rebecca Davies’s earlier remarks about the gendered nature of eighteenth-century education, it is worth noticing that Singleton does not necessarily associate public and institutionalized education with the demographic group that unquestionably dominated public education, but instead with a certain type of instructor who found a misconstrued sense of authority appealing.

Singleton’s recount of Rosara’s situation perfectly illustrates the inefficiency of absolute bans. Because of her mother’s ‘severity’, Rosara is ‘obliged’ to give her admirer secret meetings ‘that makes [Singleton] tremble for her’.<sup>31</sup> Mrs. Montague’s attempts to protect her daughter has had the effect of making Rosara intensely afraid of being honest with her mother, but it has also made her extremely naive about the world outside the limited space she is allowed to inhabit. Brooke returns to the tragic outcomes of faulty methods embraced by loving parents in her later writing, but here she limits her investigation of this method to the effects on Rosara and the dangers to which it has made her susceptible. Having suppressed the natural innocence that would allow her to confide in her mother, Rosara is instead made to adopt an artificial ignorance of the world that exposes her to several dangers:

from spending the majority of her time in the country, [Rosara is] inclined to be romantic; a circumstance I am by no means pleased with: indeed, though I am an enemy to what is called a town education, yet I think young

30 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

31 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

women, whose circumstances will admit of now and then a visit to town, may be too much confined to the country: living there, in simplicity, and a degree of ignorance, unacquainted with life, and the dangers to which our sex is exposed, they fancy the world like the shades of arcadia; and too often fall a sacrifice to the first military swain who happens to be quartered in the nearest market town: if they have fortunes, they are run away with in an honest way; and if not, the Lord have mercy upon them.<sup>32</sup>

Here, Singleton connects simplicity with ignorance and danger, whereas before simplicity characterized the benevolent ruler Elizabeth, and innocence was intimately connected to virtue. Also Julia's 'easiness of temper', which presumably is linked to her gentle and innocent nature, is a source of unease for Singleton, as it 'subjects her to be imposed upon by people of art and experience who have not half her natural discernment'.<sup>33</sup> To give a comprehensive overview of concepts such as innocence, experience, art, and nature is not realistic in this context, as it defines much of Enlightenment and Romantic debate ranging from social sciences, culture, aesthetics, medicine, science, and religion. All that can be attempted here is to discuss Brooke's use of these concepts and its implications for her educational agenda.

By constantly putting innocence and simplicity in relief by showing how intimately associated they are with their negative equivalents, Brooke highlights the ambiguities inherent in educational agendas that to a large part hinge on negotiating how, and to what extent, a child interacts with a society that is widely understood to have a morally corruptive effect. When Singleton emphasizes the ambiguous nuances of these concepts it has the effect of directing attention to how people 'of art and experience' profit from others' innocence, including teachers. Nevertheless, she makes it abundantly clear that the child must never be taught such arts in order to profit from others, nor should the child be strictly kept from interacting with different parts of society. The responsibility instead rests on the educator to set an example that is at the same time trusting and judicious. As an illustration of this approach to parenting, Singleton describes how she, instead of forbidding her niece to see an admirer she disapproves of, invites him into her home:

To prevent every improper step in my niece's conduct, though I am not pleased with the addresses of her favored lover [...] yet my house is always open to him; [...] [n]o man of honor will desire to see the woman he loves

32 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

33 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.



any where, but in the protection of her friends, if he has access to her there; and restraint in this case can answer no end, but throwing her more into the power of the man, than prudence and discretion will allow.<sup>34</sup>

Singleton's invitation aims at placing Julia in a position of power by having her meet her admirer in the home, something that also grants the guardian a certain amount of control that a strict ban on interaction would not – since, as Singleton assumes, interaction in some form or other is unavoidable. The aim of the strategy is to help Julia discern dishonesty and adversity without imposing restraints that might damage her inborn virtue and discernment. Brooke explores the opposite scenario in the dystopian novel *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*, where a manipulative supervisory education is shown to have devastating effects on the young protagonists.

### *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*

The epistolary form of Brooke's novel *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* (1763) perfectly captures the protagonists' near-impossible quest for power and self-knowledge. The genre expands on the possibilities of the essay form that characterized *The Old Maid* as it gives Brooke the opportunity to develop her educational method beyond the perspective of the teacher to include the responses of the children and those around them. The concepts of sensibility and sublimity, which to a large extent characterize the taste of mid-eighteenth-century audiences, are also central to Brooke's novel, which can be described as an exploration of the psychological effects of supervisory education. As I will show in this section, the difference that she articulates between supervised and unsupervised education, and the moral weight she accords them, can be seen in the light of changing conceptions of methods of education, and relatedly, the autonomy of the individual. The close reading focuses on highlighting passages where the educational aim and method of the parents, and the children's responses to these, are discussed. Drawing on theories of Locke and Rousseau, and comparing these to an early conception of *Bildung*, this section on *Julia Mandeville* attempts to revise earlier critical readings by placing the text within a framework of theories of education. A discussion of Anne's transformation, which has not previously been read in the light of education and which helps to illuminate the novel's stance on the superiority of a *Bildungs*-like journey to self-knowledge, concludes the section.

34 Brooke, *Old Maid*, n. pag.

It is important to note that when Brooke discusses the necessity of maintaining a level of confidence between children and parents in *The Old Maid*, she assigns the responsibility of doing so to the parents. This is a vital point to keep in mind, as it clarifies Brooke's attitude to the events that she describes in *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*. Previous criticism has frequently argued that Brooke assigns the responsibility of the tragic deaths to the protagonists alone, a notion that misconstrues the novel's educational agenda. Patricia Meyer Spacks, for example, argues that '[i]t is an irony never emphasized in the text that the father's authority yields destruction'.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, although Paula Backscheider continually brings attention to the level of political and cultural involvement in Brooke's novels as a way of challenging the idea that the novel of sensibility was a harmless and 'tame' genre,<sup>36</sup> she claims that 'Brooke's novels have the characters embracing the cultured, rural landscape, modest ambition, and a homogeneous society',<sup>37</sup> thus denying that Brooke had any progressive aspirations. In fact, Backscheider agrees with Susan Lanser that at this time of women's writing, the 'female narrative voice worked more 'to reconcile patriarchy with "democracy" than to expose contradictions between the two', and she does not exclude Brooke from this historical analysis.<sup>38</sup>

My reading of the novel contrasts a *Bildungs*-ideal with supervisory education, a method that Richard A. Barney describes as 'a version of the observation-intervention-resolution pattern' of Locke. The theatricality inherent in the method is described as follows:

In the Lockean amphitheater, where pedagogical rule-giving is taboo, the pupil/actor must proceed, painfully enough, with *no idea* what his lines are. He must constantly respond to pedagogical props or other players who enter on the scene, which more often than not both serve as the tutor's stage directions and provide the student with a gradually accumulating sense of his role. On occasion, there might be reason for direct counsel with the director, but to a great extent, the child must serve as his own naive audience, since ideally he should be unaware that the spontaneity of this theatrical education is in fact an illusion. This metaphor carries with it the greatest sense of artifice in the Lockean canon of tropes, but

35 Spacks, 'Ideology and Literary Form', p. 109.

36 Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Genre and Culture*, p. 190.

37 Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, p. 312.

38 Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Genre and Culture*, p. 210.

it too aspires to naturalness in the child's obliviousness, initially at least, to the art of pedagogical blocking.<sup>39</sup>

Locke proceeds to convince the reader that the child will not be able to detect that his or her experiences are staged, as they are subjected to it before their minds are equipped to apprehend the 'Art and Cunning' of the adult world.<sup>40</sup> Observing the mind of the child has further advantages, Locke argues, as it makes it possible for the tutor or parent to later assess the thoughts of the adult, even if he or she by that time 'puts on several Shapes to act' a thickened 'plot'.<sup>41</sup> In *Émile*, the theatricality is less openly discussed, but it nevertheless constitutes the foundation of Rousseau's method. Locke is 'the writer on education most frequently cited by Rousseau in *Emile*', writes Christopher Kelly, who also discusses the ways in which the early part of Rousseau's work follows the structure of Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*.<sup>42</sup> Differences between the two thinkers include their opinions on the child's ability or suitability to discuss moral reasons, which Locke cultivates early in the child's life, while Rousseau postpones any encouragement to reason about morality until a late stage of the child's development.<sup>43</sup> Another major difference is Rousseau's insistence on the importance of romantic love, and how to prepare for it. This is a matter that Locke does not discuss at all.

The goal of both Locke's and Rousseau's educational plans is to form an ideal citizen who not only honours his responsibility toward his family and society, but does so happily, out of free will, and this is frequently also the aim of the early *Bildungsroman*. Barney claims that the idea of *Bildung* partly originated with early modern texts on education, such as Locke's *Education*.<sup>44</sup> However, the idea of supervision, which is strongly associated with Locke's method, appears to contradict *Bildung's* insistence on *self-cultivation* and *self-formation*: Barney describes *Bildung* as designating 'a holistic cultural identity resulting from self-cultivation', a 'culturally specific and philosophically expansive narrative of self-formation'.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the element of supervision is often missing from later works associated with *Bildung*, such as *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *David Copperfield* (1849-1850),

39 Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, p. 86.

40 Quoted in Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, p. 87.

41 Quoted in Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, p. 87.

42 Kelly, 'Introduction', p. xvi.

43 Kelly, 'Introduction', p. xvii.

44 Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, pp. 25-26.

45 Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment*, pp. 26-27.

*Madame Bovary* (1857), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), to name a few. These works were published during the early to mid-nineteenth century, and have strong ties to the Romantic movement with its insistence on individualism and creative freedom. What, then, do we make of an early work such as *Julia Mandeville*, in which supervised and unsupervised education are contrasted in such sharp terms?

It is important to note the time of *Julia Mandeville's* publication. Positioned somewhere between Locke's *Education* (1693) and an example of a *Bildungsroman* in which there are very few traces of the educational maxims of Locke, such as Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), the novel appears to mark a transition from the view of Locke to that of later, Romantic ideas of education. After having articulated her ideas in *The Old Maid* and having been very recently provoked by Rousseau's *Émile* to develop them further, Brooke was at a point in her career when comparing notions of *Bildung* was both culturally and personally relevant. Without denying Barney's claim that explorations of *Bildung* in novel form might have their roots in manuals of education such as Locke's (at least in the British tradition of the novel of education), it is clear that some 70 years later the perception of *Bildung* was undergoing a transformation.

*Julia Mandeville* is in many ways a dystopian version of *Émile*, but the actions and psychology of the female protagonist is given considerably more attention in Brooke's novel, something that serves to challenge the legitimacy of Rousseau's male-centred narrative. Also the main narrator of *Julia Mandeville*, the financially and intellectually independent widow Anne Wilmot, contributes to contesting the gender bias of *Émile*. She observes the protagonists but has little interest in tutoring them: instead, they ultimately inspire her own journey to self-knowledge. In fact, in contrast to the static tutor in *Émile*, all major characters develop as Brooke's novel unfolds, and as uncertainty and ambiguity begin to affect the previously perfectly ordered community in *Julia Mandeville*, the reader starts to doubt the legitimacy of the fathers' authority.

A brief exchange between the fathers – inserted towards the middle of the narrative and dated to about a decade before the main events of the novel takes place – informs the reader of the kind and extent of the educational method the protagonists have been subjected to. Julia's father, the Earl of Belmont, initiates the project with reference to the earldom that will be passed down to Henry if the former does not have a son: 'Julia being the only child we ever had, it is very probable the estate and title will be yours: Heaven having blessed you with a son, it would be infinitely agreeable to me, and would keep up the splendor of our name, to agree on inter-marriage

between our children', he writes to Henry's father, Colonel Mandeville.<sup>46</sup> After offering to take on the expense of Henry's education, he continues:

You will imagine, my dear friend, I only intend this alliance to take place, if their sentiments, when of age to judge for themselves, correspond with our intentions for their happiness. That this may be the case, let us educate them, with the outmost care, in every accomplishment of mind and person, which can make them lovely in the eyes of each other.<sup>47</sup>

Colonel Mandeville replies:

The alliance your Lordship proposes, if it ever takes place, will make me the happiest of mankind: having, however, observed marriages made by the parents in the childhood of the parties, to be generally disagreeable to the latter, whether from perverseness of human nature, or the free spirit of love impatient of the least control, will intreat our design may be kept secret from all the world, and in particular from the young people themselves: all we can do is, to give them such an education as will best improve the gifts of nature, and render them objects of that lively and delicate affection, which alone can make such a connection happy.<sup>48</sup>

After having recommended the separation of the children until they arrive at an age when 'the heart is most susceptible to tenderness', Henry's father gives his opinion about the most suitable education of the children, depending on their gender:

Men, who act a conspicuous part on the stage of life, and who require a certain audacity and self-possession to bring their talents into full light, cannot, in my opinion, have too public an education: but women, whose loveliest charm is the rosy blush of native modesty, whose virtues blossom fairest in the vale, should never leave their household gods, the best protectors of innocence.<sup>49</sup>

The colonel's opinions are the opposite of those that Brooke expresses in *The Old Maid* in terms of gender-based education and the separation from

46 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 115.

47 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 116.

48 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 117.

49 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 117.

the larger world that such methods championed. As the supervisory aspect of the educations of Julia and Henry is only revealed about halfway into the text, the reader is forced to re-evaluate the truth value of the protagonists' claims of independence only shortly before Anne, Julia, and Henry have occasion to do the same.

As if to emphasize the importance of the role that educational methods play in the novel, it begins with a letter in which Henry discusses his education in some detail with his main correspondent George Mordant:

My father, though he educated me to become the most splendid situation, yet instructed me to be satisfied with my own moderate one; he taught me that independence was all a generous mind required; and that virtue, adorned by that liberal education his unsparing bounty lavished on me, would command through life that heart-felt esteem from the worthy of every rank, which the most exorbitant wealth alone could never procure its possessors [...] [f]rom him I receive, and learn properly to value, the most real of all treasures, independence and content.<sup>50</sup>

Henry's perspective is a summary of all that he has been taught to value in himself and others, and the passage directs the reader's attention to what will later constitute the main hurdles for his happiness, namely his lack of independence and contentedness.

In the next few letters Henry recounts an experience which he had, or rather was unknowingly subjected to, when he was on a tour of Italy in his early twenties. He tells his friend about the incident as a way of demonstrating that he is not, as his correspondent suggests, in love with Julia, for what he feels for her is different from the 'tumult, disorder, madness' he associates with the 'poisoned cup' of love.<sup>51</sup> A letter of recommendation from his father, writes Henry, introduced him to an Italian couple of great wealth. It was the particular wish of his father that Henry should have the 'honour of the Countess's friendship', and so he attended her 'every where' and was charmed 'with the flattering preference she seemed to give [him]', something that led to his becoming 'passionately in love' with her.<sup>52</sup> However, when he declared his love for the countess, a married woman, she only pitied and reproved him, and told him to 'reserve [his] heart [...] for some amiable lady of [his] own nation; and believe that love has no true pleasures but when it

<sup>50</sup> Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 7.

keeps within the bounds of honour'.<sup>53</sup> Her reply, writes Henry, filled him with a shame that he finds impossible to describe. He was 'awed, abashed, humbled before her', and it 'plunged [him] into inexpressible confusion'.<sup>54</sup> The countess then proceeded to change the subject by talking about his father: 'she talked [...] of his merit, his tenderness for me, and expectations of my conduct, which she was sure I should never disappoint'.<sup>55</sup> Henry believes that she changes the subject in order to lessen his embarrassment, but to the countess the father is so intimately linked to the scheme she has helped to carry out that the association is unavoidable. It is not until the very end of the novel that the reader becomes acquainted with the father's appeal to the countess to seduce his son:

Continuing the same anxious cares, I send him to perfect his education, not in schools or academies, but in the conversation of the most charming among women [...]. To you, Madam, I shall make no secret of my wish, that he may come back to England unconnected. I have a view for him beyond his most sanguine hopes, to which, however, I entreat he may be a stranger. [...] I should even hear with pleasure you permitted him, to a certain degree, to love you, that he might be steeled to all other charms.<sup>56</sup>

The indoctrination process is very much like that in *Émile*, where the protagonist is taught to associate a true, honourable love with a specific personality type and appearance. *Émile* was even induced to associate a certain name, Sophie, with his ideal woman, so when they do finally meet, his love for her is instant: 'At the name Sophie, you would have seen Emile shiver. Struck by so dear a name, he is wakened with a start and casts an avid glance at the girl who dares to bear it. "Sophie, O Sophie! Is it you whom my heart seeks? Is it you whom my heart loves?"', writes the narratee in *Émile*.<sup>57</sup> The tutor describes how *Émile*'s 'eyes put a hundred questions to [him] and make a hundred reproaches all at once. He seems to say to me with each look, "Guide me while there is time"',<sup>58</sup> and, as *Émile* is 'worse at disguising his feelings than any man in the world' – a result of the Lockean education that encourages honesty in pupils but deception in the tutor – Sophie's mother can easily read him and 'smile at the success'

53 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 8.

54 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 8.

55 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 8.

56 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 122-23.

57 Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 414.

58 Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 415.

of their 'projects'.<sup>59</sup> This, however, is something that Julia's and Henry's parents will not get to do, as Brooke constructs a narrative that is designed to show the devastating effects of these sorts of schemes.

Only a short amount of time passes between Henry's account of his doomed affair with the countess and his avowal to his correspondent of his love for Julia. However, as Anne Wilmot explains to her correspondent Colonel Bellville, because his father spent such an enormous sum on his education, Henry is relatively poor and his 'only card' is therefore to marry a rich heiress.<sup>60</sup> Conventions of propriety, to which both Henry and Julia are very sensitive due to the style of their upbringing, make it close to impossible for that heiress to be Julia, since she is far above Henry in terms of wealth and social class. As Anne puts it, Julia's hopes 'are founded in madness [...] [i]n what a false light do we see every thing through the medium of passion!'<sup>61</sup> Another hurdle is the gratitude that Henry owes Julia's father, whose offer of introducing him to a career at parliament puts him in a position that his education has taught him to shun. To further take advantage of such generosity by courting Julia is unforgivable in Henry's eyes, who was recently severely reprimanded for such behaviour while staying with the Italian countess. It is only in the context of the fathers' secret plan that Henry's invitation to the estate and his expensive education are justified, as the agreement rests on the understanding that Henry will bring social and intellectual capital into the marriage, while Julia, who has been kept at home throughout her childhood, will bring the financial security that Henry lacks. As they remain uninformed about this agreement, Henry and Julia instead become increasingly desperate about their chances to marry with or without their parents' consent, something that sets them spiralling towards destruction.

In the beginning Henry is fairly hopeful, to the point where he considers confessing his love for Julia to her father: 'a thousand times have I been tempted, in these hours of indulgent friendship, to open all my heart to Lord Belmont'.<sup>62</sup> However, as time goes on he becomes increasingly dejected. After confessing their love for each other, Julia, in accordance with convention, asks Henry to leave the estate. He relocates to Lord T-, whose 'zeal for [Henry's] interest, and great knowledge of mankind' is the 'properest' person Henry thinks he can consult in financial and professional matters.<sup>63</sup>

59 Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 415.

60 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 15.

61 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 69.

62 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 53.

63 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 57.



However, Lord T– turns out to have very little interest in helping Henry once he realizes how little money he has: ‘He was sorry for me; my case was really hard; he always thought my fortune much larger; wondered at my father’s indiscretion in educating me so improperly – People ought to consider their circumstances.’<sup>64</sup> Mortified at these repeated demonstrations of wealth’s value over merit and offended by Lord T–’s opinion of his father, Henry relocates to yet another friend, the poor but morally sound Mr. Herbert.

While staying with Mr. Herbert, Henry receives letters from both Anne and Julia about a suspicion they have concerning the identity of the man intended to become Julia’s husband. It is a wayward letter that informs them about such plans, but the name of the man is not included. Their fears are therefore based on guesswork, but they are communicated to Henry in a more assertive fashion than a guest seems to merit: ‘I have long, my dear Mr. Mandeville, suspected my Lord’s design in favour of Lord Melvin, of which there is not now the least doubt’, writes Anne, who continues, ‘I am astonished my Lord has not sooner told her of it; but there is no accounting for the caprice of age.’<sup>65</sup> As it turns out, Anne is one of the primary vehicles of chance and misinterpretation in the narrative. Her letter, which includes a plea to Henry to give up his attachment to Julia, has the opposite effect of intensifying his commitment. He relocates, again, to a servant’s farmhouse near Julia’s home. The location lets him surveil the estate, and he spends much of his time listening to the gossip that the servant overhears there.

While at the farm, Henry becomes increasingly dejected about his prospects of marrying Julia. After much deliberation he resolves to confess his love for her in a hopeful letter to her father, which, when it reaches Belmont, has the effect of launching preparations not only for Henry and Julia’s wedding, but also that of Lord Melville and Anne’s niece Bell Hastings, who, as it turns out, had secretly been engaged all along. Lord Belmont’s positive reply to the proposal never reaches Henry, however. As a testament to the power of chance, the letter, which first reaches Lord T– and then is redirected to Mr. Herbert, remains undeliverable as Herbert departs for London without leaving behind an address at which to reach Henry. Henry, assuming the worst and crazed at the sight of Lord Melville’s carriage passing the farm on its way to the wedding preparations at Belmont, sets out after him and challenges him to a duel. Henry dies as a result of his wounds, and Julia, who happens to see the duel, falls ill as a consequence of the shock and sorrow. With one groom killed by the other and one of the brides fatally

64 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 84.

65 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 87.

ill as a consequence, the elaborate plans and wedding preparations, which were to remain secret until Henry arrived at the estate, collapse.

The accidents, as discussed above, introduce elements of unpredictability that undermine the educational method, along with the structure of patriarchal and parental authority on which it builds. The introduction of accidents into the narrative has specific advantages for the point that Brooke wishes to make about supervisory education, namely that such methods are impractical and even dangerous in a world outside the controlled limits of the country home or the pages of a theoretical treatise on education. In Locke's writing as well as in *Émile*, nothing unexpected happens to either the tutors or the pupils, and while Julia and Henry are carefully monitored at home and abroad, their thoughts and actions comply with their fathers' expectations. However, the elements of accident and chance that are introduced when the two meet are aspects that the fathers have not foreseen, and as events unfold the fathers have occasion to rethink their chosen educational method and its role in the death of their children. Belmont writes to the father of Lord Melvin:

Why will man lay schemes of lasting felicity? By an over-solicitude to continue my family and name, and secure the happiness of my child, I have defeated my own purpose, and fatally destroyed both. Humbled in the dust, I confess the hand of heaven: the pride of birth, the grandeur of my house, had too great a share in my resolves!<sup>66</sup>

Also Anne compares the plans of the fathers to those of God: 'The bridal couch is the bed of death! Oh! Bellville! – But shall presumptuous man dare to arraign the ways of heaven!'<sup>67</sup> By discussing the father's scheming in the light of having transgressed the authority of God, Brooke once again draws attention to the idea of inborn virtue that she in *The Old Maid* argues must remain unimpaired for the child to successfully participate in the world. Manipulating, as Henry's father puts it, 'the perverseness of human nature' by, 'improv[ing] the gifts of nature'<sup>68</sup> has the disastrous effects that Brooke associates with supervisory education in *The Old Maid* as well as *Julia Mandeville*.

The *Bildungs*-like education of Anne, however, follows a much more successful trajectory. As a result of the events for which she is partly to blame, and which cause her to re-evaluate her position on a number of issues, she

66 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 143.

67 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 134.

68 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 117.

goes through a series of transformations in line with the *Bildungsroman's* insistence on self-cultivation and personal responsibility. Because her experiences are unmediated she is successful where Henry and Julia fail, something that points to how Brooke excludes the possibility of self-realization from the supervisory methods of Locke and Rousseau. Anne's *Bildung* consists of unmediated experiences that include a tour of the continent, emotional abuse, and a second, happier attachment – exactly the sort of situations that Colonel Mandeville staged for his son, but which ultimately failed to have the intended effect due to the tension between Henry's idealized views and the demands of reality. The method made Henry inflexible and incapable of dealing with disappointment, while the fathers' trust in the scheme made them oblivious to the power of chance and miscommunication.

Anne, a social butterfly who approaches people and events with equal amounts of *joie de vivre* and sarcasm in the beginning of the novel, has occasion to rethink her actions as the narrative progresses. 'A great flow of animal spirits, and a French education' has made her, according to Henry, 'a Coquet',<sup>69</sup> and she describes herself as having 'chose[n] to set up for' the choice of being a 'Belle Esprit', as it allows her to 'take a thousand little innocent freedoms, without being censured by a parcel of impertinent old women'.<sup>70</sup> With respect to Henry and Julia's first tentative steps towards acknowledging their love for each other, Anne writes, 'I have reconciled the friends: the scene was amazingly pathetic and pretty: I am only sorry I am too lazy to describe it', and continues, 'now, having united, it must be my next work to divide them: for seriously I am apt to believe, the dear creatures are in immense danger of a kind of partiality for each other, which would not be quite so convenient'.<sup>71</sup> With this goal in mind she pleads with Henry to 'sacrifice' his love for Julia: 'Make one generous effort', she writes, and calls on him to acknowledge his duty to Belmont as well as the 'romantic generosity' that obliges Julia to remain loyal to him, despite, Anne insinuates, her knowing better.<sup>72</sup>

Immediately after sending the letter to Henry she writes to Bellville, presenting a very different take on the situation: 'I have wrote Harry a ridiculous wise letter, persuading him to sacrifice his own passion to my Lord's caprice: and giving him advice, which I should hate him, if I thought him capable of following. How easy it is to be wise for any body but ones

69 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 4.

70 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 27.

71 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 38.

72 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 87.

self! I suppose Harry could with great calmness preach on the imprudence of my attachment to you.<sup>73</sup> Anne's near-impossible attachment to Bellville is another similarity between herself and Henry, but instead of sharing her own struggles with him and thereby exposing her vulnerabilities, she rallies and teases him. 'I am [...] a coquette of the first order', she writes; 'nothing cloyes like continual sweets; a little acid is absolutely necessary'.<sup>74</sup> By choosing to 'set up for' a certain personality type, Anne avoids fully engaging with the moral dimensions of her interactions with others, and the impact of Anne's letters on Julia and Henry, who lack the 'acid' of Anne and who do not comprehend her irony, is disastrous.

Anne's ignorance of the identity of Julia's intended husband and her intense interest in finding it out ('I shall not sleep until I am in this secret; I must follow my Lord about till I get a clue to direct me [...] I am on the rack of expectation; I could not be more anxious about a lover of my own')<sup>75</sup> signalizes her role in the narrative from a *Bildungs*-perspective. As literary theorist Lubomir Doležel points out, not only mystery stories are built around agents' quests to discover secrets, but also, notably, the *Bildungsroman*. 'To be sure', writes Doležel, '*Bildungsroman* has a broader thematic scope' involving the maturation process of an individual, but the 'acquisition of skills and the growth of knowledge is the thread in this process', and it is not unusual that the hero's 'growth includes the unraveling of several mysteries'.<sup>76</sup> As one of the primary agents of misconstruction and chance, Anne's quest to discover the father's secret becomes one of redemption, as it has the power to reform her previous attitude to truth and the feelings of others. The revelation of the identity of Julia's intended husband does not in itself trigger any thorough transformation in Anne, but when she realizes that her misinformation, irony, and insincere advice have contributed to the death of the two protagonists, she goes through a process of mourning and self-accusation that ultimately has the effect of eradicating the ironic distance she usually keeps between herself and others. One incident, in particular, illustrates Anne's attained susceptibility to the sublimity of sorrow and the sensibility that allows her to feel, for the first time, the full impact of the tragic fate of the protagonists. As she walks in the garden around the house, she reflects:

73 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 89.

74 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 81.

75 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 109.

76 Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, p. 127.

What force has the imagination over the senses! How different is the whole face of nature in my eyes! The once smiling scene has a melancholy gloom, which strikes a damp through my inmost soul [...] It was here [Julia's] rising blushes first discovered to me the secret of her heart: it was here the loveliest of mankind first implored me to favor his passion for my sweet friend.<sup>77</sup>

As she walks on, she notices 'the every moment encreasing darkness' which 'gave an awful gloom to the trees: I stopped, I looked round, not a human form was in sight: I listened and heard not a sound but the trembling of some poplars in the wood; I called, but the echo of my own voice was the only answer I received [...] a terror I never felt before seized me'.<sup>78</sup> Previously, Anne had compared herself to a comet: she writes to her future husband that she has begun to 'extremely [...] dislike' herself:

I have good qualities, and a benevolent heart; but have exerted the former so irregularly, and taken so little pains to rule and direct the virtuous impulses of the latter, that they have hitherto answered very little purpose either to myself or others. I feel I am a comet, shining, but useless, or perhaps destructive, whilst Lady Belmont is a benignant star.<sup>79</sup>

The metaphor that Anne invokes in order to describe her doubt in her own moral capacity at the beginning of the narrative suggests a sense of direction and movement that defines the *Bildungsroman's* progressive and ultimately successful process of learning. At this critical point in her development, however, a pathetic fallacy tinges Anne's description of the wood, which suggests a new sense of self where the darkness comes from within and colours outside objects.

Shedding the ironic persona and voice that she had previously adopted, Anne allows sorrow to really enter her consciousness, something that has the effect of replacing irony with sincerity. This change is in part illustrated by her resolution to postpone her own wedding for six months as a way of honouring her promise to Julia not to leave her parents 'to their despair'.<sup>80</sup> 'I will not', writes Anne, 'forget the sad task [Julia's] friendship imposed'.<sup>81</sup>

77 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 136.

78 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 136.

79 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 43.

80 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 135.

81 Brooke, *Julia Mandeville*, p. 135.

Anne's development closely follows that which is described as typical for the *Bildungsroman*: 'two parallel transformations undergone by the protagonist: first, a transformation from *ignorance* (of self) to *knowledge* (of self); second, a transformation from passivity to action'.<sup>82</sup> Anne's self-transformation thus includes a transition both in terms of ignorance of self and the facts surrounding Henry and Julia's intended marriage, as well as the passivity that distinguished her earlier moral commitment to her friends, which she turns into an active duty after the death of the protagonists.

## Conclusion

With a firm belief in the child's inborn virtue and an investigational approach to how to preserve it, Brooke develops her progressive and proto-feminist argument first in the periodical *The Old Maid* and then in the novel *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*. By focusing on the congruities between the two texts, I have shown that Brooke takes a strong stance against Locke's and Rousseau's methods of supervisory education, instead championing an approach that is unusually liberal in its attitude to individual agency and liberty. This is an important point that previous criticism has failed to acknowledge, and it has implications for how we understand Brooke's position as an author more generally.

An important aspect of Brooke's method is her insistence on the guardian's role as a friend and adviser, as opposed to one that supervises or imposes bans. In *Julia Mandeville*, Brooke develops her argument to include the perspective of the children, a rhetorical position that gives her the ability to argue more strongly against the effects of supervisory education. By introducing chance and accidents into the narrative she can point to the impracticalities and even danger of a method that depends on supervision and staged experiences, and for Anne Wilmot, who is one of the primary vehicles of chance and misconception in the novel, the sudden awareness of the responsibility that she bears for the tragic deaths of the protagonists triggers an ethical transformation. Brooke offers the *Bildungs*-like education of Anne as a counterpoint to that of Henry and Julia, showing how the authenticity of Anne's experiences ensures an actual self-transformation, which Henry and Julia fail to achieve due to the supervisory methods they have been subjected to.

82 Suleiman, quoted in Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, p. 127.

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# Cracks in the mirror

Changing conceptions of political virtue in mirrors for princes in Scandinavia from the Middle Ages to c.1700

*Andreas Hellerstedt*

## Abstract

This chapter provides a loose framework for the book as a whole, studying Scandinavian mirrors for princes from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. This includes a relatively small number of texts, enabling a focus on long-term developments. Despite strong continuities and a living tradition, a number of important changes are observed. Most important among them is a slow shift from ends to means. Where the earliest texts consider politics as the means of achieving virtue, the later texts regard virtue as a means for preserving the state or even the personal interest of the ruler.

**Keywords:** mirrors for princes, political virtue, reason of state, history of concepts

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate changing conceptions of virtue in mirrors for princes originating in the Scandinavian countries from the Middle Ages until c.1700. In this period, a Christian monarchy was firmly established as the only realistic political alternative in Scandinavia, as it was in much of Europe. However, although the institution remained, the society around it experienced many and profound changes. In intellectual terms the period covers the introduction of scholastic Aristotelianism, a Lutheran reformation, as well as scientific, military, and judicial revolutions, not to mention the influence of Roman law, canon law, and later, secular natural law. All of these major intellectual movements and developments are likely to have influenced the mirror for princes literature in one way or another. In other words, studying these texts not only gives us an insight into

long-term developments in virtue ethics, it also provides us with a veritable kaleidoscope of ideas prevalent in premodern Scandinavia.

There are several good arguments for choosing the Scandinavian countries for this study. First, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark were strongly connected socially, politically, and culturally during the centuries in question. In the Middle Ages, the three kingdoms shared strong dynastic ties. During the Reformation they were politically and culturally reconstructed by means of a similar strain of Lutheranism. In the early modern period, Denmark-Norway and Sweden both participated in the Thirty Years War, while also competing fiercely for dominion over the Baltic and Öresund. Politically, the countries experienced similar developments, albeit with differing time tables.<sup>1</sup>

My particular interest in the mirrors for princes is the history of virtue ethics and its application to politics and political education. Consequently, when discussing each text, I will try to answer these two questions: Which virtue (or other quality) was considered to be the most important for a ruler? Keeping in line with the overarching purpose of the present volume, I will also focus on how this virtue was acquired. Thus, I will analyse these texts from the point of view of virtue ethics and political education. Mirrors for princes are by definition ideally suited to such an investigation.

## The history of mirrors for princes

In a recent overview, Linda T. Darling has noted that very few studies of the genre of mirrors for princes extend over more than a couple of centuries and more than one country. On the other hand, the number of individual studies is huge.<sup>2</sup> There are a few studies that are wider in scope, but those

1 The literature on the political history of the Scandinavian countries is much too voluminous to summarize, and I will only mention a few works that have influenced my analysis: Charpentier Ljungqvist, *Kungamakten och lagen*; Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater*; Lockhart, *Denmark 1513-1660*; Upton, *Charles XI and Swedish Absolutism*. All translations in this chapter are my own.

2 Darling, 'Mirrors for Princes', p. 225. There are a number of collections of such individual studies, e.g. de Benedictis and Pisapia (eds.), *Specula Principum*; Lachaud and Scordia, *Le Prince au miroir*. Of particular relevance to this study is Bejczy and Nederman, *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages*. Among many individual studies on Scandinavian texts I would stress Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, and Olden-Jørgensen, 'Johann Damgaard's Alithia (1597)'; Olden-Jørgensen has also briefly compared the education of Christian IV of Denmark and Gustav Adolf of Sweden in 'Herremand I kongeklaeder'. Tania Preste has recently studied virtues in Swedish mirrors (only partly the same texts as those used here, however), with a special focus on heroic virtue; Preste, 'King's Virtues'.

that do exist are by now very old and occupied in part with questions that seem less relevant to present-day research.<sup>3</sup>

We can also turn to studies of political thought in a broader sense. These are more abundant, and some points are relevant for the purposes of this study. In his classic study, *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz argued that the development of ideas of kingship in Western Europe can be divided into several different periods, each characterized by particular images and conceptions of ideal kingship. In the Carolingian period, kingship was 'theocentric', and the king was modelled on God the Father; in the following period, up until roughly the investiture struggle, kingship was 'Christocentric', the king being conceived as an imitator of Christ on earth. In the High Middle Ages, kingship became 'law-centred', as the religious images and ideology were increasingly reserved for church, bishops, and popes, and finally, this ultimately developed into a 'polity-centred' conception of politics. Nevertheless, Kantorowicz argues that all fundamental political concepts traced their origins to theology, as did e.g. the concept of the 'body politic'.<sup>4</sup>

Michel Foucault coined the term 'governmentality' on the basis of the changes he observed in the development from mirrors for princes to handbooks on the 'art of ruling' in the sixteenth century. Governance became immanent in relation to those governed, whereas Machiavelli's prince had clearly been transcendent, an external force in relation to the people he ruled. The art of governing became more ambitious and all-pervasive. It was an 'economic' mode of governance, encompassing the subjects in relation to their surroundings: climate, natural resources, habits, mores, and ways of thinking. Attempts to establish a certain form of knowledge of the population for use as a 'tactique du gouvernement' can be observed as early as the late sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Developing Foucault's argument, Michel Senellart is one of few to study mirrors for princes (alongside similar material) over a long period. His main contribution to the debate is to distinguish the rise of two forms of 'raison d'Etat' – one using power and war as means ('absolutism') and the other regulating interests and passions (which Senellart, like Foucault, calls 'economy'). While Machiavelli described

3 Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, is an in-depth study of the early medieval material; Kleineke, *Englische Fürstenspiegel*, is still very useful as a long-term study; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, is an important survey of the high medieval material, although somewhat dated by now.

4 Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, pp. 60-61, 77-78, 90-97, 123, 140-43, 191-92, 201-6, 208-12, 231-32, 267-72, 451.

5 Foucault, 'La "Gouvernementalité"', pp. 636-42, 647, 649.

politics as a constant state of war, in which necessity rules, Giovanni Botero considered knowledge the all-important means of (peaceful) power, but also made *raison d'Etat* a general principle of politics not only reserved for extraordinary situations.<sup>6</sup>

In another long-term study of political ideas, Maurizio Viroli has argued that, around the year 1600, the meaning of the word 'politics' shifted. Instead of signifying something like 'the art of governing (a kingdom, or a people) well', it began to mean 'the corrupt means of preserving one's state'.<sup>7</sup> In terms of virtue ethics, this transformation meant that *prudentia* lost the intimate connection to *justitia* that it had once had.<sup>8</sup> The decisive shift occurred, just as Foucault argued, not so much with Machiavelli, but with his (alleged) opponents, thinkers such as Botero and Scipione Ammirato. For them, a law might be broken if this served the public interest or common good, as interpreted and represented exclusively by the sovereign prince.<sup>9</sup>

### What is a mirror for princes?

As several scholars have pointed out, calling the mirrors for princes a genre in the strict sense is not accurate.<sup>10</sup> In my view, the most reasonable definition is twofold: first I will consider texts mirrors for princes from the point of view of their purpose; 'die politische und etische Bildung der Herrscher' ('the political and moral education of the ruler').<sup>11</sup> Second, the form, on the other hand, is highly variable, and mirrors may take the form of treatises, dialogues, drama, novels, or formal speeches.<sup>12</sup> I will therefore use a wide definition, including a spectrum of different types of text.<sup>13</sup> It should also be stressed that while mirrors were not historically considered a genre, there was a keen awareness of a tradition and sense of continuity between these

6 Senellart, *Machiavélisme*, pp. 9-12, 18-19, 36-46, 56-66, 71-72, 86-87.

7 Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp. 1-2.

8 Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp. 4, 9, 27.

9 Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp. 252-57, 273-74.

10 Darling, 'Mirrors for Princes', 226-27; Stone, 'Kings are Different', p. 73.

11 Siegl-Mocavini, *John Barclays 'Argenis'*, pp. 20-23; 'manuels destinés à l'instruction morale du prince en vue du bien commun', Senellart, *Machiavélisme*, pp. 19-20; see also Kleineke, *Englische Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 21-22.

12 One could very well argue that works of history should be included here, and indeed many episodes of such works are similar to mirrors for princes. However, historical works also served other purposes, and would require an elaborate discussion of historiographical developments for which there would be no room in this study. Consequently, I have excluded them.

13 Mühleisen and Stammen, 'Politische Ethik und politische Erziehung', pp. 9-21.

texts. As early as the first half of the seventeenth century, catalogues of such works were compiled,<sup>14</sup> and an antiquarian interest is clearly discernible, not least in Scandinavia.<sup>15</sup>

Medieval and especially early modern mirrors for princes took a number of classical texts as models: the most important of these was perhaps Seneca's *De clementia*. Seneca combined earlier Greek views on the divine nature of the ruler with Roman concepts of justice in a way that came to have a lasting influence on subsequent works. Seneca also used the mirror metaphor in a characteristic way. In the very first sentence of *De clementia*, he claims that he wants the work to 'function as a kind of mirror, and hold forth you to yourself'.<sup>16</sup> Seneca aims at controlling a ruler (Nero) who could not be controlled by law. He tries to do so by advocating self-control, that is, moral virtue. The harsh justice of the emperor needed tempering by a fitting clemency, and the two virtues, though seemingly contradictory, both reflected aspects of his majesty. He also stressed the humanity of the ruler, viewing him as subjected to a higher notion of justice rather than a personification or embodiment of it, and thus partly broke with the Hellenistic tradition of divine kingship.<sup>17</sup>

The other major influence on the mirrors for princes tradition was the Bible, in particular its so-called wisdom literature. Together with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, Erasmus recommended the Wisdom of Solomon as the very first text to be read by the young prince whom he addressed in his *Institutio principis Christiani* (The education of a Christian prince).<sup>18</sup> The metaphor of the armour of righteousness (Wisdom 5:17-20), which was later used by Paul (Ephesians 6:10-20), came to serve as a concrete literary model in medieval and early modern mirrors. Isaiah 11:2, describing the gifts of the holy spirit, were also central to the mirror tradition and, in particular, to the development of a synthesis between Christian ethics and classical virtue ethics.<sup>19</sup>

14 Singer, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 13-14.

15 The 1634 edition of the *Styrlise Konunga och Höfdinga*, as well as the 1768 edition of the *Konungs skuggsjå*, both analysed below, are examples of this, as is the *Gubernacula imperii togati*.

16 'quodam modo speculi vice fungeret et te tibi ostenderem', *De clementia* 1.1, Seneca, *Moral Essays*, I, p. 356.

17 Adam, *Clementia Principis*, pp. 20-21, 24-26, 32-35, 38-39, 42-45, 51-54, 57-59, 63-73, 93-94, 125-26; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, p. 42.

18 Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, p. 74.

19 See, for instance, Green and Mews, 'Introduction', pp. x-xii; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 356-63.

The mirrors for princes of the Carolingian period coincide with the birth of powerful ideas of Christian kingship that would dominate political thought in the Middle Ages and early modern period. Accordingly, Carolingian mirrors are deeply imbued with Christian virtues such as piety, temperance, and humility, often drawing on the Old Testament, but little from the classical forerunners. It has been argued that mirrors of this period often present a set of monastic virtues for kings.<sup>20</sup> The tripartite division of the virtues of the king, regarding his rule over himself, his family, and his people, was also important in this period, and became a staple ingredient in subsequent texts.<sup>21</sup>

### Origins: the royal saint and *rex justus*

There are many reasons to consider Old Norse culture as an extension, albeit peripheral, of the Carolingian and early medieval world. This accords well with the starting point for an historical exploration of mirrors for princes literature in Scandinavia. When such texts start to appear, it is clear that they are already part of a European intellectual tradition, in which these northern texts sometimes appear rather old-fashioned and traditional.<sup>22</sup>

An important early constituent of the conception of the ideal king during the conversion period is the image of the royal saint. The most important Scandinavian saint is St. Olav, King Olav II of Norway (d. c.1030), whose relics were venerated by pilgrims travelling from all over the Nordic countries to visit his tomb in Trondheim. In Sweden, St. Erik (d. 1160) played a similar role as 'national' saint. The Danish King Knud (d. 1086) only came to be venerated later and never on a scale comparable to Olav or Erik; instead, Duke Knud Lavard was a more important saint in Denmark in the High Middle Ages.<sup>23</sup> The saints' lives portray the kings in a highly formalized manner, stressing piety and justice, approaching a monastic ideal, but also adhering to the principle of distributive justice. There is an element of innate virtue.

20 A primary example of this is the *Via regia* of Smaragdus, see Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 176-79, 355; Stone, 'Kings are Different', p. 84.

21 Stone, 'Kings are Different', pp. 76-79; Péneau, 'Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga', p. 198. It should be added that the Carolingian and early medieval ideal was not monolithic. In particular, the relationship between ruler and church was the subject of continued renegotiation; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 423-24.

22 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, pp. 132, 135-43; Gilkaer, *Political Ideas of St. Birgitta*, pp. 241-42.

23 Petersen, 'Heroic Virtue in Medieval Liturgy', pp. 45-53.

In the *St. Olav's Passion* (*Passio Olavi*), St. Olav is 'by nature benign [...] and highly inclined towards that which is right by a certain nobility of mind'.<sup>24</sup> In the life of St. Erik, the King is claimed to have been elected 'because of his innate clemency'.<sup>25</sup> More importantly, however, King Olav lived in 'perfect observance' of the Christian religion.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, we read that during Easter, Erik 'mortified his flesh with a cilice [shirt of hair], which he also wore at the time of his martyrdom, like a cuirass of righteousness'.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Olav was 'careful, so that the nobler and mightier did not oppress the humbler by violent means, he promulgated many wise and circumspect religious and secular laws, and in doing so he gave everyone their due according to their station'.<sup>28</sup>

This image of early Christian kingship had little to do with the real life of these kings, who were probably little more than glorified pirates or leaders of marauding war-bands. However, the creation of Christian monarchies was an innovation in itself, and with it came the ideal figure of the *rex justus* (the 'just king') – the Christian king characterized primarily by the virtues of piety and justice. Perhaps even more important than these virtues was the function of the king in the order of creation: the king being a vicar or an image of God on earth, and thus an embodiment of divine justice.<sup>29</sup> From

24 'natura benignus [...] et ad honesta queque sequenda quadam mentis ingenuitate promptissimus', *Der heilige Wikingerkönig*, p. 17. I have relied on the Recensio I variant of the text for the purposes of this study, which should be sufficiently representative.

25 'propter innatam sibi clementiam', *Erik den Helige*, p. xi. Knut is repeatedly described as possessing a sharp ingenium, e.g. 'Passio sancti Kanvti', pp. 541-42. An older tradition of research has stressed the importance of noble blood in a 'Germanic' pagan tradition, e.g. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 93-96. See also below, note 34.

26 'mutatus est in alium uirum', 'perfectissimus observator', 'spiritu pauper erat et terrenis negociis implicatus nichilominus meditabatur celestia', *Der heilige Wikingerkönig*, pp. 17-18. Knut is described as a 'vir religiosus', 'Passio sancti Kanvti', p. 541.

27 'carnem suam iugi attriuit cilicio quo eciam tamquam lorica iusticie tempore passionis sue indutus erat', *Erik den Helige*, p. xii; 'indutus igitur lorica fidei et accinctus gladio Spiritus, quod est uerbum Dei [...] paratus pro Christo pati quaslibet persecutionis', *Der heilige Wikingerkönig*, p. 26. King Knut is called 'athlete Christi', 'Passio sancti Kanvti', p. 538, and again, p. 539.

28 'prouidens, ne nobiliores quique et potentiores per potenciam humiliores opprimerent, leges diuinas et humanas multa plenas sapientia et mira compositas discrecione scripsit et promulgauit, in quibus suum cuique conditione ius assignauit', *Der heilige Wikingerkönig*, pp. 22-23; 'equa lance in libra iusticie vniciuique ius suum distribuit ac diuisit', *Erik den Helige*, p. xi. Knut was 'tocius veritatis et iusticie sine persone recepcione executor', and aided the poor, widows, and orphans, supported churches and monks, and so on; 'Passio sancti Kanvti', pp. 541, 545.

29 See, for instance, Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings*, pp. 144-47. On *rex justus*, Senellart, *Machiavélisme*, p. 16; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 45-55, 57, 60-65, 67-69, 76, 83-84, 102, 176-79, 194, 216-18, 246-47, 271-74, 292-95, 300-4, 314-15, 318; Kleineke, *Englische Fürstenspiegel*, p. 124; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 124-26.



the time of the earliest available texts, the ideal of the *rex justus* was 'well entrenched', as Bagge has put it, in Scandinavia. In his view it was a shared ideal common to both adherents of the king and the church.<sup>30</sup>

### *Speculum regale* or *Konungs skuggsjá*

Written in Norway in the middle of the thirteenth century, the *Speculum regale* or *Konungs skuggsjá* (henceforth *The King's Mirror*) is different from most continental works of a similar date, as Bagge has pointed out.<sup>31</sup> There may be faint traces of pre-Christian morality, as when the text points out that the memory and reputation of a man lives on after his death. However, the author soon adds that one must also think of the eternal life, and on the whole the element of a potential non-Christian influence is insignificant.<sup>32</sup>

*The King's Mirror* aims at upholding a social hierarchy and marking out differences between the king and aristocracy, on the one hand, and the people on the other, but nobility does not derive from an ancient lineage, at least not exclusively. God has created men unequal in order to test their abilities to responsibly manage the gifts they have been given.<sup>33</sup> Most importantly, in *The King's Mirror*, nobility derives, in Bagge's view, from the position one owes to the king, upon whom everything in the political world depends.<sup>34</sup>

The central aim of *The King's Mirror* is to argue for a strong monarchy. To achieve this, religious and secular arguments are used. The disastrous effects of a divided kingdom are described at length.<sup>35</sup> The text also claims that the king 'owns' the kingdom and its people, and this is meant in a much stronger sense than in other contemporary works. Ownership was of course connected to heredity, which in turn could be seen as a partly religious argument: inheriting the throne could be considered God's election.<sup>36</sup> In

30 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, pp. 110, 112.

31 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, p. 18. Possessing only limited knowledge of Old Norse I have consulted the old Danish translation in *Kongs-skugg-sio*, and, in particular, the interpretations of Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*.

32 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 355-57, 447-48.

33 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 452-53.

34 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, pp. 174-86; *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 274, 495. Bagge in general argues against Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 8, 10-12, 15-17, 21-22, 48, 163-66, 182-83, who puts great emphasis on the importance of noble blood and interprets the King's mirror as advocating an early version of reason of state.

35 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 321-52.

36 Bagge regards this as symptomatic of a broader societal process away from private justice towards public, royal justice, which, again, was a central part of the state-formation process. Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, pp. 30-37, 40.

general, the religious arguments are more prominent in *The King's Mirror*: divine kingship is the key concept. The king is God's image on earth, and he exercises his office ('sysla', 'embaetti'), in God's stead. The king shares his name with God and he must liken his judgments to God's.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the king is portrayed very much as a judge. The rule of a good king – and we may definitely call him a *rex justus* – aims at upholding peace, liberty, and justice.<sup>38</sup>

*The King's Mirror* uses few secular historical examples and references to classical literature. However, examples are drawn from the Old Testament, further reinforcing the image of the king as judge. The Bible also provides contrasting images of both the ideal ruler and the evil tyrant, and this traditional opposition is very important in the work. Saul is David's negative mirror image, while Adonijah is Solomon's.<sup>39</sup>

The main virtues required of the ideal king in thirteenth-century Norway are naturally connected to the king's function as judge. First among these is wisdom, which means understanding good arguments and understanding justice and law.<sup>40</sup> A master virtue, wisdom (often called 'mannvit', although this is not consistent) is described as branching out like a tree into other, lower, moral virtues: 'siðgoede' (good manners), 'haeverska' (modesty or courtesy), 'sannsýni' (justice), 'hóf' (temperance, humility). Wisdom in turn is derived from piety (or grace). Furthermore, wisdom seems to include religious contemplation as a higher form, although this is not perhaps central to the political context of the mirror. Most importantly, wisdom concerns righteous judgment. Bagge points out that '[w]isdom receives a moral aspect and almost merges with another main virtue, justice.<sup>41</sup> The office of the king seems indistinguishable from that of a judge: it is his duty to 'judge

37 'Kongurinn merkir gudliga tign; þviat hann ber nafn síalfs Guds', *Kongs-skugg-sio*, p. 488; 'Kongurinn heildur af Gudi nafnit, þá er þat vist hans skyllda, at likia alla sina doma eptir gudligum dómum', p. 599; the office of the king: 'hvat skylldar-syslu Kongs er', 'embaetti ok sysla', pp. 622, 487.

38 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 508-16; Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, pp. 23-24, 38-39, 46-48, 52, 55, 57, 61, 70-85, 97-100, 196-208, 210-13. Interestingly, it does not seem to have been actual practice that the king should judge legal cases in person in Norway in this period, although this was the case in Sweden; Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, p. 74; for Sweden, where judging legal cases was perhaps the most important function of the ruler, see Nordberg, *Ikung Magnus tid*, pp. 126-36, 144. In Denmark the king was expressly denied the right to do this from the thirteenth century on; Charpentier Ljungqvist, *Kungamakten och lagen*, pp. 44-46, 149.

39 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, pp. 40-42, 95, 164-65.

40 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 437-39.

41 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, pp. 86-94, 104-6, quote at p. 94; *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 601, 609-10.

on men's affairs and needs' ('daemma um mál manna ok naudsyniar').<sup>42</sup> When he is not considering the needs of his people, a king should seek God's wisdom, as found in the Wisdom of Solomon or Book of Sirach.<sup>43</sup>

The fourteenth century saw the creation of two important works of political thought in Scandinavia, both originating in Sweden.<sup>44</sup> The fourteenth century was a period of relative stability and a measure of state-building in Sweden. In contrast, the fifteenth century was a turbulent period characterized by conflict and a weak central government. Much of what I have to say about the Middle Ages will be founded on these fourteenth-century texts. On the other hand, *Konungastyrelsen* and the *Revelations* of St. Bridget are such rich texts that an analysis of them will at least bring many interesting answers.

### *Om Konnunga styrilse och höfðinga*

A free (and shortened) Swedish fourteenth-century adaptation of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* has come down to us in a published version of the seventeenth century.<sup>45</sup> The work, entitled *Om Konnunga styrilse och höfðinga* (The rulership of kings and princes; henceforth *Konungastyrelsen*),

42 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 624, 637.

43 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 624, 635. This seems representative of an older conception of wisdom, consistent with the Carolingian period; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, p. 67.

44 Magnus Eriksson was king of both Sweden and Norway between 1319 and 1343 (he ruled Sweden until 1363). He reigned under different circumstances in the two countries – the Norwegian monarchy was hereditary while the Swedish was elective. For a time, Magnus also ruled over parts of what is now (and was then) Denmark. Furthermore, the marriage between Magnus's son Haakon and Danish princess Margarete subsequently led to the union between the three countries known as Kalmarunionen, from which Sweden seceded only in 1523, while Denmark and Norway remained united until the early nineteenth century. The Swedish land law which bears Magnus Eriksson's name is also a product of this period, and the constitutional law ('Konungabalken') contained within it shares some common views with *Konungastyrelsen*. The similarities include the form; *Konungastyrelsen* is divided into 'balkar' and 'flockar', just like medieval Swedish laws. Péneau considers this in the context of a surge of vernacular writing in Sweden in the period, such as the paraphrase of the Pentateuch and the *Chronicle of Duke Erik Magnusson (Erikskrönikan)*; Péneau, 'Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga', pp. 193, 209. Péneau also points out that there are instances when the writer does not hesitate to distance himself from his models and chooses rather to adhere to the contemporary Swedish laws, even though the main thrust of the mirror's argument is quite at odds with the laws, in that it replaces *legal* limitations on the king with *moral* (and, perhaps, *divine*) limitations; Péneau, 'Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga', pp. 211-14.

45 The MS has since then been lost, but a few pages of a fifteenth-century copy were rediscovered in the nineteenth century. The text has been dated c.1340; Péneau, 'Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga', pp. 191-92, and Drar, *Konungens herravälde*, pp. 70-72.

is in many ways a curious text. It is simultaneously an important early example of the transference of an Aristotelian political and ethical vocabulary into the Swedish language and an effort to come to terms with contemporary political issues using concepts and forms which were particular to medieval Scandinavia.

Just like in the *The King's Mirror*, the king is described as God's instrument or servant ('gudz sysloman'). Hence, it is appropriate that the wise king take God as an example, again very much like in the Norwegian text: 'And thus a wise king shall know and take as his example how God orders and rules this world.'<sup>46</sup> Indeed, it has been suggested that the use of the term 'sysla', denoting the king's office, may be a direct influence from the Norwegian language.<sup>47</sup> While politics is considered from a temporal standpoint in *Konungastyrelsen*, it is still a part of a Christian moral world order. A king who does not fear God, who is greedy and unrighteous, is often deprived of his power as a consequence of 'a just judgement of God'.<sup>48</sup>

However, *Konungastyrelsen* also presents something new. A very positive view of politics and of man in society strikes the reader from the outset. Following Aristotle, the text argues not only that man is a social animal, but that man is clement ('milder') by nature. Human beings live together because this provides common benefits: 'that everyone may have use of and support from the others'. The end of human society is consequently the common good, peace, justice, and concord. These can hardly be separated, as 'peace and liberty' ('frid ok frälse') are intimately linked with the 'common good'.<sup>49</sup>

*Konungastyrelsen* seems also to separate worldly affairs from the spiritual. In principle, the spiritual form of life occupies a higher position in the hierarchical world order, but the text as such does not much concern itself with the spiritual side of things. Moreover, crucially, the secular life can be a good one: 'a purely worldly life' is described as a life that should be lived 'with virtue and manliness and temperance'.<sup>50</sup> The theological virtues faith,

46 'Ok tij skal witur kunungr huxa ok taka til äpte döme huru Gudh skipa ok styre thessa wäruld', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 63-64, similarly p. 14. Romans 13, which is used here, had been an important basis for political argument in Western Christendom since the early church; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 56. Please note that I quote the text from Bureus's 1634 edition throughout; references to Schefferus's later Latin edition below only regard Schefferus's commentary.

47 Nordberg, *I kung Magnus tid*, pp. 144-45; Drar, *Konungens herravälde*, p. 91.

48 'rättr gudz dombr', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 15, 29-30.

49 'At hwar hawi aff androm gagn ok hugnad', 'almoghans gagh'. Phrases like 'fridh ok frälse, ok til godha sämio inbyrdes' are used repeatedly, *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 4, 5, 6, 8, 56; expressions such as 'almogans tharue' and 'almoghans gagh' are also used throughout, e.g. pp. 7-8, 9, 31-32, 65.

50 'rent werilzlikt liwerne', 'medh dygd ok mandom ok med hofsämio', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 14.

hope, and love are mentioned, but only briefly. It is also stated that one should live a pure and godly life, perhaps indicating celibacy as the ultimate ideal. However, this is never central to the work. The four cardinal virtues are the main concern. Virtue ('Dyghd') is defined as 'good and fair order in the man's thought, will and manners, by which the man may live well and honestly'.<sup>51</sup> The virtues correspond to these aspects of the governance of man's soul and behaviour: prudence to the intellect ('hugh'), justice to the will, temperance to outward demeanour ('åthävor') and restraint of bodily desires.<sup>52</sup> The cardinal virtues are also connected with one another, so that 'none of them may be without the others'.<sup>53</sup>

In *Konungastyrelsen*, practical wisdom or prudence is considered the master virtue, and this seems to be particularly important in a king: 'Wise prudence in his actions is the first and highest virtue a king should have, and it is the virtue which advises all others, and governs towards that which is good.'<sup>54</sup> This quote also indicates that prudence is intimately linked with justice. Among other things, the good king is also a judge, and as such he must be 'wise' ('viter'), the writer explains.<sup>55</sup> This is perhaps the best way to imagine prudence as the master virtue in *Konungastyrelsen*: it is connected to justice because it is that capacity for good judgement which a king exercises when personally adjudicating a legal case. 'Forhuxan' (prudence) is the virtue 'which can perceive and distinguish what is good or ill', and involves weighing everything one does, to determine which alternative is the best.<sup>56</sup> Although this often involves distinguishing between right and wrong, it can also mean deciding on matters of expedience, self-preservation, and utility, e.g. 'wise prudence is to beware of betrayal and all injury'.<sup>57</sup>

The concept of justice is clearly defined in accordance with the distributive principle of Aristotle and Roman law: 'Let each have his own, and everyone that which he is rightly due.' What is to be distributed is not only (or even primarily) material goods, but also the honour awarded the

51 'godh ok faghr skipilse i manzens hugh ok wilia ok hans åthäue, huilka ledh mannen må wäl ok redhlika liwa', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 17-18.

52 *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 18.

53 'ängin thera må utan andra wara', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 18, similarly again at p. 19.

54 'Thz är thön förste ok höxte dygdh kunungr skal haua vitra för huxan i åthäuom sinom, Ok thz är thön dygdh ther rådhr allom androm dygdhom, Ok styre til thz got är', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 26.

55 *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 57, 60.

56 'som kan skudha ok skilia huat sum är got ällr ilt', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 18-19, 21.

57 'witär Forhuxan är varna sik för förrådhsom ok allom wädha', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 19, 21-22. One issue which is given much consideration is whom to share your secrets with, pp. 16-17, 22, 37-38, 71.

pious and virtuous, as well as punishment of evil-doers.<sup>58</sup> The king's justice protects the innocent and defenceless, and keeps the peace in relation to enemies both without and within; in short, it preserves 'peace and liberty' ('frid och frälse').<sup>59</sup>

The king and his counsellors should 'act and advise, in order that land and people may have a fair law'. If some law is turned to the disadvantage of the commoners ('allmogen') the king and counsellors should see to it that it is changed to their 'gain and benefit' ('gaghn ok hughnadh').<sup>60</sup> The law is dead if there is no living man to administer it, and therefore the king is called a living law.<sup>61</sup> Drar has stressed the importance of the insistence on the legislative activity of the ideal ruler in *Konungastyrelsen*, legislation being a means to achieve virtue, which was the end of secular society according to this scholastic/Aristotelian view.<sup>62</sup> The corresponding ideas in Giles of Rome are discussed by Tjällén elsewhere in this volume. To be sure, this justice is founded upon a love of God that is perfected through good works and love of one's neighbour.<sup>63</sup> However, in *Konungastyrelsen*, virtue is to a great extent presented as an end in itself, and it is certainly the end of secular political life. What relation this virtue had to the supernatural end of man is unclear, as it often was in the high Middle Ages – the academic philosophers being divided and less than clear on this issue themselves.<sup>64</sup>

The virtues of clemency and generosity are also dependent on justice, as they pertain to the king distributing gifts, grace, and favour. Seizing the property of his subjects without legal cause is a vice ('odyghd') and unbecoming of a king.<sup>65</sup> It is dishonest not to give alms to the poor, but it is a 'great honour' ('dighr hedhr') for the king to keep a large retinue and court, provide them with fine clothes and food, and so on.<sup>66</sup> 'Mildlekr' can be understood as both clemency and generosity regarding money and goods, and without it the king will never receive 'the full love or respect of his subjects'.<sup>67</sup>

58 'Lat huarium hua sit eghit, ok huarioum thz hånöm bör til rätta', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 31; 'thön dyghd, ther stadhugh är i manzins wilia, til at lata huarium thet hans är', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 19.

59 *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 49.

60 'achta ok rådha, at lanzkap ok almoghe haui rätwis lagh [...]', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 75.

61 *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 68.

62 Drar, *Konungens herravälde*, pp. 72-73, 76, 80, 83-93; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 70-71.

63 *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 25-26, 30.

64 Bejczy, 'Concept of Political Virtue', pp. 19-23; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, p. 52.

65 *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 23, 25, 74.

66 *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 40-44, 46.

67 'fullan kärlek ella godha fräghd, af sinom unidånöm', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 34-35.

*Konungastyrelsen* has a few things to say about *how* a young prince may acquire the virtues described above. Aristotle likened a child's soul to a blank wax tablet, prepared for writing.<sup>68</sup> This influential metaphor was used in a concrete sense by Aristotle and in the subsequent tradition, and amounted to a physiological explanation of the workings of the human soul.<sup>69</sup> In general, this view entails a strong emphasis on education, as the young are conceived as highly impressionable and formable.<sup>70</sup>

However, this does not mean that the innate capacities of the young prince are unimportant. On the contrary, 'as Aristotle says: the nobler the man is of his natural disposition, the quicker and better will he be held and ordered to virtuous things'.<sup>71</sup> The statement that it is 'very honourable and greatly needed' ('mykin hedhr ok tarf') that the king is himself able to read also gives us reason to suspect that standards of education were not always very high, even among kings and princes, in medieval Scandinavia. The general view of *Konungastyrelsen* is that kings are exceptional, and this means that innate characteristics seem as important as education. In fact, it is even claimed that kings and noblemen are like gods, and that they should behave accordingly. In one particular passage, we read that they possess more 'virtue and intelligence and goodness' ('dyghd ok snille ok godhlek') than other men, and therefore are a 'mirror and example' ('speghil ok äptedöme') for everyone else. Of course, a large part of their virtue comes from neither nature or nurture. This level of virtue 'no one is given perfectly, but only by the grace of God'.<sup>72</sup>

The discussion of hereditary monarchy shows that *Konungastyrelsen* does view virtue as resulting in large part from innate capacities. From the early Carolingian mirrors for princes onward, the king's office was often understood in accordance with the etymology of the Latin word *rex*, from *regere*, which was equated with *recte facere*. A ruler who did not rule justly was not worthy of the name. This etymology is presented in *Konungastyrelsen* as well, but so is an alternative, Swedish etymology, that leads in a different direction. Here,

68 'widh taflo släta then skipat ok bod är til at skriuas å', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 52.

69 Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory*, pp. 25-27.

70 Drar, *Konungens herravälde*, p. 91.

71 'Ok suå som sighr Aristoteles: Thes ädhlar menniskian är af sin naturlik skipilse, Thes skyntare ok thes heldr wil hon sik halda ok skipa til dyghdelik ting', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 51. The view that men were unequal by nature in this way seems to have been widely accepted at the time; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 60-61.

72 'thet får ängin fulkomelika, utan enkannelika afgudz nådham', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, p. 39. This view of exceptionality, characteristic of Giles of Rome, is an expression of the concept of heroic virtue; see Tjällén, 'Aristotle's Heroic Virtue and Medieval Theories of Monarchy'.

'konung' is considered to be derived from 'kyn', 'breeding, inheritance', and thus the stress is on the inherited capacities out of which virtue is formed.<sup>73</sup> Thus we read that a king should be of 'good ancestry, and therefore a king should be after inheritance and lineage, as from his father and parents, so that he is bred for good counsel, and this is conducive to pious actions'.<sup>74</sup>

Drar has pointed out that *Konungastyrelsen* presented a revolutionary view of society, in which above all the power to make new laws was an important part of the king's duties, as he strove to achieve the ends of human society, which, in line with Aristotelian and Thomist thinking, was a life of virtue. However, she also shows how this new, ambitious, and optimistic vision of politics incorporated the older ideal of the Gregorian reform movement. If the early medieval king was primarily conceived as a judge who administered justice, and a custodian of an inherited, unchanging law, his virtues were still relevant, although the new king *also* became a lawgiver.<sup>75</sup> This is perhaps all the more easily achieved in *Konungastyrelsen*, as it argues for a variant of 'the unity of the virtues'. Thus, the prudence with which the king should legislate cannot exist without justice, and therefore the new and improved medieval king was still a *rex justus*. However, *Konungastyrelsen* shows an unprecedented stress on the cardinal virtues and consequently on politics as an activity valued in itself. This is not, in my view, the case with the *Revelations* of St. Bridget.

### **Revelations of St. Bridget**

Both the modern editor and the original fourteenth-century compiler, Alfonso Pecha, of the *Liber celestis imperatoris ad reges* (The book of the celestial emperor to kings; c.1376-77),<sup>76</sup> as Book 8 of the *Revelations* of St.

73 This observation is well made in Péneau, 'Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga', p. 205, although she considers it in the context of a discussion of elective vs. hereditary monarchy.

74 'godho kyni komin, ok thy skal kunungär wara äpte byrd ok arf, som äpte fadher ok föräldre sina, Then kyn är til godha rådha, ok är thet rönter til from gärninga', *Om Konnunga styrilse*, quote at pp. 5-6; similarly at pp. 14, 18, 39. The same word ('kyni') is used in *Kongs-skugg-sio*, p. 274, when discussing the noble men of the king's retinue.

75 Drar, *Konungens herravälde*, pp. 72-93. In discussing the medieval Scandinavian laws, Charpentier Ljungqvist argues that the laws were constantly added to, although older laws were not abolished to the same degree. This led to inconsistencies in some cases; Charpentier Ljungqvist, *Kungamakten och lagen*, p. 72. I believe that something similar can be said of the mirrors: the tradition was never abolished, even though it was superseded by more recent intellectual developments.

76 Aili, 'Introduction', p. 21. The work was compiled by Bridget's confessor Alfonso Pecha. The first printed edition appeared at Lübeck in 1492. Pecha seems to have considered the *Liber ad reges* both as a separate work and a part of the *Revelations* as a whole, Aili, 'Introduction', p. 19.



Bridget is called, consider the work to be a ‘mirror of kings’.<sup>77</sup> It is also clear that it was Pecha’s compilation and revision that made the *Liber ad reges* into such a mirror, although the contents are undoubtedly Bridget’s.<sup>78</sup>

The *Liber ad reges* is quite different from *Konungastýrelsen*’s worldly and rather idealized discussions of a human society governed by virtue, reason, justice, peace, and concord. Instead, Alfonso’s prologue to Bridget’s work sets a scene of sublime religious terror and majesty against an apocalyptic backdrop. In a surprisingly authoritative voice the kings, princes, and emperors of this world are called to humble themselves and receive this book ‘from the hand of God’ and to follow its doctrines in both heart and actions.<sup>79</sup> The princes of this world should bow their heads before God and humbly receive a new crown from ‘the bride of Christ’.<sup>80</sup> Blessed are those who read and heed the words of the prophecy: ‘For the time is short.’<sup>81</sup> Alfonso ends the prologue with an appropriately thundering warning that there is no distinction of rank with the Lord, and that his vengeance will strike those who do not fear him, in this world or the next.<sup>82</sup>

According to the *Liber ad reges*, all ‘dominium’ on earth is God’s creation, but that does not mean that it is natural: instead, the reason for the institution of worldly power is the fall.<sup>83</sup> The importance of the fall colours the conception of man as political being. We encounter evil counsellors, described as wolves, foxes, and vipers; flatterers are scorpions.<sup>84</sup> In short, the world is full of ‘ferocious and unbridled animals, that is, men without law, without charity, without a sense of God, prepared to do all manner of evil deeds’.<sup>85</sup>

The text also builds on a theoretical hierarchy where spiritual power is clearly superior to worldly power, and this view permeates the work as a whole.<sup>86</sup> More importantly, perhaps, the text takes the form of advice from Christ (through Bridget) to a certain king of Sweden, who must be taken to refer to Magnus Eriksson. However, the advice is rather unlike what is found in most other mirrors for princes – it is made abundantly clear that the king

77 Aili, ‘Preface’, and Aili, ‘Introduction’, p. 21; Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 1.4, p. 48.

78 Aili, ‘Introduction’, p. 44; Gilkaer, *Political Ideas of St. Birgitta*, p. 79; for an extended discussion of the respective roles of Birgitta and Pecha I refer the reader to Gilkaer’s work.

79 Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8, p. 79.

80 Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8.9–10, p. 80.

81 Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8.8, p. 80.

82 Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8.15–21, p. 81.

83 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 86 (1.22); similarly at pp. 90 (3.1–3) and 157 (36.1).

84 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 92 (4.15), pp. 111–12 (17.1–5).

85 ‘animalibus ferocissimis et indomitis, id est viris sine lege, sine caritate, sine sensu Dei ad omnia mala preparatis’, Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 113 (18.11).

86 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, pp. 86–87 (1.26–34).

is very much negligent of his duties and prone to all manner of vice. In short, it is clear that this particular king has not been heeding good advice, and he is warned of the judgment and punishments to come.

The second chapter presents ten pieces of advice for the king. He should employ good counsellors, who are God-fearing and compassionate; he should support monasteries and crusades, he should pray and hear mass, meditate on the wounds of Christ, and perform other religious practices; he should listen to the 'complaints of the subjects of the whole kingdom'.<sup>87</sup> He should also weigh his giving of gifts carefully, as both 'prodigality' and excessive parsimony ('nimia tenacitas') are reprehensible in a ruler. The stress is on the equitable distribution of gifts, giving everyone their due.<sup>88</sup> He should not transgress the law of God, not without great caution introduce new legislation, and in general always act in accordance with the law of God and the laws of the kingdom; he should always shun 'cupiditas' and love a true 'humilitas'.<sup>89</sup> In other words, the good king is the familiar medieval ideal of a *rex justus* striving to uphold God's peace. Nevertheless, earthly politics also has a more pronounced other-worldly purpose: the king's actions must aim 'ad caelestia', and he must love God more than earthly things.<sup>90</sup> To be sure, this is partly a question of him acting as a protector and benefactor of the church in this world, but it is also a question of his conduct as a good Christian, and ultimately, of his personal salvation. This gives the *Revelations* a particular emphasis on virtues of a rather more monastic or, at least, spiritual kind, above all humility. A short glimpse of Birgitta's views on the education of a ruler underlines this: a king should have saints' lives read to him, to give him comfort in his duties and bring him closer to God.<sup>91</sup>

The image of the just ruler is reinforced by a passage on Christian chivalry and crusading. A Christian soldier should, like St. George, protect the church and the defenceless and do battle with the enemies of the faith. The traditional metaphor of the armour of faith is repeated. The five fingers of the soldier's gauntlet represent five aspects of the virtue of justice. The 'perfection of the virtues' of a Christian soldier grows out of religious observance, like the branches of a tree. His feet are the foundations, which is 'a good

87 'querimonias subditorum communitatis regni', Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 89 (2.18). 'Communitas regni' may perhaps be a more narrow term, meaning the aristocrats of the Council of the Realm (of which Birgitta's husband had been a member).

88 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 89 (2.22).

89 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 89 (2.26), p. 94 (6.3-6).

90 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 91 (4.1); 'Nam honor regis est diuinam super omnia diligere [...]', p. 92 (4.18), similarly pp. 94-95 (ch. 7).

91 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 93 (5.2).

will, mediated by God's grace'.<sup>92</sup> The Swedish king is advised not to trust his virtue, but to put his faith in God, like David when fighting Goliath.<sup>93</sup>

Bridget also gives us a rare insight into views on the virtues of a queen, although this cannot be interpreted as referring to a queen regnant. In fact, she is no doubt referring to King Magnus's queen, Blanche of Namur, towards whom she bears a grudge. Bridget holds that a good queen should be humble and modest, but also prudent in providing advice to her king.<sup>94</sup> However, this queen, who is 'seeking advice from me [i.e. Christ] through you [i.e. Bridget]', has 'infusiones et suggestiones' from both a good and an evil spirit, who 'struggle against one another in the heart of the queen'.<sup>95</sup> The evil spirit argues for seeking worldly honour and riches, and tries to dissuade the queen from trying to imitate the lives of the saints and to persuade her to be content with a mere outer observance of religion.<sup>96</sup> This false message is the opposite of true Christian humility, although it must be stressed that Bridget's humility is very aristocratic and self-conscious: 'Because it is fitting for martyrs that they have luxuries, but do not use them, that they are held in honour, but despise that honour, that they are greatly esteemed among men, but hold themselves in the least esteem'.<sup>97</sup>

### *The Advice on a Godly Life of the Abbess Ingeborg*

In a work written in Swedish dating to the middle of the fifteenth century, Ingeborg Gertsdotter (Gerhardsdotter), the aristocratic abbess of Vadstena, gives advice to her relative Christian I, King of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.<sup>98</sup> This *Advice on a Godly Life* gives valuable insights into late medieval spiritual practices, especially the role of royal confessors. However, these practices also have some bearing on political matters, as has recently been

92 'voluntas bona, mediante gracia Dei', Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, pp. 138-54 (chs. 32-34), pp. 148 (34.48-49).

93 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, pp. 171-73 (ch. 44).

94 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 100 (12.5-6).

95 'in corde regine [...] certabant inter se', Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, pp. 100-1 (12.8-introd. ch. 13). An angel and a devil fight for the king's soul again at p. 185 (48.57-64), and the theme returns later in the same chapter as well.

96 Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, pp. 101-5 (13.1-43).

97 'Quia martirii genus est delicias habere et deliciis non uti, in honore esse et honorem contempnere, magnum esse apud homines et minima sentire de seipso', Birgitta, *Revelaciones: Book VIII*, p. 109 (15.24).

98 Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd'. Ingeborg was the daughter of Gerhard, count of Holstein and duke of Slesvig.

pointed out by Biörn Tjällén.<sup>99</sup> In general terms, a form of *imitatio Christi* is proposed for the king, or at least a life of constant recognition of and sense of indebtedness to the sacrifice of the saviour. The fact that a nun considers it appropriate to provide a king with 'loving advice and healthy teachings' is, just as in the case of Bridget, in itself an interesting fact.<sup>100</sup>

First and foremost, Abess Ingeborg clearly prescribes a religious life for the king: 'First, seek the kingdom of God and of heaven'.<sup>101</sup> He should meditate on 'how God has adorned you with his own likeness and many virtues'.<sup>102</sup> In a meditation on the wounds of Christ, mention is made of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, grace, and 'every virtue', and 'every grace and seeds of virtue'.<sup>103</sup> The idea of man as an image of God, and God as a model for man, is central. Nevertheless, it is repeatedly stressed that it is God who has decorated the king with virtues, and that he ought to be grateful. In emphasizing virtues as gifts, it becomes apparent that a ruler's position, and his virtues, depend to a great extent on his inheritance, in terms of natural gifts as well as material ones:

O lord God, how manifold are your gifts of nature which you have bestowed upon me in creating me, more so than you have granted many thousand others, with great dignity on behalf of my parents. Contemplate there the benefices that you know to have from God, both from your parents and on your own account, such as dignity, a healthy constitution and bodily beauty, of the soul, inner and outer sense, quick and powerful perception and understanding, obedience and service of many people, etc.<sup>104</sup>

Coupled with this is a strong sense of sinfulness, and a call for humility. In particular, the king must beware of mortal sins, which he must confess.<sup>105</sup> In

99 Tjällén, 'Kungens bikt-fader'.

100 'kärliken raadh oc hilsamlikin vndirwisilse', Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', p. 163.

101 'Sökin först gudz oc himmerikis Rike', Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', p. 164.

102 'huru gudh haffuir idhir pryth mädh sino eghno liknilse oc marghskona dyghdom', Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', p. 166.

103 'alzskona dygd', 'azskona nadh oc dyghenna plantor', Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', p. 176.

104 'O härra gudh hwat marghfallegha ära thina naturligha gaffwor som thw mik j minom skaplisom enkanneligha offwir margha thwsanda andra vnt oc giffuith haffwir mädh store wärdugheet vppa minna föräldra wägna Thär betraktin the godhgärninga som J kunnin | märkia idhir haffwa enkanlica aff gudhi badhe aff idhrom föräldrom oc swa a jdhra eghna wägna som är wärdughet kropsens hilbrygdha wälskapnadir oc fäghrindh, til sielina, ytermer oc innermer sinne qwik oc krafftogh got näme oc vndirstandilse margha människio lydarno oc tjänst etcra', Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', pp. 167-68.

105 Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', pp. 168, 187.

prescribing prayers to God for assistance, Ingeborg uses expressions such as 'me, who always sins'.<sup>106</sup> In her interest in sins to avoid, Ingeborg expresses general Christian views, applicable to people in all walks of life: one must suppress ungodly thoughts, excessive desire for food, bodily pleasures, and above all the seven deadly sins. The Abbess had no qualms about lecturing a king on how to lead the life of a good Christian – he is merely a mortal man and another fellow Christian. However, there are certain points where the addressee's status does become important, such as when discussing greed. It is taken for granted that a measure of generosity towards the poor was deemed appropriate for a man of his standing when he is reminded to ask himself if he has been 'unmerciful towards the poor and needy'.<sup>107</sup> In a concluding admonition to the king to put his faith in God, the virgin, and the saints to aid him in ruling fairly and successfully, a number of prominent royal saints are mentioned: St. Erik, St. Olaf, and the two Danish saints named Knud (duke and king).<sup>108</sup>

Kristin Drar, drawing on both *Konungastyrelsen* and the *Revelations*, has argued that in Sweden the conception of a king's legitimate rule as consisting of the protection of justice, peace and liberty was consistent through the whole of the Middle Ages. In her view, the more optimistic Thomist-Aristotelian view of society as natural and virtue as the end of political life only reinforced this. Thus she regards all the texts she analyses as fundamentally adhering to one and the same ideal of rulership, namely the 'canon-law', or 'Gregorian' ideal.<sup>109</sup> My analysis of royal virtues in the medieval texts has more clearly highlighted the differences. Above all, there seems to be a division between 'law-centred' and 'Christ-centred' images of kingship. The former gives everyone his due after the model of Roman or natural law, but also uses law as a means for inculcating virtue in the king's subjects. The latter leads a life in imitation of Christ, and does not value politics in itself very highly. The former corresponds to the virtues of justice and prudence, the latter to piety and faith. The two may perhaps be united under the common title *rex justus*, but only because 'justus' can

106 'mik aldra armasta synogha menniskio', 'mik som altidh syndar', 'bidhia för oss vslom syndarom', Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', pp. 180, 182, 184.

107 'Om hon omiskunsam haffuir warith vidher fatika oc torfftogha', Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', p. 197.

108 Gertsdotter, 'Fjorton råd', p. 199. On royal saints, Petersen, 'Heroic Virtue in Medieval Liturgy'.

109 Drar, *Konungens herravälde*, pp. 57, 66-68, 76-77, 79, 85-87, 92, 99, 103, 106, 115-18, 125, 130-31, 133, 135-36, 141, 145-46. Interestingly, Drar claims that the Gregorian ideal was weakened towards the end of the Middle Ages, and perceives a tendency towards 'Machiavellism' in one of the late medieval chronicles, although she does not elaborate on this; pp. 145-46.

refer to the ruler and judge who rules justly and judges prudently, as well as the Christian believer who is deemed righteous in the eyes of the Lord on judgement day.

## Reformation and humanism

And if there is no one whom you can defeat, you should do battle with yourself. For that is the most glorious of all battles, and truly worthy of an undefeated prince, if he daily strives to come out better than himself.<sup>110</sup>

Just like the medieval period, the eventful sixteenth century cannot be said to be characterized by any one single consistent, well-defined ideal of kingship. Instead, it is reasonable to speak analytically of two distinct strands of development, even though these will in practice often be found together. On the one hand, there is a strictly Lutheran view of kingship and royal virtues. On the other, there is the view shaped by Erasmus, which both perpetuates the image of the traditional *rex justus* and shapes a long-lived early modern ideal of a Renaissance prince educated in the classics, the prince who was created, not born. The *Institutio principis Christiani* by Erasmus was translated (or paraphrased) into Danish and Swedish a few years after the original publication. The *Institutio* was required reading for many famous monarchs of the period, such as Erik XIV, Christian IV, and even Charles XII (b. 1682), although by the latter's time, Erasmus was complemented by the use of other texts of a markedly different character.<sup>111</sup> Nonetheless, it seems safe to say that the Lutheran Reformation was more important than the Renaissance in the Scandinavian countries in the sixteenth century.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, this already complex picture has at least one further aspect: it is in this period that we first encounter the traces of the Machiavellian prince, whose only concern is to gain and then preserve his state. At first his role is merged with that of the traditional tyrant. He was the negative mirror image of the God-fearing Lutheran king.

110 'Et si nemo fuerit, quem vincas, ipse certato tecum. Q[ui]dem istud est certamen omnium pulcherrimum, & vere invicto principe dignu[m], si cotidie nitatur seipso melior evadere', Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, p. 42.

111 Singer, *Die Fürstenspiegel*; Olden-Jørgensen, 'Hvad er et fyrstespejl?', p. 15; Lockhart, *Denmark 1513-1660*, p. 131; Hellerstedt, 'Praeses and Praeceptor'.

112 During the following century things began to change, although by then the term Renaissance may be less appropriate for other reasons. See, for instance, Kajanto, *Humanism in a Christian Society*, I, p. 12.

It is only in the mid-seventeenth century that the preservation of power is transformed into a legitimate goal in its own right in the Scandinavian mirrors for princes. One image above all others seems to encapsulate all these aspects: the battle within the prince's soul.

Although a reformulation of political thought may have been a means to an end for the Lutheran reformers, political issues were still always central to Luther and his followers. The reformer Olaus Petri presented the new political order in a sermon at the coronation of Gustav Eriksson (Vasa), king of Sweden, in Uppsala in 1528. The coronation sermon puts forth a number of central ideas of the Reformation: that the political order and the ethics of the prince must conform to God's will, knowledge of which can only be gathered directly from the Bible;<sup>113</sup> that secular government is only necessary on account of the fall;<sup>114</sup> that God will provide the prince with the supernatural gifts ('en underligen gäffwa')<sup>115</sup> needed to govern well; and that he must not trust in his own resources, but only in the Lord.<sup>116</sup> There are also important views which are more universal and less distinctively Lutheran. Just like Erasmus, Olaus repeats with striking frequency that government must be directed towards 'thz meniga betzsta' ('the common good', and similar expressions).<sup>117</sup> He also makes clear that the prince should 'judge fairly' over rich and poor alike, and that justice means the distribution of punishments and rewards.<sup>118</sup> Olaus draws on proto-nationalism, arguing that the Bible enjoins us not to elect a man who is a stranger in our land as king and holding forth saints Olav and Erik as models for the modern ruler.<sup>119</sup> However, secular government is also defined in a rather reductionistic way, being concentrated mainly on peace and order in temporal affairs ('fredh och roligheet til lekamenen').<sup>120</sup>

The coronation sermon briefly outlines the ruler's duties and virtues in theory, while two more ambitious works of the late sixteenth century, both addressed to the young prince Christian (later Christian IV of Denmark), provide richer representations of the same ideas, and spell out their implications.

113 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, pp. 228-30.

114 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, p. 228.

115 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, p. 239.

116 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, pp. 230-31, 233, 239.

117 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, pp. 228, 229, 231, 232, 237. Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, pp. 12, 25, 27, 34-37, 48, 54, 57, 62-63, 65, 93, 97, 109, 111, 112, 124, 128.

118 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, pp. 232, 237.

119 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, pp. 230, 238, 233.

120 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, p. 233. This view was characteristic of Luther's early political writings, but not of the period as a whole. Many of Luther's contemporaries, even among the reformers, gave the secular authorities much greater scope in dealing with spiritual matters; Estes, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God*, pp. 5-17, 21-29, 37-52.

### *Kong Salomons Hyldning*

Celebrating the acclamation (*hyldning*) of Christian, newly elected successor to the Danish throne, at Viborg in 1584, a stage play with a biblical theme was performed before the royal court and privy council. The playwright, schoolteacher, and minister, Hieronymus Justus (Justesen Ranch), participated himself, playing the role of the fool. The text, an entertaining and well-composed piece of literature, was printed a couple of years later.<sup>121</sup>

The plot of *Kong Salomons Hyldning* takes places in Israel in the last years of the reign of King David. The introduction to the play explains how the historical events should be interpreted. The history of Israel has come down to us 'so that the kingdom of Israel could be a perpetual mirror for all government in the whole world [...] And so that the world may know how the Lord himself both crowns and deposes rulers, and that kings rule by him.'<sup>122</sup> In particular the stories are 'such, that the virtues of rulers, which indeed are the work of the holy spirit, can be put before the eyes of all, in every state'.<sup>123</sup> David and Solomon have no equals among princes, and biblical history shows the workings of God's providence, where the heathen writers only see blind chance, Justus argues.<sup>124</sup>

At the centre of *Kong Salomons Hyldning* are the two sons of King David, Solomon and Adonia (Adonijah). The sharp contrast between the two princes gives rise to the following question: why is Solomon a good man and Adonia evil, and why does David prefer the former to accede to the throne – what makes him a good prince? The answer is hinted at at the outset: when David saw how well Nathan educated Solomon, he thought that this must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and he gave him the name Jedidia, 'beloved of the Lord' as a sign 'that he has [received] all this from God'.<sup>125</sup> Though both David and Solomon are paragons of virtue,<sup>126</sup> the play centres on God's grace: only through it is virtue achieved. Correspondingly, vice and sin, far from being veiled, are presented for all to 'see in a mirror', as the consequences of 'God taking his hand away'.<sup>127</sup>

121 Iustus, *K: Salomons Hyldning*.

122 'paa det Israels Rige skulle vaere it euig speyl for alle Regiment i den gantske Verden [...] Oc at al Iorderige skal vide, huor Herren self setter Øffuerighed bode i oc aff, oc at Kongerne regere ved hannem', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hyldning*, p. 7.

123 'Disligeste, at Øffuerigheds dyder, huilcke jo er den Helligands bedrifft, kunde settis almindelige for alle Øyen i alle Stater', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hyldning*, p. 7.

124 Iustus, *K: Salomons Hyldning*, pp. 7-8.

125 'at hand haffuer alt dette aff Gud', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hyldning*, p. 9.

126 For example, King David is described as 'retferdig, forsictig, vijss, taalmodig, modig oc Gudfryctig', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hyldning*, p. 10.

127 'see sig i speyl', '[att] Gud tager haanden bort', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hyldning*, p. 11. The mirror metaphor is used several times throughout the work.



To some extent the play leaves the reader uncertain whether virtues have any value at all. This is underlined in the contrasting portrayals of the two princes: Solomon is a good student, obedient and diligent, but he is only a child, and, as the evil counsellor Abiathar points out, being king is no child's play. Adonia is both strong and wise, while Solomon is weak. Nathan, the wise tutor of Solomon, simply comments that God gives honour to whom he wishes.<sup>128</sup> Crucially, the drama is being decided within Adonia's soul: in Act 2, scene 1, the evil prince deliberates with himself: 'he is in great torment, flesh and blood against the spirit, honour and virtue against treason and vice'. Of course, the latter prevails.<sup>129</sup> Adonia knows that the lust for power runs counter to justice, but he gives in to it: 'I will be pious another time/ Now I may look around/ Test, how far I can go:/ We are playing for the crown of Israel.'<sup>130</sup> In fact, here we see the tyrant portrayed in a believable fashion, and his thoughts are remarkably similar to those of Machiavelli, whose ideas must have been familiar to the author. Adonia adds: 'When I am king, who will dare say:/ He gained the kingdom by lies and betrayal?', supported in the margin by a quote by Seneca: 'A successful and fortunate crime is called virtue.'<sup>131</sup> Joab advises that King David be murdered, and in the margins we read a quote from Lucan: 'He who wishes to be pious, should leave the court.' It is time to think of 'the good and profit of the kingdom', Joab continues.<sup>132</sup>

Compared to this, good (Christian) rule is a simple thing: the greatest honour of a kingdom lies in a 'pure' form of God's worship, a well-ordered church, and 'good order' ('god politij') in worldly matters: all of which undoubtedly refers to the Reformation of church and state.<sup>133</sup> Solomon is described as 'wise and prudent,/ In speech honest,/ In action honourable'.<sup>134</sup> Nathan and the priest Zadock discuss David's children, and conclude that

128 Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 41-44; Joab praises Adonia again, p. 77.

129 'Er her I stor anfechting, Kød oc Blod mod Aanden, aere oc dyd mod forraederi oc odyd', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, p. 48.

130 'En anden tid vil ieg bliffue from/ Nu maa ieg noget see mig om/ Forsøge, huor langt ieg, hen kunde kan:/ Israels Krone wi spiller om', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 49-50; in the margin is the quotation from Euripides that Caesar is reported to have used: 'Si violandum est jus, regnandi causa violandum est. Aliis rebus pietatem colas'. The lines of Adonia are a loose paraphrase of these.

131 'Naar ieg bliffuer Konge, huem taar da sige:/ Hand kom til riget met falsk oc suig?', 'Prosperum ac felix scelus virtus vocatur', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, p. 50.

132 'Exeat aula, qui volet esse pius', 'Rigens nytt' oc gaffn', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 64, 75.

133 Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 58-59.

134 'vijs oc forsicigt,/ I tal oprictigt,/ I lader prectigt', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, p. 60.

there is more than one teacher ('Tuctmester') of children: 'Good Nathan,/ Evil Satan,/ You, blood of Adam/ are resisting'.<sup>135</sup>

The deciding factor is that Adonia and his rebellious followers trust in themselves: their fortune ('løcken'), and their fortitude ('Min lycke oc mandom').<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, when King David hears how things really stand, he at first considers 'the counsel of men' ('Menniskelige raad'), but soon abandons them to put his faith in God. He reads the Psalter and prays.<sup>137</sup> Benaia admonishes the king: he has been much too lenient with his son, and David admits his guilt: 'All mighty lords may here see in a mirror,/ That even the kings of this world may err'.<sup>138</sup> The culminating scene when King Solomon is anointed clearly states what is the most important message of the play: kings rule through the grace of God. Without it they are nothing.<sup>139</sup> Adonia, who finally repents and returns to his father in sack and ash, becomes a final lesson: 'For fortune turns her wheel with me'. Solomon is indeed wise and prudent, although he is also 'young and frail' ('vng oc klene'). However, ultimately 'no wisdom will avail you' if you oppose the Lord.<sup>140</sup>

### *Alithia*

*Alithia* is a short, unpublished manuscript written by Johann Damgaard in 1597. There is little information about the author, but he seems to have been an educated man. The title page claims that the young king (then 20 years of age) read the work and discussed it at length with the author.<sup>141</sup> The text calls itself a 'king's mirror, but not a great one', and claims that from it, it can be learned 'how to lead a royal government'.<sup>142</sup> The title of the work, *Alithia* (wisdom) refers to religious wisdom: the title is explained simply as 'God is truth' ('Gud er Sandhed').<sup>143</sup> More specifically, this means biblical wisdom, as the text is a clear statement of a Lutheran view of kingship. It

135 'Du gode Nathan,/ Du onde Sathan,/ Du Adams blod/ Gør vedermod', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, p. 67.

136 Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 79, 82-85.

137 Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 93-95.

138 'Alle mectige Herrer maa see I speyle,/ At Iordzen[s] Konger kund' oc feyle', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, p. 97.

139 Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 104-9.

140 'Thi lycken vender met mig sig hiul', 'hielper ingen vished', Iustus, *K: Salomons Hylding*, pp. 117, 131.

141 Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 27.

142 'Et Konge spejel, dog icke størt', 'Kongelig Regiment at føre', Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 45.

143 Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 45.

also draws on the wider Christian tradition, however. *Alithia* essentially describes the ruler's soul as a battleground where good and evil clash.<sup>144</sup>

The most conspicuous feature of this work is the constant use of opposites. At the very beginning is a letter from the devil of unbelief, Belial, to his 'huntress', Incredulitas. The devil and his servants are out to draw the king's heart away from 'all royal virtues', and if they succeed in turning the head, the body will follow. The hunted king is likened to a unicorn, whose horn, 'in which all his strength lies', is the Word of God.<sup>145</sup> The work as a whole sets faith against incredulity, fortitude against despair, humility against pride, love against fear, king against tyrant, and Christ against Belial, as Paul does in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16. At the centre of the war between good and evil stands the primary Lutheran virtue: 'God's Magnanimity and Fortitude, *Frimodighed* and God's strength [my italics]'.<sup>146</sup> The truly untranslatable word 'frimodighed' (Swedish: 'frimodighet', from the German 'Freimütigkeit') corresponds to the sense of security, confidence, and complete trust in God which the believer will experience in faith, through grace. In a word, *frimodighed* is the sum of all Lutheran virtues.<sup>147</sup>

In *Alithia*, the king's virtue is described as a palm tree, but the tree is planted in the soil of God's 'true doctrine' ('reene laere'), and it is that which will bear the fruit of royal virtues.<sup>148</sup> Thus faith and God's grace are both necessary and sufficient for virtue; human cooperation is irrelevant. Nonetheless, particular Christian virtues are described. The ideal king is humble, and as God's instrument he should also act in imitation of Christ, remove his royal crown and replace it with a crown of thorns. He must know himself as the 'great sinner' he is, and he must be aware that it is the office that is venerated, and not the man.<sup>149</sup> In imitation of Christ, he must also be prepared to sacrifice his own life for the welfare of his subjects, a demand also made by Erasmus.<sup>150</sup>

144 As the modern editor Olden-Jørgensen points out, this is a variation on the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius; the image of the soul of the prince as a battleground for God and the Devil was also used by Luther. Damgaard, *Alithia*, pp. 28-29. Similarly, Erasmus considers the evil prince an image or representation of an evil demon, as the good prince is the image of God; Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, p. 29.

145 'alle Kongelige dyder', 'der wdi er all hans størcke', Damgaard, *Alithia*, pp. 47-52.

146 'Magnanimitas och Fortitudo Dei, Frimodighed och Gudz Størcke', Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 57, similarly, 'Misstrøstighed' vs. 'Frimodighed', p. 65; the king's noble advisers must also be guided by the Holy Spirit, p. 66.

147 Damgaard, *Alithia*, pp. 58-59.

148 Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 68.

149 Damgaard, *Alithia*, pp. 76-81.

150 Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 85. The same is said by Olaus Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, pp. 234-35.

The king is several times likened to a doctor, or even a medicine, whose purpose is to care for the health of the body.<sup>151</sup> As 'an experienced physician' the king should cure and bandage those limbs which can be helped, but those which cannot 'he will cut off and throw away' to prevent them infecting the whole body.<sup>152</sup> However, the king does not want any member of his body to be injured, and only a poor head would not want to help the members of its body. In similar fashion, the king is like a medicine, a 'Preservativa' or 'Conserva' which cures the diseases of the body rather than mutilates it.<sup>153</sup>

### *Een kort Vnderwijsning*

Johan Skytte was a commoner (son of a burgomaster) who in the early decades of the seventeenth century rose to become a leading statesman and counsellor to Charles IX and his famous son Gustavus Adolphus (Gustav II Adolf). It is hardly surprising then that he was also appointed preceptor to the crown prince Gustav in 1602. In this capacity, he published a short mirror for the young prince entitled *Een kort Vnderwijsning* (A brief instruction) in 1604. Later on, it was Skytte who first showed Gustav the manuscript of *Konungastyrelsen*, which was then in Skytte's possession. Having read it, he recommended to Johannes Bureus that he edit and publish the text. Skytte even expressed his wish that *Konungastyrelsen* be used in Swedish schools, replacing classical authors.<sup>154</sup>

*Een kort Vnderwijsning* is significant in that it is a representative of the Renaissance humanist strain in mirrors for princes in Scandinavia. However, because it is such a late text, it is not a typical example of humanism, and gives important insights into other developments as well. Philosophically, Skytte was a follower of Petrus Ramus, and politically he was one of the first to introduce Lipsius in Sweden. However, on a more general level, Skytte was a strong believer in the importance and potential of education, and not least in rhetoric, and in that sense, he is a representative of late Renaissance humanism.

Skytte argues that 'both the welfare and the ruin' of the young lord himself depends on his 'upbringing and discipline'. Just like an artisan, musician, dancer, or ball player, a ruler must exercise his skill to reach proficiency

151 Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 76.

152 'enn forfarenn Laege', 'hugger hand aff och kaster bort', Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 86.

153 Damgaard, *Alithia*, pp. 96, 99-100. The use of medical metaphors is generally similar to that used in Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, e.g. pp. 100-1, 108.

154 Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 1; *Om Konnunga styrilse*, ded. Bureus was also involved in the prince's education.

and success. As practically all mirrors do, *Een kort Vnderwijsning* describes the prince as an example to his subjects. This pertains to his education, and the learning that comes from it, as well: if we know that our physician is skilled, we will gladly do what he says. Correspondingly, a ruler who lacks learning will earn the contempt of his subjects.<sup>155</sup>

Religion is the 'true source' from which all other virtues flow, according to Skytte. Leading a kingdom is an office of divine origin, and no government is upheld without the 'power and graceful ordination' of God. The prince's personal piety also inspires confidence in his subjects.<sup>156</sup> When the prince beholds God's righteousness, he will see to it that his own life conforms to the same righteousness. This amounts to nothing less than the traditional ideal of Roman law, to give each and every man his due.<sup>157</sup> Importantly, fear of God and constant contemplation of his Word will render him 'constant and *frijmodigh* in all danger [my italics]'.<sup>158</sup> As expressed by Skytte, this ideal of 'frimodighet' is to some extent compatible with the constancy advocated by Lipsius, with which Skytte was without doubt acquainted. However, if it can be considered a form of Neosticism, it is a thoroughly Lutheran version of it.<sup>159</sup>

Skytte proves to be the most extreme proponent of the idea that virtue can indeed be taught through formal schooling. Grammar, for instance, is quite surprisingly described as nearly analogous to divine grace and as 'that, through which all other glorious virtues are revealed and communicated to man'.<sup>160</sup> Skytte's view cannot be reduced to the view that language is the means through which we access revelation. Skytte also warmly recommends the study of rhetoric, not least because it is politically useful: 'eloquence twists and turns man's heart wherever she wishes', he states, in words that were to be echoed by Gustav himself in his famous farewell speech on embarking for Germany in 1630.<sup>161</sup> In his passion for rhetoric, Skytte admits

155 'Wälfärd/ så och Fördärf', 'Uptuchtan och Disciplin', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 3-7. The arguments are very similar to the first part of Erasmus's *Institutio*.

156 'rätta Källan', 'Krafft och nådige Förfordning [!]', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 12-13.

157 Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 13-14.

158 'huru han skal wara manligh, oförfärat och uthi all modtgång gladh, lustigh och oförkräckt', 'uthi alle Fahrligheter stadig och frijmodigh', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 13.

159 Prominent German Lutheran theologian David Chytraeus in fact used Lipsius's *De constantia* for the purposes of teaching theology. Lipsius of course held that soldiers should be 'fati sui securi'; Oestreich, *Neosticism*, pp. 33, 52; for Lipsius and Sweden (Skytte in particular), see Lindberg, *Stoicism och stat*, esp. pp. 194-205.

160 'then, igenom hwilkens Hielp alle andre härlige Dygder warda Menniskiomen uppenbarade och tillkänna gifne', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 15.

161 'Wältalighet wrider och lämpar Menniskiones Hierta hwart hon wil', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 15. On Gustavus's speech, see, for instance, Roberts, *Sverige som stormakt*, pp. 72-73.

to having been led somewhat astray by its power himself: 'The loveliness of rhetoric and foreign tongues have, my Lord, seduced me to speak so copiously on the sweet and wonderful virtues of Rhetorica [...]'.<sup>162</sup>

Skytte's educational ideal was truly universal, and not narrowly focused on the *studia humanitatis*. Dialectic, arithmetic, and geometry are crucial, as a king must be able to understand the flow of taxes, tolls, and excises, the strength of his army, and so on. They are also more directly pertinent to the arts of war, as the prince needs to learn 'how we should position a few thousand men expediently, so that they form either a quadrangle, a triangle, a circle, a cuneus, or some other geometric figure'. Classical authors, such as Frontinus, Aelianus, and Vegetius have demonstrated the importance of mathematics to war, 'which authors' great books we will in time [...] study and analyse, whether it is true what they have written on military matters, or not'.<sup>163</sup> Again, this is significant in relation to Neostoicism, so closely related to the military revolution in the Netherlands, from where it was imported by Gustav Adolf. Skytte's text was in all likelihood influenced by Lipsius's works (the *De militia romana* was published in 1595).<sup>164</sup>

Skytte's most central concern, however, is politics. He may well have gathered inspiration from *Konungastyrelsen* when describing the ruler's duty as being to 'almoga sin freda och frälsa' ('defend and save his people'), but the subtle shift from noun to verb form transforms 'frid och frälse', from its medieval meaning of 'justice and liberty' to be defended into a more pessimistic, and significantly reduced, idea of 'defence and security'.<sup>165</sup> To underline this, he also formulates a prince's office as being the care of the realm for the sake of the people's 'welfare' ('Wälfärd').<sup>166</sup>

162 'Wältalighetens och fremmande Tungomåhls Liufigheet, Nådige Herre, hafwer bedragit migh, at tala så widhlöfftigt om Rhetoricae sköne och vnderlige Dygder [...]', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 22. Still, Skytte goes on to require that the king's counsellors be good orators and masters of the Latin language; p. 39.

163 'huru wij skole medh behändighet ställa några Tusende Man, så at the göra anten en Qwadrat, en Triangel, en Kerkel, en Cuneum, eller någon annan Geometrisk Figur', 'hwilke Skribenters härlige Böcker wij och wele i sinom tijd [...] igenom studera och granneligen ransaka, om thet är sant, som the om Krijgzsaker skrifwit hafwa', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 26.

164 Donagan, *War in England*, pp. 18, 269-70; Wolke, *Krigets idéer*, pp. 78-86; Parker, *Military Revolution*, pp. 18-23. Oestrich gives the Swedish Articles of War of 1621 as an example, *Neostoicism*, pp. 76-78, 86, as does Lindberg, *Stoicism och stat*, 198-202, although the latter is more cautious regarding the influence of Lipsius. Skytte later on adds that he does not wish to say much about the practical side of military training, as he is not a soldier himself, Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 44-47.

165 Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 33.

166 Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 33-34.

With Skytte we also encounter those pieces of advice that belong to the shadier sides of politics and which were so negatively portrayed in *Kong Salomons Hylding*. Such advice is addressed to the ruler himself as well as to his counsellors. The latter should be God-fearing men, but they must also be able to 'be silent' and be 'secretive, although not so secretive, that they wish to contemplate all their Lords' most secret and hidden affairs, which Cornelius Tacitus claims is impossible and vain'.<sup>167</sup> The ruler must also take similar care, for 'a good, pious, and skilled prince is often bought, sold, and betrayed by those counsellors, which Lipsius calls *cubiculares consiliarios*'.<sup>168</sup> Politics, in Skytte's view, teaches the prince to know the common man ('gemene man') which also means that he must learn to 'beware of him'. For the common man is not to be trusted, and is 'inclined to change'. Politics also teaches the causes of the fall of princes and kingdoms. In particular, princes must beware of treacherous and proud courtiers, who commonly stay at court, that is, in the same places where worms and beetles crawl.<sup>169</sup>

In Skytte's view, political virtues can be learned in two ways: either through long and arduous personal experience, or by the easier way of reading the learned writings of *politici*. The study of jurisprudence, and in particular, history, perfects the academic side of the prince's education. 'If you do not know the causes of the beginnings, growth, and ruin of all mighty kingdoms, go to history.' History is in no way exclusively a collection of exemplars of virtue: in history one may in fact study 'the vices and stains of all pious princes'.<sup>170</sup> Historians such as Thucydides, Livy, and Cominaeus all provide advice which is directly applicable to contemporary politics. When the state coffers are empty, one may go to Roman history and observe how extraordinary taxation was introduced, starting with the riches of the most prominent citizens. If the prince wishes to know what end the ruler who does not hear the advice of others will meet, he need only go to Cominaeus (Philippe de Comynnes), as his father (Charles IX) so often did.<sup>171</sup> As a proponent of the study of history with a view towards political utility, Skytte

167 'lönlige, doch icke så lönlige, at the wille begrunda alle theras Herrars hemligeste och förborgade saker, hwilket Cornelius Tacitus säger enom wara omöyeligit och ett fåfångt arbete [...]', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 39-40.

168 'Förty Vopiscus han säger: At en godh, from och snäll Furste blifwer offta köppter, sålder och förrådder aff the rådgifware, som Justus Lippsius kallar Cubiculares Consiliarios', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 40.

169 'taga sig för honom till wahra', 'benägen til förändringar', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 41.

170 'Westu icke orsaken til alle mächtige Rijkers begynnelse, förkofring och undergång, så gack til Historiam', 'Uthi Historierne kan en granneligen beskoda, alle fromme Regenters laster och skamfläcker', Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 41-42.

171 Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 42-43.

is indeed a harbinger of a new century, as this method of learning politics is characteristic of the following period.

In comparing the education of Christian IV and Gustavus Adolphus, Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen has argued that the former's was very much old-fashioned. Christian's Latin exercises (as well as e.g. *Alithia*) contain an ideal of kingship which in Olden-Jørgensen's words can be termed 'Erasmus light', and the young prince genuinely seems to have taken this ideal to heart.<sup>172</sup> In terms of education, Gustav belonged to an entirely different generation in Olden-Jørgensen's view. The virtues are now valued as much in terms of 'legitimacy' and 'propaganda' as they were in terms of any intrinsic value.<sup>173</sup> In other words, they serve as an instrument for another purpose. I generally agree with this view, but would like to add that the development becomes much clearer when we come towards the middle and end of the seventeenth century. If the sixteenth century was the period of 'Erasmus lite', then surely the seventeenth was the time of 'Machiavelli lite'.<sup>174</sup>

### *Hortus Regius*

Between 1643 and 1647 the Swedish diplomat Schering Rosenhane worked at the drawn-out negotiations for peace at Münster in Westphalia. Rosenhane became acquainted with Diego Saavedra Fajardo, a Spanish nobleman on the opposite side of the negotiating table. The two men shared an interest in political thought, and Rosenhane received a copy of the *Idea principis Christiano-Politici* (The idea of a Christian prince), which Saavedra had published in 1640. This work, and perhaps the personal contact with Saavedra, inspired Rosenhane to create an original work adapted to Swedish circumstances. The result was *Hortus Regius* (Royal garden), which like *Idea* is a work of political emblems and a mirror for princes. More precisely, it is dedicated to Queen Christina, to whom it was presented as a luxurious manuscript. It was, however, never published. *Hortus Regius* differs from *Idea* in form. While the latter is composed of 100 essays, each one based on an emblem, the former is made up of emblems accompanied by a selection of quotations, chosen around the theme given by the emblem.

In a dedication, the young queen's virtues are praised as being 'beyond her sex'; this implies the view, which was common at the time, that women

172 Olden-Jørgensen, 'Herremand I kongeklaeder', p. 6.

173 Olden-Jørgensen, 'Herremand I kongeklaeder', p. 13.

174 Jan Waszink has said that Lipsius 'should be considered a *moderate* Machiavellian or a *moderate* anti-Machiavellian'. This reflects this very common position well. Waszink, 'Introduction', p. 102.



are able to achieve virtue, even to the degree that they may be on a par with men, but that this happens infrequently, and only extraordinarily, as their bodily constitution was normally considered to counteract this.<sup>175</sup> Otherwise, there is little to distinguish the text from other mirrors of the period; it does not seem to have been adapted to a female reader, a fact which is in line with what we know of the queen's education: she was educated to be a 'king', in a wholly masculine fashion.<sup>176</sup>

The quotations accompanying the first emblem stress the same things as the image: that political power is a divine institution, that the ruler must consider the common good, and that virtue and a distinguished lineage go hand in hand. The work goes on to state that religion is the foundation of a stable society, and that love and peaceful methods of governance are more effective than violence. A quote from Plutarch exemplifies this: 'A prince ought not only to know and be able to govern justly, but also humanely. For he is a bad sheperd who hates his sheep, and who is hateful to his cattle.'<sup>177</sup> However, little by little, clemency gives way to other concerns. On the traditional theme of justice as a balance between cruelty and excessive clemency, Cicero is quoted, claiming that 'one should pay attention, not to the utility of the one who punishes someone, but to the utility of the state'. Rosenhane also draws on Tacitus, who says 'one should not be afraid of a little offence for the common good', and this is followed by the theme of pious fraud: 'To deceive according to the customs of the age, is the highest form of prudence' (Pliny); 'They are simpletons, who bear their soul in their faces, and are never fit for the public theatre' (Lipsius). Although it is clearly pointed out that deceit (*dolus*) must be used in a good cause, it is just as clear that such a deceit is quite legitimate.<sup>178</sup>

### *Gubernacula*

Andreas Norcopensis (later Nordenhielm) was a professor of Latin eloquence at Uppsala University when, in 1686, he was appointed preceptor of the young

175 Hellerstedt, 'Absolute Hero', p. 178; Hellerstedt, 'Försiktig i Råd, och tapper i Gärningar', pp. 271-80.

176 Åslund, *Att fostra en kung*.

177 'Oportet virum Principum non recté tantum imperare scire et posse; Sed etiam humaniter. Turpe enim pastorem oves odisse et pecoribus suis infensum esse', Rosenhane, *Hortus Regius*, p. 6.

178 'Omnis animadversio debet non ad eius qui punit aliquem, sed ad Reip. utilitatem referri', 'Offensionum pro utilitate publica pavidum non esse decet', 'Decipere pro moribus temporum, summa est Prudentia', 'Aperti isti et Simplices, qui animum in fronte promptum gerunt, nunquam apti sunt theatre publico', Rosenhane, *Hortus Regius*, p. 8.

Crown prince of Sweden, Charles (XII).<sup>179</sup> The introduction of absolutism by the latter's father (Charles XI) is usually dated to 1680, although this was in fact a gradual process. From Norcopensis's time at Uppsala, many dissertations of a political nature have been preserved in printed form.<sup>180</sup> One of them, *Gubernacula imperii togati* (The rudder of political power), is in effect a mirror for princes. On the theoretical level, the basis is modern natural law, i.e. Grotius and most significantly, Hobbes. More importantly for the present purpose, it is a work of practical politics, and Tacitism and reason of state are prominent. Johannes Schefferus, a German who worked at Uppsala for three decades, and a representative of a form of Tacitism associated with his home town of Strassburg, is an important influence. Among other things, Schefferus published an edition with a Latin translation of *Konungastyrelsen*. This edition contains notes with political commentary on the text: for instance, Schefferus criticizes the original author and Aristotle for their views on generosity, drawing on Machiavelli's *Prince*.<sup>181</sup>

Imitating Lipsius's *Politica*, the *Gubernacula* is a 'cento' work. This means that the *Gubernacula*, not unlike the *Hortus Regius*, is made up of quotations, with short linking passages between them.<sup>182</sup> It does not mean that the *Gubernacula* does not have a position of its own on the issues. On the contrary, as the sources are often quite contradictory, the work does make a clear stand in relation to them. For instance, the *Gubernacula* uses many quotes from *Konungastyrelsen*, but is politically much closer to modern writers such as Lipsius or Bodin.

In an introduction, the *Gubernacula* establishes the main purposes of politics. The main aim is security. It is the duty of rulers to preserve society from external and internal enemies. Quoting Saavedra, it states that the 'kingdom where arms are held in high regard preserves wealth: where lances nourish olives and wines: where Ceres utilizes the helmet of Bellona, so that she may more safely bear her fruits!'<sup>183</sup> Thus the purpose of war is peace, and the dissertation limits itself to the peaceful side of politics, leaving war aside. Peace must be upheld by the means of religion and justice. In light of

179 A more extensive analysis of Norcopensis can be found in Hellerstedt, 'Praeses and Praeceptor'.

180 Whether they were written by the professor or the student is difficult to tell with certainty.

181 *Kununga ok Höfdinga Styrilse*, p. 90. On Schefferus, see Runeby, *Monarchia mixta*, pp. 456-66, and Nils Ekedahl's excellent 'Att skriva sig till klokhet', pp. 138-72.

182 On Lipsius's cento and problems of interpretation, Waszink, 'Introduction', pp. 52-56, 58-73.

183 '... & fortunatum illud Regnum, in quo armorum existimatio ubertatem conservat: ubi lanceae olivas & vites sustentant: ubi Ceres Bellonae galea utitur, ut fruges suas tantò securius possit producere!'; Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, praef..

the tradition, this means that there is a shift in the relation between ends and means. Justice and religion are not ends in themselves (politically speaking), but means to peace and security. The *Gubernacula* sets out to discuss religion and justice 'as far as they concern the strengthening and maintenance of prosperity and concord among the citizens'.<sup>184</sup>

The theme of the dissertation is gathered from a quote from the Roman historian Florus: 'And then he reduced the wild people, so that the empire [*imperium*] it had gained through force and injury would be governed with religion and justice.'<sup>185</sup> This refers to the reign of Numa Pompilius, legendary second king of Rome. Plutarch presents him as a pious fraud: Numa claimed that his laws had divine inspiration, in order for them to be respected. Significantly, a similar story is used by Machiavelli as part of his argument for the political usefulness of religion in the *Discorsi*.<sup>186</sup> This leads us to ask the following: if justice and religion are the theme, why not simply present us with an image of a glorious *rex justus* with all his royal virtues? The answer is that times had changed. 'Force and injury' were now at the heart of political philosophy, and the *rex justus* had in part become obsolete.

The virtue reflecting the relation between ends and means is prudence. The position taken by the political master virtue, *prudentia principis* (the 'practical wisdom of the prince'), to which the first third of the dissertation is devoted, has shifted. The virtue as such is defined in a way very similar to the way it always had been, but the ends and means to which it related had changed. The metaphor of the body is extensively used. As before, prudence is the overseer and commander of the whole; *Konungastyrelsen* is quoted, saying that a people whose king lacks prudence ('ther änkte kan förehuxa') is like a blind man.<sup>187</sup> This art of governing citizens ('ars, qvâ civem regant') is less common, even in the most excellent of men, than the arts of war. A version of the Lutheran idea of the king's supernatural abilities through the power of grace is clearly at play behind these statements, but it takes on a new guise. Some assume that a prince need not be prudent himself, as long as he has good counsel, we read. This is wrong, the dissertation claims,

184 'Religionem & justitiam, qvatenus ad civium concordiam ac salutem confirmandam & conservandam spectent, pro ingenii mei captu, rudi penicillo adumbrare cogitavi', Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, praef.

185 'Eo denique ferocem populum redegit, ut, qvoad vi et injuria occupaverat imperium, religione atque justitia gubernaret', Florus, *Epitome* 1.2.4. Modern editions (e.g. Loeb) do not use the same chapter divisions, but the text is the same.

186 Plutarch, *Numa* 8; Machiavelli, *Discorsi* 1.11.

187 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 2. Note Lipsius, *Politica* 3.1, where the prince who lacks prudence is likened to the Cyclops, who is blind after losing his only eye.

referring to Machiavelli, who in the *Prince* (ch. 23) claimed that a prince who is not himself wise cannot receive good advice.<sup>188</sup>

Prudence is further described as the one and only virtue of the ruler, as it discerns everything as it really is, and knows how to give everything its rightful weight.<sup>189</sup> In this passage, the text refers to both *Konungastyrelsen* and Lipsius's *Politica* (3.1), although it seems to adhere more closely to the latter, as prudence comes to overshadow justice. Critically, *prudentia principis* is defined as that virtue of the soul through which the prince knows how to decide on what should be done and what should be avoided, 'according to what his own, as well as the state's, need dictates'.<sup>190</sup> Thus, instead of presenting the ruler's personal interest and the needs of the state as incompatible opposites, as Erasmus does (to name but one example), the interest of the ruler and the interests of the state are here considered to be one and the same.<sup>191</sup>

In elaborating on the content of political prudence, the *Gubernacula* also argues that success is generally gained through the understanding of underlying causes and anticipation of future events (*prudentia* being related to *providentia*).<sup>192</sup> Therefore, this political prudence can be learned, primarily through the study of history. The utility of history in this regard is not a question of history being a mirror of exemplary lives and a spur to virtue (although this is also mentioned). The crucial usefulness of history is more morally neutral: one observes past events, gains an understanding of causes and effects, and forms the capacity to come to the right decision from the experience of dead men. In this way, one can gain the experience of many lifetimes, and avoid mistakes which would be very costly if they were made in real life.<sup>193</sup> The foundation for this view is a humanist conception of human nature as fundamentally the same at all times. A quote from Machiavelli's *Discorsi* is used to make the point: 'because human nature is one and the same in every period, it must be that man always has the same passions and affections'.<sup>194</sup>

This may at first seem like a repetition of the traditional view that history is *magistra vitae* (life's teacher), a standard point of view in mirrors and

188 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 2. The position is also supported with reference to Saavedra.

189 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 3.

190 'prout usus cum ejus ipsius, tum etiam Reipublicae postulat', Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 4.

191 Cf. Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, pp. 33-37, 55, 62-63, 65.

192 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 4-6.

193 'Mortui Consiliiarii sunt libri', Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 7-8; cf. 'Optimos consiliarios Mortuos', Lipsius, *Politica* 1.9, and 'libri quasi sunt historici, qui neque adulantur, neque celant aut dissimulant veritatem', Saavedra, *Idea*, p. 217.

194 'cumque una sit humana natura omnibus seculis, necesse est, ut semper easdem habeat passiones & affectiones', Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 7. Machiavelli, *Discorsi* 3.43.

similar literature since antiquity. However, there is an important difference if compared to earlier authors. Erasmus concedes that history may indeed be a source of *prudentia* for the prince, but he puts much emphasis on warning of the dangers of reading history the wrong way. The Greek writers were heathens, and they present the reader with a poor example of a ruler. The Romans (Livy and Sallust) are somewhat better, but even they 'do not approve of all that they describe, and what they approve of is hardly anything to be approved of for a Christian prince'. The great heroes of antiquity, such as Achilles, Cyrus, or Caesar were in fact 'great and furious robbers' and not exemplars of Christian virtue. Erasmus does defend the reading of classical historians, but only to extract from them morally good examples.<sup>195</sup> In Norcopensis, classical history is, first of all, held in much higher regard. Secondly, since the aim is to understand how politics works, examples of vice and tyranny serve an educational purpose just as well as examples of Christian virtue and piety; in fact, there is much of the former, and little of the latter, to be found in the favourite author of the day, Tacitus.

After having established the content of the central virtue of prudence, *Gubernacula* goes on to treat religion and justice as examples of areas where prudence is applied. Religion is considered from a political perspective. It ensures that relations between citizens will be strong and harmonious, and success will follow in a state where the people are pious. In short, religion is 'vinculum & firmamentum Reipublicae' (the bond and foundation of the state). Numa Pompilius is once again brought up as an example (among a host of others). However, among the ancient heathens, it is added, religion was used as a mere instrument of domination. This only reinforces the point: if there was such power in their hollow superstition, what must not the true religion be capable of? The prince himself should be an example to others through personal piety – as Seneca, Pliny, Lipsius, and others remarked, the ruler, who lives in the public eye, cannot hide or disguise himself.<sup>196</sup> 'I know a certain Machiavellus', the writer goes on, 'who recommends to his prince a simulated piety and an outer show'. Some have agreed, because the unruly mass of the people may sometimes be held back by superstition.<sup>197</sup> However, such fraud does not last long. The prince's majesty will be blemished

195 'non omnia probant quae narrant, & quaedam probant, haud quaquam probanda principi Christiano', Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, pp. 75-77.

196 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 10-15; the quote (at p. 13) is from Lipsius, *Monita et exempla* 1.2. *Gubernacula*, p. 36, also mentions Lycurgus, who 'simulavit' that he had received the counsel of Apollo when writing his laws.

197 'Scio quidem Machiavellum, qvi Principi suo pietatis simulationem, seu ostentationem precepit', Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 16.

and he will suffer the contempt of the multitude.<sup>198</sup> In this instance then, Norcopensis does not side with Machiavelli.

Justice is treated at greater length than religion. Although *Konungastyrrelsen* is quoted saying that justice is the virtue which holds society together, the discussion also aims at explaining how states are formed, grow, flourish, and die, as classical writers (notably Plato and Polybius) would describe the virtue of an entire state using analogies with the human soul or body. A circular view of history and politics is prominent. Virtue does not last – as virtue brings peace, peace fosters idleness, idleness luxury, and luxury leads to ruin.<sup>199</sup>

The *Gubernacula* is occupied with the question of the *preservation* of power and virtue. In the treatment of newly subjected peoples, clemency is advocated, although not in excess, 'but so that for the purpose of confirming and upholding power, strictness is maintained'.<sup>200</sup> A balance must be struck: a 'tempered fear' keeps the unruly in check, and thus levity does not diminish authority, neither does strictness diminish love. One must hold back or slacken the reins, all according to the type of rule ('pro qualitate imperii').<sup>201</sup> However, the prince must also know the quality of his subjects. Just as in other texts from Norcopensis's time at Uppsala, the ruler's ability is dependent on his temperament,<sup>202</sup> and the prince must know the *ingenia* (the 'characters') of his subjects, as different nations share different temperaments according to a region's climate. More importantly, not all subjects within a kingdom are suitable for all offices in the state administration. It is the prince's duty to see to it that these offices are distributed in an equitable fashion. What remarkable series of virtue and vice, sublime arts, and ingenious shrewdness is there not in this wisdom, the text exclaims, using the words of Barclay's *Icon Animorum*. The temperaments of individuals and nations are, however, not fixed and unchanging: disciplined study can compensate well enough for lack of talent, and a nation's temperament changes over time, very much in the cyclical mode referred to above.<sup>203</sup>

198 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 16.

199 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 23.

200 'sed ut imperii confirmandi & stabiliendi causâ adhibeatur severitas', Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 25.

201 'temperatus [...] timor', Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 25-26. This idea is formulated combining quotations from Seneca and Tacitus, referencing Grotius and the commentaries to Tacitus by Forstner, Gruter, and Ammirato, a method characteristic of this work.

202 See Hellerstedt, 'Praeses and Praeceptor'.

203 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 27-29, 58-59; the text here draws on a number of classical and modern authors, among whom are Tholozanus, Gruter, Machiavelli, Bodin, and Plutarch, although Barclay is perhaps the most important source, whose *Icon* is quoted several times. It

Likewise, individual *ingenia* are also subject to emendation, if not perfection. Above all, that man is considered best who excels in virtue, not the one who is born into 'claritas' (splendor, distinction), for 'the one and only nobility is virtue'. In this part of the text we meet something very like a classical conception of virtue: honour spurs virtue, virtue is its own reward, we only achieve it through long and laborious struggle, true glory comes only after death, and so on. However, this is directed towards subjects, not rulers. In fact, it is also warned that the honour bestowed upon a man by the prince may entail hate and envy from those not so fortunate.<sup>204</sup>

In accordance with prevailing political theories, the ruler is considered *legibus absolutus* (lit. 'not bound by the laws').<sup>205</sup> However, the ideal ruler will, from love of virtue, live as if he were accountable for transgressing the laws, as was the central theme of Seneca's *De clementia*.<sup>206</sup> As long as the king is a living law (*viva lex*), he will also teach his subjects to do right by doing so himself. The ruler's exercise of the virtue of justice otherwise mainly concerns his distributing punishments and rewards. Punishments must sometimes be harsh: a wound that cannot be treated must be cut, burned, or amputated, so that it does not contaminate the healthy parts of the body. The purpose is public utility, but this also means that too many harsh punishments are as bad for the prince as frequent funerals are for the reputation of a physician.<sup>207</sup> The metaphor of amputation was indeed a favourite topic of the early modern period: the *Hortus Regius* includes a matter-of-fact depiction of it as a detail in a larger emblem depicting the crew of a ship jettisoning the cargo to escape an impending storm. In the foreground, a young man sits, his arm outstretched. He holds forth his finger, and just above it hangs a saw. The emblem is accompanied by quotes similar to those used by the *Gubernacula*.<sup>208</sup>

may also be added that the following discussion of legislation is connected to the temperaments of the subjects, as the legislator must know the conditions in his country, but also because laws shape the *ingenia* of the people. *Gubernacula*, pp. 30-36.

204 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 57-58. The quote is from Juvenal's eighth satire, the theme of which is 'Stemmata quid faciunt?'

205 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 36. Reference is made to (among others) Hobbes, *De Cive* 6.13-14. Hobbes was generally criticized at Swedish universities at this time, although details of his thought could be referred to with approval; Lindberg, *Naturrätten i Uppsala*, pp. 92-94.

206 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 36; cf. Adam, *Clementia Principis*.

207 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 46, 37-38, 47. The dissertation goes quite far in considering public utility the *sole* purpose of punishments, while justice or retribution was commonly still regarded as important at this time; Lindberg, *Naturrätten i Uppsala*, pp. 177-78.

208 Notably one from Varro, 'Digitum praescindi oportet ne ob eam rem gangraena ad brachium perveniat', Rosenhane, *Hortus Regius*, p. 18.

When discussing rewards, the focus shifts to the encouragement of virtues in the citizens. Because virtue is sought for its own sake, not for the honour it gives, it is essentially its own reward. However, it is a question of equity for the ruler that good deeds are rewarded. Again, this helps shape the *ingenia* of coming generations, as the quest for honour habituates them towards virtue. Moreover, while a truly virtuous man does not desire honour for himself, he may desire honour for his country, family, or friends. Maybe he only desires that virtue itself be honoured, the dissertation adds, referring to Ammirato. However, more importantly, there are in fact few who are virtuous where there is no reward. If the prince's grace cultivates and waters great *ingenia* with rewards, they will grow, flourish, and abound.<sup>209</sup>

A Danish text from around the same time can reinforce the impression of a distinct development towards a ruler guided by reason of state. Although very different, it provides a glimpse of the inner workings of a seventeenth-century absolute monarchy. The *Maxims* of Christian V of Denmark were written as a 'political testament' to serve his heirs as a guide in ruling the country.<sup>210</sup> As such, it is certainly much closer to political practice and less philosophical than all the texts we have encountered until now. In addition, it should be added that documents such as these had an entirely different kind of authority. Christian's *Maxims* were intended as clarifications and additions to the fundamental law of the kingdom (*Kongeloven*). As the expression of the will of the monarch, they had a status similar to a law, but they were also intended to be secret, only to be read by his heirs and closest advisers.<sup>211</sup>

Although there are elements of a traditional image of royal government, as when it is said that justice must be administered without regard to person, be they rich or poor (§ 3-4), this text is generally concerned with practical things as well as more modern ideas. The virtues are mentioned, but only in passing, as '[t]rue fear of God and other royal Christian virtues'.<sup>212</sup> The

209 Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 48-50. There is a long discussion of the exact nature of rewards and how they are best distributed, pp. 51-56.

210 In 1698, Christian added to this in another text (*Remarques*), which goes even further in its animosity against the old aristocracy. For the sake of brevity, I have chosen not to analyse it here. On the texts and the tradition of political testaments in general, see Olden-Jørgensen, 'Christian V's og Frederik IV's politiske testamenter'.

211 It is clear from the introduction to the *Maxims* that the heirs are to 'reflect on them and follow them as best as is possible'. Frederik IV, who composed a similar set of *Regierungsregeln* in 1723 did expressly wish them to be considered as a fundamental law by his successor. Olden-Jørgensen, 'Christian V's og Frederik IV's politiske testamenter', p. 332.

212 'Guds Sande Fryct og andre Kongelige Christelige Dyder', 'Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer', introd.



purpose behind the maxims is to uphold an absolutism which is clearly perceived to be under threat. Absolutism is a 'costly and priceless heirloom' to be transferred from king to king and must be preserved against 'all evil machinations' of the old aristocracy.<sup>213</sup> The need for secrecy is underlined, as 'the secret is the soul of the affairs of state'.<sup>214</sup>

The thread binding this document together is *interest*, a notion which is connected to the idea of the kingdom as the personal property of the monarch.<sup>215</sup> The maxims themselves are to serve the interest not so much of the kingdom, but of the heirs and the royal house. There are several warnings to beware of officers or civil servants who, primarily because of their noble lineage, follow their own interests. Marriage alliances should not be entered into unless with such a house as serves the interest of the heirs.<sup>216</sup> In fact, even the education of the heirs should serve 'the interest of the royal hereditary government' besides providing 'all princely virtues'.<sup>217</sup> As in the case of Norcopensis, the traditional virtues have become a means of preserving absolutism, that is, virtue has become a means of preserving power.

## Conclusion

The analysis of this selection of texts illustrates both the strong long-term continuities and a number of important changes. As an image of ideal royal virtues, the *rex justus*, whose duty it was to serve divine justice on earth and defend the poor and the helpless, and whose personal piety ought to be close to that of a man of the cloister, was still 'well entrenched' in Scandinavia in the year 1700. After all, the motto of King Christian V (d. 1699) was *pietate et justitia* and the primary virtues treated by Norcopensis, the teacher of Charles XII (d. 1718) were exactly the same: piety and justice,

213 'et kostbar og uskattelig klenod', 'alle onde machinationer', 'Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer', introd. As Olden-Jørgensen points out, Danish absolutism was believed to be threatened almost from the day it was introduced. The threat had also been made public in recent years, through works such as Rosenkrantz's *Apologia nobilitatis Danicae* (1681); Olden-Jørgensen, 'Christian V's og Frederik IV's politiske testamenter', pp. 319-20.

214 'le secret er l'ame des affaires', 'Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer', § 9; mentioned again, § 26.

215 'Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer', § 12; Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, pp. 427-29, has observed the sudden emergence of 'interest' in political texts in the 1630s.

216 'Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer', introd., § 31, § 21, § 29.

217 'alle Fyrstelige Dyder, saa oc til den Kongelig Souverain Arfve-Regierings interesse', 'Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer', § 29.

along with wisdom, the master virtue, which had also been central in the early medieval mirrors. The fact that developments were almost always presented as additions to, or subtle nuances within, the existing tradition, makes changes appear less significant than they perhaps were.

Nevertheless, the early texts should not be underestimated. It is clear from both *Konungastyrelsen* and *Konungs skuggsjà* that an abstract concept of the common good, or public utility – ‘almogans tharue’ or ‘lands naudsyniar’ – was crucially important from the outset. However, it seems clear that this common good was defined to a great extent as the realization of God’s justice in this world, whereas early modern texts would perhaps be more inclined to define this as the more modest goal of ‘security’ or ‘public welfare’. If these concepts had any direct connection to a development of a conception of a ‘state’, it certainly developed very slowly.<sup>218</sup>

Some important differences between texts actually cut across the centuries, instead of pointing to a development. The implications of the fall and original sin for political life in ‘Augustinian’ versus ‘Thomist-Aristotelian’ views were fundamentally different. Were political governments natural or only a necessary evil? These two positions both had defenders, as much in the seventeenth century as in the fourteenth.

*Pietas* was a central virtue for a Christian king throughout the whole period. None of the texts discussed here question the idea that a ruler can only develop the necessary virtues of government through the grace of God. However, at least three important changes occurred. First, with Aristotelianism (i.e. in *Konungastyrelsen*) the king is no longer held to a monastic ideal, although such an ideal was important right up till the end of the Middle Ages. Royal saints were important exemplars of virtue, and continued to be so even after the Reformation to some extent. Second, with the Lutheran Reformation, piety took on a characteristic form, which is best summed up with the concept of ‘frimodighet’. This obviously had roots in the Bible and the Christian tradition, but also became characteristic of the Scandinavian countries from this time on. Third, in the seventeenth century, beginning perhaps with Johan Skytte, an instrumental view of the ruler’s piety, as well as religion in general, came to the fore. This must not be viewed as a trend towards general secularization. Rather, it says something about the change in the relationship between politics and religion, for which the Reformation may have been an essential precondition, but that is fundamentally a part of the creation of the ‘fiscal-military states’ of the seventeenth century.

218 For instance, Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, pp. 192–94.

Viroli demonstrated a significant break with tradition around 1600, when political prudence was disassociated from justice. In Scandinavia, this change can most clearly be perceived in the late humanist ideas found in the *Gubernacula* of Norcopensis, although he undoubtedly was heir to the tradition of the 'oberrheinischer Tacitismus' of the preceding generation. To some extent, these views are foreshadowed already in Johan Skytte's mirror written for Gustavus Adolphus. Political prudence as a technical skill in the service of reason of state, learned through the study of history, is characteristic of this tradition. This also tied in with humanist educational ideas, found already in the sixteenth century, which broke with the traditional emphasis on noble lineage for the capacities of a prince.

The most important shift that has been observed is the displacement of virtue (most importantly justice) as an end in itself. In a Christian context, virtue was always liable to be regarded as of merely instrumental value, as salvation would be the end of a Christian life. To some extent the two could be considered to be identical, or at least compatible, i.e. one might be a good citizen and a good Christian as well. *Konungastyrelsen* comes close to such a view. The Lutheran Reformation did not defend such a position. Still, paradoxically, it laid great emphasis on good order and the common good in political matters, even though the intrinsic value of politics as such was rather limited.

However, in view of the questions raised in this chapter, the great change occurred when the state, the common good, and, by the end of the seventeenth century, even the private interest of the ruler, became the end of politics, to which the virtue of rulers and subjects alike functioned as a means or instrument. This is most clearly seen in those texts of the absolutist period of Swedish and Danish history, but this connection is incidental. It was a more general shift in political thought, originating in the debate among the 'anti-Machiavellian' writers, who were in fact themselves the vehicles by which Machiavelli profoundly changed tradition.<sup>219</sup> The same relationship between ends and means is, for example, to be found in the *Hortus Regius*, which politically represents a 'mixed' monarchy that included a prominent aristocratic element. Were one to extend this study into the eighteenth century, one would undoubtedly find similar views in the midst of the Swedish 'Age of Liberty', where the two concepts, 'utility' and 'virtue', were both exceedingly frequent in political discourse.

219 See e.g. Stolleis, *Staat und Staatsräson*, pp. 12, 23, 28, 30-33, 40-61.

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