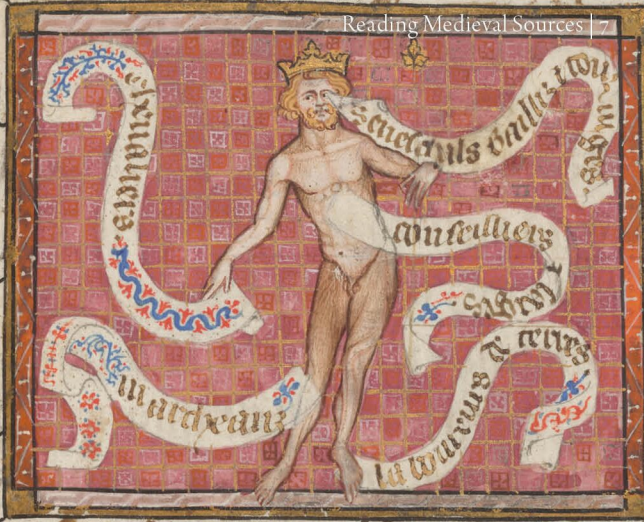


faure iustice par sage attremperence.

Reading Medieval Sources | 7



La seconde
raison est.
quar selon la
samte escripture.
Li roys est li chies
par dessus le pue
ple subget. qui sot
li membre. & pour

ce fut il dit a saul le premier roy. Cum esses paruu

lus in oculis tuis nonne cepit in tribubus isrl

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bles ne fu tu que fu chies & que tu pueple af

ta. Dont le roy n'est li chies. Seneschaut. baillif

& preuost. & autres. & autres des cris & des

oreilles. & li sage et li conseilier ou loffice dou rois. Li

A Critical Companion to the 'Mirrors for Princes' Literature

Edited by Noëlle-Laetitia Perret and Stéphane Péquignot

fice des mains. Li marchent qui couvent par le mio
te. ont loffice des gemles. Li laboureur des terres
ont loffice des pies. quar il sont tous iours ala
terre et soustiennent le corps. Et ainsi li princes
est le chief de tout le corps de la communauté. **E**t a
l'exemple dou chief qui contient & comprend en li
tous les .v. sens humains. et gouuerne. et adres
ce tous les autres membres. Li bons princes doit co

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Edited by

Noëlle-Laetitia Perret
Stéphane Péquignot



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Notes on Contributors

Makram Abbès

is Professor of Arabic Studies at the ENS of Lyon and, since September 2021, Director of CEFREPA (Centre Français de Recherche de la Péninsule Arabique). His areas of research include the theory of war in Islam, the political thought of medieval scholars and jurists, political philosophy (Farabi, Avempace, Averroes), and moral and political philosophy in Islam.

Denise Aigle

is Directrice d'Étude émérite à l'ÉPHE, and a specialist in medieval history and sanctity in Iran. She has published several monographs and collective works as well as numerous articles. Her main publications include *Le Fārs sous la domination mongole (XIIIe–XIVe s.)*, Paris, 2005, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality*, Leiden, 2015 (Saidi-Sirjani Prize 2016, International Society for Iranian Studies) and *Mūsā dar mutūn-i 'irfānī-yi fārsī* (Moses in Persian Mystical Texts), Teheran, 2021.

Olivier Biaggini

is Associate Professor (Maître de Conférences) in Medieval Hispanic Literature and Civilization at Sorbonne Nouvelle University (Paris, France) and a member of LECOMO-CREM EA 3979 at the same university. His work focuses mainly on Castilian literature from the 13th and 14th centuries, both in verse (*mester de clerecía* poems, *Libro de buen amor...*) and prose texts (Don Juan Manuel). He is particularly interested in short forms such as *exempla*, miracles or lists.

Hugo O. Bizzarri

is Professor of Hispanic Philology and History of Language at the University of Fribourg and a member of the Institute for Medieval Studies. His fields of research are medieval *exempla*, collections of proverbs and editing of texts. Among the texts he has edited are the Spanish versions of the *Secretum secretorum*.

Charles F. Briggs

is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Vermont and author of *Giles of Rome's "De regimine principum"* (Cambridge UP, 1999) and *The Body Broken: Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe, 1300–1525* (Routledge, 2020); and co-editor, with Peter S. Eardley, of *A Companion to Giles of Rome* (Brill, 2016).

Sylvène Édouard

is University Professor in Modern History, accredited to supervise research at the History Department of Jean Moulin University, Lyon 3, and member of the Rhône-Alpes Laboratory of Historical Research (LARHRA). She is a political historian of early modern Europe, specialist in princes and courts, royal education and representations. She is currently researching the spiritual education of princes and the political significance of hagiology during the reign of Philip II of Spain.

Jean-Philippe Genet

is Professor Emeritus of Medieval History at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. His field of expertise covers the cultural and political history of the medieval West.

John R. Lenz

is Associate Professor and Chair of Classics at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, USA. He received his Ph.D. in Classical Studies from Columbia University, has taught there and elsewhere, and works on ancient history and the history of ideas. He served as President and Chair of the Bertrand Russell Society.

Louise Marlow

is Professor of Religion at Wellesley College. In much of her research, she has concentrated on the pre-modern Arabic and Persian mirror-for-princes literature. She is the author of *Counsel for Kings: Wisdom and Politics in Tenth-Century Iran* (Edinburgh, 2016) and *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, 1997), and she has recently completed *Medieval Muslim Mirrors for Princes: An Anthology of Arabic, Persian and Turkish Political Advice* (Cambridge, forthcoming). Her current research explores examples of Arabic and Persian bilingualism and translations between Arabic and Persian, with particular attention to early fourteenth-century Iran.

Cary J. Nederman

is Professor of Political Science at Texas A&M University. His research concentrates on the history of Western political theory, with a specialization in classical Greco-Roman and early European ideas up to the seventeenth century. His latest books are *Thomas Becket: An Intimate Portrait* (Paulist Press, 2020) (co-authored with Karen Bollermann) and *The Bonds of Humanity: Cicero's Legacies in European Social and Political Thought, c.1100–c.1550* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020).

Corinne Péneau

is Associate Professor in Medieval History at the University of Paris-Est Créteil. She is member of the CRHEC (Centre de Recherches en Histoire Européenne Comparée, EA 4392). Her research interests include Swedish history, Swedish medieval laws, kingship and political culture, especially the history of political representation. She edited in collaboration with Samuel Hayat and Yves Sintomer, *La représentation avant le gouvernement représentatif* (Rennes, 2020). She has recently published *Histoire de Stockholm* (Paris, 2022).

Stéphane Péquignot

is Research Professor of History at the École Pratique des Hautes Études – Université Paris Sciences et Lettres, and Associate Researcher at the Universidade Nova of Lisboa. His main fields of research are the history of diplomacy, the Crown of Aragon, the history of historiography and archives. He has published a revised version of his PhD (*Au nom du roi. Pratique diplomatique et pouvoir durant le règne de Jacques II d'Aragon (1291–1327)*, Madrid, 2009), coauthored with Jean-Marie Moeglin a compendium on international relations in the Middle Ages (*Diplomatie et « relations internationales » au Moyen Âge (Ixe–Xve siècles)*, Paris, 2017), and (co-) edited various books and journal's issues on the history of negotiations and the crown of Aragon.

Noëlle-Laetitia Perret

is Assistant Professor in Medieval History at the University of Geneva (Switzerland) and Associate Researcher at the École Pratique des Hautes Études – Université Paris Sciences et Lettres. Her research interests include the social, intellectual, and cultural history of late medieval Europe as well as the history of diplomacy. She is the author of *Les traductions françaises du « De regimine principum » de Gilles de Rome. Parcours matériel, culturel et intellectuel d'un discours sur l'éducation* (Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 39) J. Miethke, W. J. Courtenay, J. Catto et J. Verger (éds), (Brill, 2011).

Günter Prinzing

received his Ph.D. from LMU Munich in 1971 and his Habilitation from WWU Münster in 1980. From 1987 until his retirement in April 2009, he was Professor of Byzantine Studies at the Johannes-Gutenberg University, Mainz. His research focuses on the history of Byzantium, with a special interest in the relations between Byzantium and its neighbours in South-East and Eastern Europe, and in Byzantine vernacular literature. He is co-editor of *Das Lemberg-er Evangeliar* (Wiesbaden, 1998) and edited the *Ponemata diaphora* of Demetrios Chomatenos (Berlin and New York, 2002 = CFHB 38).

Volker Reinhardt

is Professor of Modern History and General Swiss History at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). He is particularly interested in Italian social, economic and cultural history.

Hans-Joachim Schmidt

is Professor Emeritus of Medieval History and General Swiss History at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). His main areas of expertise are urban history, church history and the history of political concepts.

Tom Stevenson

teaches Classics and Ancient History at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. He is primarily a historian of the late Roman Republic and Augustan Age, though he has published on Greek and Roman art and has developing research interests in films and historical novels set in ancient Greece and Rome. Publications include edited books on *Cicero's Philippics* (Auckland 2008) and *The Statue of Zeus at Olympia* (Newcastle, UK, 2011), along with a monograph on *Julius Caesar and the Transformation of the Roman Republic* (London and New York, 2015).

Karl Ubl

received his Ph.D. from the University of Heidelberg (1999), and is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Cologne. His publications include the critical edition of the *Speculum virtutum* by Engelbert of Admont (2004) and a monograph on the Frankish *Lex Salica* (2017).

Steven J. Williams

is Professor of History at New Mexico Highlands University. In 2003 the University of Michigan Press published his *The Secret of Secrets. The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages*.

Introduction

Stéphane Péquignot and Noëlle-Laetitia Perret

The term “mirror of princes”, or “mirrors for princes”,¹ “*defies all attempts at definition, even at classification*”.² In fact, there is no consensus on its meaning.³ Some researchers prefer to speak of “*arts de gouverner*” (“arts of governing”),⁴ “advice literature”,⁵ “parenthetic literature”,⁶ or “ethical and moral literature”. Why, then, dedicate a *Companion* to such an elusive subject, one that resists any attempt at typological classification, and whose very existence is debated among historians?

First of all, these texts offer a key to essential political thought of the past. Their ambiguous and problematic status enhances their interest. Moreover, there has been much scholarly work done in this field in the past few decades. However, despite this strong renewal of interest in the subject, there is a dearth of critical introductory texts. We do not presume, in this introduction, to undertake a general assessment of mirrors of princes; the vast nature of such a task will become apparent from the summary chapters in the first part of this volume. The aim, here, is to specify the new ways in which mirrors of princes can be considered as objects of history and to indicate the general perspective adopted in this *Companion*. To this end, we first briefly address the question of terminology and the definitions of the various historiographies. This will allow us to consider the inclusion of mirrors of princes in a broader view of global

1 We have made the editorial choice to use both terms interchangeably in the volume.

2 Jean-Philippe Genet, *Four English Political Tracts of the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1977), p. ix.

3 For an in-depth approach to the scholarly discussion of problematic terminology and definitions of the *specula principum*, see Matthias Haake, “Writing to a Ruler, Speaking to a Ruler, Negotiating the Figure of the Ruler; Thoughts on ‘Monocratological’ Texts and Their Contexts in Greco-Roman Antiquity”, in *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered*, eds. R. Forster and N. Yavari (Boston, 2015), pp. 58–82.

4 Michel Senellart, *Les arts de gouverner : du ‘regimen’ médiéval au concept de gouvernement* (Paris, 1995).

5 Linda T. Darling, “Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability”, in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. A. Classen (Boston, 2013), pp. 223–242, here p. 225.

6 Frédéric Lachaud and Lydwine Scordia (eds.), “Introduction”, in *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l’Antiquité aux Lumières* (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), p. 13.

history,⁷ as well as to discuss the materiality and uses of the manuscripts, before finally evoking the inscription of mirrors in the time of history and historians.

1 A Controversial Issue

It is important to remember that the concept of *Fürstenspiegel* is a German historiographical construct from the beginning of the twentieth century, defined by Albert Werminghoff⁸ and Ernst Booz,⁹ and systematized by Wilhelm Kleinecke¹⁰ and then by Wilhelm Berges in his fundamental work published in 1938.¹¹ The Latin expression *speculum regum* or *speculum principum*, appears at the end of the twelfth century, in Godefroy of Viterbo (1183). It refers to an ethical, spiritual and moral literature that goes far beyond the framework of texts intended for the prince. In parallel, it is generally acknowledged that the metaphor of the mirror runs through a wider literature of advice—even if the term *speculum* is not explicitly mentioned. In any way, these texts are like a mirror that is held up to the addressee, so that he can examine what he should be and how he should behave.¹² Through the figure of the prince, the mirrors

7 While texts offering advice to rulers are known and widely studied in each national historiography, there have been relatively fewer scholarly works comparing such texts from different cultural areas. Few studies indeed have focused on the cross-cultural nature of mirrors of princes: Linda T. Darling, “Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability”, pp. 223–242; Enrico Boccaccini, “A Ruler’s Curriculum: Transcultural Comparisons of Mirrors for Princes”, in *Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam: Religious Learning between Continuity and Change*, 2 vols, ed. S. Güther (Leiden, 2020), pp. 684–712; Robert Dankoff, Introduction, in *Yūsuf Khāss Hājib, Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig). A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, trans. R. Dankoff (Chicago, 1983), pp. 4–8; Makram Abbès, “L’art de gouverner en Islam”, in *Esprit* (August–September 2014), pp. 161–171. See also Regula Forster and Nequin Yavari (eds.), *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered* (Boston, 2015).

8 Albert Werminghoff, “Die Fürstenspiegel der Karolingerzeit”, in *Historische Zeitschrift* 89 (1902), pp. 193–214.

9 Ernst Booz, *Die Fürstenspiegel des Mittelalters bis zur Scholastik* (Freiburg in Br., 1913).

10 Wilhelm Kleinecke, *Englische Fürstenspiegel vom Policraticus Johannis von Salisbury bis zum Basilikon Doron König Jacob I* (Studien zur englischen Philologie 90) (Halle, 1937).

11 Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica 2) (Leipzig, 1938, repr. 1952).

12 On “catoptric symbolism” and the symbolic values of the mirror in Western thought see, Einar M. Jónsson, *Le miroir. Naissance d’un genre littéraire* (Paris, 1995); Ritamary Bradley, “Backgrounds to the Title *Speculum* in Mediaeval Literature”, in *Speculum* 29 (1945), pp. 100–115; Gundhild Roth, “Spiegelliteratur (I. Mittellateinische Literatur)”, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 7 (1995), col. 2101–2102; Herbert Grabes, *Speculum, Mirror und Looking-Glass:*

are addressed to the whole body politic, to whom they aim to provide norms of conduct and examples of virtuous figures to imitate.

In the European and Arab-Muslim historiographical traditions, several definitions have been put forward concerning the term of “mirror of princes”, distinguishing between the meanings “in the strict sense” and “in the broad sense” as in Roberto Lambertini’s definition of Western mirrors:

These terms can be used in a rather loose sense, referring to a very wide range of sources, even narrative or iconographic ones, or parts thereof, carrying notions concerning rulership, or in a stricter sense limited to independent works explicitly aiming at instructing kings and lesser rulers about the virtues they should cultivate, their lifestyle, their duties, the philosophical and theological meaning of their office. They usually follow standard conventions so that their teachings about royal justice, princely virtues, and the like tend to give the impression of a continuous repetition of commonplaces.¹³

A broad definition of mirrors,¹⁴ such as the one proposed here, therefore applies to a wide variety of texts: treatises, political speeches, wills, dialogues, memoirs, sermons, letters, poems, panegyrics, but also philosophical treatises and historical works. Louise Marlow also suggests two levels of interpretation in her definition of the mirrors of the Arab-Muslim princes and points to a similar diversity of writing forms.

The term “Mirrors for princes”, following European practice, is given to works of literature that impart advice to rulers and high-ranking administrators; such writings are abundant in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. The designation “mirrors for princes” has often been used as a synonym for the more general category of advice literature and applied to a variety of written texts as long as they serve an advisory purpose and address a royal recipient; in this sense, the term has been applied to works of *ḥikma* (wisdom), *maw’iẓa* (moral

Kontinuität und Originalität der Spiegelmetapher in den Buchtiteln des Mittelalters und der englischen Literatur des 13. bis 17. Jahrhunderts (Tübingen, 1973).

13 Roberto Lambertini, “Mirrors for Princes”, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. H. Lagerlung (Dordrecht, 2011) (online, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9729-4_338, pp. 791–797), here p. 792.

14 For a synthesis of the tradition of the genre in the medieval West, we refer firstly to the article by Jean-Philippe Genet, “L’évolution du genre des Miroirs des princes en Occident au Moyen Âge”, in *Religion et mentalités au Moyen Âge: mélanges en l’honneur d’Hervé Martin*, eds. S. Cassagnes-Brouquet et al. (Rennes, 2003), pp. 531–541 and Cristian Bratu, “Mirrors for Princes (Western)”, in *Handbook of Medieval Studies* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 1928–1930.

exhortation), *akhlāq* (ethics, characteristically in the personal, domestic, and political setting), and *wasīyya* (“testament”, usually of a father to his son(s) and successor(s)). In other usages, the term “Mirror for princes” has been restricted to a particular literary genre, understood as a branch of *adab* (*belles lettres*). According to this more limited definition, the designation is usually reserved for independent book-length works, sometimes known as *adab* or *ādbā al-mulūk* (“the manners of kings”), *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (“counsel for kings”), or *siyar al-mulūk* (“the conduct of kings”), subdivided into thematic chapters or sections, in which materials from varied sources (such as *Qurʾanic* verses, *hadith* proverbs, bons mots, poetry, anecdotes, historical narratives) feature prominently.¹⁵

In a broad definition, the term “Mirrors of Princes” therefore applies to texts that present either a portrait of the ideal prince, or advices on governing addressed to the “prince” and through him to all sovereigns. This definition applies equally to short or long texts, in verse or prose, and to a variety of literary genres: all works which, in whole or in part, convey notions relating to royalty. In this flexible perspective, the term “miroir des princes” therefore refers less to a literary genre than to a subject. This choice, which makes it possible to identify a lineage of texts sharing a generic content from antiquity to the modern era, has been agreed upon by many scholars anxious to discern the common intent within a multifaceted “opportunistic literature”:

The authors of the “mirrors to the princes” make extensive use of rhetorical resources, so a narrow definition of the genre risks locking us into too rigid a category. The question of literary genre remains, as the works are generally composite. What is very clear, however, is the purpose of these treatises, and it is for this reason that it seems preferable to adopt a broader definition of the corpus, “parenetic literature” intended for the prince, even if, for reasons of convenience, we retain the expression “mirror to the prince” or “mirror of the prince” [...] established by historiography.¹⁶

15 Louise Marlow, “Mirrors for Princes”, in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 348–350, here pp. 348–349.

16 Frédérique Lachaud and Lydwine Scordia, “Introduction”, in eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia, *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières* (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), pp. 11–17, here p. 13: “Les auteurs des « miroirs aux princes » font un large usage des ressources de la rhétorique, aussi une définition étroite du genre risque de nous enfermer dans une catégorie trop rigide. La question du genre littéraire reste posée, car les œuvres sont généralement composites. Ce qui est en revanche très clair, c’est le but poursuivi par ces traités, et c’est pour cette raison qu’il semble préférable

The chapters in this *Companion* develop this line of thought, treating mirrors of princes not strictly as a genre but rather as a mode of expression that relies on a mirror metaphor, in a more or less explicit way, to teach the prince what he should be, what he should know, and how he should behave in order to govern his subjects well. The studies proposed in this book not only contribute to a better understanding of this vast literature, but also invite us to shift the question of definition and genre to a comparative and interconnected perspective, with a wider geographical and civilizational horizon.

2 Towards a Global Perspective

This shift towards a global and comparative perspective has been made possible by the recent evolution of research in three main and complementary directions: the study of manuscript traditions; the dissemination and testing of the term “mirror of princes” outside the West; comparatism and global history.

The manuscript traditions of the mirrors of princes are now in some cases considered to be an integral part of the history of the political thought conveyed by these texts.¹⁷ Numerous unpublished works have emerged, whether previously unknown mirrors or manuscript copies whose existence had not been discovered. Patient scholarly work has made it possible to establish complex filiations between texts,¹⁸ to reconsider intellectual traditions and moments of rupture—for example, the effect of rereadings of Aristotle in the West.¹⁹ This has led to a better understanding of the nuances and general of mirrors of princes.

At the same time, the definition of mirror of princes has been expanded. Initially used to describe texts produced in England, France, Italy and the Holy Roman Empire during the Middle Ages,²⁰ the expression was then applied

d'adopter une définition plus large du corpus, la « littérature parénétiq ue » destinée au prince, même si, pour des raisons de commodité, nous conservons l'expression « miroir au prince » ou « miroir du prince » [...] consacrée par l'historiographie”.

17 Charles F. Briggs, “Scholarly and Intellectual Authority in Late Medieval European Mirrors”, in *Global Medieval Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered*, ed. R. Forster and N. Yavari (Boston, 2015), p. 38: “Like other medieval mirrors, they privilege the ethical over the political, seeing personal character and relationships as being more important to the common weal than constitutional, structural, or process-related issues”.

18 Louise Marlow, “Mirrors for Princes”, p. 27

19 See the chapter by Charles F. Briggs and Cary Nederman in this volume.

20 Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, in the wake of which, for the delimitation of the corpus, is to be considered, Hans-Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters* (Darmstadt, 2006).

to numerous texts written or translated in so-called “peripheral” areas of the medieval West, such as Scandinavia and the Iberian Peninsula.²¹ This opening up and internal decentering of the Europe of the mirrors was accompanied by an extension of the uses of the notion towards Byzantium and Islam, in this case for manuscripts in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish. This movement hasn’t been uniform or linear. The usefulness and relevance of the notion of mirrors of princes outside the medieval West is still subject to lively debate²² hence the necessity in the various traditions here considered to discuss repeatedly the very notion of mirror of princes in different historical or historiographical contexts.

Lastly, many scholars have contrasted and compared mirrors of princes composed in different traditions, circulating in different spaces, times and political regimes. In an encyclopedic or genealogical perspective, several works have proposed a synoptic view of all writing related to the genre of mirror of princes from ancient Greece to the advent of humanism, via Byzantium, Persia, Islam and the medieval West. In this context, the emphasis has often been placed on the models of royal behavior contained in sacred texts (Bible, Hebrew sacred-writing traditions, Koran), an issue we have chosen to let the authors deal with from their own perspective. The research has also focused strongly on the connections or ruptures between the different traditions, over the long history of ideas and political thought.²³

Other studies concentrate on a particular tradition of mirrors of princes, using another tradition as a counterpoint to reveal differences in definition. The aim is thus to reveal differences in definition, typology, trajectories and

21 Adeline Rucquoi and Hugo O. Bizzarri, “Los espejos de príncipes en Castilla: entre Oriente y Occidente”, in *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 79 (2005), 7–30; Sverre Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King’s Mirror* (Odense, 1987); Andreas Hellerstedt, “Cracks in the Mirror. Changing conceptions of political virtue in mirrors for princes in Scandinavia from the Middle Ages to c. 1700”, in *Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. A. Hellerstedt (Amsterdam, 2018), pp. 281–328, as well as the chapter by Olivier Biaggini and Corinne Peneau in this volume.

22 For Islam, see for example Jocelyne Dakhli, “Les miroirs des princes islamiques: une modernité sourde?”, in *Annales HSS* 5 (Sept–Oct 2002), pp. 1191–1207; the chapters by Louise Marlow and Makram Abbès in this volume. For Byzantium, Hana Coufalová Bohrnová, “Mirrors for Princes: Genuine Byzantine Genre or Academic Construct?”, in *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 22/1 (2017), pp. 5–16, and the chapter by Günther Prinzing in this volume.

23 Pierre Hadot, “Fürstenspiegel”, in *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 8 (1972), pp. 555–632; Hans Hubert Anton, “Fürstenspiegel”, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 4 (1989), pp. 1040–1049; Roberto Lambertini, “Mirrors for Princes”, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. H. Lagerlung (Dordrecht, 2011) (online, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9729-4_338), pp. 791–797.

audiences, but also common issues. “Mirrors of princes in Islam constitute a very widespread literary genre without an equivalent in European history, despite the many concordances and common filiations”,²⁴ notes Jocelyne Dakhli. For Makram Abbès, a specialist in the mirrors of Muslim princes, Western works on the art of governing, from the Middle Ages to Machiavelli,²⁵ offer a way, once their specific contexts have been considered, to connect political ideas that have long been compartmentalized, and in the case of Islam, seen under the problematic sign of immutability.²⁶

A more systematic comparison and connected or transnational approaches allow a critical dialogue among the mirror traditions. “The voluminous nature of the mirror literatures in the Latin West, Byzantium and the medieval Islamic world provides ample scope for comparative studies”,²⁷ Louise Marlow has argued strongly in favor of such an approach, facilitated by the many interconnections between the traditions concerned.²⁸ Over the past decade or so, several historians have been exploring this avenue, with singularly different methods and results. The historian Linda T. Darling has identified great similarities in form and content in counseling literature from the West to India in the Middle Ages. According to Darling, the unity of this transnational phenomenon, which was broken only in the sixteenth century, can be explained first of all by common origins and by significant circulation between the traditions.²⁹ This interpretation has been tested by comparing the texts of mirrors of princes from various traditions considered as data.³⁰ In the absence of a critical interrogation of the genre and the effects implied by English translations,

24 “Les miroirs des princes en Islam constituent un genre littéraire très répandu et sans équivalent dans l’histoire européenne, en dépit de multiples concordances et de filiations communes”, Jocelyne Dakhli, “Les *miroirs des princes* islamiques : une modernité sourde?”, in *Annales HSS* 5 (Sept–Oct 2002), p. 1191.

25 Makram Abbès, *Islam et politique à l’âge classique* (Paris, 2009), pp. 19–122.

26 Al-Māwardī, *De l’éthique du prince et du gouvernement de l’État*, trans. M. Abbès (Paris, 2015).

27 Louise Marlow, “Surveying Recent Literature on the Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes Genre”, in *History Compass* 7/2 (2009), pp. 521–538, here p. 531.

28 “This interconnectedness of the common literary culture facilitated the circulation and perpetuation of a large body of ideas and motifs drawn from a strikingly diverse set of culture backgrounds” (Louise Marlow, “Advice and Advice Literature”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, third edition, eds. Kate Fleet et al. (2007), Brill Reference Online, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0026).

29 Linda T. Darling, “*Mirrors for Princes* in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability”, pp. 223–242.

30 Lisa Blaydes, Justin Grimmer and Alison McQueen, “Mirrors for Princes and Sultans: Advice on the Art of Governance in the Medieval Christian and Islamic Worlds”, in *Journal of Politics* 80/4 (2018), pp. 1151–1168 (with an appendix).

the comparative study of largely decontextualized “mirrors of princes” nevertheless leads to very general, even schematic, findings (the focus on strong government alone in Islam, for example). In a more nuanced way, the examination of the transcultural character of the genre, on the basis of contextualized cases, has led to the argument for the existence of “a model curriculum for the education of monocratic rulers in the Abrahamic societies” from the eighth to the thirteenth century, a model marked by formal continuities, anchored in a tradition of advice and legitimizing the use of power.³¹ This is an interesting hypothesis, which undoubtedly deserves further study.

Other approaches to mirrors of princes—comparative, global, transnational—nevertheless warn against monolithic interpretations or overly broad generalizations. For Regula Forster and Neguin Yavari, it is thus problematic to consider “commonalities in political thought amidst incongruous historical contexts in comparative frameworks”. According to these authors, it is preferable to adopt a global historical perspective that takes into account the singularities and relationships between the different intellectual traditions in which the mirrors of princes are embedded, sometimes successively, as in the case of the *Kalila wa dimna*, written in India and then adapted in Iberian sapiential literature in particular. In several recent collective works, notably on the concepts of ideal royalty,³² this simultaneous attention to the long-term, to the modalities of circulation, and to the singularities of each text testifies to the keen interest aroused by the mirrors of princes. This interest is also methodological, as the mirrors of princes constitute a remarkable object of comparative, connected, global or transnational history. The variety of perspectives adopted and results obtained prove the need to facilitate and deepen the dialogue between specular traditions *and* historiographies. This is one of the essential challenges of this volume. Hence the editors’ choice to open the study to the main spaces in relation to which the notion is not only used, but also debated. The aim is therefore to show the different scales of analysis of current research, general perspectives, and more experimental studies or studies that consider it critically, or even question its relevance. In this way, this *Companion* aims to reflect the scope of current research and the debates within the field.

31 Enrico Boccaccini, “A Ruler’s Curriculum: Transcultural Comparisons of Mirrors for Princes”, in *Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam: Religious Learning between Continuity and Change*, ed. S. Günther (Leiden, 2020), pp. 684–712.

32 Geert Roskam and Stefan Schorn (eds.), *Concepts of Ideal Rulership from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2018).

3 Materiality and Uses

Our work seeks to highlight the historicity of the mirrors of princes by situating them in their specific context. This approach considers both the textuality and the materiality of the texts, which reveal practices linked to modes of production, circulation, distribution and use.

We will therefore examine, through specific examples, the different models chosen by the authors of mirrors of princes in writing their texts, i.e. the materials with which they worked, but also the modalities of circulation, diffusion, networks of transmission, translation and re-appropriation of their works. Particular attention will be paid to the circulation of the French translations of Gilles de Rome's *De regimine principum* and the Spanish translations of the *Secretum secretorum*. We will observe how different traditions entered into dialogue, coexisted and influenced each other, voluntarily or not.

Attention to the materiality and uses of manuscripts leads us to consider the polyvalent function of the texts. The great majority of mirrors of princes have in common that they address, through the figure of the ruler, the whole political community. As the dissemination and manuscript reception of *De regimine principum* shows, the mirrors were indeed read, heard and translated by audiences beyond the royal and princely courts. In monastic schools, universities, sermons, the mirrors of princes served as working tools, *compendiums*, manuals or even guides for conduct, from which it was possible to draw practical advice, touching all areas of life. In the West, the mirrors of princes were also objects to be envied and admired by the bourgeoisie. They conveyed the tastes and values of the upper classes and brought a certain prestige to their owners, who often ordered sumptuous copies. It was thus a question of appropriating the influence of counsel originally addressed to the sovereign. This advice could relate to political action but also, through it, to concrete aspects of child rearing, marital relations, and good family government in the broadest sense.

Our understanding of the content of mirrors therefore varies according to their specific context and their use in different social environments. This question henceforth invites us to reflect globally on the uses of time and periodization within different cultural traditions.

4 Time and Periodization

Can the mirrors of princes be confined to any time sequencing or historical periodizations? What temporalities does the life of the manuscripts suggest to us? What place do the mirrors give to time and history? These three issues will

be summarized here in order to orient the reader of this *Companion* and, more generally, of studies carried out on mirrors.

The choice of periodization is particularly difficult in the case of mirrors of princes. Depending on whether one considers the West, Byzantium and Islam as a whole or separately, or whether one considers smaller areas, the boundaries and chronological divisions of the subject vary considerably. These divergences partly reflect differences in the evolution of political systems and the relationship between knowledge and power.³³ For the West, it has been common since Wilhelm Berges' classic and seminal work to distinguish several phases closely linked to the transformation of governmental regimes: the Carolingian mirrors; then, without any real continuity, the twelfth century, dominated by John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*; forms of mirrors emerging from the thirteenth century onwards;³⁴ then the productions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from polities with a developed and renewed organization. For Byzantium, if one adopts a broad understanding of the notion of mirrors of princes, they can be distinguished typologically by following the major moments in the history of the Empire.³⁵ In Islam, the succession of dynasties and the evolution of forms of power could also serve as criteria for a history of mirrors, from the prolific production of the eighth- to tenth-century Abbasids to the nineteenth century.³⁶

However, the evolution of political systems cannot, by any means, be used as the sole criterion to explain the transformations of mirrors of princes—understood in the broad sense—in the course of history. It is also essential to take the measure of other possibly decisive phenomena: Christianization, Islamization and confessionalization, the evolution of the relationship to the law in the societies concerned,³⁷ the development of universities and

33 Jean-Philippe Genet, "L'évolution du genre des miroirs des princes en Occident au Moyen Âge", p. 531; Einar M. Jónsson, "Les miroirs aux princes sont-ils un genre littéraire?", in *Médiévales. Langues, Textes, Histoire* 151 (2006), pp. 153–166. The question was already considered by Pierre Hadot, "Fürstenspiegel".

34 This scheme is, for example, taken up by José M. Nieto Soria, "Les miroirs des princes dans l'historiographie espagnole (couronne de Castille, xiii^e-xv^e siècles). Tendances de la recherche", in *Specula principum*, ed. A. de Benedictis (Frankfurt, 1999), pp. 193–207.

35 See Günther Prinzing's chapter in this volume.

36 Louise Marlow, "Surveying Recent Literature on the Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes Genre", in *History Compass* 7/2 (2009); Makram Abbès, *Islam et politique à l'âge classique; Al-Māwardī, De l'éthique du prince et du gouvernement de l'État*, trans. from Arabic by M. Abbès (Paris, 2015), as well as the chapter by Denise Aigle in this volume.

37 Angela de Benedictis (ed.), *Specula principum* (Frankfurt, 1999), in particular the introduction by Angela de Benedictis.

of scholasticism in the West, the history of literary traditions,³⁸ or again, at different rates, the reception of Aristotle.³⁹ The collection of chapters in this volume, which offer multiple and complementary insights, therefore pursues three objectives in terms of periodizations. The first is to show their diversity, without forcibly homogenizing them. The second is to place mirrors in the long-term, downstream from Greek and then Roman reflections on kingship, and upstream from the sixteenth century, a time of profound renewal and questioning of the mirrors, so as to reveal the (dis)continuities between the different traditions of reflection on kingship (the ancient legacy is, for example, not very present in Carolingian mirrors,⁴⁰ which have little posterity, and much more so in Byzantium and in the Renaissance). The third objective is to contribute, through the example of the mirrors, to making the importance and complexity of questions of periodization more perceptible.

As we have said, understanding mirrors in their time also means placing them at the heart of the concerns of the society that produces them. Were there any circumstances that were particularly conducive to the writing of mirrors? While there is, unsurprisingly, no general rule in this respect, the role of moments of crisis is nevertheless significant, for example in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century France and England.⁴¹ The same is true of phases of refoundation or reconstruction of the broken ties of political societies, particularly after civil wars or tumultuous successions, during which the authors of mirrors, more diverse than was once thought, both in Islam and in the West,⁴² sometimes tried to influence current developments.⁴³ The actual work of producing the mirror manuscripts could then require a great deal of time, especially when they were illuminated.⁴⁴ Then comes the time of use, of possible

38 Hugo O. Bizzarri, "Sermones y espejos de príncipes castellanos", in *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 42/1 (January–June 2012), pp. 163–181.

39 See the chapters by Charles F. Briggs and Cary Nedermann in this volume.

40 Alain Dubreucq, "Le prince et le peuple dans les miroirs des princes carolingiens", in *Le prince, son peuple et le bien commun, de l'Antiquité tardive à la fin du Moyen âge*, eds. H. Oudart, J.-M. Picard and J. Quaghebeur (Rennes, 2013), pp. 97–114; Hans-Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters* (Darmstadt, 2006), and Karl Ubl's chapter in this volume.

41 Frédérique Lachaud and Lydwine Scordia (eds.), *Au-delà des miroirs: la littérature politique dans la France de Charles VI et de Charles VII* (Paris, 2012).

42 Louise Marlow, "Surveying Recent Literature on the Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes Genre", in *History Compass* 7/2 (2009), pp. 527–528.

43 See on this point the chapter in this volume by Olivier Biaggini and Corinne Peneau.

44 On the images in the princely mirror manuscripts, see in particular Ernest G. Grube (ed.), *A mirror for Princes from India. Illustrated Versions of the Kalilah wa Dimnah, Anvar-i Suhayli, Iyar-i Danish, and Humayun Nameh* (Bombay, 1991); Hugo O. Bizzarri, "Del texto a

circulation and adaptation, of canonization within traditions or the corpus of texts for some, of oblivion for others. The attention paid to these successive phases in the life of manuscripts, common to many recent studies, has brought to light temporalities and personalities that were previously unknown, particularly in the classical history of political thought. This *Companion* is also intended to be as faithful a mirror as possible of this broadening of the view of *specula*.

Finally, what place do the texts of the mirrors themselves give to time and history? Before the chapters that follow provide an insight into the problem in all its complexity and nuance, it is worth pointing out at the outset a general and recurring tension, in the mirrors as in the interpretations given of them, between invariability and movement. This tension can be observed on three levels. Many specialists have noted common features, a kinship, a “family resemblance,” and even repetition between mirrors of princes, developing reflections of a general nature with a striking resemblance. However, in the West as in Islam, the variety of texts is undeniable, and their indifference to the passage of time must be strongly relativized.⁴⁵ Secondly, the texts studied here contain many passages from which history seems at first sight absent or at least secondary. They aim to formulate an ethic of behavior or of government,⁴⁶ to emphasize the necessity of a virtue or the universal character

la imagen: representaciones iconográficas de la realeza en un manuscrito de los Castigos del rey don Sancho IV (Ms. BN Madrid 3995)”, in *Incipit XXI* (2002), pp. 53–94; Bernard O’Kane, *Early Persian Painting: Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century* (London, 2003); Wolfgang Brückle, *Civitas terrena: Staatsrepräsentation und politischer Aristotelismus in der französischen Kunst (1270–1380)* (Munich, 2005).

45 Einar M. Jónsson, “Les ‘miroirs aux princes’ sont-ils un genre littéraire ?”, in *Médiévales. Langues, Textes, Histoire* 151 (2006), pp. 153–166. For Islam, Jocelyne Dakhliya notes that: “la tâche des historiens devient la détection, l’identification de chacun de ces moments; toute démarche historique se voulut, explicitement ou non, la recherche d’un point d’origine, d’une période ou d’un événement à partir desquels les destins divergeaient. Il en découlait que la temporalité idéalement étale et indistincte des Miroirs des princes était ou ne peut plus propre à décourager les historiens ou à suggérer une forme d’incapacité de la pensée politique islamique à avoir prise sur l’histoire, à saisir le cours de l’événement” (“The historians’ task becomes the detection and identification of each of these moments. Every action by the historian aims explicitly or not to discover the point of origin of a period or of an event after which destinies diverge. From this, it follows that the ideally timeless and indistinct temporality of mirrors for princes was likely to discourage historians or to suggest a kind of incapacity of Islamic political thought to grasp history, to comprehend the course of the event”), Jocelyne Dakhliya, “Les *miroirs des princes* islamiques : une modernité sourde ?” in *Annales HSS* 5 (sept–oct. 2002), p. 1205.

46 Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*.

of certain precepts.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, these texts are not, or not all, disembodied. Numerous *exempla* are mobilized to guide the actions of the recipients as well as to energize the narrative, and historical situations and figures summoned in the mirrors, and not only the distant Alexander the Great.⁴⁸ The present tense sometimes intrudes, either by reference to concrete situations, or by a marked concern for actualization,⁴⁹ or, for example in the *adab sultanniya*, because contingency and circumstances find their place in it.⁵⁰ Time and its uses by kings are a subject of reflection for certain mirrors. Finally, when a mirror was copied, translated or read, it was both transmitted and subjected to a process of adaptation, sometimes of updating. The use of illumination in certain manuscripts of mirrors of princes,⁵¹ relatively rare in Islam⁵² and somewhat more frequent in the West, offered in this respect a range of remarkable possibilities for enriching, inflecting and updating the meaning of the mirror texts. In Pierpont Manuscript 456 of the *Avis au roys*,⁵³ the representation of a king emanating phylacteries recalling his various social roles thus crystallizes in a single image the virtues scattered throughout the mirror, in such a way as to strike the mind of the recipient, to be inscribed in his memory.

By focusing on several avenues recently explored by research—the global dimension, the materiality and uses of manuscripts, the relationship of mirrors to time—this volume aims to contribute to a better understanding of mirrors of princes as objects and stakes of history.

This *Companion* is divided into two parts. The first one proposes a general idea of some of the most important traditions, from Antiquity until the sixteenth century. Following a chronological and cultural order, each chapter

47 *Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. A. Hellerstedt (Amsterdam, 2018).

48 Makram Abbès, *Islam et politique à l'âge classique*, pp. 14–15.

49 Frédérique Lachaud and Lydwine Scordia (eds.), *Le prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*.

50 See in particular *Historische Exempla in Fürstenspiegeln und Fürstenlehren*, eds. C. Reinle and H. Winkel (Frankfurt, 2011).

51 Hugo O. Bizzari, “Del texto a la imagen: representaciones iconográficas de la realeza en un manuscrito de los Castigos del rey don Sancho IV (Ms. BN Madrid 3995)”, in *Incipit* XXI (2002), pp. 53–94.

52 Louise Marlow, “Surveying Recent Literature on the Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes Genre”, in *History Compass* 7/2 (2009), p. 528.

53 Julien Lepot, “Le princier justicier dans l'*Avis aus roys*, un 'miroir au prince' enluminé du XVe siècle”, in *Le roi fontaine de justice. Pouvoir justicier et pouvoir royal au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance*, ed. S. Menegaldo and B. Ribémont (Paris, 2012), pp. 193–207; Julien Lepot, *Un miroir enluminé du milieu du XIVème siècle : l'Avis aus roys*, thesis defended at the University of Orléans, 2014 (online, <http://www.theses.fr/2014ORLE1135/document>), in particular p. 247f.

presents the main texts and their historical roots in a broad political and intellectual context. A second part explores three essential aspects of this history: the evolution of political thought through the mirror of princes and their materiality and uses. Indeed, this second part highlights, using particular examples, different kinds of models chosen by the authors of mirrors of princes in developing their texts, i.e. the materials they worked with and also the modalities of circulation, diffusion, networks of transmission, translation and reappropriation of their works. It underlines how different traditions enter in dialogue, coexist, and influence each other. It also makes it possible to explore relations between historical realities and theoretical ideas of the ideal governor. Thus, this *Companion* intends to demonstrate the importance of analyzing the mirrors of the princes in general traditions as well as at the crossroads of various influences and within the particular dynamics of their time.

Whatever the particular angle adopted in the following chapters, they all seek to shed critical light on the multiple conceptions of the literature on mirrors of princes. Therefore, this *Companion* reflects the collective hope of the editors and contributors that this book will not only be a guide to understanding the complexity of this vast literature, but will also invite further cross-readings and critical dialogue between the different traditions of mirrors of princes.



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PART 1

Mapping the Mirrors for Princes' Traditions



Ideal Models and Anti-Models of Kingship in Ancient Greek Literature: Mirror of Princes from Homer to Marcus Aurelius

John R. Lenz

1 Introduction

Ancient Greece developed the *polis* (city-state), composed of and administered by citizens, and an analytical discourse of political philosophy. For all that Greek ideas of freedom and democracy are celebrated, kingship holds a central place in ancient Greek political theory. Thoughts about the virtues of rulers run through all periods of Greek history, literature, and philosophy. From the eighth century B.C. to the second A.D., a variety of works contribute to what we can call a mirror of princes literature. Such works present both positive and negative exemplars and precepts for contemporary and potential future rulers. The discussion will be organized in the following four parts.

Homer and Hesiod (both c. 700 B.C.) present a world in which godlike, just kings maintain order; their criticisms of bad kings serve to inspire good ones. Hesiod addresses aristocratic leaders of his own time, whom he calls kings, as does Homer even when narrating epics of long-past mythical heroes. Their time, we must admit, is still prehistoric, but it exhibits nascent features of the historical city-state. Ancient Greece was never united politically, but populated by hundreds of autonomous city-states. As the *polis* developed, Greeks believed they had left kings behind, despite anomalous exceptions such as the two kings of Sparta, but in many cities a monarchical tyrant appeared for a time.

In the fifth century B.C., Athens created radical democracy. Foreign kings now threatened the freedom of Greek citizens in Greece and Asia Minor. Thirty-one Greek states allied temporarily to defeat the existential threat of the massive invasion (480–479 B.C.) by the Persian King Xerxes. Athens grew extremely wealthy through its naval empire which attempted to impose democracy throughout the Aegean; its liberality encouraged free debate, and it became the center of literary culture. Classical Greek writing of the fifth century B.C., much of it emanating from democratic Athens, largely rejected kings as foreign, whether in time, as belonging to an outgrown phase of Greek

development, or in place, as still found in Persia and other inimical Near Eastern states. A king is now a tyrant and slave-master.

Most influential for later, post-Classical, writings in praise of princes are Greek works of the fourth century B.C. The first explicit works of advice addressed to kings, subsequent to the early poets who had always retained a central role in education, appear then. A surprise turnaround in the attitude to kingship occurs in politically minded philosophical writers associated with Athens. Athens is still governed by a democracy. Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, and, somewhat differently, Aristotle all praise kingship and even state that kingship is the best form of government. At times we can see an ad hoc reason for this in their desire to flatter their own (if not always Athens') foreign royal friends or allies, especially in Xenophon and Isocrates who make Eastern kings into ideal models, and arguably but less so in Plato and Aristotle. But the more general trend has not been given enough scholarly attention. They share a theoretical monarchic reaction on the part of intellectual and perhaps wealthy Athenians to the excesses of democracy. Indeed some of the first talk of "political science" occurs in followers or close successors of Socrates (died 399 B.C.) – we will discuss five – who use the term to refer to an ideal ruler's knowledge of how to rule, and their own expertise in advising him. It is not enough to call these thinkers conservative. While today seeming theoretical and abstract, they claimed a power to educate true statesmen. Their kings are able to unify a state, end the chaos of democracy, and put an end to the endemic bloody fighting between rich and poor, or oligarchs and democrats, that plagued historical Greek cities. These authors depict ideal kings as virtuous, self-controlled, and benevolent leaders of a harmonious state.

With Alexander the Great of Macedon (336–323 B.C) and earlier his father Philip II, kingship returned to the Greek world. Greece, the Near East and most of the former Persian Empire came to be ruled by Greek kingdoms. Naturally some writers flattered them; intellectuals are often attracted to power. Hellenistic-era (323–30 B.C.) practices exerted a significant influence on Roman political forms and ideology, when in the first century B.C. Rome moved from a republic to a monarchy. Greeks now found themselves the subjects of an external ruling power. When authors of the 1st century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. wished to flatter or improve their Roman lords, they were able to draw upon models of exemplary rulers found in Homer, histories of Alexander, and Greek philosophy. The wishful thinking is apparent, but this tradition did reach a Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, who himself wrote a work of advice for rulers and others. We will consider these four thematic periods in chronological order.

2 Homer and Hesiod: The Proper Exercise of Kingship

Kingship is a central theme of the earliest Greek literature, namely four epic poems, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer, and Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*.¹ Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* open with a crisis of kingship, only to have the king's authority re-asserted later.² Homer dramatizes the proper functioning of kingship. Bad behavior by kings only serves to highlight the proper norm. No other form of rule is imagined, although we often see multiple kings or "elders" acting together in a council of kings, even locally, and might call that a type of aristocracy, but one still composed of multiple leaders called "kings". The most common terms are *wanax* ("lord") and *basileus* ("king").

By juxtaposing Homer and Hesiod we get a largely consistent picture of the ideology of kings at a time just before the rise of the Greek city-state. The poems date very roughly to c. 700 B.C. Both poets depict bards as close to kings.³ Hesiod admonishes contemporary local lords, who, he complains, had personally wronged him; Homer's tales of long-ago heroes, who would have lived before c. 1200 B.C. in our terms, presumably conveyed an ideology of leadership to contemporary kings and aristocratic leaders, some of whom claimed descent from mythic heroes. In a possible reflection of Homer's own audience, bards who appear within the Homeric epics typically perform in royal houses (*Od.* 1.154, 8.44). At the same time itinerant bards such as Homer reached a wide popular audience, to whom he counselled respect for kings. He buttressed their positions.

Kings deserved their position because they were naturally better, but they also had to maintain their positions by fostering justice and the natural order of the world on which prosperity depends. The word "cosmos" means the ordered universe. Zeus maintains order in the universe and the king does so in his political realm. A king is favored by the gods and often descended from a

1 The translations of Homer used here are those of Richmond Lattimore, Homer, *The Iliad* (Chicago, 1951) and Homer, *The Odyssey* (NY, 1967); for Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*, trans. G.W. Most (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), with occasional small modifications. For documentation and argumentation, and historical evidence for kings and councils of kings in early Greece, see John R. Lenz, *Kings and the Ideology of Kingship in Early Greece (c. 1200–700 B.C.): Epic, Archaeology and History* (diss., Columbia University, 1993). These poems are cited here as *Il.*, *Od.* (Homer's) and *Theog.*, *WD* (Hesiod's).

2 Achilles challenges Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1, who, however, regains his authority later (*Il.* 2.576–580 and 477–484, 12.891–893). Penelope's suitors in the *Odyssey* are called local kings (e.g. *Od.* 1.394–396). They are bad kings who vie to become the next king of Ithaca; this is not an attempted aristocratic takeover.

3 See Lenz, *Kings*, pp. 248–254 on the audience of Homer and Hesiod. The dating of Homer is necessarily always an uncertain approximation.

god. For this reason, kingship is hereditary.⁴ Descent from divinity is virtually a defining criterion of kingship generally in history. For example, Agamemnon's scepter, that is, his authority, was given by the gods to his ancestor (*Il.* 2.100–109). Hesiod states, “kings are from Zeus” (*Theogony* 96; see also 82). Kings are called “god-descended”, “godlike” or “god-nourished”. People revere or look upon a king “as on a god when he walks in the city”. In battle they are like gods, bulls, or lions.⁵ A king, or his son, even looks distinctive. One can tell by his appearance that a stranger is an exceptional man “of the race of men who are kings, whom Zeus sustains”.⁶ All this serves to justify an aristocracy as deserving because naturally better.

Kings must, however, act properly in order to maintain their positions. They earn their great prerogatives by fighting in the forefront (*Il.* 12.310–21). They must also speak well and give good counsel.⁷ Achilles was raised “to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds” (*Il.* 9.443). The Muses attend upon a king “and his words flow sweet from his mouth” (*Theog.* 81–97), “in winning modesty” (*Od.* 8.172), with a voice like a god's (*Od.* 4.160–1). Kings must deliberate and persuade wisely in counsels of kings, in the agora or public square, and in giving judgement (e.g. Homer, *Il.* 18.503–8; Hesiod, *Theog.* 88–90, *WD* 262–263). By speaking “in due order”, *kata kosmon*, literally “in accordance with *cosmos*”, a king maintains the proper order of society, as opposed to those trouble-makers whose speech is disorderly and reckless.⁸ Mastery of thoughtful language (*logos*) conveys power and effectiveness in civil discourse, as we will see in later Greek teachings about the liberal arts (discussed below). This notion also underwrites the importance of authors as givers of advice to both rulers and subjects.

4 Lenz, *Kings*, pp. 233–237. A speaker in the *Odyssey* states that to become king is Telemachus' “hereditary right” (*Od.* i.386–387). Even a hero who seems to acquire kingship by a grant, such as Bellerophon, qualifies on this ground (he was the son of a king, recognized as descended from a god, and son-in-law of a king, *Il.* 6.191–195). Kings can only come from an eligible ‘class’.

5 *Il.* 12.312; *Od.* 4.160–161, 8.173 (quoted), 7.71 (uniquely said of a queen); Hesiod, *Theogony* 91. Agamemnon is compared to three gods and an outstanding bull (*Il.* 2.477–483); another fighting king, to a lion (3.23).

6 *Od.* 4.62–64. Odysseus in appearance is the odd exception (*Od.* 8.158–177), although not entirely (*Il.* 3.211). Of the authors considered below, Xenophon, Isocrates, Philodemus, and Plutarch praise the physical attractiveness of kings.

7 Malcolm Schofield, “*Euboulia* in the *Iliad*”, in *Classical Quarterly* 36 (1986), pp. 6–31; Friedrich Solmsen, “The ‘Gift’ of Speech in Homer and Hesiod”, in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 85 (1954), pp. 1–15.

8 *Il.* 2.211–277, *Od.* 8.166–177. The basest character in Homer, Thersites, speaks “not in due order, quarreling with kings” (*Il.* 2.214).

Kings are part of the natural order and maintain order (*cosmos*) by means of justice, just as Zeus does. They take the lead in offering sacrifice to the gods. The first book of the oldest work of Greek literature, Homer's *Iliad*, displays the dire consequences of hubristic impiety.⁹ Kings receive regular gifts from the people, as gods do, but should not unduly fleece them. A good king is a "shepherd of the people", not a "devourer of his people" or a bribe-taker.¹⁰ He is much wealthier than others (*Od.* 1.392–393), but if he observes justice, his people will flourish. However, Homeric kings were not particularly "benefactors of the multitude" as Aristotle posited.¹¹ Homer, indeed, has only rare glimpses of kings in relation to their subjects; people must be respectful and obedient toward a good king.

Hesiod's *Works and Days* contains direct instructions to kings to heed justice for the good of the community. Where justice reigns, cities flourish. Human life in his day is so full of evils that only justice will save this age (*WD* 174–201). Hesiod in effect calls for a just king to be a savior, since a lengthy exhortation addressed to kings follows immediately upon his doomsaying. "I will now talk to kings ... those who give straight judgements ... and do not turn aside from justice at all, their city (*polis*) blooms and the people in it flower ... with good things continuously" (*WD* 202, 225–7, 236); then people have peace and abundance. "O kings, you ponder this justice yourselves"; "keep vigilant about this, kings, and straighten your words, ... and put crooked judgements quite out of your minds" (*WD* 248–9, 263–4). The gods are watching everywhere and Zeus punishes wickedness (*WD* 7–8, 238–274). A whole city will suffer because of one evil man or corrupt kings (*WD* 240–1, 260–2).

Hesiod's admonitions were addressed to kings (so called) and aristocratic leaders in his own time, who also presumably received Homer's narratives of long-ago heroes with pride in their supposed ancestors, at a time, c. 700 B.C.,

9 The *Iliad* opens with Agamemnon disrespecting a priest and through him Apollo; the god strikes his army with a plague. In defending the Greek seer Calchas who had pointed out the king's impiety (1.54–91), Achilles speaks to a king's proper behavior. Oedipus repeats Agamemnon's mistake in a copycat scene in Sophocles' fifth-century-B.C. tragedy *Oedipus Tyrannus* (284–51). A priest, seer, or a sage can speak truth to power.

10 Homer, *Il.* 1.231; Hesiod, *WD* 39, 221, 264. The suitors of Penelope in the *Odyssey* are bad kings because they consume the household of their host.

11 Aristotle says this to explain the creation of the first kings, by, in his view, voluntary agreement of the people and natural progression from the father-led family. Strictly speaking, Aristotle does not say that Homeric kings themselves were benefactors in a material sense, explaining only that they ruled over willing subjects for their subjects' benefit (*Politics* 3.14 1285b3–9, 3.15 1286b8–11). What he says later is more telling, that "kingship arose [in the first instance] with a view to providing assistance to the respectable against the people" and also to guard the people from abuses by the rich (5.10 1310b8–10, 1310b40–1311a2).

when features of the Greek *polis* were just beginning to emerge. Soon, however, the Greek polis developed along other principles and came to leave kings behind.

3 Classical Greece of the 5th Century B.C.: Negative Exemplars of Monarchs

From about the eighth century B.C., the Greeks developed the *polis* or city-state ruled by citizens, typically by an aristocratic council, sometimes by a larger more democratic body. Kingship gradually declined and became rare. In the Archaic era (700–480 B.C.), a new form of monarch, a tyrant, arose in many Greek cities. A tyrant seized power, rather than inherited it, and established a hereditary dynasty.¹² Tyrants brought improvements in administration and benefits for some elements of the population who had previously been excluded, but over time, their rule became oppressive. Eventually, cities such as Corinth and Athens overthrew a ruling tyrannical family; Herodotus, the so-called “father of history” (fifth century B.C.), reports them as hoping never again to allow tyrants, that is, monarchs, to rule in their cities (Hdt. 5.78, 92g). By the Classical period (480–323 B.C.), Greek cities thought they had evolved away from heroic-era kings, had expelled and outgrown tyrants (Thucydides 1.13, 17–18, for both points), or had fought foreign ones (from the mid-sixth to the early fifth centuries B.C.), the main subject of Herodotus’ *Histories*. Thus, Classical Greek literature tends to marginalize kings as foreign in time or place. Kings take away freedom of cities and citizens. Fifth-century literature reflects the dominance of democratic Athens in political power and literary culture.

Herodotus presents kings as negative exemplars of excessive wealth and power, greed, *hybris*, overreach, immodesty, and lawless despotism. Fifth-century Athenian tragedy, not considered here, often does the same. Herodotus was not from Athens but was politically favorable to it. In his *Histories*, Eastern kings are capricious despots, their subjects no better than slaves, metaphorically speaking. Croesus of Lydia (c. 560–546 B.C.) and Xerxes of Persia (486–465) are the worst offenders. They threaten the freedom of Greek cities and of all Greece. Greece had introduced the political idea of freedom. Xerxes thought he could chastise the waters of the Hellespont for not obeying him (Hdt. 7.34–35). He mercilessly punishes a subject who had done him great services, calling him “my slave” (7.39). Implicit in such negative stories about

¹² In fact, “tyrant” was not a title and there is some reason to believe that tyrants actually called themselves “kings”, *basileis*; some claimed descent from legendary kings.

Xerxes are that he lacks Greek values of moderation and modesty, that is, he does not know his limits in relation to the gods and other free human beings, or his own humanity. Later fourth-century writers considered below will, rather than condemn kings, promote the education of rulers along those lines.

At one point during his attempted conquest of Greece, Xerxes incredulously asks an exiled Spartan how the Greeks could ever stand up to the power of his empire. Demaratus' answer proudly contrasts Greek principles with the Persian system of government: "They are free, yes, but not entirely free; for they have a master, and that master is law, which they fear much more than your subjects fear you". (Hdt. 7.104) Remarkably, the speaker is a former king of Sparta. Sparta still had two kings descended from Heracles, but they functioned within a *polis*, subject to the rule of law. This principle of the primacy of laws to the will of one powerful man will, however, come to be reversed in the next century by kingship theorists who desire to train a king to act intelligently and not arbitrarily.

Lessons for bad kings are also conveyed through other stories of the type "the sage against the king". A sage or a holy man expresses warnings, so obviously truthful to every respectful person, that the king, in his short-sighted pursuit of power and self-interest, rejects – to his own detriment, as the event reveals.¹³ In Herodotus' fictional story (*logos*) of Solon and Croesus, the moderate Athenian politician and sage teaches morality to a king of Lydia in Asia Minor (Hdt. 1.29–34, 86–91). Croesus is overly proud of his enormous wealth; his ancestor Gyges was legendary to Greeks for wealth and "tyranny".¹⁴ Solon has been travelling in search of wisdom¹⁵ and, at Sardis, is appalled by the king's boasting. He warns Croesus of the mutability of human affairs, of human limits and the folly of hubris. Virtue is greater than material possessions. He ranks obscure, modest Greek citizens as happier than Croesus. Eventually, Croesus falls from power. He then learns the lesson of Solon (1.86) and pursues a second career of giving advice to King Cyrus of Persia.¹⁶ Here philosophy, or wisdom, triumphs over power. Croesus gains wisdom, but only as an ex-king. The same is true of

13 See note 9 for such poetic tales. Homer's epic scene occurs in a dramatic context and, as argued above, a time, that takes kings for granted. Sophocles' Classical tragedy was produced for an Athenian democratic audience hostile to kings.

14 Archilochus poem 19, ed. M.L. West; Plato, *Republic* 2 359c–360b.

15 The verb used, *philosopheōn* (Hdt. 1.30), is perhaps the first secure attestation of a compound word meaning "philosophy": Vishwa Adluri and John Lenz, "From Politics to Salvation through Philosophy: Herodotus' *Histories* and Plato's *Republic*", in *Philosophy and Salvation in Greek Religion*, ed. V. Adluri (Berlin, 2013), pp. 219, 234–235, 239–241.

16 Richmond Lattimore, "The Wise Adviser in Herodotus", in *Classical Philology* 34 (1939), pp. 24–35.

Oedipus in Sophocles' tragedies *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. For fifth-century Greeks, it is best to not have a king. Political intellectuals in the next century hold the opposite view.

4 Philosophical Kings: Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle

Xenophon and Isocrates inaugurated the Classical genre of writing in praise of kings. Fourth-century-B.C. writers use philosophy to justify and improve the rule of kings, not to criticize them as Herodotus had done in defense of political freedom. This section treats Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Paradoxically for citizens of free city-states, Xenophon and Isocrates depict Eastern kings as models. The newfound attraction of kings results partly from their prominence in geopolitics of the Aegean region. Perhaps a stronger motive was dissatisfaction with Athenian democracy.

Kings return to favor and become idealized for several reasons. Xenophon and Isocrates, both Athenians, had connections to Eastern rulers. Xenophon fought in a failed attempt to place Cyrus the Younger (died 401 B.C.) on the throne of Persia. Isocrates was close to Nicocles, king of Salamis on Cyprus, whose father Evagoras had been a significant Athenian ally. The Persians were big players in Greek interstate politics. So was Philip II of Macedon (359–336 B.C.). Isocrates hoped the foreigner Philip would unite Greece. Kings again threatened the autonomy of Greek city-states, who had to negotiate carefully with them. Greek cities felt pressures to combine into larger political units in order to compete. In retrospect we know that the long-term trend was moving away from small city-states and towards kingdoms; from the mid-fourth century B.C. and continuously thereafter up to modern times, foreign kings or emperors dominated Greek city-states, beginning with Macedonian and (in our next section) Roman overlords.

Opposition to Athenian democracy also led to flirtation with monarchs – theoretical or foreign ones, since monarchy was not a political option in Athens. Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle all worked in Athens; none was committed to democracy as practiced there. Xenophon was exiled from Athens and served Sparta. Plato advised a tyrant in Sicily. Aristotle came from Macedon. Conservative Athenians did not like the chaos of democracy. Athenians chose important state officers by annual lot, rather than by merit or any qualification. Radical democracy meant that the poor and untrained had as much say as anyone else. Sparta dealt Athens a major defeat in the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.), and the negative depiction of the Athenian people's conduct of affairs at that time by the contemporary Thucydides has tainted the image

of democracy ever after.¹⁷ Sparta had two kings but that was not the main reason some Athenian oligarchs saw it as an attractive alternative. Xenophon and Plato evince admiration for the stability and success of Sparta, its hierarchical, military organization. Sparta was thought to have avoided the bloody tumultuous *stasis*, or internal strife between oligarchs and democrats, that plagued the history of Greek city-states. The four writers considered here all admire unity and harmony in a state headed by a wise ruler. An exceptional individual might possess the knowledge and character to achieve this ideal, more than politics-as-usual or even laws could achieve.

A new theoretical force also underpinned the fascination with ideal monarchy. Xenophon, Isocrates, and Plato studied with Socrates, and Aristotle with Plato. Socrates repeatedly argues in Plato's dialogues, and also in Xenophon, that being a statesman is a craft or science (*tekhnē*) as much as any other. It requires expertise. Not all people are qualified for political office. Knowledge of how to rule is what makes a real king or ruler, Socrates said (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.9.10). Ruling is a learned, relatively rare, skill, like being a captain of a ship (Xen., *Cyropaideia* 1.6.21). Authors of advice-treatises impart this knowledge. A true king, even one who has formally qualified by inheritance, can be created by the educated adviser. Both authors and rulers rely on skills of language (as had Homer's and Hesiod's kings) and reason (*logos* means both these things). Their ideal kings are educated in the liberal arts. They also exemplify the philosophical doctrine that the mind should rule the body and the passions.

Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle endowed kings with philosophical virtues. (The Greek word *aretē* means virtue or excellence.) They are more cultured, more virtuous, and in effect freer, that is free of base desires, than anyone else in the state. So Plato, in praising the way Persians supposedly educated their king to be wise, self-controlled, truthful, and pious, says that the royal student learns to be "a real king, whose first duty is to rule himself" (Plato, *Alcibiades* 121e–122a).¹⁸ Another Socratic, Antisthenes (c. 445–365 B.C.), composed a lost work entitled *Cyrus or On Kingship*. Evidently it described the Persian king's ascent to virtue through toil.¹⁹ Antisthenes stated that a wise man will be governed by virtue, not by laws (Diogenes Laertius 6. 11). Both Plato and

17 Democracy was even a negative word for the founding fathers of the United States.

18 Translated by D.S. Hutchinson in Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. J.M. Cooper (Indianapolis, 1997), pp. 557–595. This work is of disputed authorship but was used as an introduction to Plato in antiquity.

19 Diogenes Laertius 6.2, where *ponos* should be translated "toil", not "pain" or "suffering". Antisthenes wrote other works on kingship and politics; see Diogenes Laertius 6.1–19 and the last paragraph below.

Aristotle also place an ideal king above the laws. We are far from Demaratus' story of the rule of law (see above). Evidently – this has not been noticed – Socrates' criticisms of democracy carried monarchic implications in the five followers we have mentioned. Their similarities are often striking. We will consider further Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle in that order.

Xenophon's *Cyropaideia* (*Education of Cyrus*, c. 360s B.C.) may be called historical fiction about Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire (died 529 B.C.). Xenophon describes how the king may justify his authority and maintain power. He must above all persuade willing subjects to obey him. Cyrus secures obedience, a key virtue in his men,²⁰ by persuasion, not force: "they followed gladly, because they were intelligent men" (3.3.57). The monarch himself sets an example of obedience, having been trained, along with other noble Persian youths, in self-control (*sophrosynē*) and obedience to superiors in the service of the commonwealth.²¹ Character is everything; even in battle, qualities of soul, which in Greek includes the mind, are more important than bodily strength (1.6.13, 3.3.19, 5.4.11). The centrality of intellectual, moral excellence (*aretē*) underlines the importance of the author of the advice treatise: "to rule men might be a task neither impossible or even difficult, if one should only go about it with knowledge" (*epistēmē*; 1.1.3). Both Xenophon and Cyrus have such knowledge. The king has mastered his personal desires, although the goal of ruling oneself, as a lesson for the reader, becomes more explicit in other authors such as Isocrates, Plato, and Marcus Aurelius. Xenophon himself is interested in social control by the cultured class; he presents a somewhat utopian ideal of political order founded on such knowledge, with state education for the noble peers who exhibit "the orderly life (*eukosmia*) of the educated" (1.2.3, 3.3.70). The king also learns from history (1.6.44).

Cyrus, while he qualifies in part by inheritance, in his youth reveals his superior natural character and ability (1.3, 5.1.24–25, as in Herodotus 1.114–115). He possesses in the highest degree the virtues desired in leaders of an ordered state. He is good-looking (Xen., *Cyr.* 1.2.1, 1.4.28, 3.1.41), commanding, wise, strong, gentle, just, and a fair judge. He is pious, with additional expertise: he even interprets omens (1.6.2, 3.3.34, 8.1.23–25). He displays forethought and endures hardships; he is modest and frugal; he wins friends and affection through being generous, not grasping, and forgiving. He uses his power to do good²² and, of course, to acquire a large empire, but justly. Xenophon's Cyrus

20 Obedience: Xen., *Cyr.* 1.1.3, 2.5, 6.13, 6.21–22, and 6.42; 3.1.28, 3.8, 3.57, 3.59, and 3.70; 4.1.4; 8.1.29.

21 *Cyr.* 1.2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 2.13, and 5.1; 3.3.70.

22 *Cyr.* 1.6.7–8 and 6.24; 5.2.10–11; 8.2.1–13.

himself likens the benevolent king to a good shepherd (8.2.14). From the character-driven leadership of the king and his peers follow success in war and wealth for Persia (e.g. 4.2.44–46), although, as a benefactor to others, Cyrus does not seek material rewards for himself.²³ “By making his own self-control an example, he disposed all to practice that virtue more diligently” (8.1.30). Some scholars hold that Xenophon’s portrait of Cyrus is ambiguous because the king must sometimes employ cunning and deceit, and arouse fear in others, for a good end (1.1.5, 6.27–30). But he does so against enemies. He helps friends and harms enemies.²⁴ The king himself presents a ‘mirror’, a “perfect model of virtue” for his subjects (8.1.21); by his example, with kind words and deeds (2.4.10) and as their teacher, he makes his men better.²⁵ Xenophon dramatizes this *exemplum* in action. “No one had any right to rule who was not better than his subjects” (8.1.37; see also 40). True, Xenophon devotes most attention to Cyrus’ relations with his peers, his troops and allies. Xenophon concludes that the Persian state has declined in his own time because it had not followed the successful example of Cyrus (8.8).

Xenophon wrote other works about monarchs. *Hiero*²⁶ is a dialogue in which the wise poet Simonides explains to the tyrant of Syracuse how he might become a better and happier ruler. Both Plato and Aristotle also tried to reform tyrants (see below).

Isocrates (436–338 B.C.), an Athenian teacher of civic philosophy and oratory, wrote the first prose works addressed to a specific king for his instruction.²⁷ *To Nicocles* (cited as Isoc. 2) advises his probable former student who had succeeded his father Evagoras as king of Salamis on Cyprus in 374 B.C. *Evagoras* (Isoc. 9), written for Nicocles, praises both kings, father and son. A third published Cyprian oration, *Nicocles* (Isoc. 3), is written in the voice of the good king himself, addressing his subjects on their duties.

23 *Cyr.* 1.5.13; 3.1.42 and 3.3; 4.2.42 and 2.45; 5.1.1, 1.28, 2.12, 2.20, and 4.32; 8.2.19 and 2.22.

24 *Cyr.* 1.4.25; 5.2.10, 2.12, and 3.32; 8.1–2.

25 *Cyr.* 3.3–38, 3.39, 3.49, and 3.53–55; 8.1.39.

26 See Vivienne J. Gray, “Xenophon’s *Hiero* and the Meeting of the Wise Man and Tyrant in Greek Literature”, in *Classical Quarterly* 36 (1986), pp. 115–123, and eadem, “Xenophon and Isocrates: 2. Rulership”, in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, eds. C. Rowe and M. Schofield (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 148–151. In *Agesilaus*, Xenophon expresses admiration for the king of Sparta whom he had served. Gray, “Xenophon and Isocrates”, pp. 147–148 argues that in *Oeconomicus* (“household management”) Xenophon attributes to women the qualities of ideal rulers, albeit only in the context of running a household.

27 The three orations are translated in Isocrates, Volume 1, trans. D. Mirhady and Y. Lee Too (Austin, 2000), and in Isocrates, Loeb Classical Library, Volumes 1 and 3.

Isocrates begins by praising, not the monarch, but the advice-genre and its author (Isoc. 2.1–2). While acknowledging earlier poets and other sages (2.13, 43–4), he claims that by his teaching he helps to form the monarch and others who will imitate him. His words (*logoi*) impart reason (*logos*, *logismos*, e.g. Isoc. 3.46). A good king is one who is wise enough to benefit from instruction; the teacher is the true lawgiver,²⁸ his words and philosophy better gifts than gold or statues (2.1, Isoc. 9.73–77). He offers an education in wisdom. Kings, who are isolated and lack guardrails, need this more than anyone else. Isocrates implies that he makes a monarch legitimate: through instruction, a king becomes a worthy ruler; legal succession is not enough.²⁹ The trappings of royal power, clothing and adornment, are mere external ornaments (2.32); it is his soul that counts. That is a Socratic thought. Nicocles, Isocrates boasts, is the first king to have achieved a philosophical or ‘liberal arts’ education (9.78); his father Evagoras had introduced it (9.50). A king endowed with virtues of character becomes a model for others to emulate, and reasoned words again facilitate this, from adviser to king to subjects.

The ruler must truly be the best man in the state (Isoc. 3.38, 9.81). Evagoras surpassed all in both body and mind (9.23–4, 71). He naturally excels, but is improved by education. The king’s actions flow from his character. He must be gentle, moderate, pious, just, truthful, and generous; he must be wiser than his subjects and ever mindful. Wisdom (*phronesis*) comes from discipline of the mind, self-control (2.29, 9.45, 80). He must rule himself, continue to train in practice and theory, and know history (2.35). He is wise enough to seek advice (9.44, 53).

The king’s goodness comes before all else, even conventional piety; from goodness, good consequences flow (2.20, 3.47). Both are Socratic sentiments.³⁰ Evagoras was able to build up his city due to his personal qualities (9.47–8). Virtue (*aretē*) has power to do good. The king owns all property in the state but must earn the right to it through good management (2.21). He acts not from power or greed, but for the benefit of state and subjects. Thus, his word

28 He “sets the political philosopher and teacher on a higher plane than the monarch”: Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol. 3, trans. G. Highet (NY, 1944), pp. 86, 105; he creates an analogy between the “hegemony of the pedagogue” and that of the leader: Niall Livingstone, “The Voice of Isocrates and the Dissemination of Cultural Power”, in *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning*, eds. Y. Lee Too and N. Livingstone (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 268, 279–280.

29 Jaeger, *Paideia*, vol. 3, p. 96.

30 “Virtue does not come from money, but from virtue come money and all other good things for men, both in private and in public life”, Socrates says in Plato, *Apology* 30b. Some translate, “... but virtue makes money, and everything else, good”. That seems a forced reading.

deserves to be law. Now, one exceptional individual is considered to be above the law. As in Xenophon, the ruler serves as a ‘mirror’ for the entire state (2.31): he sets an example for subjects (3.37, 60–64) and other kings to follow. He turns the people towards virtue. *Nicocles* argues that monarchy is the best form of government, albeit in words that Xenophon places self-servingly in the mouth of the king himself (3.12–13, 17).

Such sentiments could be applied to statesmen of a city-state such as Athens where Isocrates educated future political leaders – he was Plato’s rival – or to Roman senators during the Republic. Cicero praised Isocrates for producing *principes*, leaders (*de Oratore* 2.94). The Latin word *princeps* soon gained added significance when, unknown to Cicero, it came to be applied to the first Roman emperor. *To Nicocles* (Isoc. 2) became influential in the Renaissance; Erasmus presented his translation to Charles v in 1516.³¹

Plato (c. 428–347 B.C.) is another conservative Athenian who wrote about ideal kingship and considered kingship to be the best form of government. He buttresses his virtue ethics with a stronger theory of knowledge of the good. Plato holds that a ruler should rule with political knowledge. He calls for a political science (*tekhnē*) and evidently saw himself and Socrates as pursuing such knowledge and claiming to be the best advisers.³² Enlightened rulers deserve their position because they have the knowledge and wisdom to know, and act for, the good of all; they are trained to rise above self-interest; they deserve to rule others because they rule themselves; he *or she* governs a unified state. Women may be rulers because while they differ in body they do not differ in what matters, mind or soul. What follows will treat these themes in Plato: his advising of an actual monarch; his theory of ideal kingship and its approximations in the real world; and tyranny as a negative exemplar to illustrate, by contrast, true kingship.

Plato attempted to educate an actual monarch, the tyrant Dionysius II of Syracuse (367–357). His visits to Sicily are described in the autobiographical *Letter 7*, which might or might not be by Plato.³³ The letter expresses his despair at the bad government of “all existing states” and his belief that only

31 Livingstone, “The Voice of Isocrates”, p. 263.

32 A private individual may have expert political knowledge and ably advise a king (Plato, *Politicus* 259a–b, 292e–293a). Perhaps that refers to Plato himself, or to Plato’s Socrates, who claims he is the only one who takes up such knowledge (Plato, *Gorgias* 521d). Plato also wishes to improve politics by removing false advisers from a state (*Polit.* 292d; see also 298c).

33 *Letter 7* is translated by G.R. Morrow in Plato, *Complete Works*, pp. 1646–1667; see also p. 1635. Other sources: Plutarch, *Dion*; Diogenes Laertius 3.18–23. Ancient tradition presents reports, now disputed, that Plato and his students were interested in offering political

from “true philosophy” can rulers hope to gain political wisdom and learn what true justice is (325c–326b). He advised Dionysius to “perfect himself in wisdom and self-control”, to bind the citizens together, and to make others his “friends and partners in the pursuit of virtue” (332d–e). Neither Plato nor this unsuccessful pupil, however, was able to overcome the faction-fighting in the city. Worse, when Plato’s associate in philosophy, Dion, seized power from his uncle Dionysius, he did not do much better. He boasted that he had acquired superior personal virtue in Plato’s Academy; this included self-mastery, mercifulness, justice, goodness, generosity, and moderation – but also, evidently, an unwelcome didactic moralizing, for his anti-democratic arrogance met resistance (Plutarch, *Dion* 47, 52). For later writers such as Thomas More in Book I of *Utopia* (1516), this episode paradigmatically illustrates the dilemma of whether an intellectual can be involved in, and improve, real-world politics. Plato thought so, but of course his real influence came from his theories of the ideal ruler. Two works, *Statesman* (or *Politicus*; here cited as *Polit.*) and *Republic*, largely present a consistent picture.

In *Statesman*, Plato describes ideal kingship.³⁴ The true king has expert political, or kingly, skill (*tekhnē*) or knowledge (*epistēmē*). This is the only correct constitution (*Polit.* 293c, 303c). Indeed, throughout this work the term “king” is synonymous with “statesman”. The king’s knowledge is not practical but theoretical (259c–d), because his role is one of steering and guiding (260c, 292b, 305d). How does one acquire the “most difficult” knowledge of ruling human beings (292d)? *Republic* prescribes in great detail the education of the “philosopher-kings” (Plato, *Rep.* 473c–d, 540d–e). They have been rigorously educated for more than thirty years in music, mathematics, dialectic, and political experience (*Rep.* Book 7). By age fifty they know the good and therefore desire only it and nothing less; “and once they have seen the good itself, they must use it as their model and put the city, its citizens, and themselves in order” by “serving and fostering” justice (540a, d–e).

A king rules, first, over himself; such a person is the best, most just, and happiest (*Rep.* 580b–c; see also *Alc.* and *Letter VII*, as quoted above). Women may be educated to be rulers since they have the same qualities of mind as males do (*Rep.* 455e–457c).

guidance to city-states; on this, see Malcolm Schofield in *The Cambridge History* (see note 26), pp. 293–296.

34 Translated by C.J. Rowe in Plato, *Complete Works*, pp. 294–358. See Charles Griswold, “*Politikē Epistēmē* in Plato’s *Statesman*”, in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy, Vol. III: Plato*, eds. J. Anton and A. Preuss (Albany, 1989), pp. 141–167 and Christopher Rowe, “The *Politicus* and Other Dialogues”, in *The Cambridge History* (see note 26), pp. 233–257.

The “wise and good man” or woman will govern for the benefit of those she rules (296e). She cares for the state as a doctor cares for a patient. “Wise rulers” must “watch for one great thing, that by always distributing to those in the city what is most just, as judged by the intelligent application of their expertise, they are both able to preserve” and improve the citizens (297a–b; see also 293b, 293d).

The common good is the sole purpose of correct government (*Laws* 875a–b). The king “weaves” disparate types together into a common life “in agreement and friendship”.³⁵ Evidently *Statesman* hints at regulating marriage (309–311), given what we know of the *Republic’s* ruler-imposed eugenics (*Rep.* 458d–461b). All citizens will agree on “what is fine, just and good” (*Polit.* 309c). The king has instructed others to educate the citizens in virtue, and has purged the state of bad people (293d, 308b–309a, 310e). He rules willing subjects (276e) — unlike other forms of government such as democracy (*Laws* 832c), although he knows when to use persuasion or force (296b–e, 293c, 304a–d). “The best thing is not that the laws should prevail, but rather the kingly man who possesses wisdom” (294a); his expertise is “more powerful than the laws”.³⁶ He rules “with virtue and expert knowledge, distributing what is just and right correctly to all” (301d). Because politics normally consists of competing self-interest, every other state is at war with itself (*stasis*), being divided into two factions, the rich and the poor (422e–423a, 551d). Every state, except the unified state governed by ideal kingship, Plato dubs a “factionality” (*Laws* 832c).

Plato provided high-minded precepts which a later ruler might use or, indeed, misuse. While to a modern mind he seems unpleasantly to grant license to a single self-styled enlightened individual, his king is no ordinary politician. Modern criticisms of Plato often cannot get beyond our difficulty in conceiving of politicians as *not* self-interested. Plato’s statesman or stateswoman truly puts the common good above personal interest, and possesses the requisite knowledge to accomplish this. Such an individual would be more godlike than other mortals, “one individual immediately superior in body and mind” (*Polit.* 301e). Such ideal kingship has rarely if ever existed, although Plato leaves open a small possibility: “it is nowhere to be found at all, except to some small extent” (*Laws* 875d).³⁷ However, it is most unlikely: not “until philosophers rule as kings ... or ... kings and leading men genuinely and adequately

35 Plato, *Polit.* 306a, 308b, 310e–311c.

36 Plato, *Polit.* 297a; see also 295e–296a, 300c–d. Laws are rigid, too general, and the same for all (*Polit.* 294b–296a). The six less-than-ideal real-world constitutions of *Statesman* (mentioned below) are all law-bound.

37 Translated by C. Rowe, “The *Politicus*”, p. 256.

philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide” (*Rep.* 473c–d). Even in his late work *Laws*, Plato specifies, “if ever by the grace of god some natural genius were born ... he would have no need of laws to control him” (875c). Again, kingship theory figures centrally in Greek political science of the *polis*; idealism was Plato’s legacy.

In the real human world, however (*Polit.* 273c–274e, 275c), the best constitution is the one that most closely imitates the ideal. A constitutional monarch who rules according to laws constitutes the best of the next six constitutions that Plato calls inferior “imitations” of the only correct one described above (*Polit.* 301b, 302e, 303b). Nevertheless, the ideal serves as a due measure (283e) by which to judge other governments.

When kings go bad they become tyrants. Plato presents tyranny as an anti-model that reinforces the ideal by means of a warning. Kings can decline in virtue due to the natural deviation of human nature from the divine. Plato dramatizes this with his myth of Atlantis. Kings of the fictional Atlantis, originally descended from the gods, declined over time due to their becoming increasingly dominated by their mortal nature, that is, by their appetites (body) rather than by wisdom (mind). Giving way to “an unjust lust for possessions and power”, they pursued luxury, lost self-control, and failed to maintain order.³⁸ Thus monarchy morphed into its negative type, tyranny (*Polit.* 302d); a tyrant is lawless (302e) and rules by force (276e). When private interests prevail, the state disintegrates (*Laws* 714a, 875a–c).³⁹

Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) in his philosophy preserves some ideals from his teacher Plato, while also priding himself on a more practical and empirical approach. He came from a Greek city in Macedon, where his father was physician to King Amyntas III, grandfather of Alexander the Great. Aristotle holds that the goal of politics, that is, of living in a state, is sharing together for the purpose of a good life. This is the greatest good.⁴⁰ Aristotle holds with Plato and others that a good life must take place within a good society, and, conversely, that society exists for the good of everyone in it. This defines a prerequisite of proper kingship.⁴¹ A king is benefactor and guardian of social justice. Being above faction, he must protect both the rich and the poor.⁴² A king must be moderate, behave like an equal, and be supported by and support his friends, in order to set a good example for his subjects. He does not

38 Plato, *Critias* 120e–121b; Rowe, “The *Politicus*”, pp. 254–256.

39 By contrast, in *Republic*, tyranny arises as a perversion of democracy (562a–564a).

40 Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1 1252a1–7; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.2 1094b7–10.

41 *Pol.* 3.7 1279a28–34.

42 See note 11.

look to his own advantage, but to the common good;⁴³ a tyrant does the opposite and sets a bad example of selfish profit-seeking which others emulate harmfully.

Aristotle states that kingship is the “best and most divine” type of government, being the rule of one man of exceptional virtue; aristocracy, the rule of a few, is comparable in principle.⁴⁴ He adds, characteristically, to counter dreamy idealism, that virtue must be “equipped” to act.⁴⁵ A king rules for the benefit of willing subjects.⁴⁶ Kings, and similarly aristocrats, excel their subjects in merit and ability. Confusingly, however, by the conclusion of *Politics* kingship is not what Aristotle deems the best constitution.⁴⁷ This is because as cities developed, many men acquired virtue and it is no longer restricted to one person or a few.⁴⁸ Thus kingship is, for the most part, no longer viable. Aristotle presents kingship partly as theoretical ideal, partly as historical study, but reverts, like Plato in *Statesman*, to other law-bound polities (not to be considered here) in the real world where, lacking individual godlike paragons of virtue, governments rely on law and on balancing the interests of different factions. In any case, let us look at his analysis of kingship.

In *Politics*, Aristotle analyzes five types of lawful, constitutional kingship (3.14–18 1284b35–1288b2). Three have a specific scope: heroic or Homeric kingship (the type discussed above); “barbaric” (a kingship over uncivilized or unfree people, like Herodotus’ Eastern kings); and Spartan (having authority in war and religion, but not absolute because part of a *polis* oligarchy). Of these, the “barbaric” may recur elsewhere in the world, as may the fourth type, exemplified by the ancient Greek tyrants, which he calls an elective dictatorship (more on this below). The fifth type is unique. It became influential for later European theories of paternal sovereignty. This is *pambasileia*, absolute kingship with sovereign power over all matters in a state, like the authority of a father over a household. This is justified when one family, or one person, is so “outstanding in virtue” that they or he receive obedience from free and equal peers.⁴⁹ With this fifth type, Aristotle is often thought to be making a

43 *Pol.* 3.6 1279a17–21 and 28–31, 5.10 1310b34–1311a8; *Nic. Eth.* 8.10 1160b2–8.

44 *Pol.* 3.17–18 1288a8–9 and 1288a32–1288b2, 4.2 1289a39–1289b1, 5.10 1310b31–1311a8. Kingship is the best regime: *Nic. Eth.* 8.10 1160a35–36 and 1160b9; *Pol.* 4.2 1289a40 (“first and most divine”).

45 *Pol.* 4.2 1289a32–33, 7.3 1325b10–14.

46 *Pol.* 3.14 1285b6–9, 3.15 1286b8–11, 4.10 1295a15–16 and 21–22, 5.10 *ibid.*, 5.10–11 1313a18–23.

47 For a discussion, see Rowe, “Aristotelian Constitutions”, pp. 376, 386–387.

48 See below.

49 *Pol.* 3.13 1284b25–34, 3.14 1285b29–33, 3.17 1288a15–29; see also 3.13 1284a3–11 (a different context).

concession to Alexander the Great, his former pupil; in fact, the type recalls the ideal rulers of Xenophon and Plato. It is right to obey someone who “is superior to others in goodness and in the capacity for actually doing the best” (7.3 1325b10–14). This king, theoretically, would not rule according to law (3.13 1284b30–31, 3.16 1287a1–10) and might seem like a god among human beings (3.13 1284a10–11).

However, generally, kingship no longer arises in Aristotle’s time because people are more similar to each other, with no one person standing out.⁵⁰ If monarchy occurs, it commonly takes the form of tyranny. A tyrant rules over unwilling subjects for his own advantage. In an ironic twist, Aristotle advises tyrants at length on how to preserve their monarchy by becoming good kings (5.11 1313a34–1315b10). Xenophon and Plato had done the same. Aristotle here presents a somewhat cynical mirror of princes: the hitherto flawed ruler should gain a reputation for military virtue, avoid any appearance of arrogance including towards women, be moderate and not extravagant like other tyrants or at least appear to be so, adorn the city, appear to be god-fearing, and the like. A tyrant may thus appear, and might actually become, more kingly and noble, or at least “half-decent”. Thus the worst form of regime might learn to mimic the best.

5 Roman Reception: Philodemus, Historians of Alexander, Marcus Aurelius

With the rules of Philip II and Alexander the Great of Macedon (336–323 B.C.) and the succeeding Hellenistic-era kingdoms (323–30 B.C.), kingship returned to the Greek world and the Greek-ruled Near East. The period reintroduced notions of divine descent of kings and ruler-cult, which exerted a significant influence on Roman political practice and ideology, and it produced a literature addressed to kings. Writers now sit in the vulnerable positions of actual subjects of the rulers they are concerned with. (That was true of Homer and Hesiod, but rare thereafter when kingship might be aspirational.) They write delicately, often indirectly of past kings, with an eye towards receiving protection from a powerful sovereign.

Of this Hellenistic literature,⁵¹ most of which has been lost, we may note one of the first and most curious examples. Euhemerus wrote a utopian

⁵⁰ *Pol.* 3.15 1286b8–22, 5.10 1313a3–9.

⁵¹ See David E. Hahm, “Kings and Constitutions: Hellenistic Theories”, in *The Cambridge History* (see note 26), pp. 457–476. For Cynic views, see J. Moles in *ibid.*, pp. 431–432.

novel in which he claimed he had discovered, far away, a (fictional) golden column on which were inscribed the deeds of Cronus, Zeus, and others. He 'learned' that these were long-ago human beings who because of their great benefactions to people were now worshipped as gods. "Euhemerism" is known as a theory of myth, but equally is this a view of kingship. Euhemerus perhaps wrote while serving King Cassander of Macedon (311–298 B.C.). A good king deserved to be worshipped as a god.

This section will consider the use of Homeric kings and Alexander as models for Roman leaders of the late Republic (1st century B.C.) and of the Empire of the first and second centuries A.D. By the first century B.C., Rome ruled Greece and other Greek-speaking lands in Macedon, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and elsewhere. Once again, Greek writers encourage rulers to elevate and soften their rule by appreciating culture. Elements of the preceding virtue ethics recur, but the teaching seems even less disinterested. Greeks and Hellenized Easterners now write as subjects of absolute imperial overlords. Philodemus used Homer to illustrate precepts addressed to leading Romans; Greek historians presented Alexander as a paradigm for Roman emperors to emulate; and Emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote in Greek about ruling oneself (and others) philosophically.

In the first century B.C., the virtues of Homeric kings were held up as models for a Roman leader of the late Republic. The return to Homer was anticipated in part by Aristotle's praiseworthy treatment, as well as by stories that Alexander wished to be glorified as a Homeric hero and a demigod.⁵² Philodemus of Gadara, a Greek Epicurean philosopher working in Italy, presented his treatise "On the Good King according to Homer" to, among others, the family of L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus.⁵³ Piso was consul in 58 B.C. and father-in-law of Julius Caesar. It was not typical of Epicureans to draw meaning from literary-mythical culture. Philodemus flatters his Roman patron. This work, recovered by archaeology from Piso's villa in Herculaneum, where Philodemus evidently worked, was unknown until modern times. A Roman *princeps*

Herbert J. Rose and Simon Hornblower, "Euhemerus", in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 2012).

52 Some myths about Alexander are that he claimed descent from Heracles and on his mother's side from Achilles; that he carried a copy of the *Iliad* given him by Aristotle; that he ran around, and put a wreath on, the supposed tomb of Achilles at Troy; that he emulated Achilles and expressed jealousy that epic poetry had preserved his fame. Plutarch, *Alexander* 2, 8, 15, 26; Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 1.11.8 and 12.1, 7.14.4 and 17.8.

53 For Philodemus' treatise: Oswyn Murray, "Philodemus on the Good King according to Homer", in *Journal of Roman Studies* 55 (1965), pp. 161–182 and T. Dorandi (ed.) *Filodemo: Il buon re secondo Omero* (Naples, 1982).

is here likened to a king, again.⁵⁴ He must behave fairly, leniently, politely, temperately, and as a gentle father; he is harsh when necessary. He awes with his beauty, which represents virtue; he should love and be loved by the people rather than instill fear; he should be good at war but not love war. A king should deploy and appreciate good counsel and, of course, have a philosophic adviser like the author.

Roman-era Greek historians whitewashed the image of Alexander, the conqueror of Asia, in order to present him as an ideal model for a Roman ruler. Plutarch, writing c. 110–115 A.D. under Emperor Trajan,⁵⁵ and Arrian in the second century A.D., who considered himself a second Xenophon, touted Alexander as a royal supporter of Greek culture: alleging, rather implausibly, that he learned ethics and politics from Aristotle; loved learning, reading, and philosophy; slept with Homer's *Iliad* under his pillow;⁵⁶ and while he brutally destroyed the Greek city of Thebes, he reverently preserved the home of the Classical poet Pindar (Arrian 1.9.10).

Writing in their own interests as Greek subjects of a Roman emperor, historians of Alexander emphasize his virtues, sometimes in the face of much evidence to the contrary. Plutarch's Alexander displays qualities of an ideal king in action: he was extremely generous (e.g. *Alex.* 39), hardworking and temperate; he exercised self-control and was not overcome by luxury (40–41, 42.6); he judged impartially “at first” (42.2). The Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus (1st or perhaps 2nd century A.D.) eulogizes the king's *continentia* (self-control) and *clementia* (3.12.18–21). Literate Roman emperors were supposed to take the hints and treat their Greek subjects well. Dio Chrysostom, a contemporary of Plutarch, also wrote several orations on Greek ideals of kingship, one about lessons from Homeric kings applied to Alexander (*Or.* 2),⁵⁷ and others more philosophical (*Or.* 1, et al.).

Of course, not all emperors appreciated the intellectual's classic appeal to the power of culture. But Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 A.D.) went one better and wrote his own treatise. *Meditations* is a diary-like collection of his private thoughts derived from his training in Greek philosophy. Although known in popular memory as a “philosopher king”, Marcus says almost nothing about ruling itself; yet in this work he looks in the prince's mirror and presents himself as embodying some of its ideals. Scoffing at Plato's ideal state (9.29),

54 As noted above, Cicero compared Roman Republican *principes* to Isocrates' King Nicocles.

55 James R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969), p. xxxvii.

56 Plut., *Alex.* 7–8.

57 Albert B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 12–14.

he advocates virtues such as modesty, piety, justice, education, and thoughtfulness. These qualities can be applied in everyday practice, by anyone, although the emperor Antoninus Pius, his predecessor and father (by adoption), displayed them in an exemplary way (1.16). Some of Marcus' other personal admonitions can be applied to a ruler, who rules himself most of all, such as, "be free of passion and yet full of affection" (1.9). When Marcus advises that it is the nature of a king to do good yet to be maligned, that is, to bear ill-will honorably, he is repeating a maxim found in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* and first attested in the fourth-century Socratic Antisthenes.⁵⁸ Good can exist in a palace (5.16, 8.9; see also 7.36) and our best good is found in a community (5.9). Such counsels echo political precepts of Plato and Aristotle. The image of the self-control of a virtuous, benevolent ruler is perhaps the most important political legacy of this Greek philosophical tradition. Greek theories of kingship, progressing from Homer's glorification of epic leaders to attempts by intellectuals to educate rulers in virtue, have arguably been more influential throughout history than has Athenian-style democracy.

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58 Diogenes Laertius 6.3 (Antisthenes), Plut., *Alex.* 41, Marcus Aurelius 7.36, and also elsewhere. This can be related to a maxim of Socrates: Socrates said it is better to be a victim of injustice than to commit a wrong; that is, one must be good even if others are not.

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Greek and Roman Writers on the Virtues of Good Rulers: Praise, Instruction, and Constraint

Tom Stevenson

Seneca's *De Clementia* (*On Clemency / Mercy*) begins with the words:

[1.1.1] Scribere de clementia, Nero Caesar, institui, ut quodam modo speculi vice fungerer et te tibi ostenderem perventurum ad voluptatem maximam omnium. Quamvis enim recte factorum verus fructus sit fecisse nec ullum virtutum pretium dignum illis extra ipsas sit, iuvat inspiciere et circumire bonam conscientiam.

[1.1.1] I have undertaken, Nero Caesar, to write on the subject of mercy, in order to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror, and thus reveal you to yourself as one destined to attain to the greatest of all pleasures. For, though the true profit of virtuous deeds lies in the doing, and there is no fitting reward for the virtues apart from the virtues themselves, still it is a pleasure to subject a good conscience to a round of inspection. (Loeb trans. J.W. Basore, 1928)

This quote makes it tolerably clear that the rhetorical device of holding a mirror in front of a ruler for purposes of praise or instruction, both of which imply constraint, was known to Nero's adviser Seneca, though hardly any traces of Greek or Roman works which employ this device survive. It was, evidently, one technique among an array of alternatives for giving advice to ancient rulers in order to stress the value of virtuous behaviour over the destructive use of violence. Thus, the *specula principum* ('mirrors of princes') literature, as employed in the medieval period and after, derives from ancient traditions of advice though it also seems the product of evolving conditions and new imperatives. In this paper, my aim is to survey a string of ancient works in different genres written to stress both the value of virtue to ancient rulers and appropriate virtues for good rulers. Even where these works are not addressed to the rulers concerned, or do not employ the device of a mirror by which the ruler can recognise his possession of relevant virtues, they were written for various purposes of praise, instruction, and constraint similar in kind to those sought by the *specula*

principum of later periods. It seems, at any rate, vital to demonstrate that Greek and Roman writers consistently argued that the power and security of good rulers were based primarily on virtue rather than on force. A fundamental dichotomy between the good king, who behaved like a father to his people, and the evil tyrant, who was cruel and violent, was developed for this purpose.

1 Ancient Greece

A range of theoretical justifications for the power of a mortal ruler were available in ancient Greece. Such power might, for instance, be based on principles such as ‘might makes right’ (physical force as sufficient justification), ‘divine election’ (a higher/divine power as decisive), ‘the rule of law’ (implying powers voted by a sovereign legislative body), or ‘hereditary succession’ (based on family descent).¹ Homer knew a paternal ideal.² The crucial contribution of Greek authors, however, was to base ideal rule on ‘moral superiority’, where the important considerations were the superior virtue of the ruler and how this might be maintained. Moral discourse is fundamental to Graeco-Roman literature of various types, but it is particularly clear in political thought about ideal rulers.³ Following the inspirational work of Plato, heavy attention was

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- 1 The concept of ‘might makes right’, though not exclusively in relation to a single ruler, is memorably stated by the Athenians to the Melians at Thuc. 5.89.1: ‘The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.’ For ‘divine election’, particularly in the Roman world, see J. Rufus Fears, *Princeps a Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome* (Rome, 1977); with reviews by Peter A. Brunt, in *JRS* 69 (1979), pp. 168–75 and Simon R.F. Price, in *CR* 29.2 (1979), pp. 277–9. Brunt (at 174) sees divine right as a product of Christian thought. He argued in a later paper that the power of each new emperor depended on laws passed in the Senate at his accession: ‘The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime’, in *CQ* 34.2 (1984), pp. 423–44. See now the discussion of Olivier Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford, 2015), esp. 259. The merits of ‘hereditary succession’ were discussed regularly under the Roman Empire. See, for example, the papers in Alisdair G.G. Gibson (ed.) *The Julio-Claudian Succession: Reality and Perception of the ‘Augustan Model’* (Leiden/Boston, 2013), esp. Josiah Osgood, ‘Suetonius and the Succession to Augustus’, 19–40, who (at 33) outlines some of the benefits of hereditary succession. Cf. Tom Stevenson, ‘The Succession Planning of Augustus’, in *Antichthon* 47 (2013), pp. 118–39.
 - 2 Hom. *Od.* 2.47, 2.234, 5.12. Cf. Tom Stevenson, ‘The Ideal Benefactor and the Father Analogy in Greek and Roman Thought’, in *CQ* 42.2 (1992), pp. 421–36 (at 424).
 - 3 For an excellent introductory discussion, which employs regular and lengthy quotes from ancient sources, see Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1966). Straightforward, succinct, and still valuable as a survey is Thomas A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought*, 2nd ed. (London, 1967). Cf. Stevenson, ‘The Ideal Benefactor’, pp. 433–6.

paid to the virtue (regularly discussed in the plural as virtues) of the ideal ruler. A fundamental dichotomy emerged in Greek thought between the '(good) king', a selfless and beneficent ruler of pre-eminent virtue, and the '(bad) tyrant', a selfish and oppressive ruler of surpassing vice.⁴ Menander Rhetor, a Greek rhetorician and commentator, probably of the late 3rd Century AD, wrote that epideictic (display) speeches addressed to a king should employ four fundamental virtues, which are derived ultimately from Plato: courage (ἀνδρεία), justice (δικαιοσύνη), temperance (σωφροσύνη), and wisdom (φρόνησις, elsewhere σοφία) (Men. Rhet. 373).⁵ Other influential works include Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (*The Education of Cyrus*), which deals with the education of the ideal prince, and *Agesilaus*, an encomium of the famous Spartan king who was 'a perfectly good man' (1.1). Isocrates' *Evagoras* and *To Nicocles* praise the qualities of the Cypriote rulers addressed in their titles. Evagoras, for instance, was a man of courage (ἀνδρεία), wisdom (σοφία), and justice (δικαιοσύνη) (Isoc. *Evag.* 23). He displayed energy, impartiality, humanity, fairness, consistency, and self-sacrifice (40–6). The speech ends with Isocrates encouraging Nicocles, Evagoras' son, to live up to his father's example – which would require him only to maintain his present conduct (78–81).⁶

Greeks of the Hellenistic Period (323–30 BC) produced a huge amount of literature on rulers, prompted largely by the new phenomenon of absolute monarchy, which came into being in the wake of Alexander the Great's conquest of the East. After his death in 323 BC, the huge Hellenistic kingdoms of Antigonid Macedon, Seleucid Syria, and Ptolemaic Egypt dominated affairs in the lands affected by Macedonian conquest until the expansion of Rome into the eastern Mediterranean in the second century BC. Alongside the great kings, a range

4 On Plato's contribution, especially in the *Republic*, where he proposes the famous idea of philosopher kings, see Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 143–68; Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000), chaps. 10–13; Giovanni R.F. Ferrari (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge, 2007). Cf. Stevenson, "The Ideal Benefactor", pp. 433–6.

5 Text, translation, and commentary: Donald A. Russell and Nigel G. Wilson (eds.), *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford, 1981). Cf. Malcolm Heath, *Menander: A Rhetor in Context* (Oxford, 2004).

6 Xenophon: Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 169–85; Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 142–54 (Gray); Christopher Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince: Republic and Empire in the Cyropaedia* (Berkeley, 2001). Isocrates: Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 133–9; Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 142–54 (Gray); Evangelos Alexiou, "The Rhetoric of Isocrates' *Evagoras*: History, Ethics and Politics", in *Isocrate. Entre jeu rhétorique et enjeux politiques*, eds. Ch. Bouchet and P. Giovanelli-Jouanna, Collection Études et Recherches sur l'Occident Romain (Lyon, 2015), pp. 47–61. Cf. Susanna Morton Braund, "Praise and Protreptic in Early Imperial Panegyric: Cicero, Seneca, Pliny", in *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. M. Whitby (Leiden/Boston/Köln, 1998), pp. 53–76 (at 53–4, 56–8).

of lesser kings and potentates governed territories of varying size and importance. The defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in Alexandria in 30 BC brought this age of absolute kings (and queens) in the East to an end and signalled the rule of the Roman emperors.⁷

Philosophical theories of kingship were produced from an early point in the Hellenistic Period. All the major philosophical schools quickly became involved, except for the Cynics, whose extreme views on material possessions, individual ethics, and political power initially disqualified them.⁸ There has been some debate about whether a Platonic-Stoic 'canon' of 'cardinal' virtues existed, but it seems preferable to think that a pool of virtues became available for exploitation in changing circumstances.⁹ In their efforts to claim legitimacy, the kings welcomed philosophers to their courts as advisers, and these philosophers responded appropriately. They wrote treatises *Peri Basileias* (*On Kingship*) in great number. These treatises rested on several common ideas. Above all, ideal kingship was 'rule without accountability', but this was moderated and justified by the perfect virtue of the king, which was made manifest in the actions of the king towards his subjects. The main virtue of the time was love of humanity (*philanthrōpia*), in accordance with which the king displayed his love for his subjects. Other fundamental virtues included beneficence (*euergesia*), justice, self-control, wisdom, foresight, and courage. The king did not need to be a philosopher, but it was understandably held that

7 For excellent historical overviews, see Frank W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*, rev. ed. (London, 1992); Andrew Erskine (ed.) *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Malden, MA, 2005), chaps. 2–6. Cf. Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 401–14 (Garnsey).

8 For contributions by Cynics, Epicureans and Stoics, see Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 239–68; Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, chaps. 21–22 (Moles, Schofield). The Cynics took some time to become involved, and the subject of ideal kingship was not popular among Epicureans, whose founder, Epicurus, was not primarily a political philosopher. Nevertheless, an Epicurean work by Philodemus (c. 110–c. 40/35 BC), *On the Good King According to Homer*, has been recovered from the Villa of the Papyri at Pompeii. For an edition of this work, see Tiziano Dorandi, *Filodemo: Il buon re secondo Omero* (Naples, 1982). For interpretation, see Oswyn Murray, "Philodemus on the Good King according to Homer", in *JRS* 55 (1965), pp. 161–82; cf. Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 280–2, who stresses that Philodemus was primarily a literary critic.

9 On the concept of a Hellenistic 'canon' of virtues, see Helen F. North, "Canons and Hierarchies of the Cardinal Virtues in Greek and Latin Literature", in *The Classical Tradition: Literary and Historical Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan*, ed. L. Wallach (Ithaca, 1966), pp. 165–83, esp. 174–5. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and his Virtues", in *Historia* 30.3 (1981), pp. 298–323, tends to see (at 300–7) a 'pool' of virtues; cf. Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", p. 57.

he should include philosophers among his advisers.¹⁰ In their interactions with a Hellenistic ruler, Greek cities stressed his actions towards them. Benefactions were greeted with great favour and were eventually described with reference to the philosophical ideal. The forms of royal worship or ruler cult adopted by the cities described these benefactions in terms of the traditional idea of the king as saviour, benefactor, or new founder of the city. In philosophical understanding, the benefactions were expressions of the king's love, to which the subjects would respond with reciprocal love of their own. Hostile actions, in contrast, were manifestations of the vice of a 'tyrant', the polar opposite of a true 'king'.¹¹ Legal justification for the new phenomenon of Hellenistic kingship was notably weak, though the doctrine of the king as 'living law' was discussed among some thinkers.¹² In general, the philosophical framework for ideal kingship was provided by the idea of the king's pre-eminent virtue, and this was to remain the case for centuries to come.

2 The Roman Republic

By the time Augustus established his rule at Rome in 27 BC, Roman armies and commanders had been present in the eastern Mediterranean for almost

10 For Hellenistic thought on ideal kingship, see Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*; Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 239–68; Traute Adam, *Clementia Principis: der Einfluss hellenistischer Fürstenspiegel auf den Versuch einer rechtlichen Fundierung des Principats durch Seneca* (Stuttgart, 1970); Gerhard J.D. Aalders, *Political Thought in Hellenistic Times* (Amsterdam, 1975); Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, chap. 23 (Hahn). A Jewish version may be found in the "Letter of Aristeas", evidently a product of the second century BC, on which see Oswyn Murray, "Philosophy and Monarchy in the Hellenistic World", in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, eds. T. Rajak et al. (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2007), pp. 13–28. Plutarch draws heavily on Hellenistic works in his various treatments of kings and kingship.

11 On benefactions and ruler cult for the kings as benefactors, founders and/or saviours, see Simon R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1984), chaps. 1–2; Mary Beard, John A. North, and Simon R.F. Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 140–9, 208–10; Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford, 2002), chaps. 1–2; Erskine, *Companion to the Hellenistic World*, chaps. 11, 12, 25.

12 Much of the debate proceeds from Erwin R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship", in *YCS* 1 (1928), pp. 58–102, who discussed several pseudo-Pythagorean tracts preserved by Stobaeus. Their date is not certain: Louis Delatte, *Les Traités de la royauté d'Ephante, Diotogène et Sthenidas* (Liège, 1942). Diotogenes' treatise *On Kingship* described the ideal king as an imitator of God and the embodiment of law: Holger Thesleff, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*, Acta Academiae Aboensis (1965), pp. 71–7.

two centuries, and even before that time Romans had encountered Hellenistic kings and ideas about them. Thus, by the time that Rome was ruled by emperors, who were in many respects like the absolute kings of the Hellenistic world (e.g. their remoteness, overwhelming power, legal position beyond the institutions of a Greek *polis*), Romans were well acquainted with Hellenistic kingship in practice and in theory: they were certainly acquainted with ideal kingship in Greek thought. Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* was said to be the favourite book of Scipio Aemilianus (185-129 BC).¹³ Greek Imperial writers and orators subsequently adapted Hellenistic kingship thought to the conditions of life under the emperors. The ideas of the Hellenistic world, therefore, were available for use at Rome under both the Republic and the Empire.

Roman antipathy to kings and kingship, however, was well known in ancient times, so how could the Romans possibly have internalized Greek political thought dealing with the virtuous king and the decadent tyrant? It might seem to some readers that there were many reasons why they should not have done so, given their historical aversion to the idea of a *rex* ('king'), which supposedly began with the foundation of the Republic, and the pose of denial of monarchy instituted by the emperor Augustus, who founded the system of rule conventionally known as the 'Principate', in which the emperor is described as *princeps inter pares* ('the leader among equals'). The contrast in political terms between Rome and the Hellenistic world is stark.

Questions abound, and on first reading they might seem to paint a pessimistic picture. The kings of early Rome were eventually overthrown. The Roman Republic was dominated by fierce competition between noble families who were constantly on the lookout for a rogue member of their class who might seek overwhelming personal power in the state. Equally, the Empire might not seem very fertile ground for kingship literature because of the attitude adopted by Augustus, the *civilis princeps* ('citizen-like leader'). Absolute monarchy was a relevant idea but not in the political and legal environments favoured by Augustus. Philosophical advisers were fine for Greek rulers, but not for Romans, who were simultaneously careful about Greek advisers and averse to being described as kings. Romans used *amici* ('friends') as advisers, rather than Greek philosophers. Furthermore, whereas myriad works *On Kingship* were produced in the Hellenistic world, there was not much political philosophy or political debate about the form of the state at Rome because, even at times of great friction and civil war, the Romans were broadly in agreement that their *res publica* ('commonwealth', 'public business'), conceived as a partnership

13 Cic. *Q. fr.* 1.1.23; *Tusc.* 2.62. Cf. Plut. *Aem.* 6.8-10, 28.11; A.E. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus* (Oxford, 1967), s.v. 'Cyropaedia'.

between the Senate and the Roman People (SPQR, *Senatus Populusque Romanus*), was superior to other political forms since the crucial consideration was that each citizen should share wealth and privileges according to rank and achievement. Thus, the Roman *res publica* could accommodate an era of aristocratic dominance, with noble families claiming the lion's share, and an era of imperial dominance, with emperors having pre-eminent claims. It was all a matter of relative rank and achievement in respect of other citizens in the state. Plus, Romans thought that political innovation was worrisome and even dangerous. As is well known, they had no word for 'revolution'. Instead, in a highly indicative custom, they referred with derision to 'revolutionary' measures or ideas as *novae res* ('new things', 'new practices'). The *res publica* as a system for sharing prerogatives according to rank and achievement was always pre-eminent, whether that sharing approximated to what we might call a 'Republic' or an 'Empire'. The Romans were not particularly inclined to question their system, and when they might have done so, their thoughts could be shared in social settings such as recitations, dramatic performances, and conversations, rather than in literature. Quite simply then: How could Greek ruler literature make an impact under such circumstances, especially in the absence of kings? What role could it play?

The truth seems to be that Rome's outward antipathy represents an ongoing fascination with kingship, so that it should come as no surprise that kingship literature was well known in both Republican and Imperial Rome, where the basic dichotomy between the '(good) king' and the '(bad) tyrant' was constantly employed in (e.g.) political discourse, dramatic performance, and works of history. As a result, Romans of the Republic and Principate were more familiar with relevant Greek works than might be thought from general political conditions and the superficially modest number of surviving works of political theory.

The starting-point must of course be the historical tradition, which indicates that Roman nobles rose against their tyrannical king Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin the Proud), expelled the ruling Etruscan dynasty in 510 BC, and founded the Roman Republic in 509 BC.¹⁴ The evidence for this event is

¹⁴ The historical tradition is best conveyed by Livy, Book 1. For supplementary evidence of early kings at Rome, note the survival of names and institutions like the Rex Nemorensis ('King of Nemi', inspiration for Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*). The festival called the Regifugium was associated with the expulsion of the kings from Rome, though this interpretation probably misunderstands the sense of 'the flight of the king' (Ov. *Fast.* 2.685–8, Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 63 with Rose's notes; Agnes K. Michels, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 160–5. The Regia ('Royal House', 'Palace') was the house of the pontifex maximus. Cf. Rex Sacrorum ('King of Sacred Rites', Varro, *Ling.* 6.13,

suspicious for a number of reasons, not the least being that the Athenians also expelled their tyrants in 510 BC, so that a feat of historical emulation seems to have been manufactured for the benefit of Rome in Greek eyes. In addition, Etruscan influence at Rome did not decline in the fifth century BC in any marked way. In fact, Etruscan names appear regularly in the lists of magistrates of the fourth century BC, including names associated with the royal family that had supposedly been evicted.¹⁵ Whatever the truth about Rome's kings, however, there can be no doubt that an aversion to monarchy characterised the aristocratic Republic. The noble families at Rome vied with one another for wealth and privilege in a fierce manner that propelled a unique brand of individualism among the leaders of the noble houses. In this environment, they developed a pronounced sensitivity to the possibility that one of their number might rise to a position of dominance over the rest, and they did everything they could to thwart this possibility by constructing a political system based on collegiality and limited tenure of office.¹⁶ The understanding was that the nobles would share power according to rank and achievement, not permit one of their number to monopolize power. The practice arose of accusing an over-reaching political opponent of aiming at *regnum* ('kingship', 'tyranny'), viz. of aspiring to become a *rex* or *tyrannus* ('king', 'tyrant'). This accusation, which probably owes much to the influence of tyrants in Greek tragedy, originated from an aristocratic mindset that saw autocratic rule in threatening terms.¹⁷

Subsequently, in the third and (especially) the second centuries BC, Rome expanded into the eastern Mediterranean and encountered the Hellenistic kings, whose aura proved more awesome than the reality of their military

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- 28; Macrob. *Sat.* 1.15.9–12, 19; Livy 2.2; 40.42.9; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.74.4) and Interrex (a fill-in magistrate or short-term regent who was named for holding office 'between kings').
- 15 On the *rex* at Rome, see Tim J. Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome* (London/New York, 1995), pp. 141–50, 230–6, 239–41; Andrew W. Lintott, *Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 28–32; Jacques Poucet, *Les Rois de Rome: Tradition et histoire* (Bruxelles, 2000).
- 16 On the Roman nobility, see Polyb. 6.53.1–54.4; Plin. *HN* 7.43.139; Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, "Conquest, Competition and Consensus: Roman Expansion in Italy and the Rise of the *Nobilitas*", in *Historia* 42 (1993), pp. 12–39; Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, 1996), esp. chap. 6; Lintott, *Constitution*; Tom Stevenson, *Julius Caesar and the Transformation of the Roman Republic* (London, 2015), chap. 2.
- 17 See J. Roger Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic", in *TAPA* 98 (1967), pp. 151–71, esp. 152, where he points out that words like *rex* and *tyrannus* are used interchangeably at Rome, in contrast to Greek practice, and 153, where he states that it 'was probably through the medium of tragedy that the Romans first became acquainted with the type of the Greek tyrant'; *id.* "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography", in *CW* 65 (1971), pp. 12–20.

power when faced with the challenge of the Roman legions. A new wave of antipathy to kings and kingship developed at Rome out of this period of antagonism with the Hellenistic kings.¹⁸ Yet the Romans knew their enemy well, and there can be little doubt that they assimilated kingship literature profoundly. Roman imperialism was conducted on the level of ideas, as well as on the level of military conflict. Accordingly, Romans took an interest in the ideology of Hellenistic kingship and learnt much, especially from Greek ambassadors, and from Greek intellectuals and statesmen who had acquired experience at the Hellenistic courts and had even advised several of the kings.¹⁹ Hellenistic kings themselves visited Rome.²⁰ The leading families of Rome and Italy were highly Hellenized and highly cultured. Their houses, for instance, as attested at Pompeii, Herculaneum, and in Rome, borrowed decorative elements from the East, including from royal palaces. They adopted the royal practice of grouping friends by grades of admission at the morning *salutatio* (Sen. Ben. 6.34). Roman leaders knew Greek literature and philosophy well. Intellectual and political life at Rome involved impressive erudition.²¹ There was political advantage in being acquainted so well with Greek leaders, writers, and thinkers. The competitive nobility needed to deal with Greek thought because Greek ideas and institutions dominated their Mediterranean-based empire. There were also social advantages because intellectualism was another arena in which members of this highly competitive aristocracy could trump one another and score points in the contest for social standing. Cultural borrowing could easily occur alongside political antipathy under these circumstances.

The practice of Republican politics, therefore, meant that nobles were concerned about a 'tyrant', who was said to be seeking 'kingship' or 'tyranny' (*regnum*), a tendentious charge which in the Middle and Late Republics borrowed from but defied the conventional Greek distinction between the '(good) king' and the '(bad) tyrant'. While Romans could attack an opponent as a 'tyrant', they could not praise a contemporary as a 'king'. This produced a problem as Rome experienced a slow growth of autocratic power in the second and first centuries BC, when a succession of nobles achieved positions of

18 Andrew Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invective", in *CQ* 41.1 (1991), pp. 106–20.

19 For the influence of men such as Polybius and the Stoic Panaetius, see Polyb. 32.9; Cic. *Off.* 1–2; Erich Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 251–71.

20 They did not always make a good impression. For example, the sycophancy of Prusias of Bithynia, who addressed the senators as 'saviour gods' (Polyb. 30.10.10), went down well with some but was despised by others and was long remembered with revulsion by fellow Greeks.

21 Elizabeth Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (London, 1985).

dominance that threatened the old agreement between the noble families to share power in the Republic. The ‘good’ vs. ‘bad’ forms of autocracy that were conventionally contemplated in the Greek world could not be applied in any simple fashion at Rome because all autocracy was ‘bad’ from the traditional aristocratic point of view. The solution to this conundrum was to elevate an impressive friend by employing positive virtues which in Greek works were normally applied to (good) kings and rulers, e.g. the ‘great-spiritedness’ (*megalopsychia*) of a truly great man.²²

2.1 Cicero

The spotlight inevitably falls on Cicero, who provides much of our written evidence for his lifetime (106–43 BC). Several of his works show deep familiarity with Greek ruler literature. In a speech delivered in 66 BC, the *De Imperio Gnaei Pompeii* (*On the Imperium of Gnaeus Pompeius*), also called the *Pro Lege Manilia* (*On Behalf of the Manilian Law*), Cicero sought to convince his contemporaries that Pompey the Great should receive an extraordinary imperium (military command) that would effectively see him dominate the eastern Mediterranean and dwarf the rights of other Roman commanders and magistrates in that area. The command was nominally against the dangerous Pontic (Crimean) king, Mithridates VI, but was surely imbued with greater possibilities, since Mithridates had been weakened considerably in previous campaigns. Cicero’s strategy was to demonstrate that Pompey possessed extraordinary personal qualities that made him an ideal candidate for the job (3). The focus on qualities resembles the approach of ruler literature, though the qualities themselves – four above all – were evidently considered fundamental for a Roman general and calculated to appeal to a Roman audience: ‘military knowledge (*scientiam rei militaris*), courage (*uirtutem*), authority (*auctoritatem*), [and] divine fortune (*felicitatem*)’ (28, cf. 49).

First, Cicero highlights the knowledge Pompey gained through service on his father’s staff during the Social War, and through commands given him in his own right by his father (28). To these opportunities Pompey added hard work (*labor*), endurance (*fortitudo*), application (*industria*), swiftness (*celeritas*) and deliberation (*consilium*) (29–35). Second, Cicero places heavy stress

22 For Cato the Elder and Cicero rendering *megalopsychia* into Latin as *magnanimitas* (‘great-spiritedness’) or *magnitudo animi* (‘greatness of spirit’), see Ulrich Knoche, *Magnitudo Animi. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung eines Römischen Wertgedankens* (Leipzig, 1935); Yelena Baraz, “True Greatness of Soul in Seneca’s *De Constantia Sapientis*”, in *Roman Reflections: Studies in Latin Philosophy*, eds. G.D. Williams and K. Volk (Oxford, 2016), pp. 157–71 (at 161).

on Pompey's courage (*uirtus*). He uses the hyperbolic phrase, 'unbelievable and divine courage' (*incredibilis ac diuina uirtus*) twice in close succession (33, 36). The hyperbole is justified through a survey of associated qualities: 'freedom from guilt (*innocentia*), self-control (*temperantia*), loyalty (*fides*), accessibility (*facilitas*), talent (*ingenium*) and humanity (*humanitas*)' (36). These are qualities, much like the virtues of good rulers, which set Pompey apart from the mass of Roman generals (36–42). His moral authority (*auctoritas*) (43–6) and divine luck (*felicitas*) (47–8) are dealt with subsequently. Pompey's qualities, then, underpin his fitness for the military command at issue and make him uniquely qualified. He is the outstanding man of his time. Cicero has laid the groundwork for later imperial panegyrics.²³

Later, as consul in 63 BC, Cicero uncovered and thwarted the revolutionary plans of Lucius Sergius Catilina, a rogue noble, whose designs involved violent overthrow of the state. When he took a leading role in summarily executing conspirators caught in the city, enemies said that he had acted like a cruel, murderous tyrant for having killed these citizens. Friends, however, honoured him with the title *Parens Patriae* ('Parent/Father of the Fatherland') for having saved citizen lives. This title had probably been around for a long time, but Cicero proceeded to advertise it with unique vigour. It is no understatement to say that he became obsessed from this time with the task of promoting himself, in the face of considerable opposition from political enemies and rivals, as the father of the state for his crucial role in saving Rome from an undeniably serious threat. He was, in the view of his supporters, a saviour rather than a murderer of Roman citizens. The vital point about this ideological battle is that the *Parens Patriae*, as the opposite of a tyrant, functions like the good king from Greek kingship literature. 'King' as an honorific epithet was out of the question at Rome, but 'Father' plainly was not. The father analogy, therefore, provided a congenial and distinctive image for individual dominance at Rome. It was employed in Greek kingship works, but never to the same degree. As such, it represents a major adaptation of Greek ideas to Roman models and purposes.²⁴

The way in which *Parens Patriae* was applied to Cicero by appreciative friends appears to indicate that he was not alone in thinking that autocratic

23 On this 'elegant and effective panegyric of Pompey', see Andrew Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence: A Historian's Companion* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 427–30 (quote at 429). Cf. Braund "Praise and Protreptic", pp. 74–5; Catherine Steel, *Cicero: Rhetoric and Empire* (Oxford, 2001), esp. pp. 140–54. On Pompey's *felicitas* as a personal attribute, rather than a gift of the gods, see Kathryn Welch, "Nimium Felix: Caesar's *Felicitas* and Cicero's *Philippics*", in *Cicero's Philippics: History, Rhetoric, and Ideology*, eds. T. Stevenson and M. Wilson, *Prudentia* 37/38 (Auckland, N.Z., 2008), pp. 181–213 (esp. 194).

24 Stevenson, "The Ideal Benefactor".

power wielded temporarily by a selfless statesman with the aim of saving the state might be an antidote to ongoing civil conflict and war. This does not mean that there were men who wanted a monarch to rule Rome, but rather that there was interest in the qualities of the good king. Cicero's *De Re Publica* (*On the Commonwealth*) of 54 BC, for instance, shows an extraordinary willingness to discuss the merits of kingship as a political form (e.g. *Rep.* 1.54–6, 1.62–3, 2.23, 2.43). This positive attitude to kingship and the traditional Roman dictatorship (e.g. *Rep.* 6.12) is rather surprising, given the strength of opposition to individual dominance of the state from the aristocratic point of view. There is controversy about whether Cicero was in fact making an implicit recommendation for the appointment of a special dictator to restore stability in the state. Such a statesman would need to have ideal qualities, and also good advisers, but even without an implicit argument of this kind there are plentiful signs of Cicero's exploitation of Greek thought about good rulers.²⁵

Some years later, when Cicero had to deal with the dictator Caesar in the years 46 and 45 BC, he showed an extraordinary facility to employ appropriate language and manners in the presence of Rome's effective monarch. His so-called 'Caesarian' speeches – the *Pro Marcello* (*On Behalf of Marcellus*), *Pro Ligario* (*On Behalf of Ligarius*), and *Pro Rege Deiotaro* (*On Behalf of King Deiotarus*) – were delivered on behalf of associates who sought Caesar's famous clemency in order to resume respected positions. Caesar was cajoled, praised, and honoured in terms that Greeks would have understood, despite the necessary Roman adaptations.

The *Pro Marcello* thanks Caesar for his extension of clemency (*clementia*) to Marcus Claudius Marcellus, who had been a fierce opponent of the dictator, had backed Pompey during the civil war, and whose case had been supported by the entire Senate. Cicero himself undertook to plead for Marcellus' return to Rome. This decision meant a return to public life for Cicero after a long period of absence, which had made his opposition to Caesar's rule clear. Now his attitude changed fundamentally in response to Caesar's 'unbelievable and virtually divine' decision (*Marc.* 1). The self-control demonstrated in this act of *clementia* is more significant than his military conquests and is the quality which sees him 'most resembling a god' (8–9). For a start, it is an achievement that 'is entirely his own' (11) and, while other monuments will fade, 'this justice (*iustitia*) and merciful disposition (*lenitas animi*) of yours will flourish more with

25 For full discussion and references, see Tom Stevenson, "Readings of Scipio's Dictatorship in Cicero's *De Re Publica* (6.12)", in *CQ* 55.1 (2005), pp. 140–52. Cf. Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, chap. 24 (Atkins), esp. pp. 489–98; Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence*, pp. 232–41.

each passing day' (12). Caesar has surpassed all competitors 'in fairness (*aequitas*) and pity (*miseriordia*)', but 'today you have actually surpassed yourself' (12). The focus on Caesar's surpassing virtues is subsequently intensified and extended. The gods have pinned 'all hopes of safety/prosperity (*salus*)' on Caesar's clemencia and wisdom (*sapientia*) (18). In view of his 'divine excellence' (26), Cicero looks forward to an immortality for Caesar beyond the confines of his body (28). Obviously, the speech praises Caesar's display of clemency to Marcellus by drawing upon items from the established pool of kingly virtues, e.g. wisdom (*sapientia*), justice (*iustitia*), fairness (*aequitas*), generosity (*liberalitas*), and goodness (*bonitas*). Each of these virtues complements and explains Caesar's outstanding *clementia*. They also serve to construct a relationship between ruler and ruled which in ideological terms resembles that between the good king and his subjects. This is not merely a matter of literary borrowing; it is recognition that autocratic power has come to Rome in the wake of Caesar's victory in the civil war against the forces led by Pompey. The speech is 'firmly rooted in a particular ideological moment'²⁶ because Cicero wants to praise Caesar's response to the Senate's plea for Marcellus and encourage him to maintain the attitudes involved. It is not that monarchy is being endorsed for the future. Nevertheless, Cicero closes the speech by assuring the dictator of his personal devotion (32) and by claiming that the favour shown to Marcellus outshines the favour previously shown to Cicero himself (33–4).²⁷ It has been argued that Cicero employs irony in this speech and that his attitude is subversive rather than positive or genuine.²⁸ It seems, however, that there were too many Caesarian senators, and too many grateful Pompeians, saved from execution, for this to have been the case.²⁹

The speeches *Pro Ligario* (46 BC) and *Pro Rege Deiotaro* (45 BC) adopt the same basic strategy, with kingly virtues brought to the fore. In the former speech, Cicero works for the recall of Ligarius, another opponent of Caesar and supporter of Pompey during the civil war. This time he celebrates Caesar's *clementia* at regular intervals (6, 10, 15, 19, 30) but commences with a reference to Caesar's sense of pity (*miseriordia*) (1), and praises in addition the dictator's generosity (*liberalitas*) (6, 23), wisdom (*sapientia*) (6), humanity (*humanitas*) (13), mildness (*lenitas*) (15), and goodness (*bonitas*) (37). In sum, Caesar is a man of *humanitas*, *clementia*, and *miseriordia* (29, 37). He resembles a father

26 Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", p. 69.

27 On the *Pro Marcello*, see Braund, pp. 68–70; Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence*, pp. 313–17.

28 Robert R. Dyer, "Rhetoric and Intention in Cicero's *Pro Marcello*", in *JRS* 80 (1990), pp. 17–30.

29 Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence*, pp. 316–17.

rather than a judge (30) and approaches most closely to divinity in his capacity to show pity to other men (38).³⁰

The *Pro Rege Deiotaro* was delivered in favour of another Pompeian, King Deiotarus of Galatia, who had been pardoned by Caesar in 47 BC but was subsequently suspected of treachery. In now-familiar fashion, Caesar's clemency is given high praise. It distinguishes the dictator 'from being a tyrant' (34) and means that there are many 'who owe their lives to you' (40). The speech ends poignantly with the words *clementiae tuae* (43), which underline the point that the forensic circumstances have given special meaning to Caesar's *clementia*, though the strategy adopted by Cicero has drawn from the pool of virtues developed in praise of good rulers.³¹ It seems probable that Cicero was responsible for the sudden appearance and prominence of *clementia*, which was soon employed in a senatorial decree of 45 BC that proposed the construction of a temple to the Clemency of Caesar (*Clementia Caesaris*) with statues of *Clementia* and Caesar clasping hands. The temple was not in fact built, either because Caesar's murder intervened or because the proposal, although welcome because *clementia* stood in contrast to the cruelty of Sulla, was nonetheless an explicit signal that Caesar held an autocratic position in respect of his peers and contemporaries: he could treat them like conquered enemies on the battlefield and so it implied servitude. The idea of *clementia* might not have met with Caesar's approval, even though Cicero's repeated appeals to the dictator's *clementia* in a forensic setting were largely successful.³² A famous anecdote describes the extraordinary impact of Cicero's *Pro Ligario* on a reluctant Caesar (Plut. *Cic.* 39.6–7): 'it was manifest that all the emotions of [Caesar's] soul were stirred; and at last, when the orator touched upon the struggles at Pharsalus, he was so greatly affected that his body shook and he dropped from his hand some of his documents.'

In the wake of Caesar's assassination on the Ides (15th) of March 44 BC, Cicero reappeared once more at Rome as a political force of independence and fierce patriotism. His famous series of speeches known as *Philippicae* (the *Philippics*), delivered against Mark Antony, recalled the angry opposition of the Athenian statesmen Demosthenes to King Philip II of Macedon in the fourth century BC. The *Philippics* are notable for their relentless attacks on

30 On the *Pro Ligario*, see Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", p. 70; Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence*, pp. 317–19.

31 On the *Pro Rege Deiotaro*, see Braund, p. 70; Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence*, pp. 335–8.

32 Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 233–43. Braund, p. 171 n. 45, sees Cicero as 'one of several organs of Caesar's political self-representation' but there is no need to think that Caesar sanctioned Cicero's strategy in the 'Caesarian' speeches.

Antony's 'tyrannical' ways and for the explicit claim that Caesar was a tyrant who was justifiably assassinated for the good of the Republic. Cicero had in fact begun to make this claim in philosophical works, above all the *De Officiis* (*On Duties*), in the months prior to Caesar's murder.³³ This heavy concentration on Caesar as a tyrant was partly designed to justify the dictator's assassination, partly aimed at de-legitimising Antony, and partly concerned to dismiss the claims made on Caesar's behalf that he was the true *Parens Patriae*.³⁴

After Cicero's murder in 43 BC, the idea of the *Parens Patriae* became highly controversial. It was used to damn Caesar's assassins as parricides and to parry claims that he was justly removed for being a tyrant. Livy tells of famous early heroes who were described alternatively as 'fathers' and 'tyrants'. Such terms had been used for generations by the time that Livy sat down to write, in the later decades of the first century BC, but there can be little question that these terms were highly contested during Livy's formative years, when Rome was wracked by civil war.³⁵ This was also, of course, the formative period of Octavian, who would later become the emperor Augustus. The advent of autocratic power was debated fiercely. On the positive view it was thought that a *Parens Patriae* could be compatible with traditional ideas about the state, if he was selfless, a saviour, and acknowledged freely by all, rather than selfish, domineering, and in power through violent usurpation. He would be *princeps inter pares*, rather than an overt rex.

3 The Roman Empire

Augustus avoided the negative associations of monarchy with great skill, even though his power resembled that of an autocrat in certain respects. Aside from traditional attitudes and other controversies of his youth, Caesar's assassination must have governed his attitude heavily. Augustus knew what could happen to a ruler cast as a 'tyrant', and he knew too that the difference between a 'father' and a 'tyrant' at Rome could be a matter of opinion.

33 A. Martin Stone, "Greek Ethics and Roman Statesmen: *De Officiis* and the *Philippics*", in *Cicero's Philippics: History, Rhetoric, Ideology*, eds. T. Stevenson and M. Wilson, *Prudentia* 37/38 (Auckland, 2008), pp. 214–39.

34 For a full discussion, see Tom Stevenson, "Tyrants, Kings, and Fathers in the *Philippics*", in *Cicero's Philippics: History, Rhetoric, Ideology*, eds. T. Stevenson and M. Wilson, *Prudentia* 37/38 (Auckland, 2008), pp. 95–113. Cf. Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant", pp. 165–6; Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence*, pp. 374–82.

35 Stevenson, "The Ideal Benefactor"; Tom Stevenson, "*Parens Patriae* and Livy's Camillus", in *Ramus* 29.1 (2000), pp. 27–46.

Nevertheless, he was concerned to advertise qualities derived from ruler literature, much as Cicero had done, and contemporaries were concerned to honour him in similar terms.

The hallmark of his imperial style was the ritual of *recusatio* ('refusal'), whereby he affected a reluctance to accept power until prevailed upon by the unanimous voice of his subjects.³⁶ This ritual helped to produce stability and dispel any thoughts that he was a tyrant. It found its most famous expression in the events of 2 BC, through which Augustus was finally induced to accept the title *Pater Patriae* ('Father of the Fatherland') – the crowning achievement of his reign according to the arrangement of his *Res Gestae* (*Achievements*) (see RG 35.1).³⁷ The *Res Gestae*, therefore, can be looked upon as a definitive statement that he was no tyrant. He was the ideal ruler in Roman terms, with qualities, selflessly applied, which were reminiscent of Greek works on good rulers. In 27 BC the Senate awarded him a *clupeus virtutis* / *clipeus virtutis* ('shield of virtue'), a copy of which survives from Arles. Augustus associates this award closely with the title *Pater Patriae* in his *Res Gestae* (34.2, 35.1), as though in combination they indicate remarkable qualities which could eventually be acknowledged in an environment free from the taint of civil war. Augustus says that the shield honoured his *virtus* ('courage'), *clementia* ('clemency/mercy'), *iustitia* ('justice'), and *pietas* ('dutifulness') (RG 34.2), while the Arles copy indicates that in the original decree the fourth virtue was in fact *pietas erga parentem* ('dutifulness towards his father'), a form which more easily calls to mind controversies of the civil war. For example, it evokes ideological battles between Octavian and Antony over the question of Caesar's inheritance, and between Octavian and Sextus Pompey, who advertised the epithet 'Pius' ('Dutiful') as a sign of his unwavering loyalty to his father Pompey. These are virtues whose appearance owes much to their topicality in the years of civil war which preceded the award of the shield.³⁸ They should also be explained in terms of Roman adaptation of Greek models.

Although no works of political philosophy debated the matter in detail, the concept of *libertas* ('liberty/freedom') was adjusted to fit the new political situation and to conform to the distinction between a fatherly ruler, who works for the freedom of his subjects, and a tyrant, who works to suppress them. The élite of the Late Republic had developed an aristocratic concept of *libertas*,

36 Andrew N. Wallace-Hadrill, "Civilis Princeps: Between Citizen and King", in *JRS* 72 (1982), pp. 32–48.

37 Alison E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 272–6.

38 Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, pp. 266–72.

supporting freedom to compete with one another while opposing *regnum* ('kingship') and *dominatio* ('oppression', 'enslavement') in the sense of extraordinary accumulations of power by individuals or factions (cf. Caes. B Civ. 1.22.5; Aug. RG 1).³⁹ When Augustus became princeps, his *principatus* ('leadership') stood in sharp contrast to *dominatio*, and *princeps* was opposed to *dominus* ('master', especially 'slave master'). Both Augustus and Tiberius took pains to suppress usage of the title *dominus* in political settings, though it remained a conventional form of polite address within Roman society (Ov. *Fast.* 2.142; Suet. *Aug.* 53; Plin. *Ep.* 10; Cass. Dio 57.8; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.1, 3.28). Freedom was guaranteed by the emperor, and *Libertas Augusta* ('Augustan Freedom') was widely advertised.⁴⁰

The pattern was set whereby the virtues of the paternal emperor trumped the vices of the tyrant. Velleius Paterculus incorporated a miniature panegyric of Tiberius into his history.⁴¹ Tacitus, whose narrative of Tiberius' reign (AD 14–37) is famous for its subtlety and complexity, nevertheless labels the emperor a 'tyrant' in a famous passage (*Ann.* 6.6). Roman coins began to depict numerous virtues, which should be understood as divine powers, not simply as manifestations of internal imperial qualities. As such, they could describe an imperial reign as well as an individual emperor. Carlos Noreña identifies *aequitas* ('fairness'), *pietas*, *virtus*, *liberalitas* ('generosity'), and *providentia* ('foresight') as the virtues most often found on coins from AD 69 to 235.⁴²

3.1 Seneca's *De Clementia* (On Clemency, Mercifulness)

Beyond this basic dichotomy of 'father' vs. 'tyrant', or *princeps* vs. *dominus*, the depth of penetration of Greek ruler theory at Rome might still be doubted, given the absence of extended works of political philosophy. From the mid-first

39 The basic study remains that of Chaïm Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge, 1968); cf. Peter A. Brunt, "Libertas in the Roman Republic", in *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 81–350; Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 489–92, 502 (Atkins); Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, pp. 108–11.

40 Stevenson, "The Ideal Benefactor", cf. http://numismatics.org/ocre/results?q=deity_facet:%22Libertas%22.

41 Vell. Pat. 2.126; cf. A.J. Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Tiberian Narrative (2.94–131)* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 234–5.

42 Carlos F. Noreña, "The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues", in *JRS* 91 (2001), pp. 146–68; Carlos F. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (Cambridge, 2011), esp. pp. 61–100. For a fine treatment of the Republican background to these 'divine qualities', see Anna J. Clark, *Divine Qualities. Cult and Community in Republican Rome* (Oxford, 2007).

century AD, however, several important writers deal with imperial virtues in a manner more obviously connected with Hellenistic kingship treatises.

Seneca's *De Clementia* (On Clemency) is a notable and enigmatic exception to the general paucity of Roman philosophy on the virtues of good rulers. But how should it be explained? Why does it treat the emperor so openly as an absolute monarch, flying in the face of Augustus' notion of the emperor as *princeps*? Was it simply meant for the emperor, or was its cleverness, erudition, depth of thought, and multi-layered deployment of ideas designed for a wider audience? Was it meant to have practical application, or was it a *tour de force*, a philosophical virtuoso performance, designed to display the erudition and excellence of its author to his contemporaries, and thus enhance his social standing by intellectual means? Even this, of course, would mean that his audience was by no means unaware or uninterested in the topic of the good ruler.

The *De Clementia*, published in December 55 or slightly thereafter, probably indicates how Seneca wanted Nero to behave, and it is probably a work of advice to that end.⁴³ In the *Octavia*, for instance, the only surviving Roman historical play, Seneca is brought in as a character who tries to restrain Nero with Stoic advice, and Nero is depicted as a cruel tyrant who is the opposite of the good ruler set forth in the *De Clementia*.⁴⁴ In this light, the *De Clementia* recommends the practice of virtue to Nero at a critical time, just after many suspected he had murdered his stepbrother Britannicus. There were originally three books (*Clem.* 1.3.1), but only the first (which has affinities with Hellenistic essays *On Kingship*) and the beginning of the second (a philosophical analysis of virtue) survive. The first book is of prime interest here.

43 On the *De Clementia*, see Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 31–12; Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 535–43 (Griffin); Matthew Roller, *Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton, 2001), chap. 2; Susanna Braund, *Seneca: De Clementia, Edited with Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford, 2009); Malcolm Schofield, "Seneca on Monarchy and the Political Life: *De Clementia*, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, *De Otio*", in eds. S. Bartsch and A. Schiesaro, *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 68–81; Peter Stacey, "The Princely Republic", in *JRS* 104 (2014), pp. 133–54.

44 The *Octavia* was probably composed in the wake of Nero's assassination, given its knowledge of the details of Nero's overthrow. Based on events of AD 62, which resulted in the death of Octavia, Nero's first wife, the play can hardly be by Seneca, who is a character in the drama. It implies knowledge of events that occurred after Seneca's death and lacks Seneca's richness of verbal invention and dramatic development. On the *Octavia*, see Marcus Wilson (ed.) *The Tragedy of Nero's Wife: Studies on the Octavia Praetexta, Prudentia* 35.1 (Auckland, 2003); Anthony J. Boyle (ed.) *Octavia: Attributed to Seneca*, with introduction, translation, and commentary (Oxford, 2008).

The focus on *clementia* indicates the debt owed to Cicero's Caesarian speeches and the public importance of the discussion, which connects with heightened senatorial concern over the emperor's judicial powers, especially in the wake of Claudius' behaviour in the latter stages of his reign, when he heard cases against members of the elite in his private quarters (*intra cubiculum*), rather than in public, where justice and due process might be more readily assured.⁴⁵ This is why *clementia* is distinguished in detail from the more personal but useless *miser cordia* (pity) in the second book (2.3.1 ff.). Once more, then, the contemporary circumstances see the virtue of *clementia* highlighted as the determinant between the paternal monarch and the cruel tyrant.

For our purposes, the speech commences strikingly with the words: 'I have undertaken, Nero Caesar, to write on the subject of mercy, in order to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror (*ut quodam modo speculi uice fungerer*), and thus reveal you to yourself as one destined to attain to the greatest of all pleasures' (1.1.1). The explicit reference to a mirror, by which the emperor might contemplate his virtues, links Seneca's work with the massive body of political philosophy on the virtues of Hellenistic kings. Yet the dramatic acknowledgement of monarchic power at Rome serves a basic message of constraint. Nero is encouraged to continue behaving as he is at present.⁴⁶ He is already perfect: 'no one looks for any model for you to copy except yourself' (1.1.6). This perfection, of which Seneca is obviously confident, rests first on his innocence (*innocentia*) (1.1.5), or 'freedom from guilt' of civil war, and above all on his *clementia*, which is described as the essence of humanity (*humanitas*) (1.3.2). The reference to *innocentia* seems designed to draw a contrast with the opening of Claudius' reign.⁴⁷ Once again, then, while drawing on the tradition of ruler virtues, the treatment is adapted to Roman conditions and stresses relevant Roman virtues.

The image of the ruler as a father continues its prominence in Roman works.⁴⁸ Seneca evokes this image (1.14, 1.16.2–3) and calls upon Nero to recognise that praise and programme go together. The Senate honoured him with the *Pater Patriae* title (1.14.2) so that he would employ his absolute power as a gentle father rather than a cruel tyrant. An implicit contrast is drawn throughout with Claudius, Nero's immediate predecessor, whose relationship with the

45 Miriam T. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 133–4, Appendix A, 3; Braund, *Seneca: De Clementia*, pp. 30–44, 363–4, 378.

46 Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", p. 72.

47 Timothy P. Wiseman, "Calpurnius Siculus and the Claudian Civil War", in *JRS* 72 (1982), pp. 57–67.

48 Roller, *Constructing Autocracy*, chap. 4.

Senate broke down in its latter stages, and even with Augustus, who began his reign with blood on his hands from the civil wars against Sextus Pompey and Mark Antony (1.1.5, 1.9.1, 1.11.1–3). In this light, the *De Clementia* supports the intent of Seneca's political satire, *Apocolocyntosis*, which is at heart a fierce attack on Claudius' physical deficiencies and moral vices, and which compliments Nero's birth, superhuman nature, beauty, and artistry. These and other qualities, including his association with the divine (*Apoc.* 4.1; cf. *Clem.* 1.3.3, 1.7.1–2), will enable him to bring justice and happiness to the world.⁴⁹

3.2 *Pliny the Younger's Panegyricus*

About half a century later, the younger Pliny became consul and, on 1 September AD 100, delivered an expanded version of the conventional speech of thanks to the emperor Trajan. This long speech subsequently became so famous for its praise of the ruler that it is commonly held to have initiated the genre known as Latin panegyric and is referred to as Pliny's *Panegyricus*. The speeches known as the *Panegyrici Latini* (Latin Panegyrics) extend in a line of descent from Pliny's *Panegyricus*. Despite its innovative aspects, however, this speech owes much to earlier traditions, especially in its emphasis on the virtues of the paternal emperor and its denigration of his tyrannical predecessor, in this case Domitian. In addition, although it is couched in terms of praise rather than advice, so that exaggeration and economy with the truth are naturally prevalent, the element of persuasion or programme accompanies the honorific language.⁵⁰

The prominence of Trajan's virtues comes as no surprise. The range of these virtues, the individual virtues chosen for emphasis, and the way they combine to describe a man of unique superiority are, however, quite unprecedented.⁵¹ This speech was justifiably looked back upon as a tour de force. Trajan's adoption by Nerva was contentious and forced upon his predecessor by the need to keep the military on side. Pliny, however, overcomes this uncomfortable fact by emphasizing that Trajan is a man of great experience, as shown by his early career in the military (14–15). Moreover, he possesses many virtues, such as 'devotion to duty, self-restraint, mildness' (2.6: *pietatem, abstinenciam, mansuetudinem*), 'modesty and moderation' (3.2: *modestiam ... moderationemque*).

49 Braund, *Seneca: De Clementia*, pp. 314–31.

50 On Pliny's *Panegyricus*, see Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 321–2; Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", p. 55; Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 543–5 (Griffin). For the tradition of Latin prose panegyrics, see further below.

51 It is instructive to compare the speech given to Galba by Tacitus (*Hist.* 1.15), in which Galba rejects the principle of hereditary succession and chooses Piso as his successor because his virtuous character made him the best man for the role of emperor.

He combines strictness (*severitas*) with a sense of humour (*hilaritas*), seriousness (*gravitas*) with openness (*simplicitas*), and majesty (*maiestas*) with humanity (*humanitas*) (4.6). The pool of virtues is drawn upon regularly throughout the remainder of the speech. Trajan possesses seriousness, moral excellence, and self-control (82.8: *gravitate, sanctitate, temperantia*), along with the finest qualities of a great benefactor, e.g. generosity (25.3, 39.3, 60.7: *benignitas*), munificence (25.5: *munificentia*), and liberality (25.5, 27.3, 33.2, 38.2: *liberalitas*). He has no association with civil strife (49.3: *innocentia*) and is consequently free from threat (68.4: *securitas*). He has demonstrated justice (*iustitia*) in his management of shows (33.2) and in his restoration of the rule of law to the treasury (36.1–3). He exhibits strictness (*severitas*) (80.1) in court cases, balanced perfectly by clemency (*clementia*) in his measured approach to the punishment of informers, whom he entrusts to the gods (35.1), and in the mildness (*mansuetudo*) he employs in matters of bereavement (38.5).

An important theme is that, while Trajan's virtues elevate him, he remains nonetheless 'one of us' (2.4: *unum ille se ex nobis*), a ruler whose qualities stay those of a citizen, in the tradition of the *civilis princeps* ('citizen-like leader') instituted by Augustus.⁵² On campaign he behaved like one of his men (10.3, 15.5, 19.3). In general, he regards himself as a private citizen (10.4, 44.1–2, 64.4, 83–4: *privatus*), has a quality of accessibility (*facilitas*) (23.2, 47.4), and is humane, personally approachable, affable, and respectful (24.2, 48.1, 49.5, 49.7: *humanitas, suavitas, iucunditas, verecundia*). Like an ordinary citizen he readily submits to the rule of law (36.4, 64.1, 65.1, 71.3, 71.5). Above all, he shows an extraordinary reluctance to accept monarchic powers and honours, thereby illustrating his fitness to rule (5.5). He has refused, for example, the title Imperator (5.2–5), the title *Pater Patriae* (21.1), and a third consulship (57.1, 59–60), such is his modesty (5.5, 21.1, 79.4: *modestia*) and respect for the Senate (1.1, 76.1–6, 90.1, 95.1). The element of persuasion in these sections dealing with the emperor's attitude to the Senate is very strong.

Pliny repeatedly stresses and develops the image of Trajan as father. Trajan conducts himself towards the citizens 'as a father towards his children' (21.4). He acts as the *parens publicus* ('public father') (26.3, 87.1) and his benign protection encourages people to raise children again (27). The vocabulary exploits long-familiar dichotomies: 'Nowhere should we flatter him as a god and a divinity: we are talking of a fellow-citizen, not a tyrant, a father not a master' (2.3).⁵³ The theme of divinity is certainly prominent. For example, Trajan was created emperor by the gods (5.1–2). Nerva's choice of heir was guided by the

52 Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and his Virtues"; Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", pp. 61–3.

53 Stevenson, "The Ideal Benefactor".

gods and prompted by Trajan's outstanding qualities, including his similarity to the gods (2.7, 6–8). Nerva's deification reinforces the sense of Trajan's own divinity, which is both manifest and incipient in Nerva's rank as a *divus* ('deified emperor') (11). Trajan is more than human (32.1–2, 61.9, 63.1, 80.3), his inheritance legislation has outdone even the gods (40.3), and he is Jupiter's deputy (80.4). Yet the new emperor's virtues remain fundamental.⁵⁴ These make him an excellent or even the 'best' emperor: the title *Optimus* ('Best') (2.7, 88.4–10) is appropriate precisely because it embraces all the virtues (88.6). They also make him a father rather than a tyrant in the mould of Domitian, whose spectre is invoked constantly to Trajan's benefit. Whereas Domitian is said to have desired address as *dominus et deus* ('master and god'), Trajan prefers to deal with people not by elevating himself, but by being accessible and putting his subjects at their ease (48–9).⁵⁵ This fundamental contrast with a tyrant indicates the long tradition to which Pliny is contributing so remarkably.

3.3 *Other Works*

There were other contributions to ideas about good rulers from Greek writers adjusting to Roman power. They all demonstrate that writers of the Roman Empire were thoroughly schooled in Greek ruler theory and were adept at applying it to imperial rule through constantly changing circumstances. The degree to which they did this fluctuated considerably.

Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenized Jewish writer of the early first century AD, was well abreast of Hellenistic political philosophy and consequently discussed good rulers in terms of a familiar raft of qualities, such as justice, piety, humanity, and respect for law. He adhered to Plato's ideal of philosopher-kings and to the view that the king is a living law and the law a just king. His ethical system is close to Stoicism, but for him a truly moral ruler would imitate God.⁵⁶ Yet he is not systematic in his analyses, does not contemplate the rule of Rome at length, and tends alternately to concentrate on the Jewish people and on all inhabitants of the cosmos, which has 'but one polity and one law', the equivalent of Nature's Logos, based on reason.⁵⁷

54 Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", pp. 63–4.

55 On the contrast with Domitian, and how to read it in context, see *Pan.* 16.3, 20.4, 33.4, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50.5, 52.3, 53.4, 54, 55.7, 62.3, 66.2–3, 72.2, 76; Shadi Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge, MA/London, 1994), pp. 154–64; Braund, "Praise and Protreptic", pp. 64–5.

56 Philo, *Moses* 2.2–4; Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, p. 299.

57 Philo, *Joseph* 29; Sinclair, p. 299; Peder Borden, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for his Time* (Leiden/New York, 1997); Adam Kamesar (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge, 2009).

The extraordinary Musonius Rufus, a Roman who taught Stoicism for many years in the East, is similarly disappointing. While Plato (*Rep.* 5) thought that philosophers should become kings, Musonius thought that the ideal king of his day would aim to become a philosopher, the Stoic wise man (*sapiens*), so that he could develop regal virtues. Yet his argumentation and conclusions are shallow and conventional.⁵⁸ Plutarch is another who tends to trade on traditional wisdom about kingship, rather than interact innovatively with the Roman monarchy. This is largely because his concentration was upon the Greek *polis* of his day. He asked the old question about the best form of constitution (*πολιτεία*), but his discussion hardly acknowledged that the Roman Empire was the sole *πολιτεία* and that it covered all civilised peoples.⁵⁹ When he asked *why the philosopher should especially converse with rulers*, he was not troubled by the need for a philosopher to engage with men of power, as a Platonist might well have been. Instead, in a pragmatic spirit, he argued that philosophers should seek to waken the virtue which often lies dormant in the soul of a ruler (778e–f, 779b).⁶⁰ The ruler's love of humanity (*philanthrōpia*) means that he will seek to implant justice, the supreme political virtue, among the citizens. Unlike a tyrant, therefore, he will not commit injustice. The ruler's love for his people will be returned by them, as they respond to his virtue and try to emulate him: 'By his virtue a king can inculcate a life of friendship, concord and justice in his subjects.'⁶¹ Plutarch does not stoop to flattery. There are no contemporary examples of the good king, not even the Roman emperor. Only in the remote past, in a figure such as Numa, might a truly virtuous king be found. Plutarch's concern is with the leaders of contemporary Greek cities rather than the rulers of Rome.⁶²

Dio Chrysostom delivered four discourses *On Kingship*. The first three repeatedly and conventionally stress the mutual benefits of a thoughtful, generous, and hard-working king, while making much of the old contrast between the virtuous king and the non-virtuous tyrant. This was no mean feat for a Cynic, for whom kingship is a moral concept that is opposed to worldly kingship. Yet Dio borrowed from Onescritus, who had facilitated a rapprochement, and his influences are fundamentally Stoic, including support for the role of a

58 Musonius VIII (Hense): 'That kings too should study philosophy'. Cf. Sinclair, pp. 312–13; Armand Jagu, *Musonius Rufus: Entretiens et fragments*, introduction, traduction et commentaire (Hildesheim, 1979); Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 601–3 (Gill).

59 Rowe and Schofield, pp. 575–83 (Centrone).

60 Rowe and Schofield, pp. 577–8 (Centrone).

61 Rowe and Schofield, p. 580, 580 n. 69 (Centrone).

62 Rowe and Schofield, p. 580 (Centrone).

sapiens, with his thoughts being conveyed in forms and styles that owe much to Platonic dialogue and other early Socratic writing. The fourth speech is different, taking the form of a dialogue between Diogenes the Cynic and Alexander the Great, in whom some commentators have seen (respectively) Dio himself and Trajan. The argument, as might be expected, is that the true king is distinguished not merely by status but by the possession of regal virtues, above all mastery over self and beneficence to the advantage of others (4.44–75).⁶³

Part of the reason for a lack of adventurous theorising among Greeks of the Imperial period is the simple fact that the Roman Empire seemed unquestionable. In the second century AD, admirers of the emperor Marcus Aurelius could claim that Plato's ideal of a philosopher-king was finally fulfilled. The theme of the *kosmou politēs* ('world citizen') is prominent in Marcus' work, as in most traces of Roman Stoicism, since to all Stoics local and national affiliations are far less important than one's membership in the worldwide community of reason.⁶⁴ Roman Stoics debated the question of the best regime. The majority understandably preferred monarchy and conceived of the emperor as (ideally) a Stoic sage. There were others, however, such as Thræsea Paetus, who understood the Stoic ideal of self-command to entail republican government and invoked Stoicism in their anti-imperial politics.⁶⁵

The historian Cassius Dio imagined a 'debate' between Agrippa and Maecenas on the merits of democracy (52.2–13) versus monarchy (52.14–40). The idea of such a debate is surely a product of the third century AD rather than the first century BC. It belongs to a time when loyal members of the elite, such as Dio, thought the matter had been well and truly settled, though nonetheless they continued to value the notion of the citizen-like emperor.⁶⁶ Yet even as the value of the traditional pose of denial of monarchic power gradually waned into nothing with open recognition that the emperor was an absolute

63 Sinclair, pp. 312–19; Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50–250* (Oxford, 1996); Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 603–7 (Gill); Simon Swain (ed.), *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters, and Philosophy* (Oxford, 2000).

64 SHA *Marc.* 27.6–7, cf. *Marc. Aur. Med.* 9.29. On Marcus' *Meditations*, see Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought*, pp. 326–7; Richard B. Rutherford, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius: A Study* (Oxford, 1989); Rowe and Schofield, *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, pp. 611–15 (Gill).

65 Ronald Syme, *Tacitus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1958), pp. 556–68; Miriam Griffin, *Nero: The End of a Dynasty* (London, New York, 1984), pp. 165–6, 170–8; Vasily Rudich, *Political Dissidence under Nero* (London/New York, 1993).

66 For the view that the 'debate' is in fact intended as a showcase of the merits of monarchy, see Paul McKechnie, "Cassius Dio's Speech of Agrippa: A Realistic Alternative to Imperial Government?", in *G&R* 28.2 (1981), pp. 150–5.

monarch, viz. as the attitudes of the so-called 'Dominate' superseded those of the 'Principate', there was no opening of floodgates on ruler literature. There did not need to be. The Romans had not been suppressing ruler literature or the discussion of monarchic thought from Greek foundations. They had been adapting, manipulating, and developing it in their own ways.

A distinction subsequently developed between (i) the Latin panegyrics, which were rhetorical speeches modelled on Pliny's masterpiece addressed 'to a king' and in direct praise of him, and (ii) philosophical treatises of advice *On Kingship*, promoting an ideal picture even when addressed to an individual king. Fourth century AD writers, among whom may be numbered Themistius, Julian, Libanius, Claudian, and Synesius, stress this distinction. Some ninety or so virtues were employed by writers of the *Panegyrici Latini*, a collection of twelve speeches starting with Pliny's address to Trajan but dating predominantly between AD 289 and 389.⁶⁷ This mass of virtues might seem like an undisciplined pile at first glance, but in fact their Platonic and Augustan roots often emerge, as in the dominance of *virtus*, and qualities of military prowess and state security, like *fortitudo* ('strength'), *victoria* ('victory'), *salus* ('safety'), and *concordia* ('harmony') seem fundamental for rulers in uncertain times, while simultaneously permitting the use of additional virtues, along with variation and emphasis for different individuals. The large number of virtues, therefore, permitted nuanced portrayals of different emperors through selection, comparison, emphasis, or omission. Intertextual references would only have increased the layers of nuance and interpretation.⁶⁸

Kingship theory influenced Christian theology, since it seemed self-evident that the dominance of the Roman Emperor and of the Sun in the sky must reflect the omnipotence of God, and subsequently became an important influence on Byzantine political thought. It was used by Eusebius of Caesarea in his portrayal of Constantine I, the first Christian emperor. Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* should be linked with ruler literature, though the text's precise

67 For the tradition of Latin prose panegyrics, see Lester K. Born, "The Perfect Prince according to the Latin Panegyricists", in *AJP* 55 (1934), pp. 20–35; Sabine MacCormack, "Latin Prose Panegyrics", in *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II*, ed. T.A. Dorey (London/Boston, 1975), pp. 143–205; Robin Seager, "Some Imperial Virtues in the Latin Prose Panegyrics", in *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar 4th Volume 1983*, ed. F. Cairns (Liverpool, 1984), pp. 129–65; Michael Mause, *Die Darstellung des Kaisers in der lateinischen Panegyrik* (Palingenesia 50) (Stuttgart, 1994); Charles E.V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley, 1994); Mary Whitby (ed.), *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Leiden/Boston/Köln, 1998).

68 Cf. Catherine Ware, "The *Severitas* of Constantine: Imperial Virtues in the *Panegyrici Latini* 7(6) and 6(7)", in *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7.1 (2014), pp. 88–90.

genre, audience, and aims are strongly debated. Left unfinished at the writer's death, the work sought to create the impression of a harmonious and consistent imperial religious policy from the accession of Constantine (AD 306) to the reign of his three sons, beginning in September AD 337. Arranged in four books, it has seemed so suspect on the grounds of bias and inconsistencies that Eusebian authorship has even been denied altogether.⁶⁹

The works surveyed here form the foundations on which political works of the *specula principum* genre were based in the medieval period and beyond. It should be plain that the Romans were deeply familiar with ruler literature from Greek roots, but that they employed it in various genres and contexts for their own changing purposes. One rarely therefore finds a Roman adviser facing the emperor without some carefulness about the open acknowledgement of monarchic power. But the use of ideas derived ultimately from Greek sources tells us much about Roman imperatives and contexts, which are crucial for understanding the virtues that Romans chose to emphasize and propagate. The longevity of the Graeco-Roman tradition of ruler thought based on moral superiority is remarkable. It persisted up to the time of Charles I, who relied (fruitlessly, it can be stressed) on the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, according to which God's choice overcame any immediate moral questions. This was not just a different tradition but a clear rejection of the tradition that had once produced the fundamental concentration of Greek and Roman writers on the virtues of good rulers.⁷⁰

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70 See Peter A. Brunt, in *JRS* 69 (1979), pp. 168–75 and Simon R.F. Price, in *CR* 29.2 (1979), pp. 277–9. Brunt (at 174) describes divine right as a product of Christian thought.

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Carolingian Mirrors for Princes: Texts, Contents, Impact

Karl Ubl

1 Introduction

The Carolingian period witnessed the emergence of a sophisticated theory of kingship which materialized in a series of mirrors for princes during the 9th century. For a long time, Frankish kings had already been confronted with ideas about the right conduct of rulers. Clovis, the founder of the Gallic kingdom of the Franks, received an admonitory letter from Bishop Remigius of Rheims after assuming office in 481–2.¹ Remigius exhorted the king, still a pagan, to follow the rules of Christian ethics in selecting proven advisors, in taking the advice of bishops, and in supporting widows, orphans, and the oppressed. According to Remigius, the king ought to govern impartially, refuse to accept gifts, and open his palace to everyone seeking justice. Later, in the 6th century, Bishop Gregory of Tours infused his famous chronicle with a set of moral ideas on rulership and gave strident judgments on good and bad kings of his own time.² The Italian Venantius Fortunatus, later to become bishop of Poitiers, wrote several panegyric poems to the Merovingian kings, blending Roman ideals of imperial rule with Christian concepts of piety, charity, and humility.³ These are only the most prominent authors who contributed to the discourse on kingship during the Merovingian period.⁴ The ideas formulated

1 *Epistolae Austrasicae* 2, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), p. 113.

2 Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge, 2001).

3 Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Paris, 1981), pp. 297–344.

4 E.g. the anonymous letter to Chlothar II: *Epistolae aevi Merovingici collectae* 15, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), pp. 457–60. The context was established by Yves Sassier, “Aux origines de la parainesis médiévale: La lettre d’un prélat inconnu au jeune roi Clotaire II (v. 597–600)”, in *The Making of Western Christendom, 4th–8th Centuries*, ed. W. Falkowski, *Quaestiones medii aevi novae* 17 (Warsaw, 2012), pp. 145–162. For a general overview cf. Yitzhak Hen, “The Uses of the Bible and the Perception of Kingship in Merovingian Gaul”, in *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), pp. 277–89; id., “The Christianisation of Kingship”, in *Der*

by them and by other authors influenced chronicles, saints' lives, royal charters, legislation, and liturgy.

Thus, Merovingian kings were not at a loss for concepts of good rulership. What set the Carolingian period apart was the emergence of treatises dedicated to the theory of kingship. The ideas formulated by Remigius, Gregory, Venantius and others crystallized into a well-developed theory of kingship during the 9th century. A series of mirrors for princes began with the *Via regia*, written by Abbot Smaragdus and dedicated to Louis the Pious, most likely before his imperial coronation in 813. The best-known treatise on kingship from the Carolingian period is the *De institutione regia* of Jonas, bishop of Orleans, dedicated to Pippin of Aquitaine, the son of Louis the Pious, in 831. The next major mirror for princes was authored by the Irish scholar Sedulius Scottus, who lived at the episcopal court in Liège. Historians still debate whether his *De rectoribus christianis* was dedicated to Lothar II in c. 855 or to Charles the Bald in c. 870. Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, one of the most prolific authors of the 9th century, wrote several moral treatises dedicated to rulers. His *De regis persona et regio ministerio*, written in 873 for Charles the Bald, stands out as his longest and most elaborate mirror for princes. Next to these four major treatises, several other writings (poems, florilegia, biographies, conciliar canons) might also qualify as mirrors for princes. Some, but not all, of them will be addressed in the following pages.

In light of this, the question of why a sophisticated theory of kingship emerged rather late in the history of the Frankish kingdom must be addressed. Historians have proposed different explanations. It seems likely that the deposition of the Merovingians by Pippin the Short in 751 played a significant role in the intensified debate on kingship. The Merovingian kings had ruled the Frankish kingdom for three centuries and were still considered to be the cornerstone of the political community by the rivals of the Carolingians in Aquitaine and Bavaria. Consequently, Pippin the Short was in dire need of legitimation and justified his rise to kingship by invoking the consent of the Franks, by referring to the authority of the papacy, and by introducing royal unction.⁵ What is more, the Merovingians were consistently denounced as bad

Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung, ed. M. Becher and J. Jarnut (Münster, 2004), pp. 163–77.

5 *Continuationes chronicarum Fredegarii* 33, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov. 3 (1888), p. 182. The interpretation is highly controversial, cf. Josef Semmler, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751 und die fränkische Königssalbung*, *Studia humaniora* 6 (Düsseldorf, 2003); *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung*, eds. M. Becher and J. Jarnut (Münster, 2004); Ludger Körntgen, "Pippins Königserhebung von 751 und der Papst. Die Narrative der Reichsannalen und der Fredegar-Fortsetzung", in *Pippin der Jüngere und die Erneuerung des Frankenreichs*, eds. P. Breternitz and K. Ubl (Ostfildern, 2020), pp. 39–86.

and useless kings.⁶ Every one of these strategies resulted in framing kingship as something contingent, not natural – contingent on the consent of the aristocracy, on the authority of the papacy, and on anointing by bishops.

Indeed, there is ample evidence for an intensified debate on the nature of kingship immediately after 751. Ernst Kantorowicz famously demonstrated that the *laudes regiae*, ritual acclamations of the kings during mass, originated in the middle of the 8th century.⁷ At the same time, political thought entered the diplomas of Pippin the Short.⁸ Only a few years later, admonitory letters were directed at Charlemagne and at the Bavarian duke Tassilo, both elaborating on the ethics of Christian rulership.⁹ However, emphasizing the impact of 751 cannot fully account for the gap of fifty years between the deposition of the Merovingians and the first mirror for princes, authored by abbot Smaragdus. Other historians therefore explain the emergence of a sophisticated theory of kingship by pointing to the church reform initiated by Charlemagne with his famous *Admonitio generalis* of 789.¹⁰ This decree is based on the idea that every part of society has to correct its behavior in light of written texts. Two scholars close to Charlemagne, Alcuin and Paulinus of Aquileia, acted on this suggestion and composed treatises on the ethics of laymen. The writing of mirrors for kings would seem to be the next step in this Carolingian reform program.¹¹

Other historians have tried to link the emergence of a theory of kingship more closely to the reign of Louis the Pious. Étienne Delaruelle put the focus on the most prominent author, Jonas of Orleans, and his citation of the Gelasian doctrine of the two powers on earth: the spiritual power of the bishops on the

6 Janet Nelson, “Bad Kingship in the Earlier Middle Ages”, *Transactions of the Haskins Society* 8 (1996), pp. 1–26; Alain Stoclet, *Du Champ de Mars mérovingien au Champ de Mai carolingien. Éclairages sur un objet fugace et une réforme de Pépin, dit “Le Bref”* (Turnhout, 2020), pp. 161–187.

7 Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship*, University of California publications of history 33, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, 1958).

8 Brigitte Merta, “Politische Theorie in den Königsurkunden Pippins I.”, in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992), pp. 17–31.

9 Mary Garrison, “Letters to a king and biblical exempla: the examples of Cathulf and Clemens Peregrinus”, in *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), pp. 305–28; Joanna Story, “Cathulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis”, in *Speculum* 74 (1999), pp. 1–21.

10 *Admonitio generalis*, eds. M. Glatthaar, H. Mordek and K. Zechiel-Eckes, MGH *Fontes iuris* 16 (Hannover, 2012).

11 Rachel Stone, “Kings are different: Carolingian mirrors for princes and lay morality”, in *Le prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), pp. 69–86; Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 4, 81 (Cambridge, 2012).

one hand and the temporal power of the kings on the other, ascribing the superior position to the bishops.¹² Delaruelle considered this doctrine to reflect the increasing political status of bishops in the Carolingian empire. It is true that Jonas and Hincmar were both bishops and authors of mirrors for princes, and that bishops regularly used similar ideas in their episcopal councils directed at admonishing kings. Smaragdus and Sedulius, however, were not bishops. Hans Hubert Anton, therefore, drew attention to the geographic origin of Smaragdus and Jonas, the first probably an immigrant from Visigothic Spain, the second born and educated in the southwest of the Frankish empire.¹³ Both were part of the royal court of Louis the Pious as king of Aquitaine (781–813). Anton suggested that the Aquitanian mirrors for princes form a separate group of texts imbuing kingship with the concept of service (*ministerium*) to God. It is, however, doubtful whether intellectual traditions can be pinned down as neatly to geographical origins as Anton imagined.¹⁴

All these explanations contribute in some way to our understanding of the emergence of a sophisticated theory of kingship in the 9th century. I will return to this problem at the end of this essay. First, it seems useful to give a survey of the sources which are used in the Carolingian mirrors for princes. In the second part, I introduce the four main texts and their authors. Next, I provide some comments on the contents of the mirrors. In the last part, I address the impact of these texts, their manuscript transmission, their readership, and their influence on other literary genres.

2 Sources

The Carolingian authors of mirrors for princes did not have a literary model at their disposal. The only classical text available in the 9th century, Seneca's *De clementia*, was known to very few scholars and began to exert influence on

12 Étienne Delaruelle, "En relisant le *De institutione regia* de Jonas d'Orléans: L'entrée en scène de l'épiscopat carolingien", in *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), pp. 185–92.

13 Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit*, Bonner historische Forschungen 32 (Bonn, 1968).

14 Critical: Nikolaus Staubach, *Rex christianus: Hofkultur und Herrschaftspropaganda im Reich Karls des Kahlen*, Pictura et poesis 2 (Cologne, 1993), p. 137. The concept of *ministerium* has deeper roots, cf. Yves Sassier, *Royauté et idéologie au Moyen Âge : Bas-Empire, monde franc, France (IV^e–XII^e siècle)* (Paris, 2002), pp. 136–40.

medieval political thought only from the 12th century onwards.¹⁵ The same is true for the Merovingian letters of admonition to kings. Some of them were known¹⁶, but the authors of the Carolingian mirrors for princes did not take notice of them. What the Carolingians did was therefore without a direct precedent. What they mainly relied on was the Old Testament, which was an inexhaustible source for ideas about kingship.¹⁷ The Old Testament bears witness to the formation of the kingdom of Israel, it gives an outline of an ethics of kingship in the famous text of Deut. 17, 14–20, it meditates on the respective role of kings and prophets, and it includes several examples of ideal kings (David, Solomon) and failed rulers (Saul, Rehoboam). These ideas on kingship gained even more relevance for the Carolingians, when Pippin the Short and his contemporaries pushed the idea of the Franks as the New Israel, the new people of God.¹⁸ This idea is particularly salient in the correspondence between the Carolingians and the papacy. Later, Charlemagne was equated with King Josiah and King David, and Louis the Pious with King Solomon. It is therefore no coincidence that Smaragdus relied almost exclusively on quotations from the Old Testament in his *Via regia*. He openly promised his dedicatee that he would join the holy kings of ancient Israel in heaven if he imitated their virtues and their zeal for the worship of God. This idea of the *consortium* of holy kings is shared by the other authors of mirrors for princes.¹⁹ Sedulius, though,

15 Leighton Durham Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), p. 363; Peter Stacey, *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince* (Cambridge, 2007).

16 The letter to Chlothar II. (cf. note 4) was reused in a text edited by Ernst Dümmler, “Ermahnungsschreiben an einen Karolinger”, in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 13 (1888), pp. 192–96. Authorship is discussed by Fidel Rädle, *Studien zu Smaragd von Saint-Mihiel*, *Medium Aevum* 29 (Munich, 1974), pp. 28–32; Bruno Dumézil, “La lettre de conseil au prince du Vat. reg. lat. 407: un miroir mérovingien et son reflet carolingien”, in *La lettre-miroir dans l’Occident latin et vernaculaire du Ve au XVe siècle*, eds. D. Demartini, S. Shimahara and C. Veyrard-Cosme (Paris, 2018), pp. 53–66.

17 Mayke de Jong, “The empire as ecclesia: Hranbanus Maurus and biblical historia for rulers”, in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Y. Hen and M.J. Innes (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 191–226.

18 Mary Garrison, “The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an identity from Pippin to Charlemagne”, in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Y. Hen and M.J. Innes (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 114–61; Mary Garrison, “Divine Election for Nations: A Difficult Rhetoric for Medieval Scholars?” in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000–1300)*, ed. L.B. Mortensen (Copenhagen, 2006), pp. 275–314.

19 Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel, *Via regia* ep., ed. J.P. Migne, PL 102 (Paris, 1851), col. 934; Jonas of Orleans, *De institutione regia*, ed. A. Dubreucq, *Sources Chrétiennes* 407 (Paris, 1995), p. 168; Sedulius Scottus, *Liber de rectoribus christianis* 9, ed. S. Hellmann, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters* 1, 1 (Munich, 1906), p. 47.

distinguishes more clearly between the *prior populus* of the ancient Jews and the Christian society of his own time.²⁰

Apart from Holy Scripture, the church fathers figure prominently in the Carolingian mirrors for princes. The definition of kingship was regularly borrowed from Isidore of Seville, who explained the word *rex* with the (false) etymology *recte agendo* (acting rightly).²¹ More importantly, the Carolingian authors learned two apparently contradictory lessons from the church fathers. On the one hand, Augustine famously separated the virtuousness of the prince from the prosperity and success of his government in this world. Rulers should not be considered blessed because of their longevity or because of victories over their enemies, but only if they governed justly, supported the worship of God, led a Christian life, and if they did all this in view of the glory of eternal life.²² On the other hand, a different message was disseminated by an Irish text from the 7th century, which was ascribed to the church father Cyprian of Carthage (*De duodecim abusivis saeculi*).²³ The anonymous author contrasted the effects of a government inspired by justice with the effects of iniquitous administration. A good king causes the prosperity in this world, whereas a bad king induces war, the incursions of enemies, the loss of crops, animal disease, and bad weather. Surprisingly, both texts were first used by Jonas of Orleans in his *De institutione regia*.²⁴ Clearly, Jonas did not consider them to be contradictory.

20 Sedulius Scottus, *De rectoribus christianis* 15, p. 71. Cf. Gerda Heydemann, "The People of God and the Law: Biblical Models in Carolingian Legislation", in *Speculum* 85 (2020), pp. 89–131.

21 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 1.29.3; *Sententiae* 3.48.7, ed. P. Cazier, CCL 111 (Turnhout, 1998), p. 298.

22 Augustine, *De civitate dei* 5.24, eds. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCL 47 (Turnhout, 1955), p. 160. On the influence of Augustine cf. Sophia Mösch, *Augustine and the Art of Ruling in the Carolingian Imperial Period: Political Discourse in Alcuin of York and Hincmar of Rheims* (London, 2019).

23 Ps.-Cyprianus, *De xii abusivis saeculi*, ed. S. Hellmann, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 34 (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 32–60. Cf. Hans Hubert Anton, "Pseudo-Cyprian. De duodecim abusivis saeculi und sein Einfluß auf den Kontinent, insbesondere auf die karolingischen Fürstenspiegel", in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, vol. 2, ed. H. Löwe, Veröffentlichungen des Europa Zentrums Tübingen, Kulturwissenschaftliche Reihe (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 568–617; Marita Blattmann, "Ein Unglück für sein Volk. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Fehlverhalten des Königs und Volkswohl in Quellen des 7.–12. Jahrhunderts", in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 30 (1996), pp. 80–102; Rob Meens, "Politics, mirrors of princes and the Bible: sins, kings and the well-being of the realm", in *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), pp. 345–57.

24 Jonas, *De institutione regia* 3, pp. 188–92; 17, pp. 282–84. Ps.-Cyprian' chapter on kingship was also disseminated as part of the *Collectio Hibernensis*, ed. R. Flechner, *Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law* 17 (Washington, D.C., 2019).

According to him, the entanglement of virtue and worldly success is possible and should be hoped for, but it cannot be guaranteed because of the inscrutability of God's will. Sedulius Scottus is more preoccupied with this theological problem than the other authors of the Carolingian mirrors for princes.

The church father who left the deepest impression on the Carolingian authors was Gregory the Great.²⁵ His Pastoral Rule (*Regula pastoralis*) was heavily promoted by the Carolingian reform movement and established itself as the reference work for ecclesiastical administration.²⁶ Designed to be a handbook of episcopal governance, it was also considered to be very helpful for giving advice to secular rulers. The core idea informing the Pastoral Rule is the need for prelates to display humility towards their subjects. Considering the natural equality of mankind, any prelate has to be mindful of not arrogating personal privileges to himself on the basis of his office alone. Gregory also dedicates long passages to the problem of punishment and mercy. Evidently, Gregory was more interested in reintegrating malefactors by the means of penance and confession than on outright punishment. These ideas proved to be influential for the Carolingian authors because of their focus on retributive justice.

3 The Carolingian Mirrors for Princes

3.1 *Smaragdus: Via regia*

Smaragdus, probably of Visigothic origin, first made a name for himself as a scholar in the reign of Charlemagne.²⁷ He authored commentaries on the Psalms and on the *Ars grammatica* of Donatus. More importantly, he also contributed to the theological debate on the procession of the Holy Spirit in 809 in order to support the viewpoint of the Franks against the position of

25 Bruno Judic, "La tradition de Grégoire le Grand dans l'idéologie politique carolingienne", in *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne*, ed. R. Le Jan (Lille, 1998), pp. 17–57; Conrad Leyser, "The memory of Gregory the Great and the making of Latin Europe, 600–1000", in *Making Early Medieval Societies: Conflict and Belonging in the Latin West, 300–1200*, eds. K. Cooper and C. Leyser (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 181–201.

26 Silke Floryszczak, *Die Regula pastoralis Gregors des Großen: Studien zu Text, kirchenpolitischer Bedeutung und Rezeption in der Karolingerzeit*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 26 (Tübingen, 2005); Monika Suchan, *Mahnen und Regieren. Die Metapher des Hirten im früheren Mittelalter*, Millennium-Studien 56 (Berlin, 2015).

27 Rädle, *Studien zu Smaragd*; Otto Eberhardt, *Via regia. Der Fürstenspiegel Smaragds von St. Mihiel und seine literarische Gattung*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 28 (Munich, 1977); Philippe Depreux, *Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux (781–840)*, Instrumenta 1 (Sigmaringen, 1997), pp. 376–78.

Pope Leo III.²⁸ Around this time, he was promoted to be abbot of Saint-Mihiel on the river Meuse in the center of the Carolingian empire. But it was not until the reign of Louis the Pious that Smaragdus rose to prominence as one of the close advisors to the emperor on matters of monasticism. He participated at the reform council in Aachen in 816 when Louis decided to standardize the monastic rules by making the rule of St. Benedict obligatory and by supplementing it with a new set of additional instructions. Smaragdus backed up this reform by writing the first commentary on the rule of St. Benedict and acting as a supervisor (*missus*) to implement the decisions of the reform council. Louis the Pious reciprocated these services by showering the abbey of Saint Mihiel with privileges and elevating it to the status of an imperial monastery.

The date of Smaragdus' mirror for princes (*Via regia*) has been subject to an intense debate among scholars. The fact that some chapters of the *Via regia* appear almost unaltered in his mirror for monks (*Diadema monachorum*) adds to the complexity of this issue. After the convincing demonstration of H.H. Anton, there has been universal consensus that the *Via regia* predates the *Diadema monachorum*, which was written around 816–817 during the height of monastic reform.²⁹ Both the prologue and the dedicatory letter do not specify the name of the king, who is nonetheless addressed with a very personal touch.³⁰ Smaragdus only tells us that the king to whom he is speaking was anointed and took up the title of king as an infant.³¹ This applies to Louis the Pious who was installed as king of Aquitaine in 781 as a child of three and was anointed by Pope Hadrian I. Therefore, the best guess is that Smaragdus dedicated his mirror for princes to Louis the Pious as king of Aquitaine. He most likely finished it when Louis was the sole heir of his father (811–813) because he anticipated him to receive a greater share of the empire.³²

Given the dedication to Louis the Pious, the relation between him and Smaragdus must have been close. At least, this is what the author suggests to us in his prologue. He imagines himself to be part of the household of the king, coming to his banquet, and offering him a special treat in light of the love

28 *Das Konzil von Aachen 809*, ed. H. Willjung, MGH Conc. Suppl. 2 (Hannover, 1998).

29 Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 136–61.

30 The prologue is edited by Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. 3:533. Later this text was augmented in Spain: Rädle, *Studien zu Smaragd*, pp. 62–67.

31 Smaragdus, *Via regia* ep., col. 933.

32 Cf. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 161–68. Eberhardt, *Via regia*, argued for Charlemagne as dedicatee. Rutger Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire. Ideals and Expectations during the reign of Louis the Pious (813–828)* (Amsterdam, 2019), pp. 131–140 emphasizes the generic nature of the dedication, but sees Louis as the most likely candidate.

the king has shown by lavishly giving him kingly favors.³³ He was inspired by the confidence of goodwill and love, not by the audacity of presumption. In the dedicatory letter as well as in the treatise itself, Smaragdus frequently addresses Louis the Pious directly, calling him a most illustrious, most noble, most clement, and most temperate king. The *Via regia* is intended to show him the way to join the saintly kings from the Old Testament (Josiah, David, Solomon) who enjoyed kingly status both on earth and in heaven.

The treatise itself is roughly divided into chapters on virtues (ch. 1–20), on vices (ch. 21–30), and on the relation of the king to God (ch. 31–2). It has raised suspicion that in his later monastic mirror, the *Diadema monachorum*, Smaragdus reused the introductory chapters on charity, on the observance of the ten commandments, on the fear of God, and on wisdom, patience, and simplicity. Does this mean that he believed the ethics of monastic life are identical to the ethics of the ruler? This conclusion would be premature.³⁴ It seems, however, reasonable to infer that Smaragdus thought that both the ethics of monks and the ethics of kings flow from the same source of Christian responsibilities. First and foremost, the ruler is a Christian and therefore subject to the same code of conduct. He must obey the ten commandments, he must display the virtue of humility, and he must align his actions with the fear of God.

Interestingly, Smaragdus not only strings the virtues together in a simple list, he also points to the fact that some virtues seem to contradict each other. Prudence, for example, must be kept in check by simplicity lest the ruler indulge in deceitfulness or hypocrisy.³⁵ Justice should be counterbalanced by patience lest the ruler commit acts of cruelty.³⁶ The zeal for righteousness is legitimate if the ruler detects acts of unchristian behavior in his subjects, such as lewdness, avarice, or drunkenness. Such conduct must be punished by the king as a representative of Christ (*vice Christi*).³⁷ As the next chapter clarifies, the king should however temper this zeal by observing forgiveness, because “clemency consolidates the throne of the king” (Prov. 20, 28).³⁸ Thus, Smaragdus is well aware of the in-built tensions between some of the kingly

33 Smaragdus, *Via regia* prol., MGH Epp. 3:533.

34 Cf. Jasmijn Bovendeert, “Royal or Monastic Identity? Smaragdus’ *Via regia* and *Diadema monachorum* reconsidered”, in *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. R. Corradini, R. Meens, C. Pössel and P. Shaw, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 13 (Vienna, 2006), pp. 239–52; Paul Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings: Peace, Power and the Early Medieval Political Imagination* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 177–83.

35 Smaragdus, *Via regia* 6, col. 946.

36 Smaragdus, *Via regia* 7–8, cols. 946–49.

37 Smaragdus, *Via regia* 18, col. 958.

38 Smaragdus, *Via regia* 19, col. 958.

virtues that he recommends to the ruler and the virtues derived from monastic sources.

From the perspective of Smaragdus, the duty of the ruler is to pursue virtues and shun vices, and to counterbalance one virtue against the other. This is the challenge of *gubernatio regni*, the governance of the realm. Smaragdus identifies governance primarily with the exercise of retributive justice. It is true that he also castigates the avarice of kings in building palaces with resources extracted from the poor.³⁹ But Smaragdus picks out retributive justice as a central theme, which is implicitly discussed in the chapters on patience, justice, judgment, and mercy (ch. 7–10), then in the chapters on the ruler's zeal for righteousness and clemency (ch. 18–9), and again in the chapters on not rendering evil to evildoers and on the restraining of wrath (ch. 23–4). In all these chapters, Smaragdus makes no secret of his preference for mercy: "Mercy should always be placed before judgment".⁴⁰ The ruler must be extremely circumspect in handing out punishment because his power of vengeance has no limits. Smaragdus likens the king to a father who must act in love for his subjects. In his eyes, he is not a dominator, but a merciful moderator.

3.2 *Jonas: De institutione regia*

Jonas was born in the kingdom of Aquitaine where he joined the court of Louis the Pious.⁴¹ In 818, the emperor entrusted to him the bishopric of Orleans. In the following years, he worked his way up to figure as the unofficial head of the church of the Frankish empire. The emperor relied on his expertise in 825 when the question of the cult of images was debated among the Byzantine emperor, the Pope, and the Frankish church. Later he was selected by his peers to author the acts of the Council of Paris in 829 and the Council of Aachen in 836. He remained loyal to Louis the Pious during the two rebellions of 830 and 833 and supported him in crushing his opponents among the bishops. After the death of the emperor, he was one of the few who still admired his achievements and put him above his father Charlemagne because of his care for the divine cult.⁴² In short, Jonas had a deep affection for Louis the Pious.

His mirror for princes is enmeshed in the controversies between Louis the Pious and his sons. In a rather long admonition placed before the text proper,

39 Smaragdus, *Via regia* 27, cols. 965–66.

40 Smaragdus, *Via regia* 30, col. 968: *In perquirendo iustitiam esto sollicitus indagator, in diiudicando cautissimus exsecutor, ita tamen ut misericordia semper iudicio praeponatur.*

41 Depreux, *Prosopographie*, pp. 276–77.

42 Jonas of Orleans, *De cultu imaginum*, ep., ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 5 (Berlin, 1899), p. 354.

Jonas addresses his mirror to Pippin of Aquitaine in order to remind him of his filial duties towards his father. Jonas openly raises the topic of rebellion, which he describes as a civil war and a grave dishonor to the emperor.⁴³ The admonition is clearly written from the perspective of Louis the Pious. Jonas calls on Pippin to do penance, to shun the vices, to cultivate a contempt of the world, to let go of the arrogance of kingship, and to strive to be among the saintly kings. This text clearly resounds with the critical attitude towards Pippin of Aquitaine that is prevalent in sources from the imperial court.⁴⁴ Judging from the content, the admonition fits both the rebellion of 830 and of 833. Indirect evidence suggests the date of 831, when Pippin did not appear at the royal assembly at Thionville after being summoned repeatedly.⁴⁵ The aim of Jonas was to instill in the king of Aquitaine obedience towards his father and the bishops.

Jonas, however, did not bother to write a treatise from scratch. Some chapters at the end of the mirror are identical with the instructions for the laity (*De institutione laicali*) that Jonas had finished prior to 828. The main body of the text is a word-for-word copy of the relevant passages in the acts of the council of Paris in 829.⁴⁶ In 828, Louis the Pious and his son Lothar had convoked five councils in order to react to a time of crisis of the Frankish empire, triggered by incursions of pagans on several frontiers, by plagues, bad weather and famines, and by a feeling of discomfort regarding the interplay of ecclesiastical and secular functionaries. The emperors called for scrutinizing the conduct of princes, bishops, and the *populus* in general.⁴⁷ Jonas, speaking for the Council of Paris, responded to this request by submitting to the emperor a copious analysis of society at large, emphasizing the different assignments of kings and bishops. Jonas was the first to unearth the letter of Pope Gelasius to the emperor Anastasius from 494, in which the head of the Western church insisted upon the distinction between the office of bishops and the office of the emperor.⁴⁸ The Gelasian doctrine was significantly altered by Jonas to meet the needs of his own time. Later, this doctrine became a hallmark of the dispute between

43 Jonas, *De institutione regia*, adm., p. 162.

44 Roger Collins, "Pippin I and the Kingdom of Aquitaine", in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)*, eds. R. Collins and P. Godman (Oxford, 1990), pp. 363–89.

45 I am following Dubreucq's introduction to *De institutione regia*.

46 *Concilium Parisiense* 2.1–13, ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2/2 (Hannover and Leipzig, 1908), pp. 649–67; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 198–218.

47 Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus: Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts*, *Mittelalter-Forschungen* 25 (Ostfildern, 2008), pp. 149–68.

48 The only earlier quotation is in one of Pope Hadrian's letters: *Epistolae* 2, ed. K. Hampe, MGH Epp. 5 (Berlin, 1899), p. 51.

church and state in the Middle Ages. Jonas did not use it to attack secular power, but to separate their tasks, to demonstrate their inter-dependency, and – chiefly – to bolster the admonitory role of the bishops.⁴⁹

Jonas begins his mirror for princes with the Gelasian doctrine and a short sketch of his ecclesiology. This has seized the attention of historians as a sign of the increasing political status of bishops in the Carolingian empire. It has often been noticed that the ecclesiological framework sets Jonas's mirror apart from the earlier *Via regia* of Smaragdus. Bishops do not figure prominently in the worldview of Smaragdus. He only urges kings to care for the payment of the tithes.⁵⁰ Apart from this, institutional Christianity is conspicuously absent. Jonas, in contrast, highlights the role of bishops and for this purpose structures his text by following a deductive method. Whereas Smaragdus begins with the ruler as man and advances to royal virtues, Jonas puts ecclesiology first, then moves on to the royal office and subsequently discusses the personal ethics of the ruler. Chapters 12–16 closely resemble the corresponding passages in his instruction of the laity. Only the last chapter (ch. 17) harkens back to the topic of rulership and reflects on the difference between good and bad kings, relying on the viewpoint of Augustine in his *City of God*.

Chapter 3, about the essence of kingship, and chapter 4, on the proper office of the king, are among the best-known texts of the Carolingian period. Jonas blends together a great variety of sources, ranging from the Old Testament to Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, Isidore of Seville, and other Church fathers. In Jonas's view, the king is divinely appointed to implement by use of force what the bishops fail to implement by the use of words.⁵¹ His office is essentially secular.⁵² Wisdom, deemed a crucial and all-encompassing virtue by Smaragdus and later by Sedulius Scottus, is kept at bay. Jonas focuses first and foremost on the virtue of justice. It is the king's justice and equity which procure the peace and concord of the realm. Jonas even calls the king the judge of judges (*iudex iudicum*).⁵³ He must take care that no injustice takes place and that no injustice remains unavenged.⁵⁴ Justice should be accompanied by *pietas* and *misericordia*: piety (or humility) in the sense of the promotion of institutional Christianity, and mercy (or clemency) in contrast

49 Cf. Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 176–184.

50 Smaragdus, *Via regia* 12, col. 953.

51 Jonas, *De institutione regia* 4, p. 202 (quoting Isidore).

52 Raffaele Savigni, *Giona di Orleans: una ecclesiologia carolingia*, *Cristianesimo antico e medievale* 2 (Bologna, 1989), pp. 128–39.

53 Jonas, *De institutione regia* 4, p. 198.

54 Jonas, *De institutione regia* 4, p. 198.

to the vice of cruelty. As long as the king follows the path of justice, his reign will enjoy the protection of God. If he deviates from these rules of conduct, the realm is put in danger.

Thus, retributive justice is again at the core of this mirror for princes. Other cardinal virtues like prudence, temperance, and fortitude are absent. Jonas totally ignores the fact that the Carolingian ruler is primarily the leader of the armed forces of the Franks. He also omits to mention that the king bestows privileges and landed resources to his followers and therefore must observe the rules of distributive justice. What he attends to is primarily the exercise of judicial violence. Quoting Augustine, Jonas calls for leniency and pardon, but also cautions against allowing malefactors to go unpunished. The king must be mindful that he is equal by nature to all human beings and therefore must show clemency and mercy.

3.3 *Sedulius: De rectoribus christianis*

Unlike the other authors, Sedulius never held an ecclesiastical office, at least to our knowledge. He was primarily a scholar and probably immigrated from Ireland to the continent because of the Viking invasions.⁵⁵ He found refuge at the episcopal court in Liège on the river Meuse and wrote commentaries on the Pauline epistles, and grammatical and philosophical treatises. His poems show that he was active from the 840s to the early 870s and that he made contact with leading protagonists of the Frankish empire during these years. Among the dedicatees of his poems appear members of the ruling family such as emperor Lothar I, the kings Lothar II, Charles the Bald, Louis the German and the empress Ermengarde. Moreover, Sedulius addressed many bishops, mainly the bishops of Liège Hartgar and Franco, but also the bishops of Cologne and Milan. To judge from his poetic output, he was a well-connected scholar aspiring to receive the favor of as many patrons as possible.

His *De rectoribus christianis* relates to one of his royal patrons. As Sedulius keeps secret the dedicatee of his mirror for princes and fails to give any explicit hint about the date of composition, scholarship is divided into two camps. The editor of the text argued that Sedulius addressed the mirror to Lothar II during the early years of his reign over what later would be called Lotharingia (855/857).⁵⁶ Nikolaus Staubach, in the only book-length study of the treatise,

55 Cf. Giorgia Vocino, "A Peregrinus's Vade Mecum: MS Bern 363 and the 'Circle of Sedulius Scottus'", in *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages: Practices of Reading and Writing*, eds. I. van Renswoude and M. Teeuwen, *Utrecht studies in medieval literacy* 38 (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 87–124.

56 Hellmann, *Sedulius*, p. 5. Followed by Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 262.

arrived at a later date of composition, believing that Sedulius presented his mirror to Charles the Bald on the occasion of his annexation of Lotharingia in 869/870.⁵⁷ This dating is part of a much larger claim of a substantive congruence between the self-image of Charles the Bald and the world-view of Sedulius Scottus. Staubach also attempted to prove that Hincmar of Rheims is the common source of the view on rulership expressed in Sedulius and in the coronation rite of Charles the Bald in 869. This opinion on the context of *De rectoribus christianis* has gained wide approval among scholars, even though the evidence is rather shaky.⁵⁸ The mirrors of Hincmar and Sedulius draw on different authorities and do not overlap significantly. In particular, it must be taken into account that Sedulius addresses a king who has recently acceded to the throne.⁵⁹ This applies to Lothar II much better than to Charles the Bald. This debate will probably never be closed, but the idea of congruence between Sedulius and Charles the Bald should rather be called into question.

The *De rectoribus christianis* is the most elaborate Carolingian mirror for princes, with respect to both its style and content.⁶⁰ Sedulius modelled his treatise stylistically on the famous *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius, using prose and verse (*prosimetrum*) alternately. Likewise, the treatise begins with a dedicatory verse preface and ends with an epilogue in prose. Regarding content, the treatise is more independent and original than any other of the Carolingian mirrors for princes. Sedulius does not string together one quotation after another, but follows his own train of thought, incorporating examples from biblical, classical, and late antique history. In the first part of his treatise, he presents the ethics of a Christian ruler (ch. 1–6) and discusses the reasons for lapsing into bad kingship (ch. 7–8) before summarizing again the principles of peaceful and just rulership (ch. 9–10). The second part shows the Christian

57 Staubach, *Rex christianus*, pp. 188–97.

58 Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, pp. 223–25; Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, p. 42; Andrew J. Romig, *Be a Perfect Man: Christian Masculinity and the Carolingian Aristocracy* (Philadelphia, 2017), p. 94; Linda Dohmen, *Die Ursache allen Übels. Untersuchungen zu den Unzuchtsvorwürfen gegen die Gemahlinnen der Karolinger*, *Mittelalter-Forschungen* 53 (Ostfildern, 2017), pp. 94–97.

59 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 2, p. 25: *Instar luciferi niteat res publica vestri exortuque novo splendida vota gerat*. I am following Hans Hubert Anton, “Verfassungspolitik und Liturgie. Studien zu Westfranken und Lotharingen im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert”, in *Geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande. Regionale Befunde und raumübergreifende Perspektiven. Georg Droege zum Gedenken*, eds. M. Nikolay-Panter, W. Janssen and Wolfgang Herborn (Cologne, 1994), pp. 65–103, 277–83.

60 Cf. the detailed analysis of Staubach, *Rex christianus*, pp. 105–97.

ruler in action, first in relation to the church (ch. 11–13 and ch. 19), then in relation to warfare⁶¹ (ch. 14–18).

Right from the outset, Sedulius is very clear about his view that governing is a specific discipline of knowledge (*ars*). In a later chapter, he enhances this view by calling it the most difficult discipline in human affairs.⁶² This is the case because governing requires wisdom (*sapientia*), which Sedulius equates with insight into the will of God. This insight allows the ruler to recognize the instability of worldly affairs and the changing prosperity of kingdoms. Like the moon, kingdoms have successive phases, ranging from the ascendant formation via warfare to the plenitude of glory and finally to the decline and collapse of earthly rule.⁶³ Christian rulers should not become desperate in view of unfavorable events and circumstances, but consider them as a challenge and an opportunity for erudition. According to Sedulius, this is the specific virtue of the Christian religion in contrast to the pagans and the Jews, that they thank God for confronting them with adversity.⁶⁴

Wisdom not only requires Christian rulers to be continuously thankful to God. It also entails that kings do not rely on their superior forces in battle but on the help of the Almighty, implored by relentless prayer and worship.⁶⁵ What the king spends for the stipends of his knights and followers in battle should be counterbalanced by what he donates to the support of the church and its clerics. Wisdom, therefore, demands that Christian rulers take the church under their wings. They act as the vicars of God in the government and protection of the church, making sure that the privileges of the clergy are safe against lay encroachment and that church councils meet regularly in order to monitor the conduct of clerics.⁶⁶ Kings are not only supposed to support the church, they are also obliged to obey the rules of church law and to accept the admonitions of bishops.⁶⁷ Like David, the king must be willing to do penance if the bishops charge him with sinful behavior.

61 Cf. Thomas Scharff, *Die Kämpfe der Herrscher und der Heiligen: Krieg und historische Erinnerung in der Karolingerzeit* (Darmstadt, 2002), pp. 24–26.

62 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis*, praef., p. 19; 6, p. 37: *In humanis rebus nulla quidem ars, ut dicunt, difficilior est, quam inter turbulentissimas tempestatum huius saeculi procellas bene imperare et provide rem publicam gubernare.*

63 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 16, p. 73; cf. 3, p. 27–9.

64 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 16, p. 74.

65 Warfare is discussed in Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 14–15, pp. 62–71.

66 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 19, pp. 84–7.

67 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 12, pp. 54–6.

In sum, Sedulius endorses the idea of a philosopher-king.⁶⁸ Wisdom is at the core of his mirror for princes, clearly outshining the virtue of justice central to Jonas of Orleans. Bad kingship likewise is characterized not by injustice, but by licentiousness, lavishness, and ignorance.⁶⁹ Good kingship, in contrast, starts with thankfulness to God and self-control. Only he who knows how to govern himself can be trusted with the governance of others.⁷⁰ The idea of self-control implies that Sedulius is inclined to favor the virtues of gentle rule: he emphasizes the need of affability, clemency, mildness, and the tranquility of the soul. He makes this point forcefully by relating at great length the story of the cruel punishment of the Thessalonians by emperor Theodosius the Great and of his subsequent penance before Ambrose of Milan.⁷¹ The emperors of late antiquity are Sedulius's heroes of Christian rulership.

3.4 *Hincmar: De regis persona et regio ministerio*

Kingship was permanently on the mind of Hincmar of Rheims.⁷² As a monk of Saint-Denis he was already close to the court of Louis the Pious during the last years of his reign, before he was appointed as archbishop of Rheims by Charles the Bald in 845. In the following years, he was a close advisor of the West-Frankish king, who assigned him the task of drafting some of his major capitularies (royal edicts). Hincmar also claimed to be the head of the bishops in the kingdom of Charles the Bald, organizing church councils, pressing ahead with reforming his own diocesan administration, and attempting to influence the outcomes of theological discussions. Hincmar discussed kingship on several occasions. In 858, when he was leading the opposition against the invasion of Louis the German, he denounced the violation of the Verdun treaty and held up a mirror of good rulership to the East-Frankish King.⁷³ In 860, he intervened in the debate on the divorce of Lothar II and discussed the opinion of some bishops of the middle kingdom that the ruler is above the law.⁷⁴ In both cases, he acted in line with the political ambitions of Charles the

68 Staubach, *Rex christianus*, p. 147.

69 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 7, p. 41.

70 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 2, pp. 25–7.

71 Sedulius, *De rectoribus christianis* 12, pp. 54–7.

72 Cf. Janet Nelson, "Kingship, law and liturgy in the political thought of Hincmar of Rheims", in *English Historical Review* 92 (1977), pp. 241–79; Sassier, *Royauté et idéologie*, pp. 160–73. A new edition of his mirrors for princes has been prepared by Clémentine Bernard-Valette for the series Sources chrétiennes.

73 Synod of Quierzy, ed. W. Hartmann, MGH Conc. 3 (Hannover, 1984), pp. 408–27.

74 Hincmar, *De divortio Lotharii regis et Theutbergae reginae*, ed. L. Böhringer, MGH Conc. 4, Suppl. 1 (Hannover, 1992), pp. 247–50.

Bald. In 862 he began to write the continuation of the West-Frankish annals, which provided him with ample opportunity to comment on kingship. Later, a gradual estrangement took place in the relationship between the king and his archbishop, and after the death of Charles the Bald Hincmar never regained his former position as a close advisor of the king.⁷⁵ Still, he made his influence felt by writing letters and admonitory treatises to the succeeding West Frankish rulers.⁷⁶ He outlived several of them before his death in 882.

In light of his impressive output of admonitory writings, it is not possible to discuss his view on kingship exhaustively. I will focus instead on his major mirror for princes, his *De regis persona et regio ministerio*, written in 873. In doing so, it must be taken into account that this treatise does not give us a complete picture of his views on kingship. Essentially, Hincmar made an effort to salve the conscience of Charles the Bald after the king took the startling decision to condemn his rebellious son Carloman to death in 873.⁷⁷ Carloman was the youngest son and destined for an ecclesiastical career from an early age. After Charles the Bald received a significant part of the middle kingdom in 870, Carloman decided to quit the monastic profession and made a push for a share in the succession plans of his father. Hincmar and Charles worked in tandem to quell the rebellion. In 873, Carloman was sentenced to death, but his father commuted the punishment to blinding.

Given the criticism levelled against this extraordinary punitive rigor⁷⁸, Hincmar entered the debate to justify the actions of his king. The second part of the *De regis persona et regio ministerio* (ch. 19–28) is dedicated to the problem of discretion in showing mercy and discusses the need to mete out capital punishment to those who commit grave crimes. In the third part (ch. 29–33), Hincmar asserts that it is contrary to the office of the king to pardon his kinsmen if they have committed crimes against the holy church and against the commonwealth. Both parts clearly refer to the case of Carloman. The first part (ch. 1–18),

75 Cf. Steffen Patzold, "Konsens und Konkurrenz. Überlegungen zu einem aktuellen Forschungskonzept der Mediävistik", in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 41 (2007), pp. 75–103.

76 Hincmar, *Ad Ludovicum balbum regem*, PL 125:983–90; Hincmar, *Ad Carolum imperatorem*, PL 125:989–94; Hincmar, *Ad episcopos regni admonitio*, PL 125:1007–18; Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, eds. T. Gross and R. Schieffer, MGH Fontes iuris 3 (Hannover, 1980); Hincmar, *De cavendis vitiis*, ed. D. Nachtmann, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte 16 (Munich, 1998). Cf. Sylvie Joye, "Family order and kingship according to Hincmar", in *Hincmar of Rheims. Life and Work*, eds. R. Stone and C. West (Manchester, 2015), pp. 190–210.

77 Cf. Brigitte Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit*, MGH Schriften 44 (Hannover, 1997), pp. 446–75.

78 Charles the Bald was accused of unmerciful tyranny: *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH ss rer. German. 7 (Hannover, 1891), p. 78.

however, gives an introduction to kingship in general, placing special emphasis on the conduct of warfare (ch. 7–15) and on the administration of justice (ch. 16–18). This highly original structure stands in stark contrast to the content of the treatise, which consists mostly of extracts from the church fathers. Hincmar is a master in the typical parasitic mode of the Carolingian intellectuals: speaking through the quotation of authorities. But there is more to it than that. Thanks to manuscript studies, it has been convincingly demonstrated that Hincmar reused a florilegium compiled by Jonas of Orleans decades before.⁷⁹ Half of the treatise is dependent on this set of quotations, which was aimed at legitimizing warfare and capital punishment. Hincmar must have been exhilarated to find this source material so perfectly in line with his aims.

Contrary to what the title suggests, Hincmar does not contrast the person and the office of the king. *Persona* (role) and *ministerium* (office) are two sides of the same coin. God has instituted the office of kingship and he supports good and allows bad impersonations of kingship. Quoting Pseudo-Cyprian and Gregory the Great, Hincmar agrees with the view that good kings in general procure the prosperity of the realm, whereas bad kings bring about its ruin.⁸⁰ As in his other writings, Hincmar places special emphasis on the selection of suitable and experienced advisors, self-consciously reflecting on his own position in the West Frankish kingdom.⁸¹ The dedicatee Charles the Bald was probably delighted to read that Augustine had apparently considered it salutary to have kings ruling “long and widely”. Hincmar arrived at this conclusion by manipulating what Augustine actually said.⁸² The section on warfare embraces the view that wars authorized by God are legitimate and that killing in warfare does not imply sinful behavior. It is even allowed to make offerings to those who have died in just warfare. This argument relies on quotations from Augustine compiled in the florilegium of Jonas of Orleans.

79 André Wilmart, “L’admonition de Jonas au roi Pépin et le florilège canonique d’Orléans”, in *Revue bénédictine* 45 (1933), pp. 214–33; Gerhard Laehr and Carl Erdmann, “Ein karolingischer Konzilsbrief und der Fürstenspiegel Hincmars von Reims”, in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 50 (1935), pp. 106–34. The date of this florilegium is open to debate: Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 221–31 (ca. 836); Dubreucq, *De institutione regia*, p. 122 (833); Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 202–4 (830s); Phillip Wynn, *Augustine on War and Military Service* (Minneapolis, 2013), pp. 298–314 (after Fontenoy).

80 Hincmar, *De regis persona et regio ministerio* 2–3, PL 125:833–37.

81 Hincmar, *De regis persona et regio ministerio* 4, PL 125:837–39. Cf. Patzold, “Konsens und Konkurrenz”, pp. 77–88.

82 Augustine, *De civitate dei* 5.24, p. 160; cf. Hincmar, *De regis persona et regio ministerio* 5–6, PL 125:839–40.

The section on the justification of capital punishment, however, is the work of Hincmar himself. He held legal issues very dear, being a generally recognized expert on canon law and author of secular and ecclesiastical legislation. In his eyes, justice was the key virtue for kings.⁸³ According to Hincmar, some persons held the opinion that justice is incompatible with the administration of capital punishment. Hincmar disagreed, arguing that frequent acts of mercy can induce malefactors to repeat their crimes and to have confidence in impunity. Quoting Augustine, Hincmar shows that even the saintly prophets in the Old and the apostles in the New Testament allowed for capital punishment – even if much more rarely in the latter.⁸⁴ Decretals of pope Innocent I supply Hincmar with proof that the enforcement of capital punishment is legitimate and does not imply sinful behavior. Mercy should be refused to those who try to defend their crimes, do not show remorse, and are unwilling to change their actions. According to Hincmar, numerous examples demonstrate that God punishes the incorrigibles. The king must employ the same rigor.

4 Contents

Subsuming the four treatises by Smaragdus, Jonas, Sedulius and Hincmar under a literary genre is a delicate issue. As I have said before, the authors had no model before them to emulate. What is more, they apparently did not even know of each other's treatises. There is no evidence for a growing body of thought or internal debate among these authors. This observation can be confirmed by the fact that each of them uses different source material. The only significant overlap is between Jonas and Hincmar, because Hincmar demonstrably made use of a florilegium compiled by Jonas of Orleans. Speaking of a conscious literary genre is therefore doubtful.⁸⁵ However, we can conclude that the writing of mirrors for princes was somehow “in the air”. Why was this the case? It will not do to refer to the rising status of the bishops in the 9th century and to the recognition of their role as admonishers of the rulers.⁸⁶ Since late antiquity, bishops had taken up this role and acted as heirs to the classical

83 Most clearly expressed in Hincmar, *Ad episcopos regni admonitio* 17, PL 125:1017. Cf. Hincmar, *De regis persona et regio ministerio* 16–17, PL 125:844–45.

84 Hincmar, *De regis persona et regio ministerio* 23, PL 125:849–50.

85 On this question cf. Eberhardt, *Via regia*, pp. 267–391 (broad definition); Einar Már Jónsson, “Les « miroirs aux princes » sont-ils un genre littéraire ?”, in *Médiévales* 51 (2006), pp. 153–166 (narrow definition).

86 Along these lines: Monika Suchan, “Gerechtigkeit in christlicher Verantwortung. Neue Blicke in die Fürstenspiegel des Frühmittelalters”, in *Francia* 41 (2014), pp. 1–23.

philosophers in instructing rulers and lay people in general.⁸⁷ I have already mentioned the Merovingian bishops' continuing to do this since the very beginning of the Frankish kingdom. Thus, we have to state the question more precisely: Why was the writing of sophisticated theories of kingship "in the air"? But before answering this question, it is helpful to look at the contents more systematically and clarify some elements of this theory of kingship.

The Carolingian mirrors for princes do not work from the assumption of a common good, as did the Aristotelian mirrors from the later Middle Ages.⁸⁸ Even though the idea of a common good was available in the language of diplomas and capitularies,⁸⁹ the authors of the mirrors do not derive the moral and political obligations of the king from this principle. Rather they center their arguments on the relation of the king to God. The king fulfills a divinely instituted office and is accountable to God himself. Divine grace is the main source of his authority. As a just king he may be rewarded with success in this world and he will join the saintly kings in heaven. We must be aware that this view does not fully represent Carolingian political thought. As I have said, the idea of a common good was frequently referred to in other sources. Moreover, political actions were regularly justified by appealing to the idea of consent or public approval.⁹⁰ The idea of hereditary succession also looms large in the sources.⁹¹ The Carolingian authors of mirrors for princes did not deny the validity of these arguments, but they thought that the relation of the king to God created the strongest foundation for moral and political obligations.

However, this emphasis on divine grace does not exclude the fact that the mirrors for princes address the relation of the king to his subjects. They do this

87 Cf. Irene van Renswoude, *The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2019).

88 Matthew Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford, 1999).

89 E.g. *Die Urkunden Ludwigs des Frommen*, ed. T. Kölzer, MGH DD Kar. 2/3 (Wiesbaden, 2016), p. 1470; *Capitularia regum Francorum*, ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, MGH Capit. 2 (Hannover, 1897), p. 688. Cf. Wolfgang Wehlen, *Geschichtsschreibung und Staatsauf-fassung im Zeitalter Ludwigs des Frommen*, Historische Studien 418 (Lübeck and Hamburg, 1970); Yves Sassier, "L'utilisation d'un concept romain aux temps carolingiens: la res publica aux IX^e et X^e siècles", in *Médiévales* 15 (1988), pp. 17–29.

90 Janet Nelson, "Legislation and consensus in the reign of Charles the Bald", in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald (Oxford, 1983), pp. 202–27; Jürgen Hannig, *Consensus fidelium. Frühfeudale Interpretationen des Verhältnisses von Königtum und Adel am Beispiel des Frankenreiches*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 27 (Stuttgart, 1982).

91 Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 559–567.

under the heading of justice, the “characteristic and all-enveloping virtue”⁹² of the Carolingian mirrors. Although kings of the Old Testament are often denounced for amassing riches and abusing their superior power, this problem is mostly absent from the minds of Carolingian authors. Justice is the main Christian virtue insofar as it regulates the behavior of kings to the powerless, the poor, the orphans, and the widows who need the protection of the king. Justice also defines the relationship of the king to the church, regarding both his protection of the church and his allegiance to the precedents of canon law. Correspondingly, tyranny is defined by the absence of justice, by cruelty, and by the oppression of the poor. The Aristotelian notion that a tyrant is aiming at his own profit, not at the common good, is unknown to Carolingian authors.⁹³

The significance of justice is well in line with the main authorities used in the Carolingian mirrors for princes. Augustine, Gregory and Pseudo-Cyprian had already placed justice at the center of their discussion of government and administration. The Merovingian sources also emphasized the virtues of justice and legality.⁹⁴ The same can be said about the idea of biblical kingship, which has strong antecedents in the sixth and seventh centuries.⁹⁵ Is it therefore true that the Carolingian mirrors for princes differ only “in temper and temperature” and that they “made explicit what was already implicit through looking harder at the Old Testament”?⁹⁶ There is something to be said for this opinion. The Carolingian mirrors do not overflow with creative thinking. What historians have singled out as the most important contribution of the Carolingians to the history of political thought is the idea of episcopal supervision of kings. This idea grew steadily stronger and more coherent from Jonas to

92 John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, “The via regia of the Carolingian age”, in *Trends in Medieval Political Thought*, ed. B. Smalley (Oxford, 1965), pp. 22–41, p. 34.

93 Cf. Karl Ubl, “Die Figur des Tyrannen. Herrscherkritik im Zeitalter Philipps des Schönen (1285–1314)”, in *Gewalt und Widerstand in der politischen Kultur des späten Mittelalters*, eds. M. Kintzinger, Frank Rexroth and Jörg Rogge (Ostfildern, 2015), pp. 211–246.

94 Cf. Olivier Guillot, “La justice dans le royaume franc à l’époque mérovingienne”, in *La giustizia nell’alto medioevo (secoli V–VIII)*, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 42 (Spoleto, 1995), pp. 653–736; Stefan Esders, *Römische Rechts tradition und merowingisches Königtum: Zum Rechtscharakter politischer Herrschaft in Burgund im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 134 (Göttingen, 1997); Sassier, “Aux origines.” This is disputed by Mathias Schmoeckel, “Rex erit qui recte faciet. Die Entstehung der Idee von der Gerechtigkeit des Königs als Grundlage der Gesellschaft”, in *Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947): Ein jüdisches Forscherleben zwischen wissenschaftlicher Anerkennung und politischem Exil*, eds. M. Becher and Y. Hen, *Bonner historische Forschungen* 63 (Siegburg, 2010), pp. 55–92.

95 Hen, “Christianisation of Kingship”.

96 Wallace-Hadrill, “The via regia”, p. 23 and p. 32.

Sedulius and was at its peak in Hincmar of Rheims, who construed the obligation of correcting the king directly from the fact of episcopal anointing.⁹⁷

In my opinion, it makes hardly any sense to judge the Carolingian mirrors by focusing on their contribution to the history of political thought: They had no immediate antecedents, they do not constitute a literary genre, and they had no immediate impact on the development of medieval political thought, as I will show in the next chapter. The emergence of a sophisticated theory of kingship is itself a remarkable achievement. Primarily, Carolingian mirrors are instructive because they reflect the preoccupations and immediate concerns of the clerical elite in their relationship to the kings of the Franks. By directly addressing the kings, they argue from a theological viewpoint and highlight divine grace as the origin of normative obligations. Apart from this clerical agenda, they demonstrate that moderation in dealing out punishments was a crucial issue in the 9th century.

5 Impact

The Carolingian mirrors for princes were directly addressed and presented to specific kings. Beyond that, they do not seem to have had a wide audience. Manuscripts from the 9th century are extremely rare.⁹⁸ The *Via regia* of Smaragdus is transmitted by two Spanish manuscripts from the 10th century and two West German or French manuscripts from the 11th century. The complete mirror of Jonas of Orleans is extant only in late manuscripts from the 15th and 17th centuries. A fragmentary copy from the 9th century, also containing the florilegium used by Hincmar of Rheims, has been preserved in Orleans. The same applies to the *De rectoribus christianis*, which also survives in a partial copy of the 9th century and a couple of later manuscripts. The admonitory treatises of Hincmar of Rheims are known only from printed editions of the 17th century that relied on now lost manuscripts from the library of Rheims. The contrast with legal manuscripts is striking: both secular and ecclesiastical law are transmitted in hundreds of copies dating from the 9th and early

97 Cf. Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1969). Ullmann, though, definitely overstates his case when he coins the concept of “stunted sovereignty of the king” (p. 111). For a modern survey of Carolingian political thought cf. Sassier, *Royauté et idéologie*, pp. 116–80.

98 This paragraph is based on the editions cited above. Cf. Warren Pezé, “Knowledge on Kingship at the Dawn of Feudalism (c. 900)”, in *Wissen und Bildung in einer Zeit bedrohter Ordnung. Der Zerfall des Karolingerreiches um 900*, ed. W. Pezé (Stuttgart, 2020), pp. 147–199.

10th century.⁹⁹ It is therefore misleading to claim that Carolingian mirrors for princes were an “immensely popular genre”.¹⁰⁰ Presumably, they were not even aimed at a wider audience than the individually addressed kings.

Hence, it is true that the revival of the genre in the 12th century began without any kind of boost from the Carolingian period.¹⁰¹ It seems that the Carolingian mirrors for princes had no lasting impact at all. But this assessment holds true only for the four mirrors for princes themselves, and not if we consider them as the tip of the iceberg of a much larger discussion on the nature of kingship that intensified markedly after the deposition of the Merovingians in 751. The letter of the Anglo-Saxon priest Cathwulf to Charlemagne, dated 775, is a celebrated example.¹⁰² It is beyond doubt that this emerging debate on the nature of kingship is characteristic of Carolingian elite culture from the late 8th century onwards.

The theories of kingship had their most direct influence in the Carolingian church councils. As I have said earlier, Jonas of Orleans first presented his thoughts on the nature of kingship during the Parisian council of 829 before he made use of the same material in his *De institutione regia*. Later, he once again recycled his ideas on the office of the king when he was writing the canons of the council of Aachen in 836.¹⁰³ Hincmar of Rheims, as well, regularly elaborated on the conduct of kings on the occasion of clerical synods, most famously at the council at Quierzy in 858. Even after Hincmar’s death, the bishops of Rheims kept up this tradition.¹⁰⁴ The bishops of the East Frankish kingdom did not fall short in confronting kings with ethical instructions.¹⁰⁵

99 Cf. Lotte Kéry, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages, ca. 400–1140: A Bibliographical Guide to the Manuscripts and Literature*, History of Medieval Canon Law (Washington, DC, 1999); for secular law cf. www.leges.uni-koeln.de and capitularia.un-koeln.de.

100 Geoffrey Koziol, “Why We Have Mirrors for Princes but None for Presidents”, in *Why the Middle Ages Matter: Medieval Light on Modern Injustice*, eds. C. Martin Chazelle, Simon Richard Doubleday, Felice Lifshitz and Amy Goodrich Remensnyder (London, 2012), pp. 183–98, 185.

101 Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, Schriften des Reichsinstituts für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde 2 (Stuttgart, 1938), p. 1.

102 *Epistolae variorum* 7, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 4 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 501–4. Another text of the 9th century was edited by Rudolf Schieffer, “Zwei karolingische Texte über das Königtum”, in *Deutsches Archiv* 46 (1990) pp. 1–17; for additional manuscripts cf. Gerhard Schmitz, “De disciplina principum in ecclesia. Ein karolingischer Traktat über das Königtum”, in *Deutsches Archiv* 75 (2019), pp. 19–39.

103 *Synod of Aachen* (836) 41–47, ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2/2 (Hannover and Leipzig, 1908), pp. 714–18.

104 *Synod of Trosly* (909) 2, ed. G. Schmitz, MGH Conc. 5 (Hannover, 2012), pp. 507–11.

105 Cf. the letter of archbishop Liutbert of Mainz directed to Louis the German: *Epistolae variorum* 18, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 6 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 165–66.

At the Council of Mainz in 888, they incorporated extracts from the Parisian council on the office of kingship, directly addressing the new and unexperienced king Arnulf of Carinthia.¹⁰⁶ The redactor of the council at Tribur (895) was more inventive and put an independent discussion of kingship in front of the canons.¹⁰⁷ Thus, we have to assume that most Carolingian bishops were well acquainted with the ethics of kingship and used it for performative acts of admonitions at large assemblies.¹⁰⁸

The intense debate on the nature of kingship also exerted a significant influence on the biographers of Carolingian rulers. The first to write a biography of a secular ruler, Ermoldus Nigellus, was well versed in the ethics of kingship. He directed two panegyric poems to Pippin of Aquitaine, one of them usually classified as a mirror for princes.¹⁰⁹ His biography of Louis the Pious is replete with comments praising the virtues of the emperor. Whereas Charlemagne is criticized openly for allowing injustice and corruption to take root in the empire, Louis is praised as the exemplary ruler, characterized by his unfailing piety. Ermoldus alludes to the concept of *pietas* on 130 occasions.¹¹⁰ A few years later, Einhard wrote his famous biography of Charlemagne. He distanced himself from the prevalent ethics of Christian rulership by placing the secular virtue of magnanimity at the center of his praise of the deceased emperor.¹¹¹ The contrast could hardly be greater. The topic of retributive justice, a central issue in the mirrors for princes, surfaces for the first time in the anonymous biography of Louis the Pious, written shortly after his death (by the so-called “Astronomer”). The biographer reacts to the criticism directed at Louis the Pious because of his indulgent attitude towards rebellion and uses this topic

106 *Synod of Mainz* (888) 2, ed. W. Hartmann, MGH Conc. 5 (Hannover, 2012), pp. 255–57.

107 *Synod of Tribur* (895), ed. W. Hartmann, MGH Conc. 5 (Hannover, 2012), pp. 342–45.

108 On this performative aspect cf. Pezé, “Knowledge on Kingship”.

109 *Ermold le Noir. Poème sur Louis le Pieux et épîtres au roi Pépin*, ed. E. Faral (Paris, 1932); Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 190–98; Peter Godman, *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 125–29; Christiane Veyrard-Cosme, “Ermold le Noir (IXe s.) et l’Ad Pippinum Regem”, in *La lyre et la pourpre: Poésie latine et politique de l’Antiquité tardive à la Renaissance*, eds. N. Catellani-Dufrêne and M.J.-L. Perrin (Rennes, 2012), pp. 73–86.

110 Philippe Depreux, “La pietas comme principe de gouvernement d’après le Poème sur Louis le Pieux d’Ermold le Noir”, in *The Community, the Family and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, eds. J. Hill and M. Swan (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 201–24, p. 204.

111 I am following Matthias Tischler, *Einhardts “Vita Karoli”: Studien zur Entstehung, Überlieferung und Rezeption*, MGH Schriften 48 (Hannover, 2001); for a different view: Steffen Patzold, “Einhardts erste Leser. Zu Kontext und Darstellungsabsicht der Vita Karoli”, in *Viator Multilingual* 42 (2011), pp. 33–55.

as a leitmotiv for his narration of the events of his reign.¹¹² In the later 9th century, historians like Notker of St. Gall and Regino of Prüm continued to interweave their historical accounts with reflections on the idea of kingship.¹¹³

The debate on kingship, however, was not confined to clerical assemblies or to the scriptorium.¹¹⁴ Bishops justified the degradation of Louis the Pious in 833 by mentioning his misconduct, mismanagement, and specific crimes he committed contrary to the office of kingship.¹¹⁵ After the decisive battle of Fontenoy, Louis the German and Charles the Bald harried their elder brother Lothar I from Aachen and divided the empire between themselves, claiming that the bishops had decided to declare Lothar unfit for government.¹¹⁶ From then on, kings had to prove their fitness for office. Lothar II failed this test dramatically when he tried to divorce his wife and forced the bishops to support his actions. Pope Nicholas I was his staunchest opponent. It was during his pontificate that popes began to confront Carolingian rulers by measuring their fitness for office. This took on a whole new dimension when the emperor Louis II lacked a successor and the pope claimed the authority to transfer the empire to the candidate who could prove to be most capable of protecting the Apostolic See.¹¹⁷ The ethics of kingship heavily influenced the controversy over the succession of the empire. Finally, the first non-Carolingian king, Boso of Vienne, availed himself of this discourse when he induced the bishops to elect him king of the Franks in 879. He pledged to act with humility, to be open

112 Andrew J. Romig, "In Praise of the Too-Clement Emperor: The Problem of Forgiveness in the Astronomer's *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*", in *Speculum* 89 (2014), pp. 382–409.

113 Cf. Pezé, "Knowledge on Kingship"; Eric J. Goldberg and Simon MacLean, "Royal Marriage, Frankish History and Dynastic Crisis in Regino of Prüm's Chronicle", in *Medieval worlds* 10 (2019), pp. 107–129.

114 I will not discuss the influence on liturgy and the works of art. Cf. Staubach, *Rex Christianus*; Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia, 1991); Ildar Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World (c. 751–877)* (Leiden, 2008); Wolfgang Eric Wagner, *Die liturgische Gegenwart des abwesenden Königs. Gebetsverbrüderung und Herrscherbild im frühen Mittelalter*, Brill's series on the early Middle Ages 19 (Leiden, 2010).

115 Courtney Booker, "The Public Penance of Louis the Pious: A New Edition of the 'Episcoporum de poenitentia, quam Hludowicus imperator professus est, relatio Compendiensis' (833)", in *Viator*, 39/2 (2008), pp. 1–20.

116 Nithard, *Historiae* 4.1, ed. S. Glansdorf (Paris, 2012), p. 128.

117 Staubach, *Rex christianus*, pp. 336–38; Simon Groth, "Papsttum, italisches Königtum und Kaisertum. Zur Entwicklung eines Dreiecksverhältnisses von Ludwig II. bis Berengar I.", in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 124 (2013), pp. 151–84.

to criticism, and to abide by the rule of law.¹¹⁸ Similar promises entered the scripted rites of king-making customary in most of the Carolingian successor states.¹¹⁹

6 Summary

The significance of the Carolingian mirrors for princes should not be overstated. They provide only partial insight into the debate on kingship during the Carolingian era, much less did they cover the wealth of concepts implicit in the political practice of the Frankish empire. Kingship was more complex than contemporary theoretical reflection suggests. This is the case because the mirrors are characterized by a very specific predicament: a cleric is addressing a king. Not designing their work to circulate more widely, clerical authors deemed it best to persuade kings by pointing to their direct relationship to God and their responsibility for the salvation of the souls. This had already been done by bishops since late antiquity and resurfaced more forcefully after the Carolingian seizure of power in 751 and the church reform of Charlemagne. Still, the difference between sending admonitory poems or letters and writing long treatises on kingship is significant. In both, clerics exercise their care for the salvation of souls, but only the treatises on kingship claim to offer expertise in the working of government. Smaragdus speaks of the *gubernatio regni* and Jonas coins the concept of *ministerium regis*. Sedulius and Hincmar emphasize this expertise by using the concept of *ars* and *scientia* to describe their inquiry into the principles of government. It is probably not a coincidence that this change happened during the reign of Louis the Pious. Obviously, he was more open to accepting instruction and criticism from clerics than his father

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- 118 *Synod of Mantaille* (879), ed. W. Hartmann, MGH Conc. 5 (Hannover, 2012), pp. 158–61. Cf. Geoffrey Koziol, “Making Boso the Clown: Performance and Performativity in a Pseudo-Diploma of the Renegade King (8 December 879)”, in *Rituals, Performatives, and Political Order in Northern Europe, c. 650–1350*, ed. W. Jezierski (Turnhout, 2016), pp. 43–62.
- 119 *Ordines coronationis Franciae. Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, ed. R.A. Jackson (Philadelphia, 1995). Cf. Marcel David, *Le serment du sacre du IX^e au XV^e siècle: Contribution à l'étude des limites juridiques de la souveraineté* (Strasbourg, 1951); Janet Nelson, “The Lord’s anointed and the people’s choice: Carolingian royal ritual”, in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. O. Cannadine and S. Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 137–80; Rudolf Schieffer, “Die Ausbreitung der Königssalbung im hochmittelalterlichen Europa”, in *Die mittelalterliche Thronfolge im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. M. Becher, Vorträge und Forschungen 84 (Ostfildern, 2017), pp. 43–78.

Charlemagne, even in his own field of action. Moreover, it is manifest that he was more reflective about the nature of government because of his anxiety over the influence of the legacy of his father. But more importantly, the reign of Louis the Pious is distinct in the way government was to a certain extent professionalized. Royal diplomas were standardized, capitularies had to be centrally archived, and the relationship of monasteries to the ruler was systematized—to mention only a few examples.¹²⁰ This created a peculiar Christian discourse on political power which was concerned with morality, the person of the king, and with the authority of bishops. The upshot was the emergence of a sophisticated theory of kingship in a series of mirrors for princes.

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120 Cf. Susanne Zwierlein, *Studien zu den Arengen Kaiser Ludwigs des Frommen (814–840)*, MGH Studien und Texte 60 (Wiesbaden, 2017); Sarah Patt, *Studien zu den Formulae imperiales. Urkundenkonzeption und Formulargebrauch in der Kanzlei Kaiser Ludwigs des Frommen (814–840)*, MGH Studien und Texte 59 (Wiesbaden, 2016).

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Byzantine Mirrors for Princes: An Overview

Günter Prinzing

Though one still speaks of ‘Byzantine mirrors for princes’,¹ for some years in Byzantine studies, as well as in classical studies, it has been disputed whether and to what extent it is permissible or justified, with regard to the respective sources, to speak of the existence of such texts in the sense of a separate genre.² The sceptics refer to the (long-known) fact that, in contrast to the source collections for medieval studies,³ there is no text explicitly proven to be a ‘mirror for princes’ in the Byzantine sources until 1453 (as well as in the Greek and Roman sources up to Late Antiquity).⁴ But while the ancient historian Matthias Haake breaks new ground in this debate⁵ and the Byzantinist Diether R. Reinsch wants to take the spectrum of what should or could be called a “mirror for princes” even further,⁶ the Byzantinist Paolo Odorico takes a completely contrary position. He claims that the texts hitherto referred to as mirror for

1 See Barker, *Social and Political Thought*, p. 20; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, pp. 157–165, vol. 2, p. 397 (author here Peter Pieler); Theognostos, *Thesaurus*, ed. Munitiz, p. LXXXVIII; Blum, *Byzantinische Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 30–31; Karayannopoulos and Weiss, *Quellenkunde*, 2: 613 (index); Čičurov, “Gesetz und Gerechtigkeit”; id., *Političeskaja ideologija*, p. 8 and passim; Simon, “Princes”, pp. 480, 483; Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”; Jeffreys and Kazhdan, “Mirror”; Jeffreys, “Rhetoric”, p. 832; Fögen, “Denken”, pp. 46–49; Munitiz, “War”; Eideneier, “Fürstenspiegel”, pp. 720–721; Schmalzbauer, “Regieren”; Dagron, “*Emperor*”, p. 17 and passim (see index); Rosenqvist, *Literatur*, p. 112 and passim; Païdas, *H θεματική*; id., *Τα κάτοπτρα* (see on both works Prinzing, “Review Païdas”); Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 12 and passim (see index); Païdas, *Δύο κείμενα*, pp. 19–23; Giannouli, “Paränese”, p. 120; Schreiner, *Byzanz*, pp. 104, 112, 202; Gaul, *Thomas Magistros*, pp. 214 and 330–337; Reinsch, “Bemerkungen”, pp. 404–407; and 418–419; Niehoff-Panagiotidis, “Avoiding”, pp. 115, 117; Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 45–46 and passim; Troianos, *Die Quellen*, pp. 102 and 251–252; Grünbart, “Externe Instanzen”, pp. 17–19; Cupane, “Literatur”, pp. 952, 960, 963; Grünbart, “Anleitungen”, pp. 62–77; Çelik, *Manuel II*, pp. 319–321. – *Nota bene*: In English, the term “Fürstenspiegel” can be rendered as *mirror of princes* or (as used in this text) *mirror for princes*.

2 See Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, p. 157; Odorico, “Les miroirs”, particularly pp. 224–226; Haake, “Writing”; and Giannouli, “Coronation”, pp. 203–204.

3 See Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 5–23, and Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 3–37. (Introduction).

4 See Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 1; Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1053; Odorico, “Les miroirs”, p. 233; Haake, “Writing”, p. 63.

5 Haake, “Writing”, pp. 69–72, where he emphasizes “the importance to any understanding of the meaning of a text is its original and intended communicative context [...]”. (p. 72).

6 Reinsch, “Bemerkungen”, pp. 405–407.

princes did not contain any innovative elements in comparison to similar texts from Antiquity regarding content or formal aspects. Consequently, he believes that there can be no talking of mirrors for princes, so that this genre is simply non-existent in Byzantium.⁷ A principally desirable and fundamental clarification of all aspects of the genre problem is beyond the scope of this concise overview; therefore, it seems appropriate to choose a pragmatic approach in the search for corresponding Byzantine texts. For this reason, despite all reservations, the familiar term mirror for princes is retained and, with the help of suggestions from the current debate, a new attempt will be made to delineate what is meant by a Byzantine mirror for princes:

1. Such a text is primarily a self-contained text for instructing an emperor (or a person of similar rank) on his position in the political system: it is about the diversity of the interests of his office, the rights and obligations in its exercise, but also about the demands on his personal behaviour as a ruler. Consequently, the purpose of a mirror for princes is usually to prepare the ruler for his duties, or to advise on how to improve (or criticize) his government practice; in some cases, there is a restriction to certain individual aspects.
2. A mirror for princes, judging from the traditional texts, is as a rule aimed at a specific person who was, should be, or could be entrusted with state control, thus to the incumbent emperor or a designated or potential candidate for the imperial office (a prince or co-emperor, or one or more potential heirs to the throne); but it could also be directed to the ruler of a near or distant land.
3. With respect to the written transmission of mirrors for princes one can distinguish between independently transmitted texts and those which are, though being self-contained texts, embedded in or found directly adjacent to a text of quite a different content. Hence, such a type of text can be rightly classified as an 'integrated mirror for princes'.⁸
4. It corresponds with the purpose (and occasion) of writing a mirror for princes that it is usually addressed directly to the intended recipient(s)

7 Odorico, "Les miroirs", pp. 224, 226, 233, 240; for differing critical remarks, see Dostálová, "Review Odorico [2009]", pp. 381–82, Prinzing, "Review Odorico [2009]", Toth, "Fighting", p. 392 (with n. 37); most recently Agapitos, "Insignificance", pp. 42–44, 47, and Leonte, *Visions*, pp. 143–149.

8 It could therefore be surrounded by the different text or placed before or after it. See Prinzing, "Beobachtungen", pp. 2–5 (with a table, now partially to be revised, pp. 30–31); Čičurov, *Ideologija*, pp. 9–11; Giannouli, "Parānese", p. 120.

or that this form of dedication is indirectly identifiable.⁹ Otherwise, the text would not be a mirror for princes but a political treatise, unless there is additional information on the addressee(s) of the text or a personal dedication.¹⁰ Presumably, the author was often close to the addressee, so he “was able to give real advice and also pronounce serious warnings”.¹¹

5. The rhetorical and literary design of accordingly defined mirrors for princes is variable and open to various forms. Rightly, however, Herbert Hunger distinguishes between two groups with regard to structural and stylistic peculiarities of mirrors for princes. According to him one group is “clearly in the gnomological tradition and characterised by its structure – numerous small chapters (κεφάλαια)”. This is the group containing the texts of Agapetos, Photios, Pseudo-Basil I and Manuel II Palaiologos, for which it is also typical that they have an acrostic formed “from the initial letters of the individual chapters”. The other group includes discursive texts “stylized by their authors in a coherent presentation”.¹²

It is hardly surprising, however, that in terms of form and content, elements of the genres of *Parainesis* (admonition), *Enkomion* (eulogy) or *Psogos* (diatribe) can also be added to the instruction.¹³ Therefore, an intermingling of genres can occasionally be observed in some mirrors for princes.¹⁴

9 Prinzing, “Review Odorico [2009]”, p. 268. An example of a short integrated (anti-)mirror for princes can be found in Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. Reinsch, p. 17, ll. 10–16, Bk I, Ch. 28, where he indirectly reports a general’s unscrupulous advice to Basil (11).

10 The latter is, e.g., the case with the mirror for princes *Imperial Statue* by Nikephoros Blemmydes and in his seemingly integrated mirror for princes, edited by P. Carelos, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 98 (2005), pp. 399–402, which I have left out of consideration here.

11 Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. I, p. 157 (my translation).

12 Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. I, pp. 158–9 (my translation); see Leonte, *Visions*, pp. 133–41.

13 See Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 183; Giannouli, “Paränese”; and the stimulating work: Bourbouhakis, *Not composed in a chance manner*, especially its chapter “The Ἐπιτάφιος as a paraenetic text; or a ‘distorting mirror’ of Princes”, pp. 68*–81*.

14 Therefore, the designation of Emperor Constantine VII’s famous text *De Administrando Imperio* (DAI) as mirror for princes has been rightfully rejected by Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 59. For, although the DAI was dedicated by Constantine in a direct address to his son in the *prooimion*, and more *prooimia* are also inserted in the course of the following text, the content of the latter then substantively proves to be a kind of government manual, with concrete recommendations for action. On the DAI see also Lilie (et al.), *PmbZ I, Prolegomena*, pp. 154–55, and *PmbZ II, Prolegomena*, pp. 104–05. – Even in relation to the *Short History* (rightly or wrongly) attributed to Michael Psellos, the presumption of the editor Willem E. Aerts is hardly convincing, that the author wanted to write a kind of mirror for princes with this work; see Psellos, *Short History*, ed. Aerts, p. 1x. As justification, Aerts refers to Ch. 15 (pp. 10, 61–63, translated on p. 11), where the author addresses an unknown reader as follows: “[...] but I shall occupy myself for you with the further history and start from the rule of Caesar Julius, in order that you may either imitate the good deeds of the

In the following, based on the above definition, the relevant mirrors for princes, whether independent or integrated ones, will be presented according to their way of transmission and their time of writing. The latter, indicated by numbering, also illustrates their distribution within the respective periods.¹⁵ As to the former, however, an independent text will be marked by the letter A and an integrated text by the letter B. In short, the texts we are dealing with will be ordered, apart from their titles, by the letters A or B in combination with the numbering (iff) mentioned above.

1 Mirrors for Princes in the Early Byzantine Period

The speech *To the Emperor on the Imperial Office* written by Synesios of Cyrene (c. 370–c. 413)¹⁶ during his stay as ambassador of the African Pentapolis in Constantinople (probably 397–400), and addressed to Emperor Arkadios, is indisputably the earliest mirror for princes (A 1); however, it is rightly doubted that Synesios presented it as it has been recorded in writing. Concrete advice to the emperor in addition to prudent instruction, but also exhortation and clear criticism of the ruler characterize this speech as an exemplary, discursive mirror for princes.¹⁷

From the 6th century comes the mirror for princes of Agapetos' *Exposition of Chapters/ Ekthesis kephalaion* (A 2), which, unlike the text of Synesios, consists of 72 chapters with wise aphorisms or counsels (*gnomai*) written before 548, possibly around 530. This was perhaps written with the knowledge of

emperors, or criticize and despise the bad ones". Although this passage could have been taken from a mirror for princes, it merely emphasizes the didactic function of the context represented by the entire, purely historiographical work. On this, see Lilie (et al.), *PmbZ* II, *Prolegomena*, pp. 15–16, and Tocci, "Questions", pp. 66–68.

15 The text of the senator and orator Themistios (c. 317–388), which was probably directed to Emperor Theodosios I (379–395), is not taken into consideration here because, viewed individually, it represents only the preface to a mirror for princes, the main part of which is missing in what has been handed down: see Amato and Ramelli, "L'inedito", pp. 9–10 (Greek text), 12–3 (Italian translation), 13–5 and 63–5.

16 Baldwin, "Synesios", in: *ODB* 3 (1991), p. 1993.

17 Synesios of Cyrene, *On the Imperial Office*, ed. J. Lamoureux, pp. 84–141. For the content, form, occasion and date of the speech, see *ibid.*, Ajoulat, *Notices*, pp. 1–84; Hunger, *Literatur*, I, p. 158; Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 31–2; Simon, "Princes", p. 480; important for the interpretation as a mirror for princes is Brandt, "Die Rede", pp. 62–3 and 69–70; further, Paidas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, pp. 23–4; Giannouli, "Paränese", pp. 120–25; Hoffmann, "Die Lebenswelt", pp. 53–55; Reinsch, "Bemerkungen", pp. 404–05, 408, 417; Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 59–60, 61; on the reception by Nikephoros Blemmydes and especially Thomas Magister, see Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 185, 188–89.

Emperor Justinian I (reg. 527–565) because, according to the acrostic of many versions of the text, he is the “most pious emperor” to whom “Agapetos the least deacon” has dedicated his mirror for princes. Exactly where Agapetos worked as a deacon is unknown, but he probably belonged to the clergy of the Great Church (the Hagia Sophia) in Constantinople. Agapetos’ text, which is sophisticated, decidedly Christian, but indebted to antique paradigms, gives the perfect example of a gnomic, but rather unsystematic mirror for princes. Because of the rich manuscript tradition of the text, title and acrostic were handed down inconsistently. This mirror for princes was widely received, especially in the Slavic world.¹⁸

Two other mirrors for princes strongly influenced by Agapetos (A 2) are included in the history of Theophylact Simocata (580/90 – after 628);¹⁹ hence, each one represents an integrated mirror for princes: The first (B 1) is a speech given by the mentally unstable Emperor Justin II (565–578), on the initiative of his wife Sophia, on 7 December 574 when he raised his notary Tiberios to caesar and co-regent (Tiberios I, reg. 578–582). Theophylact expressly emphasized that he was genuinely reproducing the wording of this speech.²⁰

18 Agapetos the Deacon, *Exposition of Chapters*, ed. and trans. Riedinger; for criticism, see Prinzing, “Review Riedinger” (1998); see also Agapetos the Deacon, *Exposition of Chapters*, ed. and trans. Iadevaia (critical edition with Italian translation); for a commented English translation, see Bell, *Three Political Voices*, pp. 99–122 (based on Riedinger’s edition). – For the content, see Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, pp. 158–61; Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 32–34, with German translation on pp. 59–80 (after *Patrologia Graeca* 86); Čičurov, “Gesetz”, pp. 34–5 and passim; Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1054; Simon, “Princeps”, p. 480; Frohne, *Agapetus*, with translation, pp. 111–50, after *Patrologia Graeca* vol. 86; Romano, “Retorica”, pp. 302–10 and 315; Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 9, 12, 28; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, pp. 14–5, 31, 37, 40–42, 108; Munitiz, “War”, p. 52; Maltese, “L’imperatore”; Dagron, *Emperor*, pp. 17–8, 36; Meier, *Zeitalter*, pp. 129–133 and passim, ignoring Riedinger’s edition; Paidas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, 24f.; Taragna, “Le regole”, p. 80 and passim; Leppin, *Justinian*, pp. 124–25; Odorico, “Les miroirs”, pp. 227–33; Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 185–87, 192, 194–95, 222–23; Giannouli, “Parānese”, pp. 120, 123, 125; and Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 227 (n. 90), 88, 141, and 228 (n. 104). For the reception, see Ševčenko, “Agapetus East”, Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 35–39; Marjanović-Dušanić, “Sur une version”; Volk, “From the Desert”, pp. 406 and 419; Nikolov, “Political Ideology”, pp. 364–367 and 375–378.

19 See Baldwin, “Simokattes, Theophylaktos”, in *ODB* 3 (1991), p. 1900f.; Schreiner, “Th. (eophylaktos) Simokates”, in *LMA* 8 (1997), col. 672.

20 Theophylact Simocata, *History*, ed. De Boor and Wirth, III, II, 8–11, pp. 132,22–133,17; id., *History*, trans. Schreiner, p. 103; id., *The History*, ed. Whitby, p. 89; Munitiz, “War”, p. 52; Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 6–10, 27–9; Whitby, *The Emperor*, pp. 227–9, particularly 328–9; Čičurov, *Ideologija*, pp. 19–26; Meier, *Zeitalter*, p. 619; Brodka, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie*, p. 224; Taragna, “Le regole”, pp. 80–1, 90, 93f., 97–9; Efthymiadis, “History”, pp. 177–78; Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 105 and 181.

Compared to the first, the second (B 2) is a more pagan- than Christian-inspired text; it is a doubly integrated mirror for princes²¹ insofar as it consists of the section of a speech that the terminally ill Tiberios is said to have delivered on 13 August 582 to his successor and son-in-law, the caesar Maurice, and which was read in his presence by the quaestor John. This would have happened before Tiberios himself had elevated Maurice to emperor (582–602).²²

2 Mirrors for Princes in the Middle Byzantine Period

The first three pertinent texts of this epoch are connected with the name of the exceptionally erudite Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Photios (858–867 and 877–886).²³ For the second part of his letter sent to Prince Michael (Boris I) of Bulgaria in 865 represents an integrated mirror for princes (B 3) in which Photios also gives moral and varied practical advice to the prince, who had just converted to Christianity.²⁴ This section of the letter consists of about 90 maxims and pieces of advice that are associative but strung together without systematic order. Much like the mirror for princes of Agapetos (A 1), but with new accents, it formally belongs into the gnomic tradition. The first part teaches Michael about the Christian way of life, as well as about Christian dogma (this with the help of a synopsis of councils) and encomiastically sees in Michael a ‘New Constantine’.²⁵

21 Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 8 and 10–12.

22 *Theophylact Simocata, History*, ed. De Boor and Wirth, I, 1, 16–20, pp. 41, 13–42,8; id., *History*, trans. Schreiner, pp. 44–5; id., *History*, trans. Whitby, pp. 20–21. For the content (and text), see also Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 10–12, with further evidence; Whitby, *The Emperor*, pp. 327–30; Čičurov, *Ideologija*, pp. 21–25; Taragna, “Le regole”, pp. 80, 82–87 and 90; Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 105 and 141.

23 See Lilie (et al.), *PmbZ I*, # 6253, pp. 671–84, at 676; II, # 26667, pp. 478–485.

24 Photios, *Letters*, eds. Laourdas and Westerink, I, no. 1, pp. 2–39, with the integrated mirror for princes on pp. 21, 622–39, 1208; Photios, *Letter to Boris*, trans. Stratoudaki White and Berrigan, pp. 39–79, with the text in question from 58–79. On the content, see Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 13–16; Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1054; Čičurov, *Ideologija*, p. 33–67; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, p. 110; Munitiz, “War”, pp. 52–53, 55, 58; Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, pp. 112–152 (on the reception, 152–156); Shepard, “The ruler”, pp. 351–353; Ziemann, “Wandervolk”, pp. 365–370; Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, p. 25; Roueché, “The Place”, pp. 133, 144; Odorico, “Les miroirs”, pp. 234–240 (for criticism, see Strano, “A proposito”, pp. 118–122; Prinzing, “Review Odorico [2009]”, pp. 267–68); Giannouli, “Paränese”, pp. 120, 124–25; Kaldellis, *Republic*, p. 227, n. 90; most recently Leonte, “Didacticism”, pp. 242–43.

25 See Brandes and Hoffmann, *Konzilsynopse*, pp. 15f. (with n. 6), 28 and 244; Troianos, *Quellen*, p. 251. On the title “New Constantine”, see Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 10, 44; Berger, “Legitimation”, pp. 10–12 and Pratsch, “Konstantin”, p. 74.

The *Admonitory Chapters/Kephalaia Parainetika* that, according to their acrostic, Emperor Basil I (867–886) wrote for his son and co-emperor Leon/Leo (VI), form the gnomic mirror for princes of (Ps.-) Basil (A 3) in 66 chapters because of this attribution. But it is no coincidence that it is in many respects closely related to B 3: Constantine Païdas, who has re-edited this text in the form of an improved version of Kurt Emminger's first edition and provided it with a translation into modern Greek,²⁶ affirms the view of the research that it was not the uneducated Basil I, but most probably Patriarch Photios, who, around 881/882, also wrote this mirror for princes.²⁷

This is followed by the *Further Admonition/Hetera Pairainesis*, the shortest Byzantine mirror for princes (A 4).²⁸ Although anonymous, it is certain that this text was also written for Leo (VI) at the behest of Basil I. Presumably, it was the clergyman Theophanes Sphenodaimon²⁹ who wrote it while being aware of the text A 3, more precisely, after the release of Leo on 20 July 886 from the imprisonment which his father had imposed on him for suspicion of conspiracy, and before the death of the Emperor on 29 August 886.³⁰

From the 10th century come two integrated mirrors for princes. One consists of a passage from a letter of the Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos (901–907, 912–925), as leader of the Regency Council of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, sent 913 to the Caliph al-Muqtadir (908–932) in support of the legation to the Caliph which the bishop Demetrios of Chytroi (on Cyprus) undertook for the release of his countrymen held in captivity by the Emir of Tarsos (B 4). Above all, the passage emphasizes justice as the main virtue of a ruler, and in this respect represents a scarce, though thematically limited integrated mirror for princes.³¹

26 Emminger, *Studien*, III, pp. 23–73, text 50–73; Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα* pp. 103–243 (with synoptic translation), see also p. 26 (with bibliography). In addition, see Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, pp. 160–161; Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 39–42; Čičurov, “Gesetz”, pp. 40–45; Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1054; Simon, “Princeps”, pp. 480–481; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, pp. 108–9; Čičurov, *Ideologija*, pp. 67–81, specifically on its innovations, pp. 89–97, and (in comparison to the epitaph of Leon VI on Basil I), pp. 97–107; Dagron, *Emperor*, p. 36; Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 185 and passim (cf. index, add p. 196); Reinsch, “Abweichungen”, p. 126; Giannouli, “Paränese”, p. 126; Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 45–6, 84, 141; Troianos, *Die Quellen*, pp. 251–252.

27 On the dating and authorship of Photios, see Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, pp. 87–89.

28 Ibid. pp. 244–257 (with translation), see also pp. 27 and 89–98; Troianos, *Die Quellen*, p. 252.

29 About him, see Lilie (et al.), in *PmbZ*, Abt. II., # 28076.

30 Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, pp. 96–98; see also Markopoulos, “Chapitres”, pp. 474–76.

31 Nicholas I, *Letters*, eds. Jenkins and Westerink, no. 1, pp. 4, 28–43; Grumel and Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 632 [646]; Dölger, Müller and Beihammer, *Regesten*, no. 571a. See Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 18–9; Beihammer, “Reiner christlicher König”, in *Byzantinische*

The other text (B 5) consists of an admonitory speech that Emperor Romanos I Lakapenos (920–44) is said to have directed against tsar Symeon of Bulgaria (894–927) in view of his attack on Constantinople (September 924), during a memorable meeting with him at the Golden Horn.³² In this fictional address, Romanos strongly urged Symeon to avoid bloodshed among Christians and make peace. Thus, the speech perfectly forms an integrated mirror for princes. The sources do not mention a dialogue at this meeting between the rulers.³³

Particularly interesting is a section of the famous *Advice and Narrations / Consilia et Narrationes* of the military expert and aristocrat Kekaumenos (1020/24 – after 1070),³⁴ which proves to be an integrated mirror for princes (B 6). This work, which lacks an original title and is handed down in a single manuscript from the 14th century of various content, comprises the chapter of advice (B 6), according to its arrangement in the critical editions of Gennadij G. Litavrin and Charlotte Roueché, either in its penultimate section V (*Sovety Vasilevsu/Advice to the emperor*, §§ 77–88, Litavrin) or in its (last) section VII (*Consilium principii/Advice to an emperor*, Roueché).³⁵ This chapter is directed at an emperor (or his successors) and refers to concrete tasks of rulership in civil and military (including naval) matters, but warns against the blind fulfilment of absurd imperial decrees. The author underpins this advice with his life experience and timely examples from the reigns of former emperors.³⁶ As

Zeitschrift 95 (2002), pp. 9–10 and 33; Shepard, “Equilibrium”, p. 496; Lilie (et al.), in *PmbZ* II, # 25885 (Nikolaos I Mystikos), pp. 78–89, at 82, and Leonte, “Didacticism”, p. 243, who disregards the previous scholarly discussion.

32 See Grünbart, “Treffen” (2012), pp. 147–149 (dating the meeting 923); on Symeon Lilie (et al.), *PmbZ* II, # 27467), pp. 183–202, at 1906.

33 Symeon Magistros, *Chronicon*, ed. Wahlgren, pp. 323, 272–324, 292; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, ed. Thurn, pp. 220, 48–59; see also Skylitzes, *Byzanz*, Teil I, trans. Thurn, pp. 258–59; Skylitzès, *Empereurs*, trans. Flusin and Cheynet, pp. 184–85; Skylitzes, *History*, trans. Wortley, p. 213. See Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 23–24; Lilie et al., *PmbZ* II, # 27467 (Symeon), pp. 189–202, at 196; Grünbart, “Treffen”, pp. 147–149, where he overlooks the ruler’s speech.

34 Litavrin, “Kekaumenos”, in *LMA* 5 (1991), col. 1095; Kazhdan, “Kekaumenos”, in *ODB* 2 (1991), p. 1119.

35 Kekaumenos. *Advice and narrations*, ed. and trans. Litavrin, Kekavmen., *Sovety*, pp. 291–315 (text with synopt. translation, followed by a rich commentary); ed. and trans. Roueché, Kekaumenos, *Consilia*; cf. also Beck (trans.), *Vademecum*, pp. 125–151; ed. and trans. Tsounkarakes, Κεκαυμένος, pp. 244–275; trans. Signes Codoñer, Cecaumeno, *Consejos*, pp. 124–139; trans. Odorico, Kékauménos, *Conseils*, pp. 188–204.

36 For the content, see Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, p. 162; Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1054–55; Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 19–22; further Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 42–3; Simon, “Princes”, pp. 482–83; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, pp. 142–47; Munitiz, “War”, p. 58; Roueché, “The Place”, especially pp. 130–33; Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, p. 28; Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 195 and 222–24; Reinsch, “Bemerkungen”, pp. 407–08; Lilie (et al.), in *PmbZ* II, *Prolegomena*, pp. 106–08; Giannouli, “Paränese”, pp. 120–21, 124, 126–7; Troianos, *Die Quellen*,

an aside, Maria Dora Spadaro argues, unconvincingly, that the text (B 6) is the work of another author, thus being an independent mirror for princes.³⁷ But her argument that the main addressee of the text should be identified with Constantine x Doukas (1059–67), rather than with Michael VII Doukas (1071–78),³⁸ is worth considering.³⁹

Also, the mirror of princes, long held to be an autonomous text of Theophylact (Hephaistos), the writer, teacher, and later archbishop of ‘Bulgaria’ (Achrida/Ohrid) c. 1090–1120/26,⁴⁰ is an integrated mirror for princes (B 7). For it is enclosed within the speech written in 1085/86 that he addressed to his pupil Constantine Doukas (c. 1074–95), co-emperor with Alexios I Komnenos and fiancé of the Emperor’s famous daughter Anna.⁴¹ This has emerged from the critical edition of Paul Gautier.⁴² In the first part of the speech, Theophylact gives detailed praise of Constantine and his parents, especially his mother; the following integrated mirror for princes closes the speech. It is abstract and general at the beginning, when it comes to instructing Constantine concisely on antique constitutional models such as monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, along with their counterparts – tyranny, oligarchy and ochlocracy. Only then does Theophylact elaborate, in contrast with the fearful image of a tyrant, the virtues of a godly, peaceful, benevolent, and learned emperor, but one who should, like his generals, be prepared to lead his military forces into battle.⁴³

p. 252; Kaldellis, *Republic*, p. 79; Grünbart, “Externe Instanzen”, p. 19; Kislinger, “Der Ruhm”, pp. 43–45; and below n. 39.

37 Spadaro, “Ἡ λόγος βασιλικός”. Consequently, the text of advice (B 6) is missing in her Kekaumenos edition, see Spadaro, *Raccomandazioni*, but see the critical remarks in Litavrin, Kekavmen, *Sovety*, pp. 702–05 (in the *Addenda* to his book).

38 Litavrin, Kekavmen, *Sovety*, pp. 121, and 533, n. 788.

39 Spadaro, “Ἡ λόγος βασιλικός”.

40 See Theophylact of Ohrid, *Orations*, ed. Gautier, pp. 11–37 (for the biography of the author); Prinzing, “The province”, pp. 361, 367–368 (with further references).

41 See Theophylact of Ohrid, *Orations*, ed. Gautier, pp. 49–58; Brand, “Doukas, Constantine”, in *ODB* 2 (1991), pp. 657–58, and Tiftixoglu, “Zum Mitkaisertum”, pp. 104–106.

42 See Theophylact of Ohrid, *Orations*, ed. and trans. Gautier, pp. 48–9 and pp. 178–211, the text of advice: pp. 193–211 (with French translation). The German translation by Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 59–95, is based on the obsolete edition in *Patrologia Graeca*.

43 See Grabar, “God”, pp. 117–119; Blum, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 44–46; Romano, “Retorica”, pp. 310–16; Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 24–5 (with further evidence); Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1055; Simon, “Princesps”, p. 483; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, pp. 157–61; Munitiz, “War”, pp. 53, 58–59; Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 193, 195, 223; Reinsch, “Bemerkungen”, pp. 408–410; Giannouli, “Paränese”, pp. 120 and 123–127; ead., “Coronation”, p. 216; Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 57 (with endnote 122, p. 220), 102; more under n. 59. – The statements on form and content in Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, pp. 29–30, and id., *Τα κάτοπτρα*, p. 26, ignore Gautier’s edition and recent literature.

An unusual mirror for princes comprises two poems written in iambic dodecasyllabic verse preserved under the title Μούσαι Ἀλεξιάδες Κομνηνιάδες, the subtitles of which are given as the last instructions of the father to his son and emperor (i.e., John [II] Komnenos). The poems' editor Paul Maas calls them "The Muses of Emperor Alexios I" (A 5).⁴⁴ Poem I consists of a *prooimion* of 53 and another 367 verses, but the mutilated poem II only of 81. According to Reinsch, it provided "not only general and for the Mirror for Princes genre typical guiding principles, but concrete life experiences".⁴⁵ Reinsch also proved that Alexios I was not the author of this mirror for princes, but it is unknown who else it could have been. It is indisputable that this unique text was intended to ideologically strengthen the reign of John II (1118–43).⁴⁶

In the 12th century, it is the Grottaferrata version of the anonymous epic poem *Digenes Akrites*, which offers a brief integrated mirror for princes (B 8) in the context of the fictitious account of an encounter between Digenes and Emperor Basil (I or II, although the original version probably had Romanos [I]) during his visit to the Euphrates border area controlled by Digenes. Invited by the Emperor to express a wish frankly, Digenes directed several admonitory pleas to him to obey the virtues that characterize the correct conduct of an orthodox ruler; namely, that these are the weapons of justice with which he can overwhelm all opponents. Finally, he exhorted him indirectly to be humble and fear God, stating that rule is not a matter of power, but the gift of God alone.⁴⁷ Digenes' advice is conventional, only in content, not in its setting.

3 Mirrors for Princes in the Late Byzantine Period

A letter to the ruler of the successor state of Epiros by Archbishop Demetrios Chomatenos of Ohrid (1216–1236), handed down in his *Various Works*, provides a special kind of an integrated mirror for princes (B 9). It is contained in a

44 Maas, "Die Musen".

45 See Reinsch, "Abweichungen", p. 126, who not only highlighted here the accurate summary of the peculiarities of the poem by Maas, "Die Musen", p. 366, but also reprinted it.

46 On the content, see Reinsch, "Abweichungen", pp. 123–128; id., "Bemerkungen", pp. 412–17; Giannouli, "Paränese", p. 120; Mullett, "Whose Muses?", pp. 208–209, 218–220; in addition, see also Čičurov, *Ideologija*, pp. 119–126, and most recently Neville, "Enemies", pp. 258–260 and 264–265.

47 See ed. and trans. Jeffreys, *Digenis Akritis*, pp. 228 (G IV, 1033–1041) and 129 (commentary); ed. and trans. Odorico, *Digenis Akritis*, p. 122 (IV, 1033–1041); ed. Trapp, *Digenes Akrites*, p. 232 (G IV, 1983–1992). On this, see Prinzing, "Beobachtungen", pp. 22–3, and id., "Historiography", pp. 349–50 (with further evidence; add Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, pp. 149–51).

letter to the ruler Theodore Doukas (c. 1215–1230, emperor from 1226), from the period 1216–1225⁴⁸ and deals with a request of Theodore, relating to his order to execute the notorious robber Petrilos (and his sons) without trial. Since the tenor of the criticism in monastic circles was that the ruler had committed murder, Theodore had become remorseful and asked Chomatenos for an assessment of his behaviour. Although the latter confirmed the ruler's classification as a murder, he also pointed out that Theodore had used this approach as retribution and had prevented further misdeeds. Therefore, he had served the common good and should not feel any remorse. In this context, Chomatenos cites further arguments for the correct conduct of the ruler, who, as an imitator (*antimimos*) of God, acts justly in punitive measures (as God himself does), if he has ordered them, not out of his own interest as a private citizen, but as a ruler acting for the common good.⁴⁹

Also from the 13th century comes an exemplary, as well as unique, integrated mirror for princes (B 10). It is found in the 19th chapter of a 20-chapter work that was created between 1204 and 1252, probably in the realm of Nicaea, according to the editor Joseph A. Munitiz. The chapters can only partially be assigned to an author named Theognostos, as in the case of chapter 19; in others, the authorship is unclear. Theognostos was probably a hieromonk (*hieromonachos*) who had made little literary impact. Entitled *παράινεσις πρὸς βασιλέα* ("Exhortation to the Emperor"), this integrated mirror for princes is not addressed to a particular emperor and it remains unclear whether it was ever read by an emperor. Apart from a short closing poem, the text is composed of 14 paragraphs (referring to the addressees in a plain manner up to § 5), using many biblical quotations, initially to remind the reader conventionally of the supremacy of God, and then to teach him justice, dispassion, clemency, peacefulness and further virtues in the mirror for princes tradition, with reference to the Last Judgement. In §§ 6–13, Theognostos underlines the tenor of the advice on the basis of authoritative historical examples (from well-known sources), which refer (in this order) to Alexander the Great, King David, the emperors Constantine (I, here also called "Saint"), Theodosios II, again Alexander, the emperors Basil II, Isaac I Komnenos, Empress Theophano and John I Tzimiskes. Theognostos devotes most of the space to the latter because of his

48 Demetrios Chomatenos, *Various Works*, ed. Prinzing, no. 110, pp. 363–367, at §§ 5–6, pp. 365–366, see also regest pp. 221*–22*, with bibliography (add id. "Nochmals", pp. 228, 237); and Stefec, "Regesten", p. 32, no. 40. On Theodore Doukas, see Angold, "Theodore Komnenos Doukas", in *ODB* 3 (1991), p. 2042.

49 Demetrios Chomatenos, *Various Works*, ed. Prinzing, no. 110, pp. §§ 5–6, pp. 365–366; see the magisterial interpretation of Simon, "Gewissensbisse"; Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 187, 192–93 and Kaldellis, *Republic*, p. 81 (erroneously calling the letter's addressee Theodore Laskaris, see also p. 219, n. 91).

instigation of the murder of Nikephoros II Phokas and his subsequent purification. The main theme of these examples is moderation or abstinence and soundness of mind (*sophrosyne*), e.g., when referring to Basil II in § 11: “But even the Emperor Basileios Boulgaroktonos, who has fifty years of rule, is never found with a woman”. The context of the integrated mirror for princes is heterogeneous in content, so that the work as a whole is a pious doctrine written to a middle educational standard and addressed to a mixed spiritual-monastic or even secular-lay readership. In any case, this chapter of advice indicates that Theognostos probably did not exclude the possibility that even a (potential) emperor could be among the readers.⁵⁰

A near contemporary of Theognostos’ text is the extensive, discursive mirror for princes known as *Imperial Statue: A Moral Treatise/Basilikos Andrias: Logos Ethikos* (A 6),⁵¹ which was written by Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197–c. 1271), probably the most important scholar in the Nicene Empire, in the period 1248–1250.⁵² Thus Blemmydes wrote his mirror for princes after he had become a monk in 1234 and the abbot of the monastery he founded in Emathia at Ephesus in 1248. Apart from this text, he left behind numerous other writings, including his autobiography. Highly regarded as a man of religious and spiritual authority, he was also an independent spirit, who could not only be critical and irksome but also readily acted as an arbitrator on moral questions. It is most likely, therefore, that the affair of Emperor John III Vatatzes (1222–1254)⁵³ with Marchesina, lady-in-waiting to his second wife, Anne/Constance

50 Theognostos, *Thesaurus*, ed. Munitiz, no. XIX, pp. 196–203, with quote, p. 200, § 11: Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν βουλγαροκτόνον βασιλέα Βασίλειον ἐπὶ πενήκοντα ἔτη ἰθύναντα τὴν ἀρχὴν γυναικὶ συγγενόμενον οὐχ εὕρισκομεν. See the introduction of the work in general, to Ch. 19, pp. LXXXVII–XC; further Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 25–26; Munitiz, “War”, pp. 54–55; Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 187, 191–192, 196; Agapitos, “Insignificance”, p. 46, who unconvincingly considers text B 10 to be “negligible”.

51 Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Imperial Statue*, ed. and trans. Hunger and Ševčenko, pp. 44–117: synoptic text of both versions, the original text and its paraphrase, pp. 121–147; English translation of the original mirror for princes, 121–147; German translation of the paraphrase; what follows is the analysis of the working method of the metaphrast(s) by comparison of the Blemmydes text and its paraphrase at pp. 179–206. On the dating, see Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 188, and id., *Byzantine Hellene* (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 91 and 338, the year 1254, given by Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, p. 30, is outdated.

52 On him, see Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Autobiography*, trans. Munitiz, pp. 29–43 (Introduction); Macrides, “Blemmydes, Nikephoros”, in *ODB* 1 (1991) p. 296; *PLP* 2987; Angelov, *Byzantine Hellene*, pp. 80–87 and passim; Agapitos, “Insignificance”, pp. 43 and 46–47.

53 On him see Angold, “John III Vatatzes”, in *ODB* 2 (1991), pp. 1047–1048; and Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 3, and passim (see index).

of Hohenstaufen, caused the mirror for princes to be written.⁵⁴ Although Blemmydes dedicated it by letter to his most important pupil, Theodore (II) Laskaris (1221–1258),⁵⁵ John's son, crown prince and co-emperor of John III since c. 1241, he presented this work to both emperors at the same time.⁵⁶ Since the highly stylized mirror for princes was difficult to understand, two high clerics of the patriarchate, Georgios Galesiotes and Georgios Oinaiotes, created a simpler paraphrase at the beginning of the 14th century.⁵⁷ In terms of content, the mirror for princes extends to 219 chapters of varying length, which the editors have additionally divided into 14 sections.⁵⁸ The chapters outline in their entirety the most important legal, moral and practical aspects of the position and practice of a Christian-oriented and classically-educated emperor, described as an imitator of God and the “foundation of the people”, with repeated reference to examples from ancient history.⁵⁹ Thus, Blemmydes, referring to the public role of the imperial office and the absolute authority of its owner, also emphasizes his commitment to lawfulness, to the observance of virtues (such as serenity, clemency, moderation, philanthropy, self-control), to the love of honesty towards the subjects, and to a preference for peaceful solutions to conflicts; he also insists that the military should not be neglected and that it should always be well prepared, especially with regard to the navy (chapters 132–135).⁶⁰ Twice, the mirror for princes allows the reader to infer a contemporary connection: indirectly to the Marchesina Affair in chapter

54 Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 188, with reference to Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Imperial Statue*, ed. and trans. Hunger and Ševčenko, ch. 66, pp. 62/64, and further evidence.

55 On him see Angold, “Theodore II Laskaris”, in *ODB* 3 (1991), pp. 2040–41; and Angelov, *Byzantine Hellene*.

56 In his autobiography, Blemmydes explicitly refers to both emperors as addressees (Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Autobiography*, ed. Munitiz, II, p. 79, ch. 76, 1–2), and trans. Munitiz, pp. 132–33; but a dedicatory letter of Blemmydes to Theodore II Laskaris can be found in the letter edition: Theodore Laskaris, *Letters*, ed. Festa, Florence 1898, appendix III: Nicephori Epistulae, no. 13, pp. 303–304; see Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 188, n. 25, and id., *Byzantine Hellene*, pp. 85, 91.

57 See Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Imperial Statue*, ed. and trans. Hunger and Ševčenko, pp. 32–35 (“Die Autoren der Metaphrase”). The chapter concludes on pp. 35–39 with observations on language and style of both authors.

58 I: Ch. 1–7, II: 8–33, III: 34–48, IV: 49–66, V: 67–92, VI: 93–104, VII: 105–122, VIII: 123–132, IX: 133–140, X: 141–154, XI: 155–171, XII: 172–201, XIII: 202–216, XIV: 217–219. On the content, see n. 63.

59 Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Imperial Statue*, ed. and trans. Hunger and Ševčenko, Ch. 8, p. 46; see Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, p. 163 (no reference to the parallel in Théophylact of Ohrid, *Orations*, ed. Gautier, p. 195, 10, with p. 194, n. 17); Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1055; Blum (trans.), *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 97, n. 7; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, p. 191.

60 See above texts for notes 36 and 43.

66, and directly to the fall of Constantinople in 1204 in chapter 28, each time in the context of the sexual misconduct often referred to in the text (including the conjugal infidelity first addressed by Theognostos [chapter 12]),⁶¹ or the demands for sexual abstinence; but chapters 70–72, on dealing with or distributing financial resources, or chapters 155 and 165–166, on matters relating to the promotion and selection of suitable judges or men for other public offices, also criticize or indirectly point to current deficiencies.⁶² For a more detailed analysis of this mirror for princes, see Dimiter G. Angelov's comments.⁶³

Thomas Magistros, author of the following mirror for princes, created an extensive discursive text of a special kind, for he not only provided it with a title deliberately borrowed from Synesios' speech (A 1), *On the Imperial Office*, but also wrote, as its counterpart, a mirror for subjects. His mirror for princes consists of 30 chapters (introduced by the first editor A. Mai) and is addressed directly to the addressee (A 7).⁶⁴ Magistros lived as a teacher, rhetorician and philologist, and after 1328 also as a monk (his monastery is unknown), always in Thessalonike, where he was born about 1280/85 and died "shortly after 1347/48".⁶⁵ Although his life and work have been repeatedly examined, most recently in the comprehensive monograph by Niels Gaul,⁶⁶ neither the date of the writing of the mirror for princes nor the identity of its addressee can be definitely determined because the data vary.⁶⁷ According to Gaul, it was

61 See Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 187, and below.

62 See Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 188, 192, 196, 294.

63 Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 188–189, passim (see index, add pp. 193–194, 293–294, with reference [p. 293] to the innovative content of Ch. 1), also id., *Byzantine Hellene*, pp. 125, 336; see also Hunger, *Literatur*, I, pp. 163–164; Schmalzbauer, "Fürstenspiegel", col. 1055; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, pp. 191–192; Munitiz, "War", pp. 55–57, 61; Giannouli, "Paränese", pp. 120, 122–123, 125–127; Kaldellis, *Republic*, p. 45.

64 Thomas Magistros, *On the Imperial Office*, ed. P. Volpe Cacciatore, pp. 29–84 (definite edition), with Italian paraphrase on pp. 87–94; German translation (after the edition of Mai, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 145, col. 448–496) in Blum (trans.), *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 99–139 (n. pp. 140–145). For other editions, translations and secondary literature, see Gaul, *Thomas Magistros*, pp. 406–407, furthermore, see Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, pp. 30–31 (partly erroneous information), and Gickler, *Kaiser Michael IX.*, p. 18.

65 Gaul, *Thomas Magistros*, pp. 220–222, and 406 (quotation), see also *PLP* 16045.

66 See Gaul, *Thomas Magistros*, see pp. 211–383: second part, "Thomas Magistros, Bios und Êthos"; and here the section: "Fürsten- und Stadtbürgerspiegel. (Datierung)", pp. 330–337; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. I, pp. 164–165; Blum (trans.), *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 49–53; Schmalzbauer, "Fürstenspiegel", col. 1055; Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 175, and passim (see index); Giannouli, "Paränese", pp. 120, 122, 124, 127–128; Agapitos, "Insignificance", p. 45, n. 218, and 46.

67 Angelov, *Ideology*, pp. 189–191 (not mentioned by Gaul), 298–303, 316–21; Giannouli, "Paränese", pp. 122, and 127–128, arguing for a date of writing shortly after 1316 and with good reason "probably sooner" (p. 122), pleads for Andronikos III as addressee of

written during “the period between about 1304 and 1341”, with the “most plausible [being] the decade 1315–1325”. As to the addressees, Gaul suggests “Andronikos II, Michael IX or Andronikos III Palaiologos – or a fictitious, idealized *basileus*”, but not the previously favoured Despot Constantine Palaiologos.⁶⁸ Any substantive analysis of this mirror for princes, which has various contemporary references (including the tax policy of the emperor), must now start from the findings of the recent works by Angelov and Gaul.⁶⁹

A surprising integrated mirror for princes appears a little later in the fictitious speech which Empress Irene Asenina Kantakouzene, the wife of (anti-) Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354), addressed to Matthew Kantakouzenos,⁷⁰ the eldest of her three sons (besides three daughters). For the first time in Byzantine literature, the words of a mirror for princes are put into a woman’s mouth! The text can be found in the richly structured historical work of Nikephoros Gregoras (c. 1295–1359/61) at a place where there is talk of a threatened rebellion by Matthew against his father (B II).⁷¹ John VI delegated to his wife the task of dissuading Matthew from this course of action. Mother and son therefore met in late 1347 at Adrianople. With this speech – a new type of mirror for princes, a mixture of maternal wisdom, caring admonition, clever reasoning (in view of the desolate state of the Empire) and interspersed with various *topoi* from mirrors for princes succeeded in persuading Matthew to concede.⁷²

the text, because he had been crowned in February 1316 as co-emperor with his father Andronikos II. However, she overlooked the fact that Božidar Ferjančić had confirmed the date for the proclamation of co-emperor for Andronikos III, which had been determined by Ljubomir Maksimovic in 1975 (period between 1308 and 13 February 1313), and kept the date (supported among others by Short Chronicles) of 2 February 1325 for the crowning as co-emperor. See Ferjančić, “Savladarstvo u doba Paleologa”, in *Zbornik radova Vizant. Instituta* 24/25 (1986), pp. 307–384 (with French abstract: La co-souveraineté sous les Paléologues), at pp. 330–31 and 383; Gaul, *Thomas Magistros*, p. 332, n.74, considers Maksimović’s information.

68 Gaul, *Thomas Magistros*, pp. 330–337, and (in summary) pp. 406–407 (quotations on p. 406).

69 Angelov (as above n. 66); Gaul, *Thomas Magistros*, pp. 330, 333, 406.

70 On Irene, see *PLP* no. 10935, Nicol, *Lady*, pp. 71–82, Melichar, “Imperial Women”, pp. 107, 119–120 and 122; on John VI, *PLP* 10973; on Matthew, *PLP* no. 10983.

71 Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantine History*, ed. Schopen, II, = XVI, Ch. 3, §§ 1–5, pp. 804, 13–813, 6. Irene’s speech: pp. 805,23 – 812,23, the integrated mirror for princes: pp. 807,14 – 812,19. German: Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantine History*, trans. Van Dieten, III, pp. 180–85; Irene’s speech: pp. 181 (§4)–85, the integrated mirror for princes: 182,6–185. On Gregoras and his work, see *PLP* no. 4442, Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, pp. 453–56; most recently Kolo-
vou, *Geschichtskonzeption und Phantasie*.

72 On Irene’s speech, see Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantine History*, trans. Van Dieten, III, pp. 4 and 6; Nicol, *Lady*, pp. 71–81, at 75–6; id., *Reluctant Emperor*, pp. 88–89 and Melichar, “Imperial Women”, p. 120.

The mirror for princes (A 8) of the eminently learned Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425), however, was probably written in the period 1406–1413 and addressed to his son John VIII (co-emperor from before 1407 to October 1422, sole emperor from 1425 to 1448); it was the last to follow gnomic form with an acrostic arrangement. Consisting of 100 chapters, it is titled *Hypothekai basilikes agoges* (“Foundation of Imperial Conduct”)⁷³ and is the only Byzantine mirror for princes genuinely written by an emperor for his son.⁷⁴ Remarkably, in the *prooimion* Manuel himself establishes his special authority as an emperor, instructing his son in comparison to other authors not similarly qualified. As to the content of this mirror for princes, the emperor here consciously refers to the doctrines of virtue of ancient models and only marginally deals with concrete problems, apart from a concern for health and with the relationship of the emperor to the church, which is mentioned here for the first time in two chapters (11 and 12). Thus, his text of advice has several theologically influenced statements in which he discusses free will (ch. 3, 26, 28, 68), original sin, baptismal grace (27) and the vanity of all earthly things (62–65). He also considers people to be slaves to sin (29) and calls for a study of conscience (41).⁷⁵

Concluding this series of independent mirrors for princes is, as Antonia Giannouli has shown, a discursive mirror for princes whose title *Basilikos e peri basileias* (A 9) links it to the mirrors for princes of Blemmydes and Synesios. Its author, John (Ioannes) Argyropoulos (c. 1415–1487), a philologist, teacher, and humanist from Constantinople,⁷⁶ composed and gave this text as a speech to Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos (1448–1453),⁷⁷ after the ruler had travelled from his coronation in Mistras to Constantinople, arriving there on 12 March 1449.⁷⁸ But it is unclear on what occasion Argyropoulos spoke. Because of its

73 See the edition in *Patrologia Graeca* 156, col. 320–84 (text of the *editio princeps* by J. Leunclavius). On the dating, see Païdas, *Δύο Κείμενα*, pp. 31–32 (with dating of December 1399 to June 1403), and Giannouli, “Paränese”, p. 119, n. 1 (without explanation); Barker, *Manuel II*, pp. 344–345, n. 84, refers to 1406 (after older models); Leonte, *Visions*, pp. 126–127. On Manuel II, see also *PLP* no. 21513; Prinzing, “Manuel II”, and Çelik, *Manuel II*; on John VIII, *PLP* no. 21481.

74 *Patrologia Graeca* 156, col. 316 B–317 C. On that: Giannouli, “Paränese”, pp. 119–121; Leonte, *Visions*, pp. 124–160 (and Index); Çelik, *Manuel II*, pp. 319–330.

75 On the content, see Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, pp. 164–165 (also on the reception); Schmalzbauer, “Fürstenspiegel”, col. 1055; Pertusi, *Il pensiero*, pp. 270–272; Angelov, *Ideology*, p. 391; Giannouli, “Paränese”, pp. 120–121, 126–127.

76 On John Argyropoulos, see Talbot, “Argyropoulos, John”, in *ODB* 1 (1991) pp. 164–165; Fyrigos, “Johannes Argyropoulos”, in *LThK* 5 (1996), p. 880.

77 Ἰωάννου διδασκάλου τοῦ Ἀργυροπούλου Βασιλικὸς ἢ περὶ βασιλείας πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Κωνσταντῖνον τὸν Παλαιολόγον, in S. Lampros (ed.), *Argyropuleia*, pp. 29–47.

78 Giannouli, “Coronation”, p. 218. On Constantine XI Palaiologos, see *PLP* no. 21500.

paraenetic character, this speech instead represents a mirror for princes rather than a coronation speech, but also includes some features of an encomium.⁷⁹ According to Giannouli, it can be divided into three sections, of which the first two (after the encomiastic introduction) clearly form the mirror for princes; the second part is of a more advisory-reflective nature. The short third section refers to the contemporary situation of the empire. Due to current threats, the “Hellenes” and their “most divine emperor”, in order not to lose their freedom and to ward off attacks of ‘barbarians’, also need the hope of a fortunate outcome, procured by the emperor, with the help of Western allies.⁸⁰

To sum up: This paper deals with mirrors for princes in Byzantine literature from the 4th to the 15th century, despite the increasing tendency in scholarship to deny their (and their genre’s) existence. Accordingly, keeping pragmatically to the traditional view that any text of advice, directly addressing a ruler and aiming at his instruction on state affairs, could rightly be classified as a mirror for princes, a fresh look through the sources was carried out in search of corresponding texts. It led to the result that at least there in fact exist 20 mirrors for princes, even if none of them has this explicit heading. In addition, these texts of advice can, regarding their way of transmission, be divided in nine independent mirrors for princes (A 1–9) and eleven so-called integrated ones (B 1–11); they are embedded in texts of different content. (Apart from this, it confirms Hunger’s observation that one can distinguish between two groups of mirrors for princes regarding their different literary design, those which are characterized as gnomic by their structure and formal particularities and those which are stylistically discursive texts). The respective number mentioned of both groups (A/B), however, is not a fixed quantity. Rather, this could perhaps be further enlarged by the inclusion of texts previously known, but not yet considered (also for instance by newly discovered or hitherto overlooked texts).⁸¹ However, regarding their quality, it remains to be stated that, although the Byzantine mirrors for princes were traditionally aimed at strengthening the moral self-discipline of their addressees, they vary noticeably in terms of form and

79 Giannouli, “Coronation”, pp. 217–221. See also Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, p. 63.

80 The sections are distributed as follows: *Argyropuleia*, ed. S. Lampros, pp. 29, 1–31, 9 (encomiastic prefix); 31, 10–38, 14 (mirror for princes, part 1); pp. 38, 14–44, 19 (mirror, part 2); pp. 45, 1–47, 18 (part 3): see Giannouli, “Coronation”, p. 219.

81 Not included here were the parts of mirrors for princes in the works “Barlaam and Joasaph”, “Stephanites and Ichnelates”, “Syntipas”, and others, mentioned already in Prinzing, “Beobachtungen”, pp. 5–6 and 27 (note 73); see in addition id. “Review Païdas”, p. 294, n. 6 (reference to Manuel II’s writing *Peri gamou*) and id., “Review Odorico [2009]”, p. 267, n. 3 (reference to the integrated mirror for princes in the Life of St Euphrosyne). As to “Stephanites and Ichnelates” see now Niehoff-Panagiotidis, “The Pancatantra”.

content, often in innovative ways. Not infrequently, they refer to particular circumstances of the time of their composition.⁸²

Translated by Leo Ruickbie

Abbreviations

LMA	Lexikon des Mittelalters
LThK	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche
ODB	Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium
PLP	Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit
PmbZ	Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit

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⁸² See Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, pp. 196–197 and 200.

⁸³ The following list of editions of primary sources and their translations is not exhaustive. It is easy to find additional information in Wolfgang Schule, *Bibliographie* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

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The Conception of Power in Islam: Persian Mirrors of Princes and Sunni Theories (11th–14th Centuries)

Denise Aigle

Treatises on the art of governance (“mirrors for princes”) form one of the branches of the *Adab al-mulūk* (“manner(s) or custom(s) of kings”) that were immensely popular in medieval Islam. “Royalty is a pedagogy”,¹ hence the importance of this literary genre in many cultural universes.² In the Latin West, these texts are intended to convey the ideal image of the good prince and are often designated by the generic term *speculum regis* or *speculum principum*. Islam draws on the notion of “counsels for kings” (*naṣīḥat al-mulūk*) or “ways (or conduct) of kings” (*siyar al-mulūk*).³ Yet the idea remains the same: this literature has an ethical and moral function. The pertinence of this connection is attested by Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, author of a mirror for princes entitled “Wisdom of Royal Glory” (*Kutadgu bilig*).⁴ Composed in Kashgar in 1069, this text was written in the Turkic language of the stelae,⁵ which had been erected on the banks of the Orkhon River in Mongolia from the 8th century.⁶ Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib thus writes: “A loyal man may serve one as a mirror: by regarding him one may straighten one’s habits and character”.⁷

1 This expression is used by Christian Jambet, “Idéal politique et politique idéale selon Nasīr al-Dīn Tūsī”, in *Nasīr al-Dīn Tūsī. Philosophe et savant du XIII^e siècle*, eds. N. Pourjavady and Z. Vesel (Teheran, 1997), p. 52.

2 On the cultural aspect of mirrors for princes beyond the Islamic world, see Robert Dankoff, “Introduction”, in *Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig). A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, trans. with an introduction and notes R. Dankoff (Chicago/London, 1983), pp. 4–8; *Global Medieval Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered*.

3 See Louise Marlow, “Advice and Advice Literature”, in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, 3rd ed., pp. 34–58; “Adab al-mulūk”.

4 The term *qut* means royal charisma and *bilig* wisdom, hence the title of this work, which became a monument of Turkic literature in the 11th century.

5 Here, I utilise the term “Turkic” to avoid ambiguity with the word “Turkish” in reference to the language spoken in Turkey in contrast to the different Turkish languages of medieval Central Asia.

6 These stelae, erected in the cradle of the ancient Turkic khanates, describe the divine origin of the khans, their wisdom, and the glory of their great ancestors.

7 *Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu bilig)*, p. 222. The Qarakhanid Turks converted to Islam in the mid-10th century. The book is dedicated to the prince Tavghach Bughra Khan; see Robert Dankoff, “Inner Asia Wisdom Traditions in the Pre-Mongol Period”, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981), pp. 25–41.

1 Cultural Context

Mirrors for princes were highly popular in the Iranian world. This moral literature of Persian expression takes the form of collections of advice (Persian, *andarz, pand*; Arab, *naṣīḥa*) or a “testament” (*wasīyya*) transmitted from father to son or from an older person to a younger one.⁸ Yet this literary genre can also be expressed as a treatise, which, along with describing the conduct of the ideal prince, develops a theory of good governance.⁹ This most often involves three aspects: the issue of personal ethics, the management of the household, and the governance of subjects. All mirrors for princes stress the moral qualities to which a sovereign should aspire; all use proverbs, aphorisms, and anecdotes to illustrate the words of the author; and all draw on written authorities, whether religious or not. Princely advice literature developed in Iran well before the arrival of Islam, and it is evident that in many cases, the Persian tradition of mirrors for princes is indebted to this pre-Islamic heritage expressed in the wisdom literature of the Sassanid period.

The majority of these ancient wisdom books were transmitted in Arabic and Persian during the Islamic period. Muslim historians also spread the concept of Sassanid royalty by providing rulers with models of conduct drawn from ancient history. Claude Cahen wrote in 1977: “In this respect, history is a variant of these mirrors for princes from the Persian tradition, which, reciprocally, borrowed materials from it.”¹⁰ Indeed, the chroniclers inserted real mirrors for princes into their writings. In relation to such a sovereign, they detailed the qualities required to be a good prince, or on the contrary, the flaws disqualifying him from the exercise of the royal function. The influence of this ethical

8 Clifford E. Bosworth, “An Early Arabic Mirror for Princes: Tāhir Dhû l-Yamînain’s Epistle to his Son ‘Abdallāh (206/821)”, in *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies* 29 (1970), pp. 25–41; Muḥammad, Nazim, “The *Pand-Nāmāh* of Sebuktegîn”, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1933), pp. 605–628.

9 For an overview of Mirrors for Princes, see Heribert Busse, “Fürstenspiegel und Fürstenethik”, in *Bustan* 9/1 (1968), pp. 12–19; Ann K.S. Lambton, “Islamic Mirrors for Princes”, in *La Persia nel medioevo* (Rome, 1971), pp. 419–442; Dimitri Gutas, “Ethische Schriften im Islam”, in *Orientalisches Mittelalter*, ed. W. Heinrichs (Wiesbaden, 1990), pp. 346–365; Stefan Leder, “Aspekte arabischer und persischer Fürstenspiegel: Legitimation, Fürstenethik, politischer Vernunft”, in *Specula principum*, ed. A. de Benedictis (Frankfurt, 1999), pp. 21–50; Neguin Yavari, *Advice for the Sultan. Prophetic Voices and Secular Politics in Medieval Islam* (Oxford, 2014).

10 Claude Cahen, “Notes sur l’historiographie dans la communauté musulmane idéale”, in *Revue des études islamiques* 13 (1977), p. 82.

and moral literature also emerges in the monumental epigraphy, which frequently describes the qualities of a good prince.¹¹

As may be expected, the authors of mirrors for princes all belong to the learned class. Princes themselves, chancellery employees, philosophers, religious scholars, and Sufis composed texts of varying lengths in this literary genre. The works predating the 13th century have attracted much scholarly attention compared to the later texts, with the most important being edited, often translated, and annotated. Nevertheless, the notable treatise of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī (d. 1274) entitled “Ethics dedicated to Nāṣirī” (*Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*)¹² has been the subject of very few studies, despite being the model for numerous later texts.¹³ Some treatises written in the post-Mongol period have been studied by scholars, but many only possess a single manuscript, thus attesting to their limited circulation with a few exceptions.¹⁴ For Louise Marlow, this lack of interest in mirrors for princes composed after the 13th century is probably due to the fact that the political ideas expressed therein and the anecdotes used to illustrate the authors’ words are mere commonplaces borrowed from earlier works. Indeed, these texts include scarce information on their period of composition.¹⁵

Three types of texts may be distinguished. Firstly, mirrors for princes composed by religious scholars present the manner of governance based on a formulation that is closely related to the founding principles of Islam. They express a political ideal founded on the Quranic verses connected with political thought, the “deeds and sayings” (*hadiths*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, the practices of the early Islamic community, and the interpretation of the ancient sources in light of later political developments. These interpretations are reinforced by the dogma of the “divine guidance” of the community by the caliph

11 This is the case of the inscriptions preserved on diverse monuments in Iran. See Sheila Blair, “The epigraphic program of the tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya: meaning in Mongol architecture”, in *Islamic Art* 2 (1987), pp. 43–96.

12 This work, completed in 1235, is dedicated to its patron, a dignitary of Qūhīstān.

13 On this text, see Charles-Henri Fouchécour, *Moralia. Les notions morales dans la littérature persane du III^e–IX^e au VI^e/XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1986), pp. 444–447; Jambet, “Idéal politique et politique idéale”; Maria Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin. Aspect de l’histoire culturelle de l’Iran médiéval* (Studia Iranica) Cahier 28 (Paris, 2002), p. 57.

14 For example, the treatise of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī entitled *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (written between 1467 and 1477) and the famous *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī* composed in Herat by Husayn Wā’iz al-Kāshifī (d. 1504–1505); see Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin*, pp. 60–65.

15 Louise Marlow, “The Way of Viziers and the Lamp of Commanders (*Minhāj al-wuzarrā’ wa-sirāj al-umarā’*) of Ahmad al-Isfahbadhī and the Literary and Political Culture of Early Fourteenth-Century Iran”, in *Writers and Rulers. Perspectives on Their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times*, eds. B. Gruendler and L. Marlow (Wiesbaden, 2004), p. 171.

(or imam) and the infallibility of the consensus of religious scholars, *ijmāʿ*, a term derived from an Arabic root signifying “to bring together”. In the early 11th century, this theory was developed by al-Māwardī in his legal treatise *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*.¹⁶ Secondly, in the Iranian world, the Islamic formulation of mirrors for princes was not the primary focus, as certain authors sought to incorporate the Sassanid tradition of royalty into the Islamic norms by emphasizing the “divine law” of the king. To govern well, the prince had to possess an essential virtue, notably wisdom; he had to rely on justice rather than the “true religion” (*dīn al-ḥaqq*), that is to say, Islam. Finally, a third category of authors is inspired by both the Sassanid tradition and Greek philosophy: the chief of the Islamic community is thus identified as the “philosopher king”. According to this conception of power, wisdom is placed above the sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad.¹⁷

After presenting the features of the princely advice literature from the Sassanid period in light of its considerable influence over the following centuries, I will examine a few mirrors for princes composed in medieval Iran and considered milestones in this school of thought. I will then show how, depending on the historical circumstances, the political thought of mirrors for princes evolved in relation to the much-debated issue of the relation between the power of the caliph and that of the sultan who became the true leader of the Muslim community from 11th century onwards.

2 The Tradition of Ancient Persia

2.1 *The Wisdom Books of the Sassanid Tradition*

In the majority of wisdom books from the Sassanid period, it is said that every king should be advised by a wise figure, most often his minister. These texts were transmitted in Arabic between the 9th and 11th centuries and then in Persian, notably in the “Book of kings” (*Shāh-nāmāh*), the great versified epic completed by Firdawsī in 1010. This tradition is dominated by two sovereigns recognized for their ability to govern well. Firstly, Khusraw Anūshīrvān (r. 531–579) established administrative measures in his kingdom, which contributed to the renown of his justice in the later tradition. In the justice of the

16 See below.

17 Jambet, “Idéal politique et politique”, p. 45; see also Ann K.S. Lambton, “Islamic Political Thought”, in *The Legacy of Islam*, eds. J. Schacht and C.E. Bosworth (Oxford, 1974), 404–424. Reimpr. in *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government* (London, 1980), p. 404.

prince thus lies the principle of a country's prosperity. Khusraw Anūshīrvān ends his life as a sage, as he was well advised and instructed by his minister Buzurgmihr, who helped him understand that the force of man resides in his knowledge derived from wisdom.¹⁸ Secondly, Ardashīr (r. 224–241) plays a considerable role in mirrors for princes. He represents the royal model par excellence, because he has the three key qualities required to exercise the princely function: he is of noble lineage, has exemplary conduct, and aspires to promote knowledge. Like Khusraw Anūshīrvān, Ardashīr was also advised by a sage.¹⁹ However, as shown by Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, many texts under his authority were composed in different periods and under different political and cultural conditions, thus developing what is known as the “*Ardashīrian*” tradition, centered on the “model king” no longer assisted by advisors.²⁰

2.2 *The Sassanid Conception of Royalty*

In Sassanid Persia, the king ruled by divine law. The gift that accompanies God's granting of royalty is royal glory (*farr-i īzādī*). Religion and royalty are thus interlinked. Al-Mas'ūdī, an Arabic chronicler from the 10th century, is the author of a work entitled “The Prairies of Gold” (*Murūj al-dhahab*). He attributes the following words to the founder of the Sassanid dynasty: “Religion and royalty are twin sisters; one cannot exist without the other. Religion is the foundation of royalty, and royalty is the protector of religion”.²¹ In the Sassanid empire, the royal institution is thus guaranteed by its divine origin. The union between religion and royalty is constitutive of society, which is divided into four classes: men of religion, men of the sword, men of the quill, and men of affairs.²² As the founder of order and the source of prosperity, the good king must reprimand disorder, even by blood; he must ensure that everyone stays in the place assigned by the social order. This Sassanid conception of royalty is easily adapted to the medieval Persian theory of government.

Firdawsī included the notion of royal glory (*farr-i īzādī*) in his “Book of kings” (*Shāh-nāmah*). In this major text of Persian culture, the elect of God is split into two categories: prophets whose mission is to lead men to Him and

18 *Moralia*, p. 56.

19 *Moralia*, p. 84.

20 On this Persian wisdom literature, refer to *Moralia*; see Khusraw Anūshīrvān, pp. 38–58; Buzurgmihr, pp. 58–67; Ardashīr, pp. 84–100.

21 Ann K.S. Lambton, “Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship”, in *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), p. 96.

22 On the structure of Iranian society in the Islamic period, see Ann K.S. Lambton, “Islamic Society in Persia”, in *An Inaugural Lecture. School of Oriental and African Studies* (London, 1954), pp. 3–32; *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia*, pp. 221–246.

kings who maintain order among humans by acting with justice. Royalty is thus raised to the level of prophecy.²³ By evoking the heroic imagery of ancient Persian, the *Shāh-nāmāh* arouses national Iranian feelings. From the 11th century, this text had a remarkable influence. Firdawsī's long poem crystallized the collective identity of Iranians, since the cyclical vision of history presented in this royal epic allowed Iranians to interpret the different phases of the country's tumultuous history unravelling before their eyes throughout the Middle Ages. In many ways, the *Shāh-nāmāh* is the mirror in which princes as well as Iranian society as a whole contemplated themselves over the centuries.²⁴

The *Shāh-nāmāh* provided the authors of mirrors for princes with a collection of exempla to illustrate the various types of good governance. They dotted their texts with citations and maxims attributed to the great figures of ancient Persia. The Muslim tradition, which accorded great importance to the hadiths of the Prophet Muḥammad, was used to supplement the words of the ancients. However, while the authors of mirrors for princes could adapt the words of ancient Persian sages to the historical circumstances of their time, they were forced to respect the exact formulation of the Prophet's words according to the criteria chosen by religious scholars for the written recording of hadiths.

3 A Few Milestones in the Tradition of Persian Mirrors for Princes

3.1 *Beginnings*

The first medieval theories of governmental ethics in the Iranian world figure in works composed in Arabic from the 8th century.²⁵ Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 757) converted to Islam and spent his career in the service of the chancellery of the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 754–775).²⁶ He made a substantial contribution to the genesis of the literature of *Adab al-mulūk*. Ibn al-Muqaffa' not only translated

23 *Moralia*, p. 397.

24 Julie S. Meisami, "Le *Shāh-nāma* as Mirror for Princes. A Study in Reception", in *Pand-o sokhan*, eds. Ch. Balay, Cl. Kappler and Z. Vesel (Teheran, 1995), pp. 265–273. See also Assadullah S. Mélikian-Chirvani, "Conscience du passé et résistance culturelle dans l'Iran mongol", in *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. D. Aigle (Teheran, 1995), pp. 135–177; Assadullah S. Mélikian-Chirvani, "Le Livre des Rois, Miroir du destin", in *Studia Iranica* 17 (1988), pp. 7–46. On the importance of the *Shāh-nāmāh* in iconography, see the recent work of Anna Caiozzo, *Le roi glorieux. Les imaginaires de la royauté d'après les enluminures du Shāh Nāma de Firdawsī aux époques timourides et turkmène* (Paris, 2018).

25 On Arabic mirrors for princes, see Gustav Richter, *Studien sur Geschichte der älteren arabischen Fürstenspiegel* (Leipzig, 1932); Dimitri Gutas, "Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature: Nature and Scope", in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981), pp. 49–86.

26 Francesco Gabrieli, "Ibn al-Mukaffā", in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, pp. 907–909.

Middle Persian materials into Arabic but also authored several short opuscles on governmental ethics, with the most famous being the *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*. This work is considered to be one of the oldest mirrors for princes of the Islamic tradition.²⁷ Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ advised the caliph to proceed with the codification of laws in his kingdom in order to unite the different parts of the umma under his authority. Royalty, he explains, is founded on religion, because it is the best means to govern well. The competent sovereign is endowed with knowledge; his subjects owe him obedience. As observed, the ideal of the Sassanid monarchy is visible in the theory elaborated by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ.²⁸

The “Book of the Crown” (*Kitāb al-Tāj*), known under the title of *Kitāb al-Tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk* and traditionally attributed to Jāḥiẓ (d. 868), was penned, rather, by Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī (d. 864).²⁹ The *Kitāb al-Tāj* predominantly comprises materials relating to the Sassanid court and anecdotes reiterated in later texts. The author explains that the sovereign governs by divine delegation. The justice of the prince involves ensuring each individual’s status in society. Here again, the Sassanid theory of royalty is clearly attested. Yet this text also conveys the idea of the shepherd-king and his flock, or in other words, his subjects. This comparison emerges in the hadiths of the Prophet Muḥammad who said: “The imam in charge of people is their shepherd, and every shepherd is responsible for the flock he has under his command”.³⁰ The idea of the shepherd-king and his flock is adopted by the authors of mirrors for princes who were influenced by Sufism, but it is also found in the short treatises on governmental ethics inserted into diverse historical sources.³¹

3.2 *Major Works of the Persian Tradition (10th to 12th Centuries)*

The most famous mirrors for princes of the Persian tradition were composed by authors from different intellectual circles between the 10th and 12th centuries. The oldest text is the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Pseudo-Māwardī. This Arabic mirror, preserved in a single manuscript, was long attributed to Abū l-Ḥasan

27 This text is presented by Erwin I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 69–74; Ann K.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (London, 1981), p. 54; Marlow, “Advice and Advice Literature”, pp. 38–39; “Adab al-mulūk”, online.

28 Lambton, “Justice in the Medieval Persian”, p. 98; “Islamic Political Thought”, pp. 408–409.

29 See Gregor Schoeler, “Verfasser und Titel des Jāḥiẓ zugeschrieben sof. Kitāb al-Tāj”, in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 130 (1980), pp. 217–215.

30 These words of the Prophet Muḥammad are found in the main collections of hadiths.

31 On these treatises, see Ann K.S. Lambton, “Changing Concepts of Justice and Injustice from the 5th/11th Century to the 8th/14th Century in Persia”, in *Studia Islamica* (1988), pp. 45–60.

‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī (974–1058). However, Louise Marlow, who translated and commented the text, demonstrated that this *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* was composed during the first half of the 10th century.³² The author did not reside in a single religious milieu, as he often makes reference to “all religious communities” and highlights the contrast between “our milla” and others.³³ The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* was composed, apparently not upon request, for the Samanid sovereign Naṣr II b. Aḥmad (r. 914–943), but it was also addressed to a regional or local audience.

The *Qābūs-nāmah* (ca. 1082) was composed by Kāy Kā’ūs b. Isfandyār, the second-to-last prince of the Ziyarid dynasty of Gilān, for his son Gilān-Shāh. The text was written on the eve of the dynasty’s overthrow by the Seljuqs.³⁴ The *Qābūs-nāmah* is often considered to be the first Persian mirror for princes. In the text, however, Kāy Kā’ūs gives little emphasis to the princely function and the theory of power. His preoccupations lie elsewhere: advising his son so that he will act as a moral man in relation to God, his family, and others. He explains the rules to respect in society and lists the professions that an honorable man can exercise, depending on the vicissitudes of history. The *Qābūs-nāmah* was a major source of inspiration for later Persian moral literature.³⁵

The famous Seljuq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092) is the author of “The Book of Conduct Observed by Princes” (*Siyar al-mulūk*).³⁶ Niẓām al-Mulk lived in a period marked by the beginning of the political disintegration of the Abbasid caliphate. As the vizier of the Seljuqs, Niẓām al-Mulk played an important role in the new division of power between the caliph and the sultan by introducing new administrative practices.³⁷ His authority under Alp Arslan

32 Louise Marlow, “A Samanid work of counsel and commentary: The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Pseudo-Māwardī”, in *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 45 (2007), pp. 181–192, as well as her contribution in this volume. She translated and commented the text in *Counsel for Kings: Wisdom and Politics in Tenth-Century Iran*.

33 Marlow, “A Samanid Work of Counsel and Commentary”, pp. 182–183.

34 Clifford E. Bosworth, “Kay Kā’ūs b. Iskandar”, in *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 4, pp. 847–848.

35 *Moralia*, pp. 179–222.

36 This mirror for princes is also known under the title of *Siyāsat-nāmah*; see the discussion on the title in *Moralia*, p. 384. English Translation: *The Book of Government or Rulers for Kings*. On this text, see the analyses of Marta Simidchieva, “Kingship and Legitimacy in Niẓām al-Mulk’s *Siyāsatnāma*, Fifth/Eleventh Century”, in *Writers and rulers. Perspectives on Their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times*, eds. B. Gruendler and L. Marlow (Wiesbaden, 2004), pp. 97–131; cf. also *Moralia*, pp. 381–389.

37 On the role of Niẓām al-Mulk in the Seljuq administration, see Clifford E. Bosworth, “Saldjūkides”, in *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 8, p. 941; Julie S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 271, n. 9.

(r. 1063–1072) was such that the Seljuq regime was known as the “era of Niẓām al-Mulk” (*al-dawlat al-niẓāmiyya*).³⁸ He subsequently became the model of the ideal vizier, capable of upholding Persian culture with a sovereign of nomadic origin. Even Niẓām al-Mulk himself contributed to forging this identity as a symbol of good governance.³⁹

In 1086, the sultan Malik-Shāh (r. 1073–1092) asked his minister to prepare a manual of good governance, which included the qualities necessary for kings to rule with justice and maintain political stability.⁴⁰ This work is essentially composed of maxims and anecdotes that serve to illustrate the author’s statements about the exercise of power and morality. The ideal models used as examples are taken from the *Shāh-nāmāh*, but he also mentions the sovereigns who brought glory to the Iranian dynasties by establishing their political autonomy in relation to the caliph: the Samanids (819–1005), Buyids (932–1062), and Saffarids (967–1221). After the Prophet Muḥammad, the Turkic sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna (r. 998–1030) is the most cited figure. In the Muslim tradition, he is presented as a soldier of faith (*al-ghāzī*) in the image of the Prophet, because he extended the frontiers of Islam to India where Persian culture then spread.

The history of the *Siyar al-mulūk* is linked to the political career of its author. The work was composed in two phases of his life.⁴¹ He initially wrote the first thirty-nine chapters between 1086 and 1091. Probably towards the end of 1091, just prior to his deposition as vizier and subsequent execution, Niẓām al-Mulk revised the text: “Because of the constant anxiety that was in his mind on account of the enemies of this dynasty he added another eleven chapters”.⁴²

Niẓām al-Mulk writes: “In each century, the Almighty chooses among His people a man whom He adorns with all the royal virtues (...); He entrusts him with the affairs of this world, the care of His servants’ rest; (...) so that his subjects, living under the protective refuge provided by his justice, may enjoy complete security”.⁴³ According to Niẓām al-Mulk, religion and royalty are interdependent and inseparable. The absence of one irreversibly leads to

38 Simidchieva, “Kingship and Legitimacy in Niẓām al-Mulk’s *Siyāsatnāma*”, p. 98.

39 Neguin Yavari, *The Future of Iran’s Past: Nizām al-Mulk Remembered* (London, 2018), chap. 3–5.

40 N. Yavari recently worked on *Niẓām al-Mulk and the Siyar al-mulūk*; see the entries “Neẓām al-Molk” and “Siar al-Moluk”; *Advice for the Sultan*, pp. 18–23; *The Future of Iran’s Past*.

41 The first part is constituted of thirty-nine chapters; see Simidchieva, “Kingship and Legitimacy in Niẓām al-Mulk’s *Siyāsatnāma*”, p. 99. On the stages of its composition, see idem, “*Siyāsat-nāme Revisited: The Question of Authenticity*”, pp. 657–674.

42 Yavari, *Advice for the Sultan*, p. 29.

43 *The book of Government or Rulers for Kings. The Siyāsat-nāma or Siyar al-Mulūk of Niẓām al-Mulk*, trans. H. Darke (London, 1960), p. 9.

the corruption of the other. The immediate consequences of such dysfunction manifest by the emergence of religious heresy and rebellions against the sovereign power, which is the worst threat to the royal function. For Niẓām al-Mulk, justice (*ʿadl*) is coupled with coercive force (*siyāsa*), which bears the concrete signification of “correcting” or “physically punishing” in his text. Respect for the religious law designed to engender justice and thus prosperity throughout the kingdom is not natural for humans. Enforcing sharia therefore requires the sovereign to be coercive towards his subjects: he must “prohibit evil and order good”.

The term *siyāsa* is of prime importance in the political advice literature. In medieval times, it held a very precise meaning. The word *siyāsa* is mentioned in a short mirror for princes composed in the first half of the 12th century by Ẓahīrī al-Samarquandī, the head of the chancellery of a Qara Khitai sovereign in Central Asia, a dynasty originating from Northern China. He writes: “The exercise of power (*pādishāhī*) has two distinct parts: the hierarchization of men (*riyāsa*) and the exercise of justice by coercion (*siyāsa*).”⁴⁴ In the *Sindbād-nāmah*, another text dedicated to the same sovereign, Ẓahīrī al-Samarquandī writes in the introduction that the book contains “the basis of the rules of government (*riyāsa*) and the establishment of the principles of power (*siyāsa*), which is the auxiliary of religion.”⁴⁵ The emphasis placed on the hierarchization of men and the usage of coercive force to apply the principles of religion indicates that Ẓahīrī al-Samarquandī sought to combine the Sassanid conception of royalty with Islam.

Chapters forty to fifty of the *Siyar al-mulūk* were compiled after Niẓām al-Mulk had fallen into disgrace. He addresses a message to Malik-Shāh to warn him about the consequences of poor governance. He implicitly accuses him of being incapable of preventing the rise of corruption (*fasād*), sedition (*fitna*), and disorder (*āshūb*), terms that have a strong moral and religious connotation. Niẓām al-Mulk criticizes the Seljuq regime by detailing all the misdemeanors that took place at this time, notably because of the fratricidal rivalries between blood princes.⁴⁶ Despite these trying circumstances, the sultan’s vizier never once authorizes his subjects to revolt, since the choice of whoever exercises power is a divine prerogative. After describing the misery of this period, Niẓām al-Mulk declares: “God will raise a just and able prince and bestow intelligence upon him to put everything back in its place.”⁴⁷

44 *Moralia*, p. 401.

45 *Moralia*, p. 421.

46 *The Book of Government*, p. 143.

47 *The Book of Government*, p. 143.

The *Siyar al-mulūk* is a real mirror for princes; it is entirely centered on the royal function. The prince must be attentive to everything that happens in his kingdom. When distributing the functions of the state, he must be wary of entrusting them to individuals without the moral qualities to assume them.⁴⁸ Though a fervent Sunni, Niẓām al-Mulk develops a vision of power similar to the Sassanid tradition in the *Siyar al-mulūk*. The Seljuq vizier is by no means concerned with the fiction embodied by the institution of the caliphate, stripped of all its temporal prerogatives, at this time, since the effective power lay in the hands of the Turkic sultan. Despite his attachment to Sunni Islam, Niẓām al-Mulk nevertheless drew from the traditions of ancient Persia to contribute towards the good governance of the sultan in whose service he was engaged. The *Siyar al-mulūk* includes a few theoretical perspectives on power in Sassanid Persia, but with an Islamic formulation.

The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) is another important work from this period,⁴⁹ originating from quite a different milieu. Its author was an eminent theologian, jurist, and mystic whose highly original thought was influential in Iran and beyond. He came from Khorasan in eastern Iran, where numerous religious movements were developing at the time. At the request of Niẓām al-Mulk, al-Ghazālī came to Baghdad to teach in a religious school (*al-madrasa al-niẓāmiyya*) founded in the Abbasid capital by the vizier of the Seljuqs.⁵⁰

Charles-Henri de Fouchécour traces the textual history of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*.⁵¹ In reality, it is composed of two distinct parts. While the authenticity of the first section is certain, the same cannot be said for the second, which is essentially a compilation of anecdotes, advice, and maxims borrowed from early writings. The two sections of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* were translated into Arabic as a coherent whole in the 12th century⁵² and were thus considered to be the authentic work of al-Ghazālī. However, a manuscript tradition takes the first section of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* as an independent composition.⁵³ The issue of the authenticity of the second section arises when studying the history

48 *The Book of Government*, p. 13.

49 The English translation of the text is entitled *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*.

50 On al-Ghazālī, see Frank R. Charles Bagley, "Introduction", in *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings (Naṣīḥat al-mulūk)*, trans. F.R.C. Bagley (London, 1964), pp. 1X–LXXIV; William Montgomery Watt, "al-Ghazālī", in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, pp. 1062–1066.

51 *Moralia*, pp. 389–390.

52 The two sections of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* were translated under the title of *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīḥat al-mulūk*. The work is dedicated to the Atabek of Mosul, Alp Qutluğ (d. 595/1199). See *Moralia*, p. 391, n. 104.

53 Cf. the oldest known manuscript dated to 1309; *Moralia*, p. 391, n. 105.

of al-Ghazālī's moral and political thought.⁵⁴ Yet this problem of authenticity is of lesser importance in light of the tradition of mirrors for princes in medieval Persia. It suffices to consider the second section, which we will call the "Pseudo-Ghazālī", as the original work of an anonymous author.

The first section of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* is based on another work of al-Ghazālī, "The Alchemy of happiness" (*Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat*), a Persian adaptation of one of his most famous works in Arabic, "The Revival of the Religious Sciences" (*Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*). This Arabic version did not feature a mirror for princes, but to adapt the text to a Persian context with dominant ethical and moral preoccupations, al-Ghazālī included a short ethical treatise in "The Alchemy of happiness", which served as the basis for the composition of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*.⁵⁵ This text may be considered to be a mirror for princes of Sufi tone, in which al-Ghazālī expounds his reflections on the faith, world, and death. The author's intent is the moral order. In his manner of governance in this world, the prince therefore plays out his eternal salvation or damnation in the hereafter.⁵⁶ He should exercise power according to the sharia but through the intermediary of the ulemas, who become his advisors in this new system, unlike that of Niẓām al-Mulk. Here, the religious scholar replaces the wise advisor of the Sassanid king. In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, the good prince is the "pious and virtuous caliph" epitomized by the caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 717–720).⁵⁷ In this first section of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, the prince upholds his position by exercising justice through the application of the sharia.⁵⁸

The second section of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* or "Pseudo-Ghazālī" is divided into seven chapters. The first is of an unusual length, since it constitutes almost half of the book. The other chapters focus on the offices of vizier and secretary, the notion of royal virtue, the true purpose of the prince, the leading figures of the state, moral maxims, the words of sages, and women.⁵⁹

54 For Ann K.S. Lambton, the two sections of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* were penned by al-Ghazālī; see "The Theory of Kingship in the *Naṣīḥat ul-mulūk* of Ghazālī", in *Islamic Quarterly* 1 (1954), pp. 47–55. On the incorrect attribution of the text to al-Ghazālī, see Patricia Crone, "Did al-Gazālī Write a Mirror for Princes? On the Authorship of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*", in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987), pp. 167–191; Carole Hillenbrand, "Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik? Al-Ghazālī's Views on Government", in *Iran* 26 (1988), pp. 88–94.

55 *Moralia*, p. 389.

56 *Moralia*, p. 359.

57 See Antoine Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir. L'espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides (v. 72–193/692–809)* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 283–320.

58 *Moralia*, pp. 395–396.

59 *Moralia*, p. 396.

In the first section of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, al-Ghazālī views the sultan as the lieutenant (*nāʾib*) of God on earth, while this idea disappears in the Pseudo-Ghazālī. As in the *Shāh-nāmāh*, the gift that accompanies the granting of royalty is royal glory (*farr-i ʾizādī*). The author underlines the coercive duty of the prince, since “tyrannical constraint (*siyāsa*) is preferable to the explosion of people’s violence”.⁶⁰ The term *siyāsa* is related to the word *hayba*, designating the fear inspired by the majesty of the prince. The author of the Pseudo-Ghazālī thus writes: “The greatest bounty after the Islamic faith is bodily health and security. Security derives from the *siyāsa* of the king (...). Nowadays, the prince must possess this severity (*siyāsa*) and majesty (*hayba*), because the people of today are not like those of the past: this era is full of insolent and impolite people”.⁶¹

It is difficult to accept that this second section of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* was penned by al-Ghazālī, as it would attest to the author’s return to the Sassanid theory of the royal function. Indeed, in the first section strongly marked by Islam, al-Ghazālī gives an unprecedented place to the ulemas compared to the earlier mirrors for princes. The author of the second section undoubtedly sought to incorporate al-Ghazālī’s composition into the Iranian tradition and “Persianize”, as it were, his thought on the art of governance.

Until the late 12th century, Persian mirrors for princes, with the exception of the authentic *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of al-Ghazālī, remain faithful to the Sassanid tradition of government wrapped in Islamic guise: the power of divine inspiration, the maintenance of order by coercive force, and the importance accorded to the prince’s advisors. The Persian mirrors for princes thus emphasize the virtues, qualities, and duties of the ideal sovereign. Let us now examine how political theory evolved in Islam in accordance with historical events. Drawing on the mirrors for princes presented above, I will endeavor to contextualize the theories of governmental ethics that emerged with the Sunni theories.

3.3 *Evolution of Political Thought between the 11th and 14th Centuries*

All Islamic political theories stem from the assumption that the government is founded on a contract between God and the Muslim community. Justice (*dār al-ʿadl*) is considered to reign in the Muslim empire (*dār al-islām*), because the prescriptions of the Quran are observed there. According to the Quranic revelation, only the leader of the community, the caliph (or *imām*), who is endowed with specific qualities, is capable of enforcing the sharia. The foundation of the

60 *Moralia*, p. 401.

61 *Moralia*, p. 401.

political structure is the community of believers (*umma*), that is, all the individuals who are connected to one another by the links of religion. The internal organization of the *umma* is defined by the submission to both the sharia and the temporal leader of the community, namely the caliph. This principle finds its scriptural source in the Quranic verse: "Obey God, His Prophet, and those in authority among you".⁶² As can be seen, this conception of power is quite removed from the Sassanid theory despite the clearly defined links between power and religion in the latter.

The first author to put forward a true theory of government, known as the theory of the *imāma*, was al-Māwardī (d. 1058) in his "Principles of government" (*Ahkām al-sultāniyya*).⁶³ This treatise was accepted by Sunni scholars as a "canonical" text. According to the theory of the *imāma*, the caliph should be of Quraysh origin like the Prophet Muḥammad, an adult male, without physical and mental handicap, and courageous so as to lead the holy war or jihad. The caliph should also be endowed with the virtue of justice (*ʿadāla*), that is, a state of impeccable moral and religious perfection. His first function is to judge the acts of his subjects. Yet to assume this fundamental role, he should possess knowledge of the scriptures, which is indispensable for interpreting the sharia. At the time of al-Māwardī's writing, a number of independent powers and rebel groups existed in the *dār al-islām*. The very existence of the caliphate was thus on the verge of becoming a fiction. In his *Ahkām al-sultāniyya*, al-Māwardī attempts to define an ideal Islamic government in which perpetual peace reigns between the members of the universal *umma*. However, the gap between theory and practice is already quite evident.

At the time of al-Ghazālī, the fiction of al-Māwardī's theory was even more apparent. Baghdad had fallen into the hands of the Seljuq Turks, although they were Muslims. Several religious scholars thus claimed that the *imāma* no longer served any purpose in these new political circumstances. Al-Ghazālī rejected this vision: in his view, if the *imāma* disappeared, the Muslim community would no longer exist. According to the theory developed several decades earlier by al-Māwardī, in the absence of *imāms*, the community's religious functions as attested by the existence of the *umma* are suspended: Friday prayer, pilgrimage to Mecca, collection of alms (*zakāt*), holy war

62 Quran, 4:59.

63 Carl Brockelmann, "Al-Māwardī", in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 6, pp. 859–860; Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, pp. 27–37; Henri Laoust, "L'action et la pensée politique d'al-Māwardī", in *Revue des études islamiques* 36 (1958), pp. 11–92. Al-Māwardī is also the author of other treatises, one of the most important being the *Tashīl al-naẓar wa-ta'jīl al-ẓafar*, recently translated and commented by Makram Abbès, *Al-Māwardī. De l'éthique du prince et du gouvernement de l'état* (Paris, 2015)

(*jihād*), and enforcement of the legal punishments prescribed by the Quran.⁶⁴ Al-Ghazālī is pragmatic in his elaboration of a new political theory compatible with the political conditions of the time.⁶⁵ For him, Muslims belong to two different communities: one is religious, based on the Quran and sharia, while the other is political, depending on the secular power. As subjects of the sultan, Muslims are in ephemeral kingdoms, governed by sovereigns without the qualities required to be caliph. Yet the Muslim community needs them to ensure its internal security and deal with external dangers. As a consequence, the guarantors of religion are the ulemas, whose role is to acknowledge and support the power in place. According to al-Ghazālī, a power vacuum would lead to a state of anarchy and prevent the cohesion of the *umma*. To resolve this political issue, al-Ghazālī assigns specific duties to the caliph, sultan, and ulemas. The sultan has the power (*shawqa*) to ensure the security of the *umma*; the caliph offers moral support; and the ulemas express the authority of the sharia. Nevertheless, al-Ghazālī's theory was short-lived. From this time onwards, the caliph no longer held the same institutional power, since the sultan was considered the shadow of God on earth. This major change in the theory of Islamic government contributed to the absolutism of the sultan's power, or perhaps even created it.

A new phase in the evolution of the theory of power in Islam took place in 1258, when the Mongols captured Baghdad and abolished the Abbasid caliphate.⁶⁶ The eastern Muslim empire, the heart of which lay in the Iranian world, fell into the hands of a non-Muslim power. After the 13th century, mirrors for princes and treatises on governmental ethics were still composed in the Iranian cultural area, although lengthy texts no longer emerged. The *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī marks the transition into a new period in the tradition of political advice literature.⁶⁷ Influenced by Greek philosophy, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī draws on concepts inherited from Aristotle, such as the notion of the king as the "wise ruler of the world".⁶⁸ As in the Sunni theories, he stresses that every good prince should be assisted by God, since this is proof of his legitimacy.

64 Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York, 2004), p. 242.

65 On this aspect of his work, see Henri Laoust, *La politique de Ghazālī* (Paris, 1970).

66 The Abbasid caliphate was restored in Cairo by the Mamluk sultan Baybars (r. 1260–1277) for the purpose of political legitimacy. However, devoid of political power, the new caliph held only a symbolic function.

67 Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin*, p. 59. A few short treatises on governmental ethics were also integrated in the historical chronicles; see Marlow, "The Way of Viziers and the Lamp of Commanders" (cf. note 15), especially the summary table, p. 193.

68 Jambet, "Idéal politique et politique idéale selon Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī", p. 41.

After the fall of Baghdad, it is necessary to turn towards Syria to observe the emergence of other theories of government. The famous Hanbali thinker Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) undertook jihad with words and weapons during the final invasions of the Iranian Mongols in Syria (between 1300 and 1304).⁶⁹ Ibn Taymiyya expresses his political ideas in diverse writings.⁷⁰ If religion and political power become separated, so he says, disorder will manifest in the state. This theory is not new: better a bad sovereign than chaos. Indeed, Ibn Taymiyya shows the same political pragmatism as al-Ghazālī more than two centuries earlier. He considers the period of the Prophet and his Companions to be the golden age of Islam, the only time when real political unity reigned in the community. The Hanbali thinker does not plead for notional political unity but for a type of solidarity in which each autonomous power belongs to a greater whole. According to Ibn Taymiyya, the sultan's authority derives from his ability to enforce the canonical obligations. Even an ignorant or unjust sovereign must be obeyed by his subjects, by virtue of the aforementioned Qurānic prescription. There is thus nothing new in this theory, which is merely an adaptation of the historical circumstances in which Ibn Taymiyya was writing. He admits that the Mamluk sultans and their emirs are the true holders of power, especially since they had saved Syria from the Mongol peril by stopping the enemy troops at 'Ayn Jālūt in Palestine in 1260. To some extent, he adopts al-Ghazālī's theory. The emirs possess the power of constraint (*shawq*) and coercive force (*siyāsa*), whereas the ulemas hold knowledge of the scriptures; both groups remain at the service of the sharia. The gap between sharia and *siyāsa* is removed in the very title of his work, "The Book of Legislative Governance" (*Kitāb al-Siyāsat al-shar'īyya*),⁷¹ which is a treatise on the general principles of "divine governance" (*siyāsa ilāhiyya*).⁷² Throughout this text, Ibn Taymiyya emphasises the necessity of coercive power, which is essential to maintain discipline and political order.⁷³ In theory, politics is subordinate

69 At this time, the Mongol sovereigns of Iran converted to Islam, so fighting them posed a legal problem. On this issue and the role played by Ibn Taymiyya, see Denise Aigle, "The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymiyya's three 'Anti-Mongol' Fatwas", in *Mamluk Studies Review* 11/2 (2007), pp. 1–31.

70 In light of the abundant literature on Ibn Taymiyya, refer to the work of Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politique de Takī al-Dīn Ibn Taymīya* (Cairo, 1939). On his political thought, see Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, pp. 143–151.

71 Henri Laoust, *Le traité de droit public d'Ibn Taymīya* (Beirut, 1948).

72 Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, p. 144.

73 Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, p. 145.

to religion, but according to the theory elaborated by Ibn Taymiyya, the reference to the caliphate – though nominally found in Cairo – has now completely disappeared.

The stance that was eventually adopted after the fall of the Abbasid caliphate is summarized in the words of Badr al-Dīn b. Jamā'a (d. 1333), a famous qadi of Damascus and contemporary of Ibn Taymiyya.⁷⁴ He declared: "The sovereign has the right to govern until a stronger one seizes power and governs in his place. Any government, even if there are reasons to criticize it, is better than a power vacuum; it is therefore necessary to choose the lesser of two evils."⁷⁵ The wars opposing Muslims during the first centuries of Islam continued to have a profound effect until the end of the Middle Ages. The fear of political and social chaos considerably influenced the authors of government treatises and mirrors for princes, leading to significant conservatism in the dogmatic political thought of Islam.

4 Summary and Conclusion

Two principal movements emerge from the political advice literature in the Iranian world, barring the more minority or lesser known movements originating from the philosophical and Sufi schools. These visions of governance, one closer to ancient Persian wisdom and the other formulated according to Islamic norms, give rise to four questions in guise of a conclusion. In this tradition of princely ethics, how is the prince's exercise of justice conceived? What attitude should be adopted towards a sovereign who does not respect religious law or is even tyrannical towards his subjects? What is the importance given to the advisors of the sovereign? And, finally, what were the repercussions of the historical evolution of the Iranian world – and more broadly, the Muslim East – on the conception of power in medieval Islam?

The works that have been presented and discussed here are dogmatic texts that express an ideal that is rarely attained in reality. The concept of justice did not have the same significance for the authors of the Sassanid and Islamic traditions. In the former case, the justice of the prince is linked to his wisdom and,

74 Kamal S. Salibi, "Ibn Jamā'a", in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, pp. 771–772; Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, pp. 138–143. Ibn Jamā'a is the author of a government treatise entitled *Taḥrīr al-ahkām fī tadbīr ahl al-islām*, which is quite similar to that of al-Māwardī. It was edited and translated by Hans Kofler, "Handbuch des Islamischen Staats – und Verwaltungsrechtes von Badr-al-Dīn Ibn Gamā'ah", in *Islamica* 6/4 (1934), pp. 349–414; 7/1 (1935), pp. 1–64; Schlussheft (1938), pp. 18–129.

75 Citation taken from Lambton, "Islam Political Thought", p. 415.

above all, to his ability to keep each subject in the place assigned. The sovereign initiates a “circle of justice” that depends on the equilibrium between the different parts of society. In this system of thought, justice – and thus the prosperity of the kingdom – stems from this rigid social equilibrium. This creates, it should be said, a fixed society in which “social mobility”⁷⁶ proves difficult. In the latter case, justice is the reflection of a strict application of the sharia. The duty of the caliph (or sultan), depending on the epoch and the power equilibrium between these two sources of authority, is to enforce religious law in the area under his control. By application of this religious law unifying all members of the *umma*, the Muslim empire, or *dār al-islām*, becomes the empire of justice, or *dār al-ʿadl*. Based on this principle, it is conceivable that the members of the *umma* are not assigned a fixed place in society. However, such an idea does not emerge in texts such as the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* of Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, whose thought was influenced by Greek philosophy and Sassanid Persia. The purpose of the royal function was order (*al-niẓām*), which, as highlighted by Christian Jambet, corresponds to the Greek *nomos*.⁷⁷ The sovereign is the “regulator of the virtuous city-state”. His duty is to “ensure that the four classes of society stay in equilibrium, that everyone maintains his place, and that no one transgresses the limits of his social position”.⁷⁸ According to Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, only an absolute monarch can regulate society and uphold justice by exercising the power of coercion (*siyāsa*), the legitimacy of which is founded on the application of the sharia. The relation thus established between religion and justice conforms to the Sassanid division of society, as reflected in the majority of Persian mirrors for princes. As the Arabic historian al-Masʿūdī remarked in the 10th century, royalty and religion in Iranian Islam are twin sisters, a concept inherited from Sassanid Persia. In practice, however, Islam showed its capacity for enabling a certain social mobility between the different classes. For instance, provided that they possessed the intellectual acumen, religious knowledge, and ability to write in Arabic, Persians of a lower social class could assume a high level of responsibility in the hierarchy of power in the chancellery of the caliph, Turkic sultan, or Mongol khans.

In the Islamic formulation of the theory of government, based on a well-known Qurʾānic verse, any rebellion against a sovereign who does not respect the sharia was prohibited. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, the authors of government treatises dreaded the idea of political, religious, and social chaos. It was therefore necessary to obey the man chosen by God to lead his people.

76 I am aware of the somewhat anachronistic usage of these terms.

77 Jambet, “Idéal politique et politique idéale selon Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī”, p. 52.

78 Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin*, p. 59.

This vision of power is one of the major themes of both Christian and Islamic apocalyptic literature. If God sent a tyrannical and thus unjust sovereign, it was a logical consequence of the poor behavior of the religious community. The tyrannical sovereign is, as it were, an instrument for the redemption of sinners.⁷⁹ A somewhat similar idea is found in the treatises on governmental ethics and the Islamic mirrors for princes, which state that a tyrannical and unjust sovereign should be tolerated without rebellion. But what about the texts influenced by the Sassanid tradition? Is it permitted to revolt against an unjust sovereign? Here, it is also not allowed, because the sovereign is the receptacle of divine glory (*farr-i izadī*). He possesses the majesty that inspires respectful fear. As divine glory was accorded to him, is this not a sign that he, like the prophets, is an elect of God, a sage? Royal charisma – or rather royalty in the Sassanid theory, as illustrated in numerous works on political advice in medieval Iran – allows for no act of rebellion against the holder of power, at least in theory.

In the above discussion, the major role played by the king's wise advisor has been brought to light. In the *Shāh-nāmāh*, Firdawsī develops his reflection on royal wisdom through the model couple formed by Khusraw Anūshīrvān and his minister Buzurgmihr, the two central figures of the “Book of Kings”. When this founding text of Iranian identity was composed, Iran had already been part of the Muslim empire for more than five centuries. However, Persian Islam inherited the Sassanid theme of the king advised by wise men. Is Nizām al-Mulk not the model of the wise vizier as the advisor of a Turkic sultan? This is what transpires in his *Sīyar al-mulūk*, as well as in many historical examples. The idea of the prince's sage vizier is also adopted in the Pseudo-Ghazālī. In a similar vein, al-Ghazālī, widely recognized for his attachment to Islam, retained the Sassanid role of the king's advisor in his theory of power, elaborated in the *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*. Though a fervent Sunni, al-Ghazālī nevertheless remained attached to this tradition of ancient Persia. In his text, the sultan is advised by ulemas rather than sages who give their moral support to the Turkic sultan's choice of caliph. The Seljuq sultans at this time incontestably had the political authority and military strength to protect the subjects of the kingdom. Yet the entire framework introduced by al-Ghazālī is merely a fiction that seeks to provide a response to the new political situation: the de facto submission of the caliphate power to the Seljuq sultanate.

79 Denise Aigle, “Legitimizing a Low-Born, Regicide Monarch: The Case of the Mamluk Sultan Baybars and the Ilkhans in the Thirteenth Century”, in *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission and the Sacred*, eds. I. Charleux, G. Delaplace, R. Hamayon and S. Pearce (Bellingham, 2010), chap. 2, pp. 61–94.

The historical evolution of the eastern part of the Muslim world, with Iran constituting its heart in the broadest sense of the term for several centuries, led to the development of the princely function and the theory of power. After the arrival of the non-Muslim Mongols in the former Abbasid capital, political reflection moved to Syria, which in turn faced a new political situation. However, as in earlier periods during which the caliphate structure was considerably disrupted, the majority of authors adopted the same political pragmatism in relation to the incumbent power. Political theory in medieval Islam, as expressed in the Persian mirrors for princes and dogmatic Sunni works, is marked by considerable conservatism. The sovereign must employ coercive force; it is impossible, at least in theory, to rebel against him, even if he is tyrannical towards his subjects. This submission to a sovereign devoid of cardinal virtues, which any good prince worthy of honoring his function should theoretically possess, undoubtedly led to the absolutism of the sultan's power in the eastern Muslim world.

Translated by Victoria Grace

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Western Medieval *Specula*, c. 1150–c. 1450

Charles F. Briggs and Cary J. Nederman

Up to the present, there have been three avenues adopted by scholars of Western medieval political thought to the study of writings broadly grouped under the umbrella of the so-called “mirror of princes” (or perhaps better termed “political advice”) literature, otherwise known as the *speculum principum*. For reasons that will become evident presently, none of these approaches has proved satisfactory. Our intention in the present chapter is to revisit the premises of these general scholarly orientations in order to offer a reconceptualization of political mirrors in a more capacious yet still cogent manner.

The first deficient approach within scholarship may best be characterized as ignorance or negligence, that is, a complete failure to talk about *specula* as a form of political theorizing at all. Some otherwise very good and widely read surveys of political thought during the Middle Ages are silent concerning mirrors.¹ The rationale for this, explicit or implicit, appears to be that these texts represent nothing other than simplistic and cheap Christian moralizing about the duties of rulers that was sycophantic and certainly unworthy of serious attention by scholars. Mirrors, in other words, lack the substance attached to the “real” contributions to the Western tradition made by the political philosophy of the Middle Ages. Concerning such an attitude of contempt, Bernard Guenée once observed, “It cannot be said that this plentiful literature has often held the historian’s interest. It appears that they have been discouraged from the outset by works thought to be stereotyped and conventional, with no visible relation to concrete political life”.² Guenée insists, however, that this position entirely ignores later medieval political reality, wherein “a whole world of beliefs and convictions” favored the power of a prince “not controlled by institutions”, and where “the only practical obstacle to tyranny was the horror of tyranny inculcated in the ruler himself”.³ In other words, scholars who

1 Alexander James Carlyle and Robert Warrand Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West* (Edinburgh, 1903–1936); Charles H. MacIlwain, *The Growth of Political Thought in the West* (New York, 1932); Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250–1450* (Cambridge, 1992).

2 Bernard Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1985), p. 70.

3 Guenée, *States and Rulers*, pp. 86–87.

circumvent the multiplicity of medieval mirrors introduce an anachronistic standard through which to filter which texts are or are not deserving of our attention.

A line of interpretation that confronts the reality of political *specula* directly identifies a small body of writing as authoritative and for all intents and purposes imputes to all other mirrors secondary or derivative status. Thus, for example, one or more among John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (completed in 1159), the pseudo-Aristotelian Arabic-language *Secretum secretorum* (whose full text was first rendered into Latin by Philip of Tripoli [c. 1230]), Thomas Aquinas' *De regno* (1260s–1274), and Giles of Rome's Aristotelian-inflected *De regimine principum* (c. 1279–1280) are held to constitute the paradigm(s) of princely mirrors characteristic of the Latin Middle Ages. Such tract(s) allegedly inspired numerous imitators who simply ransacked their source(s) in order to suit their authors' own agendas. There are, in other words, a very few established "archetypes" of political *specula* that directed or defined the characteristic features of the form. This approach is evident, for example, in Jean Dunbabin's contribution to the *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought* - the only chapter in that substantial tome that explicitly discusses mirrors of princes in any more than passing reference - in which Giles of Rome plays the role of the "model" that shaped subsequent mirrors of the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁴ It may reasonably be argued, however, that the idealization of a tiny fraction of the mirror literature reflects a certain sort of intellectual laziness, since it absolves scholars from peering carefully into the many writings included under that rubric.

Yet another orientation of scholarship concerning medieval political advice writings advocates the view that mirrors should be treated as a genre rather than a paradigm.⁵ Concentration on a genre-based mode of interpretation

4 Jean Dunbabin, "Government" (1988), pp. 483–89; also Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 63–65; Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought, 300–1450* (London, 1996), pp. 133–34; Steven J. Williams, "Giving Advice and Taking It: The Reception by Rulers of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum* as a *Speculum principis*" (Florence, 2004), pp. 139–80; Francis Oakley, *The Mortgage of the Past: Reshaping the Ancient Political Inheritance (1050–1300)* (New Haven, 2012), p. 2.

5 Consider Michel Senellart's remark that, even though advice manuals contain "une multiplicité non seulement d'arts, de techniques, de systèmes de règles, de modèles d'action, mais aussi de définitions du 'gouvernement'", it remains possible "que l'on peut regrouper en un genre l'ensemble des textes, quelle que soit leur forme littéraire (dialogue, discours, traité, sermon, poème, lettre, etc.), qui instruisent le prince de ce qu'il doit être, savoir et faire pour bien diriger son État": *Les arts de gouverner: du regimen médiéval au concept de gouvernement* (Paris, 1995), p. 45.

comes with its own challenges, however, specifically the problems posed by the determination of what “counts” as a mirror and what does not. In its very meaning, a genre requires both fixed boundaries and the identification of one or more “core” properties. To include particular texts within a genre, a taxonomy or typology must be invoked. In the case of political *specula*, proposed schemes of classification have generated only confusion, engendered by invoking wildly diverging criteria for the necessary and sufficient characteristics of the genre. Some scholars have insisted upon quite stringent standards of inclusion, such that many works customarily regarded as *specula* are eliminated from consideration as such.⁶ Others have acknowledged the “fuzziness” of the borders that distinguish political mirrors strictly speaking from other forms of politically-inclined written expression.⁷ A further strategy has involved limiting attention to a locale and/or period of time in which clear themes and concrete intellectual engagements may be demonstrated.⁸ In light of these circumstances, one should hardly blame scholars who have quite reasonably thrown their hands up in despair. Thus, the editors of a recent volume on the history of the genre of mirrors of princes in the Western world have insisted that writings within the genre should be understood “in a large sense”—even promiscuously—as simply statements “dont la connaissance est considéré par certains auteurs comme nécessaire au prince”.⁹ In effect, a mirror is whatever its author says it is. The introduction to another lately published collection of *speculum*-related essays that covers medieval political advice treatises from around the globe remarks that “mirrors for princes” as a “genre” may only be “loosely defined”.¹⁰ We commend with empathy Matthew Giancarlo’s expressed frustration that “even in a limited accounting the *Fürstenspiegel* appears less as

6 Jean-Philippe Genet (ed.), *Four English Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1977), pp. xii–xiv; Einar Már Jonsson, “La situation du *speculum regale* dans la littérature occidentale” (1987) and “Les ‘miroirs aux princes’: sont-ils un genre littéraire?” (2006).

7 Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des Frühen und Hohen Mittelalters* (Darmstadt, 2006), p. 11; Mohsen Zakeri, “A Proposal for the Classification of Political Literature in Arabic and Persian”, in *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered*, eds. R. Forster and N. Yavari (2015), p. 76.

8 Dora Bell, *L'idéal éthique de la Royauté en France au Moyen Age* (Geneva, 1962); Jacques Krynen, *Idéal du prince et pouvoir royale en France à la fin du Moyen Âge (1380–1440)* (Paris, 1983); Ulrike Grassnick, *Ratgeber des Königs: Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherideal im spätmittelalterlichen England* (Cologne, 2004).

9 *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, eds. F. Lachaudand L. Scordia (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), p. 12.

10 *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered*, eds. R. Forster and N. Yavari (Cambridge, Mass., 2015), p. 1.

a genre and more as a genre of genres".¹¹ Without question, the conceptualization of political *specula* in terms of genre has ultimately generated more problems than it has solved, inasmuch as the varying definitions of it produce another layer of academic conflict that leads away from the investigation of the actual texts at hand.

If it is unsatisfactory for historians of medieval political ideas to ignore mirrors, or to posit the priority of a few paradigmatic examples, or to indulge in interminable disputes over the properties of the genre, then is there some other, more fruitful way to study the topic? We propose an alternative approach that seems to us to avoid the pitfalls of previous interpretive strategies by adapting some useful insights afforded by the twentieth-century Austrian-English philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. One of the central preoccupations of his major work, *Philosophical Investigations*, is the demolition of the (characteristically Platonic) position that words (and attendant concepts) have essences, each with one "true" and precise meaning. He illustrates this by analysis of the noun "game". This word can properly denote a vast range of activities. Can we find a common quality or nature to all games? Games such as chess or baseball, for example, might seem to share the property of winning and losing. A game of ringa-ring-a-roses, however, lacks exactly this characteristic. Wittgenstein's point is that a general word that we might presume to possess one and only one meaning—a single essentiality—turns out to have no such thing. Instead, he says, "We see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail".¹² He calls such networks "family resemblances", in the sense that members of a biological family each have certain common features (nose, chin, eye color, and so on), but none are identical to one or the other parent or sibling.¹³ The word "game", Wittgenstein insists, illustrates just such a family resemblance.¹⁴ And no game is quintessential or archetypal.

We propose to apply Wittgenstein's observation to mirrors, especially insofar as it eliminates the need to contest the "essence" of a genre. Instead, each mirror is unique in terms of authorship, audience(s), locale, and date of composition. No *speculum* is in this sense an unvarnished copy of another. What is true of games is equally valid for moving beyond the probably intractable

11 Matthew Giancarlo, "Mirror, Mirror: Princely Hermeneutics, Practical Constitutionalism, and the Genres of the English *Fürstenspiegel*" (2015), p. 35.

12 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (London, 1968), sec. 66.

13 See Colin McGinn, *Truth by Analysis: Names, Games, and Philosophy* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 15–34. Somewhat digressively, we may note that even identical twins have evident differences, as one of us who is the stepfather to twin boys (Nederman) can attest.

14 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, sec. 67.

debate about the chief properties of the mirror genre: “*Look and see* whether there is anything common to *all*.—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don’t think, but look”.¹⁵ The utility of adopting a Wittgensteinian “family resemblance” perspective for the investigation of Western medieval political mirrors should not be discounted.¹⁶ In the present chapter, we “look” at texts composed during the High and Late Middle Ages that exhibit the sort of similarities and differences that mark *specula* as a family of writings distinct from other families of the era (purely scholastic texts such as commentaries and *quaestiones* and works of political propaganda come to mind). We therefore are able to circumvent the fraught problem of what constitutes the “core” or “ideal” of medieval mirror literature. Our treatment of the topic is freed to travel far and wide throughout the terrain of political thought more generally (another family of a broader sort) dating to the Western Middle Ages. We make no claim to be comprehensive. The instruments of facial recognition remain too unrefined to aspire to that goal.

1 Three Ancestors and a Close Family Friend

It may be surprising, and perhaps a little ironic, to discover that the earliest major exemplars of the medieval political mirror literature from the twelfth century do not in certain ways reflect the main family characteristics of more typical works of advice to secular princes. We have in mind, specifically, Bernard of Clairvaux’s *De consideratione ad Eugenium Papam*, John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*, and Gerald of Wales’s *De principis instructione*. Bernard’s book offers counsel to the Lord of the Church and John’s to courtiers, while Gerald’s is an impassioned assault on the corrupt rule of England of his day. Nevertheless, these writings afford an ancestry that merits our attention, if only to paint a backdrop against which to view later *specula*, whose resemblances are more pronounced.

De consideratione is seldom counted among the political mirrors of the Middle Ages. When studied at all by historians of political thought, the work is

15 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, sec. 66. To be sure, Wittgenstein’s injunction to “look” or to “see” is especially well suited to studying the visually-oriented language associated with the *speculum*.

16 Another effort to apply “family resemblance” in a similar fashion, in this case to medieval popular romances, is afforded by Megan G. Leitch, “‘Of his ffader spak he no thing’: Family Resemblance and Anxiety of Influence in Fifteenth-Century Prose Romance” (2016).

examined for Bernard's influential interpretation of Mark 22:38, which yields the quintessential statement of the so-called theory of the two swords.¹⁷ While certainly an important contribution to medieval political ideas, such attention overlooks the context in which Bernard develops the two swords. *De consideratione* is designed primarily to offer advice to Pope Eugenius III (born Bernardo of Pisa), a Cistercian monk closely connected with Bernard, who ascended to the papal throne in 1145. At the time, the Roman Church was in a state of tremendous upheaval, not least on account of tensions about the extent of the legitimate authority of the pope that spilled over into overt political conflict.¹⁸ Moreover, despite the close relationship between Eugenius and Bernard, the latter evinced serious concern that his associate was not up to the position that had been thrust upon him.¹⁹ These circumstances formed the general context in which *De consideratione* was composed, although its five books appear to have been written over a period of some years.²⁰

Nonetheless, a thematic unity may be observed in the text, namely, the advice that cultivation of personal and spiritual qualities is absolutely necessary for Eugenius to confront and resist the corruption that is everywhere around him: "Dangers are no longer immanent, they are present".²¹ These characteristics include the cardinal virtues in their right ordering,²² as well as humility, which Bernard regards to be the very foundation for virtue.²³ Challenges to the pope's rectitude are found not only in the secular sphere, but also among prelates and clerics who grasp for preferment by means of flattery and hypocrisy.²⁴ As for the laity, he singles out "the Roman people ... unaccustomed to peace, given to tumult; people rough and intractable even today and unable

17 Mary Elizabeth Sullivan, "Verbal Swordplay: The Two Swords as Linguistic Tool in Medieval Political Writings" (2013). It is worthy of note that *De consideratione* is one of the few medieval political texts quoted explicitly and extensively during the following centuries, albeit at times quite critically.

18 Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 205–221.

19 David Luscombe and Gillian Evans, "The Twelfth-Century Renaissance" (1988), pp. 324–325.

20 Luscombe and Evans, "Twelfth-Century Renaissance", p. 325.

21 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione ad Eugenium papam (Five Books on Consideration: Advice to a Pope)*, trans. J.D. Anderson and E.T. Kennan (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1975), I. 13.

22 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione* I.8–10. It is noteworthy that in describing the virtues, Bernard employs the Aristotelian concept of virtue as the mean between two vices, despite the fact that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* would not be available in the West for another century. This was, however, not as odd as it seems. See Cary J. Nederman and John Brückmann, "Aristotelianism in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*" (1983), pp. 203–229.

23 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione* v.32.

24 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione* IV.4.

to be subdued except when they no longer have the means to resist".²⁵ The reference here is presumably to the republican commune at Rome established by Giordano Pierleoni and later under the guidance of Arnold of Brescia. The particular cause advocated by the Romans was the diminution of papal power in general, and especially over the city.²⁶ As a result, Eugenius only inhabited Rome for a few short periods of time. There were many reasons, then, why *De consideratione* leaves the strong impression that avarice and ambition have run so rampant that corruption is ubiquitous. Bernard counsels Eugenius to exercise the strength of personal character—along with submission to God, of course—in order to resist the venality that surrounds him in the papal curia as well as the world at large. The kinship between Bernard's advice and other political *specula* will soon become apparent.

If *De consideratione* has been neglected as a mirror, John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (subtitled *Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*) has long been saddled with the opposite fate, that is, it has been commonly (indeed, almost universally) identified as the first prominent example and earliest paradigm of the *speculum principum*. The classic early twentieth-century interpreters of princely mirrors such as Born, Kleineke and Berges all placed the beginning of the medieval (as distinct from the ancient or Carolingian) tradition firmly on John's doorstep.²⁷ With the exception of a recent essay by Julie Barrau, there has been no concerted challenge to the claim that John was the *terminus a quo* for the many *specula* of the period from the mid-twelfth to the mid-fifteenth century (and beyond).²⁸ But it may reasonably be asked: a mirror for whom? The subtitle of the *Policraticus* as well as the fact that its dedicatee was the English chancellor Thomas Becket and not King Henry II both suggest an intended audience and agenda different from the moral and political education of royalty. Between 1156 and 1159, during which time John composed his treatise, and for roughly a decade before, he served as an administrator at the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury and evidently a close confidant of its incumbent, Theobald.²⁹ Becket had likewise been a part of this courtly circle as well, until his appointment to the chancellorship in 1154. In both his correspondence and in the Introduction to the *Policraticus*

25 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione* IV.2.

26 Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, pp. 406–407.

27 Lester K. Born, "The Perfect Prince: A Study in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Ideals" (1928), pp. 470–504; Wilhelm Kleineke, *Englische Fürstenspiegel vom Policraticus Johanns von Salisbury bis zum Basiliakon Doron König Jakobs I* (Halle, 1937), pp. 23–47; Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Stuttgart, 1938), pp. 40–107.

28 Julie Barrau, "Ceci n'est pas un miroir, ou le *Policraticus* de Jean de Salisbury" (2007).

29 Cary J. Nederman, *John of Salisbury* (Tempe, Ariz., 2005), pp. 2–39.

itself, John clearly states that he has written for people placed in a position similar to his own. His target, arguably, is the corruption that he observes in his ecclesio-political environment.

Careful examination of the overarching structure of the *Policraticus* supports this interpretation. The first book is clearly directed toward courtiers (as well as their master) who devote all of their energy to frivolous pursuits, among them feasting, drinking, hunting, carousing with theatre folk, and generally pursuing fleshly pleasures for their own sake. This is not to say that John renounces these activities out of hand; merely that they should not be the goal of officials, but only an outlet for occasional recreation.³⁰ Book 2 criticizes various occult practices popular at medieval courts.³¹ The third book contains an extensive survey of the forms of ambition and flattery typical of courtly life and a concomitant defense of a Ciceronian-inflected concept of friendship as a shield against such conduct.³² Only when we reach the fourth book does John begin to flesh out some measure of a mirror of princes, enunciating a comparison between the king and the tyrant and formulating a commentary on Deuteronomy in order to educate rulers in the way of life and behavior appropriate to kingly government.³³ This section of the *Policraticus* is ordinarily singled out as the centerpiece of his initiation of medieval princely *specula*. Thereafter John moves on to his famed conception of the body politic, comprising Books 5 and 6.³⁴ He dispenses with the royal “head” in a scant three chapters of the fifth book and devotes the remainder of his quite lengthy discussion to the duties of the other parts of the organism necessary for the common welfare of the whole, returning to the prince only sparingly. Finally, the seventh and eighth books include a truncated history of ancient philosophy, a critique of Epicureanism, and an extended attack on the immoral conduct of monks, clerics and bishops.³⁵ At the close of Book 8, he returns to the king/tyranny distinction and presents an argument for the legitimacy of tyrannicide under highly constrained conditions. To whom is John addressing the *Policraticus*? Given a complete survey of the text, he seems far less concerned with kings per se and far more with their advisors and minions. Of course, the character of the ruler is a significant factor, but his proper instruction and guidance appears to be the main concern of the councilors whom John is primarily addressing.

30 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, trans. J.B. Pike, in *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers* (Minneapolis, 1938), pp. 11–54.

31 John of Salisbury, in *Frivolities*, pp. 55–151.

32 John of Salisbury, in *Frivolities*, pp. 152–212.

33 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, trans. C.J. Nederman (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 27–63.

34 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, pp. 65–143.

35 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, pp. 145–213.

Is the *Policraticus* a *speculum*? Assuredly. Is it a *speculum principum*? At best, only indirectly.

The final ancestral family member of the medieval political mirror literature to be examined in this section of the chapter is *De principis instructione* by Gerald of Wales. Like John, Gerald was a keen observer of the Plantagenet dynasty from a very close proximity. Composed and reworked over a span of time from c. 1190 to c. 1216–17, *De principis instructione* comprises three books.³⁶ The first of these is, as Gerald's modern biographer remarks, "a conventional 'Mirror for Princes' and is largely derivative".³⁷ Indeed, if Gerald had written only book I, this conclusion would be warranted. The initial 21 chapters of *De principis instructione* contain a litany of the moral qualities required of a good prince. Gerald also introduces there the commonplace distinction between king and tyrant as well as a statement about the bad ends to which the latter always comes (probably adapted from the *Policraticus*). The preface to the work, which was evidently reworked, offers an ex post facto quasi-dedication to the French Prince Louis (eventually Louis VIII) that was clearly inserted quite late, suggesting that *De principis instructione* was not initially meant to be addressed to any particular ruler.³⁸ Of greatest importance, however, is that the second and third books—the main body of the text—represent an extended and unremitting condemnation of Henry II and his offspring. No sin or vice is too minor to merit identification and denunciation. When read in its entirety, as Gerald clearly intended, it might be more accurate to characterize *De principis instructione* (in the words of Jean-Philippe Genet) as "plutôt un 'anti-Miroir' qu'un Miroir".³⁹ Or, as Frédérique Lachaud has argued, engaging with the text holistically draws out a sort of originality that distinguishes it from the mainstream of princely mirrors.⁴⁰

Perhaps the most obvious token of the description as an "anti-mirror" is Gerald's repeated and unapologetic branding of Henry and his sons as tyrants.

36 Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales 1146–1223* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 69–70.

37 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, p. 70. Bartlett (*Gerald of Wales*, p. 69) speculates that the first section circulated separately from the latter two, and was then later revised.

38 Gerald of Wales, *De principis instructione*, trans. J. Stephenson, in *Concerning the Instruction of Princes* (Felinfach, Wales, 1992), p. 8. The Stephenson translation contains only the second and third "divisions" (that is, books) of *De principis instructione*. A new critical edition and full rendering into English by Robert Bartlett is now available: Gerald of Wales, *De principis instructione/Instruction for a Ruler*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 2018).

39 Jean-Philippe Genet, "L'évolution du genre des Miroirs des princes en Occident au Moyen Âge" (2003), p. 524 n. 15.

40 Frédérique Lachaud, "Le *Liber de principis instructione* de Giraud de Barry" (2007), pp. 113–42.

To offer a single, although typical, example concerning Henry, taken from the preface to the second book: “after he mounted the throne of the kingdom, whoever saw such a heavy oppressor of the church, so unjust a tyrant to his kingdom, one so obstinate in everything evil?”⁴¹ Henry’s tyrannical character manifests itself most especially in two regards: the assassination of Becket (to which, unsurprisingly, Gerald returns again and again) and the failure to act on his promise to take up the cross and go on crusade.⁴² Nor do Henry’s issue fare any better: the deaths in adulthood of Geoffrey and Henry, the travails of Richard and John, are all recited. *De principis instructione*, at least in the preponderance of its pages, is effectively a chronicle of the misdeeds and missteps of the Plantagenet line up to the end of John’s reign. Why should any of this be relevant to the present discussion? The labeling of contemporaneous (or recently deceased) princes as “tyrants” was rarely (if ever) a feature of royal *specula*. Rulers of old (biblical or pagan) might have been accorded that title in princely mirrors. Certainly, as with the writings of Bernard and John, some resemblances to later *speculum* literature may be observed, but these ancestors are perhaps less recognizable than succeeding generations of such texts.

In coming to terms with the family of mirrors, there were also some writings that might best be described as “friends”. For the most part, these will be addressed in the next section of this chapter. But it is appropriate to discuss briefly one “friend” dating to the later twelfth century that was pillaged almost immediately after its dissemination: a treatise titled *Moralium dogma philosophorum*, the authorship of which has been widely disputed. The *Moralium* was a collection containing snippets of wisdom organized according to theme, derived mainly from pagan Roman philosophers and poets, as well as, on occasion, the Christian Fathers and, even less frequently, scripture. The compiler/author states in the prologue that the intent of the volume is to present the views primarily of that “most eloquent Latin writer Cicero” (and secondarily of the “erudite and most elegant” moralist Seneca).⁴³ The ease with which the *Moralium* provided useful quotes from such important sources effectively assured that it would be widely appropriated by later medieval thinkers in general, but especially authors of princely *specula* (Gerald of Wales, for instance, drew from it in the first book of the *De principis instructione*).⁴⁴ Its structure is built upon two basic pillars. The first arranges the words of its authorities

41 Gerald of Wales, *De principis*, p. 10.

42 On the former point, see Gerald of Wales, *De principis*, pp. 13, 14–15, 16–17, 46, 50, 52, 70, 90, 102; on the latter, pp. 18–19, 20–22, 40–47, 58–63.

43 *Moralium dogma philosophorum*, ed. J. Holmberg (Uppsala, 1929), p. 5.

44 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, p. 70.

around the cardinal virtues and their subcategories.⁴⁵ The second takes up the issue of virtue in general (*honorabilitas*) and its relationship to utility (*utilitas*), which constituted, of course, the central issue posed by Cicero's *De officiis*.⁴⁶ The *Moralium*, it should be noted, was not specifically designed for political use. The moral teachings contained in it were oriented toward guiding the conduct of individuals. It is easy to see, however, how the authors of mirrors could readily convert such ethical maxims into political advice. This is the sense in which we mean that the *Moralium* may be counted as a close friend of the body of royal *speculum* literature.

2 A Growing Family

Mirrors literature underwent two important developments in the middle decades of the thirteenth century. First, the number of works produced increased markedly. Some twenty independent texts were produced which purported to give moral and political advice to rulers, mostly in France but also in Italy, Castile, England, and Norway. Secondly, the decades between 1220 and 1280 were arguably the most creative period for this kind of political literature in Latin Christendom, as several innovative and (for the future) influential works of advice for rulers took their place beside the partial appropriation of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, the most notable being the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum* and a cluster of works by mendicants based in France. Several factors in the broader society and culture contributed to this remarkable acceleration in the output and variety of mirrors. The growing ambitions of states and their rulers, already evident in Plantagenet England and Capetian France during the previous century, grew apace there and elsewhere, while a similar trend towards centralization, standardization, and control was under way in the Church. The demand of both states and the Church for educated specialists, especially in the law and administration, and in the case of the Church for pastors trained in the arts of preaching and confession, stimulated the foundation and growth of universities and the flourishing of the new orders of mendicant friars. Meanwhile at the universities and in the schools of the Franciscans and Dominicans (and, later, the Augustinians), the hitherto "lost" works of Aristotle and his Greek, Muslim, and Jewish commentators were being translated and studied, and these developments, in turn, encouraged a fresh look at the works of Roman antiquity, both pagan and patristic.

45 *Moralium*, pp. 5–52.

46 *Moralium*, pp. 52–71.

The impact of all this on political thought and discourse was enormous, since it not only supplied new language and concepts but also new questions and concerns about the origins, ends, scope, and limits of power in human society.

Although these developments were felt beyond France—and here one thinks of the political advice literature for the *podestà* of northern Italian communes, whose most famous and influential example was Brunetto Latini's *Tresor*, and of the Norwegian-language *Speculum regale* (c. 1260)⁴⁷—all the mirrors written during these years were composed by mendicant friars (and one Cistercian), who directed their mirrors mostly to members of the French royal family.⁴⁸ Indeed the close association of the court of Louis IX, the university, and the convents and schools of the mendicant friars made Paris a virtual factory of mirrors of princes literature. Ultra-pious, moralizing, notably partial to the mendicant orders, and dedicated to a program of wise and just kingship, Louis IX was in truth the “King of the Mirrors of Princes.”⁴⁹ Louis himself authored the *Enseignements* (1267–70) for his heir, the future Philip III, and at least three, and perhaps four mirrors were written for Louis and for members of his immediate family.⁵⁰ Two of the three mirrors unquestionably addressed to the royal family were the work of the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais, who composed *De eruditione filiorum nobilium* for Queen Marguerite and the royal children (1250/1254–60) and *De morali principis institutione* for the king and his son-in-law Thibaut V/II of Champagne and Navarre (1263). The third contribution, by the Franciscan Gilbert of Tournai, was the *Eruditio regum et principum*, completed by him in 1259 and addressed to King Louis. Both Vincent and Gilbert were close associates of the king, and there is every reason to believe that the image of kingship and the moral lessons presented in their mirrors reflected Louis's own sensibilities.

In keeping with this relationship, Gilbert in the *Eruditio* adopts an especially intimate tone, as personal confessor offering counsel and as court preacher

47 Jonsson, “La situation”; Jonsson, “Les ‘miroirs aux princes’”; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 301, 314–317.

48 Although one could arguably also mention here the short verse *Enseignements des princes* of the trouvère Robert of Blois (mid-1200s): Jonsson, “Les ‘miroirs aux princes’”, p. 158; Dominique Boutet, “Le prince au miroir de la littérature narrative (XII^e–XIII^e siècles)” (2007), pp. 143–44, 151.

49 Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, trans. G.E. Gollrad (Bloomington, 2009), pp. 315–340; Jean-Philippe Genet, “Saint Louis: le roi politique” (1998), p. 30.

50 Marie-Geneviève Gossel (“Le miroir au prince de Jean de Limoges (XIII^e siècle)”, pp. 88–91) seems inclined to think Jean de Limoges, OCist, dedicated his mirror, the *Morale somnium Pharaonis*, to Count Thibaut IV of Champagne, king of Navarre, and not to his son, Thibaut V/II of Champagne and Navarre, the husband of Louis IX's daughter Isabelle of France.

delivering instruction and admonition. Throughout, Gilbert speaks in the first person singular and plural, and on occasion he addresses Louis directly: "You request, most gentle lord, that what follows be connected to what preceded; namely that the matter I began might be finished".⁵¹ The *Eruditio* is made up of three "letters" (*epistolae*) to the king, treating in turn, (1) how Louis should revere God and conduct himself, (2) how he should discipline his powerful subjects and his officials, and (3) how he should love and protect his subjects. Gilbert's method of argumentation is essentially exigitical in the moral sense. This is especially striking in the second part of the first *epistola*, where each of the chapters explicates one of the twelve commands to kings in Deuteronomy 17:16–20. Thus he interprets the first precept, "he must not multiply horses for himself", to mean that the king should not waste his time hunting—a command which likely flattered Louis, since he had no love for the sport. The king who emerges from the pages of the *Eruditio* is a stern moralist, who, guided by biblical precepts, exercises extreme self-control, and roots out and punishes the abuses of his subjects.

Vincent of Beauvais's two works on princely education and advice seem to be the results of a planned larger four-part "universal work" (*opus universale*) of political advice for the Capetians, which in its entirety would have treated "the *status* of the prince ... the entire royal court or household, and ... the administration of the *res publica* and the governance of the whole realm".⁵² As such it would have complemented in organization and scope Vincent's great universal encyclopedia, the *Speculum maius* (also planned to have four parts, although only three were completed by the time of Vincent's death). Both projects were also works of *compilatio*; but whereas compiling an encyclopedia of useful extracts from authoritative sources was the primary goal of the *Speculum maius*, Vincent's mirrors project instead deployed those extracts in the form of two *tractatus* in each of which he makes a series of arguments.⁵³ The basic argument of *De eruditione* is that children must be educated and disciplined from a young age in order to counteract a human being's natural tendency toward the

51 "Postulatis, clementissime domine, praelibatis continuari sequentia, materiam scilicet perfici quam coepi": Gilbert of Tournai, *Eruditio regum et principum* 2.1, ed. De Poorter (Louvain, 1914), p. 43, lines 1–2.

52 "Cum igitur in illo articulo temporis ... opus quodam universale de statu principis ac tocius regalis curie siue familie, necnon et de rei publice amministrazione ac tocius regni gubernacione ... conficere iam cepissem": Vincent of Beauvais, *De eruditione filiorum nobilium* prol., ed. R.J. Steiner (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), p. 3, lines 12–17. On this planned project, see Vincent of Beauvais, *De morali principis institutione*, ed. R.J. Schneider (Turnhout, 1995), pp. XIX–XXIV.

53 Vincent of Beauvais, *De morali principis institutione*, ed. Schneider, pp. XXXVI–XL.

“dullness of ignorance” in the intellect and the “rotteness of concupiscence” in the *affectus*.⁵⁴ This is especially important for the children of princes, since they are placed at the top of society and it will be their duty to rule.⁵⁵ In pursuit of these goals, *De eruditione* delivers a program of instruction and discipline, mostly for royal boys but with the last several chapters devoted to the moral formation and proper behavior of girls, married women, widows, and (Vincent’s ideal) virgins dedicated to the monastic life. In *De morali principis institutione*, Vincent’s subject is governance, and most especially rule by the head of the body politic, that is, the prince.⁵⁶ Since the prince should conform himself to the image of the Holy Trinity, and thus to the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the goodness of the Holy Spirit, so too the *De morali* is divided into three parts, treating in turn: (1) the origins of royal power and its legitimacy; (2) the wisdom of the prince in ruling his realm, in both peace and war; and (3) the prince’s goodness as enacted in his own perfect virtue, and his correction and suppression of the vices of courtiers.⁵⁷ Vincent’s view of the origins of royal power is purely Augustinian; a result of the Fall of Man, it has been a necessary evil that imposes order in a corrupted world. And yet in the case of the Christian kings of France, royal rule has achieved a degree of legitimacy owing to “divine dispensation, popular consent or election, the approbation of the church, and prescriptive right based on long tenure and good faith.”⁵⁸ Despite this, royal power is essentially negative and empty, and thus should be regarded as a burden and a temptation to sin, rather than as a reward or honor. Thus to continue to rule legitimately, the prince must take great care to govern wisely and competently, to be learned and encourage the pursuit of learning, and to inculcate and reinforce a virtuous character in himself and stamp out the envy, slander, ambition, and flattery of the powerful.

Just as in the mirror of his Franciscan counterpart, Vincent’s works of princely advice take the form of a succession of sermons that present

54 “Anima siquidem infantis carni recenter infusa ex eius corrupcione contrahit et caliginem ignorancie quantum ad intellectum et putredinem concupiscencie quantum ad affectum”: Vincent of Beauvais, *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*, 1, ed. Steiner, p. 5, lines 7–10.

55 “Et dicitur hoc ad quemlibet fidelem, precipueque ad principem, cuius liberi quanto ad maioris honoris culmen in populo debent erigi, tanto maiori diligencia opus est illos a puericia erudiri”: Vincent of Beauvais, *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*, 1, ed. Steiner, p. 5, lines 4–7.

56 This from the *Policraticus*, mostly by way of Hélinand of Froidmont: *De morali principis institutione* 1, ed. Schneider pp. 7–8, lines 19–30.

57 *De morali principis institutione* 1, ed. Schneider, pp. XXIV–XXX, 55.

58 “Ad hoc autem quatuor concurrunt que in manu eorum eadem regna iure stabiliunt, uidelicet ordinacionis diuine dispensacio, populi consensus uel electio, ecclesie approbatio, longissimi temporis cum bona fide prescripcio”: *De morali principis institutione* 1, ed. Schneider, p. 22, lines 5–9.

arguments reinforced by copious citations of authorities and the use of *exempla*. Yet there the similarity ends, since in stark contrast to Gilbert's personal, florid, and by turns chatty or haranguing style, Vincent employs throughout the style of the "scholastic" sermon which he and his fellow Dominicans had done so much to develop. The tone is calm and clinically impersonal, and almost every chapter begins with a topic, followed by a series of *divisiones*, with each argument and secondary argument supported by numerous *auctoritates*, *similitudines*, and *exempla*, most of which Vincent exported from the *Speculum maius*, but also from the Bible and its *Glossa ordinaria*, the *Florilegium Gallicum*, William Peraldus's *Summa de vitiis*, and Gratian's *Decretum*.⁵⁹ Vincent also employs far more authorities and *exempla* and does so more often and at greater length.

The same sermon style was employed by Vincent's contemporary and fellow Dominican William Peraldus in his *De eruditione principum*, composed in Lyon c. 1265. And just as Vincent was particularly reliant on his own *Speculum maius* for authorities and exempla, so too did William rely mostly on his own *Summae* of virtues and vices, though he also appears to have borrowed from Vincent's *De eruditione filiorum nobilium* in the section of his work where he discusses the education of princes.⁶⁰ William also shared his confrère's negative view of the origins of royal power and the character of courtiers. If anything, his assessment of the legitimacy of any earthly power is even more pessimistic, since he makes no effort to aggrandize or even advocate for any contemporary rulers or dynasties. In place of the metaphor of the body politic, he uses instead the image of the giant statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:31–45, with its sobering message of contemporary decadence and the awful power of God. He does not even name a princely dedicatee, saying only that he wrote his mirror when "asked by some prince and on account of the acquiescence to his request by my superiors, whom I am required to obey".⁶¹ Peraldus is contemptuous of any claims to status by birth and makes it quite clear that princes only gain their legitimacy through their practice of Christian virtues

59 *De morali principis institutione* 1, ed. Schneider, pp. 152–161.

60 Michiel Verweij, "Princely Virtues or Virtues for Princes? William Peraldus and His *De eruditione principum*" (2007), pp. 56–57; Arpad Steiner, "Guillaume Perrault and Vincent of Beauvais" (1933), pp. 51–58.

61 "Propterea ego ... quodam principe rogatus et ad acquiescendum ejus precibus a majoribus meis, quibus obedire debebam": William Peraldus, *De eruditione principum proemium* (<http://www.corpusthomicum.org/xreo.html>). The colophon in a single, late (1476) witness, Valencia, Biblioteca universitaria, 1764, has "precibus regis tunch nauarre", which, if correct, would be Louis IX's son-in-law, Thibaut V/II of Champagne and Navarre: Verweij, "Princely Virtues or Virtues for Princes?", p. 52.

(especially wisdom, goodness, faith, hope, fear of God, and love), and their reverence for and defense of the Church and its clergy, their punishment of heresy and vice, their protection of the weak, and their maintenance of peace.⁶²

Together these four mendicant mirrors construct a model of kingship and princely rule that is profoundly biblical and theological. All present an essentially negative, “Augustinian” explanation of the origins of power in society, and all engage in “une sorte de *reductio* du ‘politique’ au ‘religieux’”:⁶³ good rule is entirely dependent on a prince who is a faithful son of the Church and exemplifies the perfect Christian life. It has already been mentioned that the person of Louis IX may have been the living inspiration of this model, or that at least he would have been highly receptive to it. Surely another inspiration, however, was the pastoral mission, and with it the Franciscan and Dominican education programs, to which all three authors had made signal contributions.⁶⁴ The chief transmitter of this particular brand of biblical/theological kingship, in so far as one can determine this from the evidence of surviving manuscripts, was not the mirrors of Gilbert and Vincent, which achieved only very modest circulation, but rather Peraldus’s *De eruditione principum*, which enjoyed considerable popularity.⁶⁵

These authors of biblical/theological mirrors also share a studied avoidance of the new Aristotelian (and pseudo-Aristotelian) moral philosophy that was beginning to be commented on by several of their fellow friars, and a subordination of pagan classical material to biblical, patristic, and Christian monastic (here especially Bernard of Clairvaux) authorities. Yet it was to be these texts from the ancient and Islamic worlds that were to have the most profound impact on the political mirrors literature of the later Middle Ages. Philip of Tripoli’s Latin translation (c. 1231) of the *Secretum secretorum*, a Hellenistic-Arabic compendium of what purports to be a letter of Aristotle to Alexander

62 Verweij, “Princely Virtues or Virtues for Princes?”, pp. 59–71.

63 For this characterization, see Carla Casagrande, “Le roi, les anges et la paix chez le franciscain Guibert de Tournai” (2005), p. 153 and Verweij, “Princely Virtues or Virtues for Princes?”, p. 55.

64 On Gilbert’s contributions to Franciscan education, see Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c. 1210–1517)* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 264–271; on Peraldus’s and Vincent’s, Marian M. Mulchahey, “*First the Bow Is Bent in Study*”: *Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 112–13, 467–470.

65 Gilbert of Tournai (3 MSS; though this number is likely incomplete): De Poorter (ed.), pp. VII–IX. Vincent of Beauvais, *De eruditione filiorum nobilium* (15 MSS; 1 MS of French trans.; 1 lost MS), *De morali principis institutione* (10 MSS; 5 lost MSS): Thomas Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, vol. 4 (Rome, 1993), pp. 454–55, 456–57. William Peraldus, *De eruditione principum* (51 MSS; 3 MSS of French trans.; 1 MS of Italian trans.): Verweij, “Princely Virtues or Virtues for Princes?”, pp. 52–53.

the Great, advising him on politics, medicine, diet and hygiene, war, astrology, and the occult arts, became the most copied and translated mirrors text of the late thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Its model of princely counsel and education was one of “*applied science and medicine* in the service of the commonwealth, with some moral advice put in for good measure”.⁶⁶ Well before the end of the thirteenth century, its utility to princes was much appreciated, as witnessed by its translation into several vernaculars and the care lavished by the English Franciscan Roger Bacon on his expanded, glossed, and re-organized edition, which he seems to have intended for Edward I.⁶⁷

In the 1260s, another Franciscan from the British Isles, John of Wales, prepared two compilations of *auctoritates* and *exempla*, the *Breviloquium de virtutibus antiquorum principum et philosophorum* and the *Communiloquium sive summa collationum*, which although not written for any specific prince and aimed more at the needs of preachers, nonetheless were to have a considerable influence on many later medieval mirrors. The *Breviloquium* (early 1260s) had a special relevance for princes, having been “designed” by John “for the instruction of rulers”.⁶⁸ In four sections, each devoted to one of the four cardinal virtues (justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude), John musters scores of quotations, drawn for the most part from classical Roman sources (and *florilegia* thereof), for the purpose of recounting the virtuous character and deeds of ancient princes, and the wise sayings of those ancient philosophers who acted as their counselors. John expresses great admiration for these princes and philosophers of Greek and Roman antiquity who exemplified virtue and wisdom, and who respected the laws of the state and protected the *salus populi*. Moreover, given the evident excellence of these ancient pagans, should not contemporary Christian princes and their counselors be even moreso?⁶⁹ John’s next project, the *Communiloquium* (late 1260s), was a collection of *exempla* aimed at various social groups; however, its first section, on the state (*respublica*), became an important source for later mirrors. Here again,

66 Jeremiah Hackett, “*Mirrors of Princes, Errors of Philosophers: Roger Bacon and Giles of Rome (Aegidius Romanus) on the Education of the Government (the Prince)*” (2006), p. 110.

67 Steven J. Williams, “Roger Bacon and His Edition of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*” (1994), pp. 66–68. For more on the *Secret of Secrets*, see Williams’s contribution to this volume.

68 Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales: A Study of the Works and Ideas of a Thirteenth-Century Friar* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 41.

69 Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales*, pp. 41–62.

John favors *exempla* from antiquity and stresses the importance of respect for the laws and the common good.⁷⁰

While John of Wales's compiling activity and interest in preaching was very much in line with the preoccupations of his French mendicant counterparts (indeed he spent much of his career teaching in Paris's Franciscan convent), his privileging of the cardinal virtues and of ancient pagan philosophy and history set him apart. If this classicism makes him seem like a throwback to twelfth-century ancestors like John of Salisbury, then he is guilty as charged, since in the *Breviloquium* he draws at least forty-two of his *exempla* from the *Policraticus*, a work on which he was even more dependent in the first part of *Communiloquium* (at least 56 *exempla*).⁷¹ He also relies heavily on Valerius Maximus, *De dictis et factis memorabilibus*, and Seneca, thanks in part to the resurrection of several of the latter's works by Roger Bacon.⁷² Both of John's compilations circulated broadly and were heavily used by the authors of several later mirrors.⁷³

During the 1260s and 1270s, the new Latin translations of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (mid-1240s), *Politics* (c. 1260), and *Rhetoric* (1250s/1269) began powerfully to assert themselves in the *De regno ad regem Cypri* (c. 1267–1274) of the Dominican Thomas Aquinas and the *De regimine principum* (c. 1279–80) of the Augustinian Giles of Rome.⁷⁴ That these two friars were the first to write mirrors with a strongly Aristotelian inflection comes as no surprise. Both played leading roles in the reception and study of Aristotle's works at the University of Paris. More specifically, Thomas wrote commentaries on the *Ethics* and on the first several books of the *Politics*, and incorporated much of this in his *Summa theologiae*, and Giles not only prepared the first commentary on the *Rhetoric* but was also Thomas's student and spent much of his scholarly career articulating and responding to his teacher's doctrines. In the first chapter of *De regno* (dedicated to either Hugh II or Hugh III), Thomas signals the new, Aristotelian approach, speaking of final causes and saying "it

70 Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales*, pp. 63–106.

71 Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales*, pp. 102–103; Albrecht Diem, "A Classicising Friar at Work: John of Wales' *Breviloquium de virtutibus*" (2009), pp. 82–84.

72 Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales*, pp. 6–7.

73 There are at least 180 MSS of the *Breviloquium* and roughly 150 copies of the *Communiloquium*, as well as several translations of each: Swanson, *John of Wales*, pp. 201–226; Albrecht Diem and Michiel Verweij, "Virtus est via ad gloriam? John of Wales and Michele da Massa in Disagreement" (2009), p. 215.

74 Although the weight of scholarly opinion affirms Thomas's authorship of *De regno*, it is not universal: on this, see James M. Blythe, *The Life and Works of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)* (Turnout, 2009), pp. 157–168.

is natural for human beings to be social and political animals".⁷⁵ Instead of the Augustinian explanation of royal power originating in human sinfulness, here Thomas propounds Aristotle's teaching that living in the *polis* is natural to human beings, and that only by living in a multitude do they attain the proper end of human life. Thomas then, in the next chapter, adopts Aristotle's taxonomy of three good (monarchy, aristocracy, polity) and three bad (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy) political constitutions, before going on to argue that monarchy is the best form of constitution because it is the most stable, but that in order to guard against it devolving into tyranny (the worst form), a monarchy should adopt elements of a mixed constitution. In clearly preferring kingship over the other legitimate forms of government—a matter on which Aristotle is more equivocal—and using the Bible to reinforce his preference ("The Lord says through Ezekiel: 'My servant David will be king over all, and there will be one shepherd of all of them'"), Thomas makes clear that he intends to bend Aristotle's doctrine to his own ends and adapt the teaching of the Stagirite to current political realities.⁷⁶

Thomas did not finish the *De regno*, breaking off early in the second book of what was clearly meant to be a much longer work. Nonetheless this incomplete version is extant in fifty copies, attesting to its popularity.⁷⁷ Moreover, two of Thomas's students, the Dominican Ptolemy of Lucca and Giles of Rome, sought to finish what their master had started. Ptolemy's project (c. 1301–03), going by the title *De regimine principum*, is more a work of political theory than a mirror of princes, but the work of the same name by Giles of Rome was a thorough-going Aristotelian, and Thomist mirror.⁷⁸ Shortly after having been denied the *licentia docendi* in theology from the University of Paris for refusing to retract several censured propositions that he shared with Thomas (d. 1274), Giles wrote *De regimine principum* for the heir to the French throne, Philip the Fair.⁷⁹ Giles pushes *De regimine* in an even more Aristotelian direction than Thomas. The three main divisions of the text are based on the Peripatetic division of moral philosophy into rule of the self (ethics), of the family

75 Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers* 1.1.3, trans. J.M. Blythe (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 61.

76 Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers* 1.2.3, trans. J.M. Blythe, p. 64 (quoting Ezekiel 37:24).

77 Thomas Aquinas, *De regno ad regem Cypri*, ed. H.F. Dondaine (Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia 42) (Rome, 1979), pp. 425–431.

78 On Ptolemy's *De regimine principum*, see Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers*, trans. J.M. Blythe, pp. 1–45, and James M. Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 92–117.

79 Charles F. Briggs, "Life, Works, and Legacy" (2016), pp. 9–12.

and household (economics), and of the state (politics), and Giles cites by name several of Aristotle's works, especially, the *Politics*, *Ethics*, and *Rhetoric*, some 550 times, while virtually ignoring the Bible and Church Fathers.⁸⁰ And yet Giles also silently injects Thomist positions throughout, for example asserting the superiority of monarchy over other forms of constitution while going even further to make a strong case for hereditary over elective kingship.⁸¹ Giles, like John of Wales, privileges the cardinal virtues, but also incorporates them within a larger Aristotelian catalogue of twelve virtues, and stresses Aristotle's definition of virtue as the mean between two extremes as well as his idea of *habitus*, i.e., that a virtuous or vicious character is the product of one's upbringing and education.⁸² In addition, Giles in the second book "constructs" an Aristotelian economics on the basis of material drawn from the *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* (and, concerning the education of children, from Vincent of Beauvais), and pens a manual of military science, largely drawn from Vegetius, in *De regimine*'s tenth and final part.⁸³ Lastly, by describing and applying the Aristotelian principles of deliberative rhetoric to political discourse, he makes his mirror "the product of a broadly logical method when applied to the moral conduct of humans in order to persuade a wider audience of the general principles of the life of virtue".⁸⁴ Thus, if Thomas's Aristotelian "turn" initiated a break with earlier mirrors, Giles opened the rupture further by "integrating" his mirror "au langage du politique" that was being developed in Italy, as exemplified in Latini's *Tresor*.⁸⁵

Surviving in roughly 350 Latin copies, as well as ramifying into multiple adaptations and vernacular translations, the *De regimine* achieved an audience that was second only in popularity to the *Secretum secretorum*.⁸⁶ And although the *Secretum* and the *De regimine* (and *De regno*) offered distinctly different versions of "Aristotelian" advice, both treated politics as a positive, autonomous sphere, as an "art of governance", rather than simply as a burdensome

80 Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's "De regimine principum": Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University*, c. 1275–c. 1525 (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 10–13.

81 For this, see most recently Roberto Lambertini, "Political Thought" (2016), pp. 258–265.

82 Cary J. Nederman, "The Meaning of Aristotelianism in Medieval Moral and Political Thought" (1996), pp. 573–575.

83 Roberto Lambertini, "A proposito della 'costruzione' dell'*Oeconomica* in Egidio Romano" (1998), pp. 315–70; Vincent of Beauvais, *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*, ed. Steiner, pp. xxv–xxvii; Christopher Allmand, *The "De re militari" of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 105–112.

84 Matthew Kempshall, "The Rhetoric of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*" (2007), p. 190.

85 Jean-Philippe Genet, "Conclusion : la littérature au miroir du prince" (2007), p. 416.

86 For this, see the contribution in this volume of Perret.

duty mandated by God in order to impose some kind of order on a corrupt and sinful world.⁸⁷ Over the course of the next century and a half, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum* and the Aristotelian mirrors group of Thomas and Giles took their place beside the biblical/theological group of Gilbert, Vincent, and Peraldus, and the classicizing compilations of John of Wales (and the *Policraticus* which John of Wales helped to popularize) as the four main models for later mirrors writers. These models should not so much be thought of as “archetypes” or even as “core” texts, but rather as patriarchs, or as bloodlines, whose language and concepts, arguments, exemplary sayings and stories, and structuring features later writers could borrow, blend, rework, redeploy, or ignore as they saw fit.

In 1278–82, the Castilian Franciscan Juan Gil de Zamora demonstrated a readiness to mine his confrère’s *Breviloquium* when writing the *De preconiiis Hispanie* for Alfonso X’s heir, Sancho. A mirror constructed from *exempla* drawn from ancient and more recent history, and organized according to the virtues, *De preconiiis* strikes a monitory tone against princes (here read King Alfonso) who oppress their subjects with heavy and novel fiscal demands.⁸⁸ John of Wales’s compilations continued to exert a dynastic influence on Iberian mirrors. This was in part because so many of them were written by Franciscans; but it was also owing to the popularity there of the so-called *Glosa Castellana al Regimiento de Principes* (1340s), written by a Franciscan (perhaps Juan García de Castrojeriz) for the future Pedro I, which combined an abridged Castilian translation of Giles of Rome’s mirror with copious *exempla*, most of them taken from John of Wales, and substantial additions of biblical and theological material.⁸⁹ Something similar can be seen in the Austrian Benedictine Engelbert of Admont’s *De regimine principum* (c. 1297–1300) and *Speculum virtutum* (c. 1306–13, for Dukes Albert II and Otto of Habsburg). The earlier work, which demonstrates a close affinity with both Thomas’s political ideas and with Giles’s mirror, and like them relies heavily on Aristotle and is sparing with the use of *exempla*, is nonetheless more circumspect about the advantages of monarchy and more open to broad political participation than either Thomas

87 Senellart, *Les arts de gouverner*, pp. 155–205.

88 Frank Tang, “Royal Misdemeanour: Princely Virtues and Criticism of the Ruler in Medieval Castile (Juan Gil de Zamora and Álvaro Pelayo)” (2017), pp. 103–112.

89 Roberto Lambertini, “Lost in Translation: About the Castilian Gloss on Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum*” (2001), pp. 93–102; Marco Toste, “*Unicuique suum*: The Restitution to John of Wales, OFM, of Parts of Some Mirrors for Princes Circulating in Late Medieval Portugal” (2015).

or Giles.⁹⁰ Engelbert is even more innovative in the *Speculum virtutum*, which although it borrows key structural elements from Giles (on the purpose and ends of human life, the habits, passions, and virtues), nonetheless makes original arguments, backed up with copious *rationes* from Aristotle (sometimes by way of Giles or Thomas), but also from Cicero, Seneca, Boethius, and John of Salisbury, and a healthy admixture of *exempla* from John of Wales and medieval chronicles.⁹¹ To cite two final examples: the author of the *Liber de informatione principum* (c. 1315, probably by Durand of Champagne, OFM), composed for Louis X of France, presents a work very much in the vein of the biblical/theological mirrors of the previous century (indeed he cites Gilbert of Tournai), but also influenced by Thomas's approach to Aristotelian ethics;⁹² and sometime in the 1390s, an English royal clerk (perhaps John Thorpe, a canon of Norwich Cathedral) dedicated to Richard II a short mirror, *De quadripartita regis specie*, which combines parts of the *Secretum secretorum* with copious extracts from Proverbs and other biblical wisdom books.⁹³ Both mirrors stress the importance of wisdom, and both are preoccupied with the problem of taxation and government expenditure.

Dozens of other examples could be summoned up here, because the propagation of political advice literature for rulers, already observable in the middle decades of the thirteenth century, accelerated thereafter. The new mirrors were addressed to an ever more diverse audience, including not only kings or future kings, but also royal women, *signori* and high office-holders of Italian city-states, German and Sicilian noblemen, and city councilors in Valencia.⁹⁴ And if mendicants and monks continued to compose mirrors, they

90 Karl Ubl, "Zur Entstehung der Fürstenspiegel Engelberts von Admont (†1331)" (1999), pp. 530–534; Karl Ubl, *Engelbert von Admont: Ein Gelehrter im Spannungsfeld von Aristotelismus und christlicher Überlieferung* (Vienna, 2000), pp. 69–81.

91 Engelbert of Admont, *Speculum virtutum*, ed. K. Ubl (Hannover, 2004), pp. 17–23; Karl Ubl, "Clementia oder severitas. Historische Exempla über eine Paradoxie der Tugendlehre in den Fürstenspiegeln Engelberts von Admont und seiner Zeitgenossen" (2011), pp. 26–30.

92 Lydwine Scordia, "Le roi, l'or et le sang des pauvres dans *Le livre de l'information des princes*, miroir anonyme dédié à Louis X" (2004), pp. 507–532; Constant Mews, Rina Lahav, "Wisdom and Justice in the Court of Jeanne of Navarre and Philip IV: Durand of Champagne, the *Speculum dominarum*, and the *De informatione principum*" (2014), pp. 188–192.

93 Genet (ed.), *Four English Political Tracts*, pp. 22–39.

94 For example: Durand of Champagne, OFM, *Speculum dominarum* (c. 1300), for Jeanne de Navarre; Christine de Pizan, *Livre des trois vertus* (1406), for Marguerite of Burgundy; and the anonymous *Advis* (1425) for Yolande of Aragon. Guido Vernani, OP, *Liber de Virtutibus* (1330s), for Galeotto and Malatesta III of Rimini, and Luca Mannelli, OP, *Compendium moralis philosophie* (c. 1340), for Bruzio Visconti; Enrico of Rimini, OP, *De quattuor virtutibus cardinalibus* (by 1310), for the leading citizens of Venice, and Paolino of Venice, OFM,

were joined by clerks (both lay and ecclesiastical), noblemen and kings, and a woman, Christine de Pizan.⁹⁵ These authors, moreover, increasingly wrote in the vernacular and experimented with different prose and verse literary forms, including the letter, the dialogue, the dream vision, and the fable.⁹⁶ In short, the mirror of princes “family” and “friends” continued to grow, diversify, and be vital participants in the political discourse of later medieval Latin Christendom.

3 Black Sheep

Most families have a black sheep or two, members who don't quite fit into the familial mode and yet possess unmistakable resemblances to their relatives. So it is with political mirrors. In this section, we consider briefly three such outliers: the anonymous English *Speculum Justiciariorum*, which probably dates to the early fourteenth century; the two versions of a work known by the title *Speculum Regis Edwardi III*, most likely composed by William of Pagula in the 1330s; and three early fifteenth-century treatises composed by the Valois courtier Christine de Pizan. On the one hand, these texts are extremely diverse in their thematic presentation and substance. Yet, on the other hand, they share an important feature that stands out in relation to the other mirrors we have

Tractatus de regimine rectoris (c. 1315), for Marino Badoer, Venetian duke of Crete. Johann von Viktring, *Speculum militare* (1330–35), for Otto of Habsburg, and Michael of Prague, OCarth, *De regimine principum* (1387), for Rupert II of Wittelsbach; Andrea de Pace, OFM, *Viridarium principum* (c. 1391–92), for Nicolò Peralta. Francesc Eiximenis, OFM, *Regiment de la cosa pública* (1383), for the jurats of Valencia.

- 95 For example: Walter of Milemete, *De nobilitatibus, sapientibus et prudentibus regum* (1326–27), for Edward III of England; Roger Waltham, *Compendium morale ex virtuosius dictis et factis exemplaribus antiquorum proficiendum* (c. 1330); Thomas Hoccleve, *Regiment of Princes* (1411), for the future Henry V of England; Juan de Mena, *Laberinto de fortuna* (1444), for Juan II of Castile; Juan Manuel, prince of Villena, *El libro de los estados* (1327–30); Pero López de Ayala, *Rimado de Palácio* (1380s); Pedro, duke of Coimbra, *Virtuosa benfeitoria* (1418–33); Hugues de Lannoy, *L'instruction d'un jeune prince* (c. 1450), for Philip the Good of Burgundy; Sancho IV of Castile, *Castigos e documentos* (c. 1292–93), for the future Ferdinand IV; Duarte of Portugal, *Leal conselheiro* (1420–38); Christine de Pizan, *Le livre du corps de police* (1404–07), for Charles VI of France and the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne; on Christine's mirrors, see below in this chapter.
- 96 An example of each, respectively: Francesco Petrarca, *De re publica optime administranda* (1373), for Francesco da Carrara; Pierre Salmon, *Les demandes faites par le roi Charles VI, touchant son état et le gouvernement de sa personne, avec les réponses de Pierre Salmon* (1409); Philippe de Mézières, *Songe du vieil pèlerin* (1388), for Charles VI of France; Smil Flaška, *Nová rada* (1393–1395).

examined, namely, they single out for criticism and reform some existing political and social practice or practices of their time. Unlike the main bloodlines of *speculum* literature, these writings expressly address current issues in a manner that throws off the cloak of ambiguity and states grievances overtly, while also adhering to intellectual and linguistic elements that affiliate them with other mirrors. And, perhaps as importantly, they are still all addressed to a royal courtly audience.

The first of the aforementioned treatises, the *Speculum Justiciariorum*, written in Anglo-Norman, has been the object of some controversy about its authorship, a topic that should not detain us here.⁹⁷ On the face of it, the main purpose of the treatise is to express an explicitly critical stance toward legal (mis)conduct occurring during its time. In his prologue, the author frames his intention by way of a complaint against the corruption of judges: “I perceived that divers of those who should govern the law by rules of right had regard to their own earthly profit, and to pleasing princes, lords and friends, and to amassing lordships and goods”.⁹⁸ Justices, he says, refuse to refer to law set down in written form, the better to manipulate the powers of their offices; they invoke spurious “exceptions” to statute when it suits them; they abuse laws by misapplication or misinterpretation; and they too often lack the learning and experience required to judge justly.⁹⁹ For the author, the stakes are personal rather than merely theoretical: “I, the accuser of false judges, [was] falsely imprisoned by their execution”.¹⁰⁰ As he languished in custody—for what crime he never expressly states—he composed his treatise, with the aid of friends who supplied him with documents and books that provided the raw materials for constructing the *Speculum Justiciariorum*.

Clearly, the work condemns the practices of the contemporary judiciary in England. But to whom? The judges themselves, profiting as they are from their conduct, hardly had any motivation to reform themselves. The answer lies in the prologue, in which, although it contains no explicit dedication or encomium, it seems evident that the author is addressing a royal audience, likely King Edward I. It is the prince alone who has it within his authority to right the wrongs that judges have committed. The text dedicates nearly all of its attention to magistrates within the purview of royal jurisdiction, dissecting the duties of coroners, sheriffs, justices of the eyre, chief justices, and the

97 See Cary J. Nederman, “The Mirror Crack’d: The *Speculum Principum* as Political and Social Criticism in the Late Middle Ages” (1998), p. 20 and note 23.

98 *Speculum Justiciariorum*, ed. W.J. Whittaker (London, 1895), p. 1.

99 *Speculum Justiciariorum*, ed. Whittaker, pp. 1–2.

100 *Speculum Justiciariorum*, ed. Whittaker, p. 2.

like. This concentration on the conduct of the king's judicial officers indicates that the treatise's primary concern is the exercise of royal powers. Inasmuch as the crown is the fount of adjudication in the realm, all of the decisions of its duly commissioned agents ultimately redound to the person of the prince. In this insistence that the king is ultimately responsible for the supervision of his magistrates, the *Speculum Justiciariorum* shares the view of many princely *specula*. But the author maintains that the monarch, so far from being exempt in any legal manner from ensuring that his magistrates perform their functions dutifully, is answerable to the community of the realm, embodied by parliament. "Although the king should have no peer in his land", he says, "nevertheless in order that if the king by his fault should sin against any of his people ... it is agreed as law that the king should have companions to hear and determine in the parliaments all the writs and complaints concerning wrongs done by the king, the queen, their children, and their familiars, for which wrongs one could not otherwise have obtained common right".¹⁰¹ Parliament (albeit an essentially aristocratic one) offers redress against the ruler and his servants when they violate law: the royal house is subject to the institutionalized judgment of the great men of the realm. The *Speculum Justiciariorum* justifies this position by (spurious) references to the long-standing traditions and practices of England, stretching back to King Alfred. The treatise thus offers a resolution to the problem of how—short of divine judgment—a monarch might be held accountable for his own acts as well as those of officials who serve in his name.

The two tracts comprising the work known collectively as the *Speculum Regis Edwardi III* likewise employ many of the features that have been associated with mirrors of princes, but to dramatically different effect. The treatise is now safely attributed to the English canon lawyer and parish priest William of Pagula, who seems to have composed its two recensions in 1331 and 1332 respectively.¹⁰² Addressed in direct and personalized terms to King Edward III, the tract in many ways contains what one might expect from a work that explicitly addresses itself to a king, offering praise for his majesty couched in the moral and religious terms that advice book readers have come to expect: God is to be imitated by the ruler in the justice shown by his judgment and will; the king's office and authority derive from the commission of right; the prince ought to bind himself to the law, as a demonstration of his just intent and will; when

¹⁰¹ *Speculum Justiciariorum*, ed. Whittaker, p. 7.

¹⁰² Cary J. Nederman and Cynthia J. Neville, "The Origins of the *Speculum Regis Edwardi III* of William of Pagula" (1997).

the king seems to err, it is the consequence of evil counsel, which ought to be banished from the realm.¹⁰³

Yet family resemblances of the *Speculum Regis Edwardi* to the more closely related *specula* already discussed, while evident, do not fully capture its distinctiveness as an open criticism of English royal policy, in particular, by defending the rights of peasants against the exactions of the king, and, especially, the practice of royal purveyance. Purveyance is the customary prerogative of the king to provide for his household and troops when touring the realm by confiscating local goods or purchasing them at a fixed, non-negotiable price.¹⁰⁴ Part of his case against the devastating effects of purveyance William advocates in terms recognizable to any advice-book reader. The king is warned that the commission of evil endangers his salvation; and theft from the poor, which is taken to be coextensive with purveyance, is precisely the sort of evil about which the king ought to worry.¹⁰⁵ William recurrently invokes the frailty of all human life, including the king's. Should death transpire unexpectedly, damnation and eternal punishment are the prospects for the ruler who has not corrected injuries done to his subjects.

If William had left matters at that, we might regard him as a kind-hearted yet ineffectual shepherd of an oppressed flock. But he is often inclined to threaten Edward III in terms that are far less spiritual. In particular, he asserts that the king is a creature of his people and is thus subject to their judgment. William supports his position with reference to recent events, reminding Edward that “when first you came by ship from foreign parts into this land, how humbly, how graciously, how devoutly, how joyously, the English people admitted you and stood by you and aided you in everything you did against your rebels”.¹⁰⁶ The message here is one of reciprocity. The king relies upon the good will of subjects to achieve and maintain his power. Oppression of subjects (such as by in effect robbing them of their goods) will induce a reaction against him. Indeed, a king who makes war on his people, by employing force to steal from them, may rightfully be opposed, just as one may legitimately repulse the force of a thief in order to protect oneself and one's goods. William warns Edward that “many evils may happen to you and your kingdom”, as a result of which the king and his officials “will perish”; elsewhere, the king is advised to expect

103 William of Pagula, *Speculum Regis Edwardi III*, trans. C.J. Nederman (Tempe, Ariz., 2002), A 1, A 16, A 36, B 51, A 43, B 23, B 37.

104 Cary J. Nederman, “Property and Protest: Political Theory and Subjective Rights in Fourteenth-Century England” (1996).

105 William of Pagula, *Speculum*, A 6–7.

106 William of Pagula, *Speculum*, B 1.

the loss of his realm.¹⁰⁷ William leaves little doubt about the threat he is making to Edward III: “Your people ... are not of one mind with you; and certainly, if they had a leader, they would rise up against you, just as they did against your father”, a direct reference to the disastrous reign of Edward II.¹⁰⁸ If the monarch’s subjects are not safe from their royal master, then they will not hesitate to replace him with someone who respects their rights, as a direct consequence of the reciprocal nature of the relationship that binds the people to the ruler. Kings who “have extended their hand towards the goods and income of others”, William observes, find that “the people rise up against them and they are almost wiped from the earth. And therefore be warned, and heed, lest you forget what happened to your father”.¹⁰⁹ The *Speculum Regis Edwardi* thereby inverts or dismantles many of the expectations held by readers of advice books, while still maintaining a semblance of adherence to contours of mirror literature. On the one hand, William refers to the dangers to the eternal soul of the king posed by unjust governance. On the other, however, he is perfectly prepared to point out the immediate consequences of a disgruntled and aggrieved populace by drawing to mind events not very far removed from Edward’s own ascension to the throne.

A final intriguing instance of mirror writing that departs from many of the features of political advice books and yet shares definite characteristics with them is afforded by Christine de Pizan. Christine was the most prolific, and yet often overlooked, author of political “mirror” books in medieval Europe, credited with no fewer than nine such treatises.¹¹⁰ On the face of it, she was no overt critic in the manner of the two English “black sheep” previously discussed; this is surely because of her financial dependence upon the patronage of the French court, as well as her deep admiration for members of the ruling dynasty.¹¹¹ But at the same time, Christine’s *specula* diverge substantially from other mirrors in the striking inclusiveness of the topics that she addresses, especially in regard to the place of women within the social and political order. Two of her works spoke explicitly to the female predicament. In one, *Le livre de la Cité des Dames* (1405), she defends women as a group from various slanders against their intelligence and capacity to achieve moral and political virtue. The second of these writings, *Le livre des Trois Vertus* (1406), examines in minute detail the conduct appropriate to women of each and every social

107 William of Pagula, *Speculum*, A 10, A 18.

108 William of Pagula, *Speculum*, A 11.

109 William of Pagula, *Speculum*, B 38.

110 Kate Forhan, *The Political Thought of Christine of Pizan* (Aldershot, U.K., 2002), p. 27.

111 Charity C. Willard, “Christine de Pizan: From Poet to Political Commentator” (1992).

distinction, extending from princesses and noblewomen to merchant's wives and even prostitutes. Some might argue that Christine's concentration on this rich social diversity immediately excludes her writings from the *speculum principum* family entirely. But her work, especially the *Trois Vertus*, is manifestly addressed to a courtly audience and remains firmly grounded on familiar conventions of the *speculum* literature.

The points at which Christine departs from the ordinary path generally occur when pragmatic considerations become relevant, in particular by offering practical advice to female denizens of court. Thus, for instance, she recommends that the princess should dissemble with her enemies, even when she has definite knowledge of their conspiring in plots and machinations against her.¹¹² "The wise lady", she observes, "will use this prudent device of discreet dissimulation, which should not be considered vicious but rather a great virtue when employed for the common good, to maintain peace, or to avoid detriment or greater harm".¹¹³ Similar mendacity is proposed in the case of charitable works and benefactions. Christine counsels that "justifiable hypocrisy is necessary for princes and princesses who must rule over others and thus be accorded more respect than others. Moreover, expedient hypocrisy is not unworthy for others desiring honor, as long as they practice it for worthy ends".¹¹⁴ This represents a noteworthy inversion of the standard advice book position, according to which religion and virtue are seen to be their own rewards, quite apart from temporal consequences.

Perhaps as strikingly, Christine advocates for the competence of women to contribute to the tasks associated with the maintenance of public peace and secular well-being. In *Cité des Dames*, she proclaims that "in case anyone says that women do not have a natural sense for politics and government, I will give you examples of several great women rulers ... whose skill in governing—both past and present—in all their affairs following the deaths of their husbands provides obvious demonstration that a woman with a mind is fit for all tasks".¹¹⁵ Nor does Christine confine herself to female rulers who have inherited their positions from deceased spouses. One role performed by a princess may be to quell intranquillity in her land arising from her husband's acquiescence to evil councilors: "If the prince, because of poor advice or for any other reason, should

112 Christine de Pizan, *Le livre des trois Vertus*, trans. C.C. Willard, in *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies* (New York, 1989), pp. 105–107.

113 Christine de Pizan, *Mirror of Honor*, p. 106.

114 Christine de Pizan, *Mirror of Honor*, p. 109.

115 Christine de Pizan, *Le livre de la Cité des Dames*, trans. E.J. Richards, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (New York, 1982), p. 32.

be tempted to harm his subjects, they will know their lady to be full of kindness, pity and charity. They will come to her, humbly petitioning her to intercede for them before the prince".¹¹⁶ The princess is envisioned by Christine as a sort of ombudsperson, a conduit between hostile forces (whether within or without the realm), whose clashes might otherwise disturb the peace.¹¹⁷ In the course of her writings, Christine does not dispense with instruction about the office of the prince, often couched in quite customary terms. But she expands considerably the considerations relevant to the evaluation of royal government.

4 Conclusion

In 1411, the English Privy Seal clerk Thomas Hoccleve composed his verse mirror, *The Regiment of Princes*, for the future King Henry V (r. 1413–22). After a lengthy prologue of 2016 lines in which he explores "the complex relationship between prince and advising poet",¹¹⁸ Hoccleve begins the mirror proper, first addressing Henry directly, and then explaining that in the *Regiment* he has sought by and large to "translate" and "compile" matter from the *Secretum secretorum* ("Aristotle ... His epistles to Alisaundre sente"), "Gyles of Regiment of Princes", and "a book Jacob de Cessolis of the ordre of prechours maad ... That the Ches Moralyse clepid is".¹¹⁹ Hoccleve here foregrounds his mirror's reliance on three of the four mirrors "bloodlines", the pseudo-Aristotelian, the Aristotelian/Aegidian, and the classicizing (since James of Cessole compiled his *Libellus super ludo scaccorum* (c. 1300) largely from John of Wales's *Breviloquium*).¹²⁰ Hoccleve's readiness to assemble a new work of princely advice from the standard models thus makes his *Regiment* a fairly typical member of the broad and diverse family of Western medieval *specula principum*.

The *Regiment* also exemplifies several other features of this textual family. It is explicitly a work of counsel and didactic instruction whose end is to inculcate in the ruler a virtuous *habitus* and a solicitude for the common good. At the same time, Hoccleve assumes (at least rhetorically) a princely audience who is already virtuous, wise and knowing ("I am seur that tho bookes alle three Red hath and seen your innat sapience; And as I hope, hir vertu folwen

116 Christine de Pizan, *Mirror of Honor*, p. 85.

117 Christine de Pizan, *Mirror of Honor*, pp. 84–87.

118 Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. C.R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, 1999), lines 22–24, note.

119 Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, lines 2038–39, 2052–53, 2109–11.

120 Pamela Kalning, "Virtues and Exempla in John of Wales and Jacobus de Cessolis" (2007), pp. 139–176.

yee”), and whose readiness to listen to counsel is entirely dependent on the prince’s own willed choice (“And although it be no maneere of neede Yow to consaille what to doon or leeve, Yit if yow list of stories taken heede, Sumwhat it may profyte, by your leeve”).¹²¹ In other words, mirror texts tend to take it as a given that the ruler’s power and authority are a fact, and that the health of the state rests on his (or in the case of mirrors written for aristocrats, their) will to act either in accordance with his own self-centered good (i.e., bad governance/tyranny) or the common good (good governance). Like Hoccleve, most mirror writers stress the ruler’s autonomy, but some instead highlight the need to rule in partnership with other elites (e.g., Engelbert of Admont) and subject to the law (e.g., the *Speculum Justiciariorum*).

Hoccleve’s mirror also reminds us that, whereas mirrors commonly employed rhetorical strategies that stressed the general value and applicability of their advice,¹²² they frequently were written as responses to specific political problems. Hoccleve expresses his anxiety over the recent civil wars in England which had broken out after the deposition of Richard II and Prince Henry’s father’s seizure of the throne, and he worries that England is about to be plunged again into a ruinous war with France.¹²³ Across the Channel, the crisis of governance posed by Charles VI’s insanity unleashed a virtual flood of mirrors by Jacques Legrand, Jean Gerson, Pierre Salmon, and, of course, Christine de Pizan.¹²⁴ Likewise, several mirrors of the late thirteenth and first part of the fourteenth century delivered open criticism of growing and unprecedented fiscal demands by governments.¹²⁵ Even certain “national” traits are discernable in mirrors. English mirrors were frequently written by royal clerks, like Hoccleve, Walter of Milemete, Roger Waltham, and the likely author of the

121 Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, lines 2129–31, 2136–39. See also Giancarlo, “Mirror, Mirror: Princely Hermeneutics”, pp. 37–38; Carla Casagrande, “Virtù della prudenza e dono del consiglio” (2004).

122 Genet (*Four English Political Tracts*, p. xi) identifies their “serene, didactic flavour” and Grassnick (*Ratgeber des Königs*, p. 4) their “weitgehend situationsentbundenen Handlungsanleitungen”.

123 Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, lines 5216–439.

124 Evencio Beltran, “Christine de Pizan, Jacques Legrand et le *Communiloquium* de Jean de Galles” (1983); Jacques Krynen, *L’empire du roi: idées et croyances politiques en France, XIIIe–XVe siècle* (Paris, 1993), pp. 199–204; Jacques Verger, “*Ad prefulgidum sapiencie culmen prolem regis inclitam provehere*: l’initiation des dauphins de France à la sagesse politique selon Jean Gerson” (2000); Yelena Mazour-Matusevich and Istvan P. Bejczy, “Jean Gerson on Virtues and Princely Education” (2007); Albert Rigaudière, “Le bon prince dans l’oeuvre de Pierre Salmon” (2000).

125 See the discussion, above, of the mirrors of Juan Gil de Zamora, Durand of Champagne, and William of Pagula.

De quadripartita regis specie, John Thorpe, but not (except for John of Wales) by mendicants, whereas mendicants predominate among authors of mirrors composed in mid-thirteenth- to late fourteenth-century France, Italy, and Iberia. And while the sanctity of Capetian and Valois kingship is very much to the fore in French mirrors, Alfonso X's *Siete partidas* (especially the *Segunda partida*) was an important source for those written in Castile.¹²⁶

In his pioneering 1928 article, Lester Born surveyed a dozen mirrors of princes, beginning with John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* and concluding with Hoccleve's *Regiment*, and therefrom constructed a composite image of the Western Middle Ages' "Perfect Prince":

wise, self-restrained, just; devoted to the welfare of his people; a pattern in virtues for his subjects; interested in economic developments, an educational program, and the true religion of God; surrounded by efficient ministers and able advisers; opposed to aggressive war; and, in the realization that even he is subject to law, and through the mutual need of the prince and his subjects, zealous for the attainment of peace and unity.¹²⁷

These qualities are pretty much the same as those which Christine de Pizan assigned to the royal subject of her mirror-biography, the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles v* (1404). In Christine's rendering, the deceased monarch becomes the "prince dessiné par les miroirs": "Il n'est en effet de qualité du parfait souverain qui ne trouve belle illustration dans la personne ou l'administration du sage roi".¹²⁸ Of course, no real, living monarch, not even Charles V, or Louis IX for that matter, lived up to this ideal. Nor was political reality simply a function of the ruler's person, will, and deeds, since the prince was but one piece on a crowded and highly contingent political chessboard. The medieval writers and readers of mirrors of princes were as aware of these realities as we are, so we should not insult them by assuming that they turned to them for nothing more than some flawless reflection of the prince. For them mirrors were many things. They could be bids for patronage, tokens of political affiliation, guarded or overt criticisms of contemporary rule, or pieces of propaganda. They were also works that sought to bridge the space between political theory and political action, and as such they played a key role in the mediation

126 Krynen, *L'empire du roi*, pp. 167–239; José M. Nieto Soria, "Les Miroirs des princes dans l'historiographie espagnole (couronne de Castille, XIII^e–XV^e siècles): tendances de la recherche" (1999).

127 Born, "The Perfect Prince", p. 504.

128 Krynen, *L'empire du roi*, pp. 200–201.

and dissemination of moral and political philosophy among a broad public. Ultimately, however, political mirrors all belonged to the same clan.

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Refutation, Parody, Annihilation: The End of the Mirror for Princes in Machiavelli, Vettori and Guicciardini

Volker Reinhardt

1 Political Praxis and Political Theory in the Florence of the Medici

The Medicis' skilfully veiled exercise of power behind the scenes of a republic which, in crucial respects, was already hollowed out, presented unforeseen challenges for reflection on politics and its moral evaluation.¹ The rule of a complexly constructed patronage structure, built on deep-reaching foundations encompassing a large proportion of the Florentine middle class as well as expanding networks of half-vertical, half-horizontal associations of allied patrician clans, seemed to defy all classical systematizations of forms of government. Officially and formally Florence remained a republic even after 1434 – a fact that Cosimo de' Medici, who, as its 'godfather', played so masterfully on all registers of political psychology and economy, never ceased to emphasize, and never tired of ritualizing in celebrations of all kinds. Nonetheless it was clear, and not only to insiders, that his will as the head of the dominant interest groups was generally the law.²

This phenomenon of power exercised with the support of clients was not included in the received cataloguing of good and bad forms of government; indeed, at least in the Florence of the time, it overstepped the limits of the sayable. On the contrary, the domination of such a loyalty-based alliance stood in opposition to the traditional guiding values of the *bonum commune*. Generations of Florentines had been raised in the spirit of these norms: the good of the Florentine community came first, and all particular interests were to be subordinated to it. All those concerned were aware that political reality was increasingly evolving in the opposite direction: that belonging to an influential patronage alliance was of decisive importance for political career

1 Cf. John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200–1575* (London, 2006); Anthony Molho, *Firenze nel Quattrocento*, 2 vol. (Rome, 2006–2008).

2 Cf. Dale Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence 1426–1434* (Oxford, 1978); Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's *Ceuvre** (New Haven, 2000).

opportunities, and that choosing the right patron could thus be crucial to setting the course of an individual's life. But this could be communicated only behind closed doors. Officially, as proclaimed by official state historian Leonardo Bruni, Florence remained the *civitas libertatis*, the state of freedom and distributive justice, which gave to each his own.³ Bruni himself, as a creature of the Medici,⁴ had been elevated to the influential and lucrative position of chancellor. He thus had no interest in highlighting how after 1434, the erstwhile relatively open republic was steadily and deliberately narrowed until it became a syndicate for the pursuit of the interests of the Medici and their appendants.

But the transformation of the *res publica* into a *cosa nostra* was not the only shift of coordinates taking place on the Arno. The Medici evidently also did not wish to allow power relations to remain in a perpetual state of uncertainty, requiring constant rebalancing; they strove instead toward the final goal of establishing a dynastic principality.⁵ Because it would be impossible to see through such a transformation after a long republican past without vehement counterreactions, the Medici had to develop long-term strategies aimed at the revaluation of all political values. Concretely, this meant the mental embedding and acceptance of the notion that rule by a princely family was the culmination of the history of the republic. The ideological core of this 'princely republic' was the conceptual framing of the Medici as the incarnation of the will of the Florentine people – that the Medici had been ordained by divine providence to concentrate, ennoble, and historically realize all the yearnings and ambitions of their fellow citizens. Once this idea had spread and was accepted in wider circles, little stood in the way of a transformation of the political system into a principality *sui generis*. It had to be taken into account, however, that this process would stretch out over more than a generation. In the present state of research, it can be taken as established⁶ that this process was essentially complete by around 1530, and the majority of Florentine patri-cians treated the princely rule of the Medici positively, given firm rules advantaging the old elite. By this point, the transition from a clientelistic republic to a principality with simultaneously patrician and paternalistic underpinnings

3 Brian J. Maxson, *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence* (New York, 2014).

4 Lauro Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists* (London, 1963).

5 Cf. Janet Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo x. and the two Cosimos* (Princeton, 1984).

6 Nicholas Scott Baker, *The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance 1480–1550* (Cambridge, Mass., 2013).

was experienced not as a rupture, but as continuity across forms that changed with the requirements of the times.

Naturally, there was resistance to this complex development, which was repeatedly stalled and set back by peripeteias such as the republic of 1494 to 1512 and its *governo largo*. Naturally, the opponents of the Medici, who mainly gathered in circles of those neglected or even damaged by the Medicis' interest group, articulated their objections. But their counterprojects were marked by terminological insecurity, if not outright verbal helplessness. They regularly culminated in the general accusation of tyranny,⁷ and thereby in a broad repudiation which, being as traditional as it was vague, was scarcely adapted to the actual decision-making conditions of a patron taking into account the wishes of his influential supporters.

In such a political and cultural milieu, thinking on politics and the state had to be profoundly transformed. Old black-and-white delineations, such as those presented by the Florentine side during the heated debates with the Milanese humanists in the time of the hegemony of Gian Galeazzo Visconti and the impending capture of the republic, proved to be untenable.⁸ After a generation of Medici dominance, praise of the republic as the only form of government appropriate to the nature of man, once so loudly proclaimed, had faded away. Those who continued to articulate it were suspected either of being caught up in the Medici propaganda apparatus, or of wishing to return to the pre-1434 power distribution. Completely new approaches, new terminologies, and above all new differentiations were now needed to cope with the challenge of theorizing an increasingly unclear and ambiguous political praxis. This brought into play new categories in this analysis, understood as the art of decoding. Politics itself had become the art of obfuscation, and appearances stood on at least equal footing with reality. As politics had largely become a matter of dissimulation, the work of historians and political thinkers would now be to unmask this virtuosic political deception with intellectual brilliance. In the course of this development, the central types of classical political doctrine came to be seen as antiquated, as a crumbling ideological façade, and even as worthy of parody.

7 Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434 to 1494)* (Oxford, 1997); Athanasios Moulakis, *Republican Realism in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford, 1997).

8 Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton, 1955).

2 The Humanistic Mirror for Princes as Counterimage

The crowning examples of the humanistic mirror for princes,⁹ penned by Erasmus of Rotterdam¹⁰ and Guillaume Budé,¹¹ had inherited the traditions of the genre as shaped by Thomas Aquinas and other ecclesiastical authorities, while adding their own particular accents. The basis and starting point for their texts was the pedagogical impetus, and thus the educability of man, whose nature is corrupted by original sin, but who could be led away from *concupiscentia* and toward the Good through the interaction of the freely offered grace of God and a suitable educational programme. This overcoming of bestiality and ennoblement into a higher humanity was to be achieved by reading and internalizing a body of texts, in which ancient moral teachings and Christian instruction, Cicero and Augustine, harmoniously intertwine and complement one another. It was not disputed that in this combination, biblical revelation had the final and highest word, albeit in an emphatically undogmatic interpretation. All obscure points – of which, according to Erasmus, there were many – were not considered binding on human conduct; only passages with a clear moral philosophical message possessed an obligatory character. In this sifting-out, all chapters pointing to predestination were dismissed, whereas the moral striving of people of good will toward self-perfection – which the reformers, for their part, had devalued or suppressed – was correspondingly emphasized. For harsh critics such as Martin Luther, this synthesis led to an intolerable antiquization, and even paganization, of the Christian message of salvation and morality.¹²

Thus, at the centre of the humanistic programme for the education of princes stood the exemplum: both in theory and in practice, in text and in life. All exemplary instructions from antiquity would remain dead letters if they were not illustrated and typified by the living example of the humanistic

9 On the fundamentals of the genre, cf. Bruno Singer, *Der Fürstenspiegel in Deutschland im Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation* (Munich, 1980); Hans-Otto Mühleisen, Theo Stammen and Michael Philipp (eds.), *Tugendlehre und Regierungskunst: Studien zum Fürstenspiegel der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1990); Hans-Otto Mühleisen, *Fürstenspiegel der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1997).

10 Eberhard von Koerber, *Die Staatstheorie des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Berlin, 1967); Christine Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of a New Christianity* (Toronto, 2013); Mihai-D. Grigore, *Neagoe Basarab – Princeps Christianus. Christianitas-Semantik im Vergleich mit Erasmus, Luther und Machiavelli (1513–1523)* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015).

11 David O. McNeil, *Guillaume Budé and Humanism in the Reign of Francis I* (Geneva, 1975); Marie-Madeleine de la Garanderie, *Guillaume Budé, philosophe de la culture* (Paris, 2010).

12 Cf. Volker Reinhardt, *Luther der Ketzer: Rom und die Reformation* (Munich, 2016).

educator at the prince's side. The humanistic mirror for princes was largely a prospectus for its own cause. One of the loftiest imperatives of the prince was thus to cultivate, deepen, and propagate culture – meaning, concretely, the *studia humanitatis* – by all means, material and spiritual. Indeed, this energetic support for talent and scholarly diligence was nearly raised to the status of proof of a ruler's legitimacy. The men of power who most intensively devoted themselves to this paramount duty thereby provided incontrovertible evidence of their divine appointment and mandate, while to neglect these patronage activities would raise serious doubts about the legitimacy of their power. In other words, the ideal prince was aware of his debt of gratitude to his educators, and thus founded academies and provided other lucrative posts for the pioneers of the new scholarship, who had first opened his eyes to the true dimensions of his calling as a ruler.

The ideal prince, educated by a humanistic educator, would then officiate in a seamless extension of his role as the educator of his people. The principles applying to this education of the people were the same as those of his own education, albeit with differing direction, dosage, and practical application. Here again, the vivid *exemplum* stood very much in the foreground. In order to fulfil this purpose, the prince had constantly to act as a visible model for his subjects, to the service of whose well-being he had been called by God. The good prince would teach his people to be good; all of his lessons would remain impotent, or transform into their opposite, if he did not make them believable through his own understandable example. The prince's reign thus had to be authentic, free of pretence and hypocrisy. The ruler had to be good himself in order to be able to educate his subordinates into goodness. Consequently, good rule was without attributes; the outward markings of majesty, such as crowns, jewels, and other pompous ornaments, were vain trinkets, distorting the essence of good reign. The latter was incompatible with any medium that would take on its own independent power; it had to be direct, conveyed without recourse to any medium, through the pure power of fact. The good prince himself was the medium, permeating and dominating public space.

The ruler's goodness included the capacity for strictness, just as the loving father – the archetype and matrix of all politics – needed to be able to flog and punish his children in order to guide them durably toward the good. This goodness, strict when necessary but never cruel, was simply the anthropologically proven and confirmed principle of godly rule. Only in this way could the tendencies of the good and movement toward the good, which remained present in humanity after the fall, be activated and afforded decisive strength. As a fallen creature, man still possessed the more or less repressed and diffuse

impulse toward the good, the true, and the beautiful.¹³ Guided appropriately by a well-educated ruler, he could accept the divine offer of grace and then – as explained by Erasmus in his treatise on free will – be led by his creator, like a child who is still too awkward to walk alone, into a good life and, after death, into paradise. Nothing was so demotic as goodness – according to this pledge of success, the humanistically instructed ruler would win over and harmoniously govern his subjects, guaranteeing their well-being.¹⁴ Evil in the form of envy, ingratitude, avarice, and strife would not thereby be eliminated, but in normal cases could be managed through the superior strength of good people and of the good itself. If the balance were to shift and destructive forces gain strength, whether through internal uprisings or external threats, the good ruler must not pay them back in the same coin. The ruler was first a Christian and only secondly invested with a public function; as a Christian, he had to take more care than anyone to avoid putting his salvation at risk. The humanistic mirror for princes sought, in connection with ancient tradition, to show how it is possible to be at once a Christian and a prince. A few years later, Martin Luther took up the same problem in his work *Von christlicher Obrigkeit*, a sort of theologically founded mirror for princes.¹⁵ His conclusions ran in the same direction as those of Erasmus. For Luther, the Christian prince dwells in two kingdoms: the purely spiritual kingdom of Christ, in which every individual freely subordinates himself in anticipation, and the kingdom of this world, which must be ruled by the sword, a pure labour of love for the truly Christian prince, involving no personal gain. For Erasmus, the parallel consequence is that when conscience and the maintenance of power conflict, the prince must give up power rather than to allow himself to be morally compromised.

As can easily be recognized, the humanistic mirror for princes lacked any concept of statehood in the new understanding that had been shaped by the dynamic and demon-haunted spirit of the reason of state.¹⁶ Consequently, it suppressed the fact that irreconcilable interests clash in the state, and that violence is thus indispensable as a regulative. All tensions would be dissolved, and all disputes Solomonicly settled, if the ruler, educated after the humanistic *esprit de conseil*, virtuously exercised his divinely appointed office as a guide in the direction of virtue. For Erasmus, pursuing this aim required the

13 Cornelius Augustijn, *Erasmus von Rotterdam: Leben – Werk – Wirkung* (Munich, 1986).

14 Philipp C. Dust, *Three Renaissance Pacifists: Essays in the Theories of Erasmus, More and Vives* (New York, 1987).

15 Cf. Rochus Leonhardt and Arnulf von Scheliha (eds.), *Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders! Zu Martin Luthers Staatsverständnis* (Baden-Baden, 2015).

16 Herfried Münkler, *Im Namen des Staates: Die Begründung der Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987).

ruler to overcome substantial parts of his nature: he had to quell his rage and set aside his personal glory, the two causes of most wars, inevitably leading to higher taxes and thus the ruin of the people. Although he was to generously support art and science, he had to be economical with official funds in the manner of a caring father, setting aside his own needs. With Erasmus's requirement of self-overcoming, and even self-mortification, the profession of ruler took on an almost martyrlike quality. Like a good shepherd, the ideal prince was to watch day and night over the well-being of the flock that had been entrusted to him, and if need be sacrifice himself for them. The ruler's office thus parallels that of the pope, as Petrus explains in exemplary fashion in his exchange with the power-hungry, hedonistic Julius II in Erasmus's satirical dialogue 'Julius Exclusus'. A new synthesis would fuse together Christian morality, as traditionally taught by the church through the cardinal virtues, and government, in the spirit of humanistic educational optimism. Naturally, the good prince would also be the protector and paragon of his church. Working with high dignitaries of the church, not only would he have to ensure that his worldly subjects led pious lives, but as a good chief shepherd, also guide the personnel of the church through his own shining example.

3 Anti-Mirror for Princes: Machiavelli's *the Prince*

This theory of governance was no longer adapted to the Italy of the Renaissance, least of all the political milieu of Florence. A rejection of tradition was inevitable, and political theorists and historians of the early 1500s saw through this process in an uncommonly forceful and radical fashion. The most blatant expression of the loss and revaluation of traditional values occurred in Machiavelli's treatise *De Principatibus*, which has consequently been perceived as an anti-mirror for princes.¹⁷ This was also the author's own claim; others had written about politics of and for men as they should be, but were not. He, Machiavelli, however, based his theory on actual human beings, and

17 Since the mid-20th century, the scholarly literature on Machiavelli and his political theory has grown to gigantic proportions. I therefore refer here only to recent standard literature containing detailed bibliographies: Frédéric Chabod, *Machiavelli and the Renaissance* (New York, 1965); John G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (London, 1975); Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli* (Oxford, 1981); Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli (eds.), *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1990); Harvey C. Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue* (Chicago, 1996); Mikael Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire* (Cambridge, 2004); Jacob Soll, *Publishing the Prince: History, Reading, and the Birth of Political Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 2005).

thereby the subject and object of politics, as an empirically supported appraisal showed them to be. This move reversed the direction of gaze and the thrust of the classical mirror for princes. The task of the prince's teacher was no longer to morally upgrade his pupil, but to open his eyes to the knowledge of an evil reality and humanity's incurably destructive nature. *The Prince*, seen from this perspective, represents practical knowledge of the world – indispensable tutoring in applied anthropology.

The prince nevertheless required instruction – indeed, required it more urgently than ever. Machiavelli's text was constructed as a pitiless settling of accounts with the established theory of government. Only after the untenability of this theory had been brought to light, its teachings demolished, and its spirit driven out of the prince would successful rule become possible. In other words, Machiavelli's book of rules for success as a prince was designed as an invalidation, refutation, and annihilation of all the ethical teachings that a prince had previously received. His countertreatise sought to replace all ecclesiastically transmitted Christian precepts – which, in a world whose nature was completely different from what they supposed, could only lead to ruin – with a *tabula rasa*. In this aim, Machiavelli almost seems to have revelled in multiplying contradictions. For example, he explained that the princely virtue of *clementia*, clemency, so prized by the church, regularly transforms in political practice into its opposite, cruelty: namely, whenever a neglectful ruler allowed his subjects to take the reins.¹⁸ Out of this carelessness, which raises the hope of impunity, arise numerous crimes. In other words, an exemplary death sentence, which excites fear and terror and thereby keeps the wanton within bounds, is much more clement than the traditionally prized clemency itself. This holds, he claimed, even if innocent people are sacrificed.¹⁹ All that counts is the deterrent effect. In particular, influential circles within the state must be made to reckon at all times with the possibility of being instrumentalized as sacrificial pawns, whether in a republic or a principality. The work of the ruler thus becomes a task of cool calculation: what damages or serves the state more or less? A second cardinal virtue, *justitia*, also thereby became nugatory. Justice is whatever strengthens the state: disadvantages to individuals are always compensated many times over by benefits to the state.

With his countertreatise, Machiavelli thus sought to demolish all past mirrors for princes at a single blow. This wholesale rejection of values in the name of a new science based on experience of humanity cumulated in the (in) famous negation of political morality as a whole: the accomplished prince

18 Nicolas Machiavelli, *De principatibus*, chap. 17.

19 Nicolas Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, 1, 8.

must have the courage to be cruel. To properly fulfil his role as his subjects' educator, his own education in the spirit of the reason of state tells him that he must be able to become a sly, swift predator.²⁰ In this process of becoming both educated and educator, there is a curious interference: the *uomo virtuoso*, the perfect prince in Machiavelli's sense, is to impart a thoroughly traditional code of qualities and patterns of behaviour to his subordinates — one that was thus a world away from the teacher's own education and orientation. While the prince must be able to trample on every conceivable norm for the good Christian ruler when the situation requires it, the inner polarity of the great mass of people must be entirely conventional. They are above all to believe in the tenets and moral prescriptions of the state religion, which the prince himself should see as a pure *Instrumentum regni* — a mere product of constructive political imagination — to be virtuosically played. On Machiavelli's account — in which he bade farewell to Christian tradition²¹ — religion was made by human beings and arose out of their hopes and fears. For this reason, it must be well made, meaning that it must serve the purposes of human coexistence within the state. With this transfiguration of the function of religion and revaluation of its values, making it a pure instrument of rule, Machiavelli the religious sceptic provoked Christian Europe like no other thinker of his time. In one chapter,²² his 'Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio', he describes in detail how a Roman commander spontaneously manipulated an unfavourable augury, thereby firing up his soldiers' fighting spirit and winning a battle that otherwise would have been lost. For Machiavelli, the accomplished prince must have the ability to manipulate the beliefs of his subjects precisely in the manner of this ancient Roman consul. He must hide this unbelief at all costs, however — if he fails to do so, his skilfully accomplished enchantment of the world will precipitously collapse. The art of dissimulation thus becomes the central axis of politics. In other words, the traditional mirror for princes had become a mirror for subjects. Machiavelli's prince, like that of Erasmus but for opposing reasons, must effect an almost superhuman relinquishment of his own nature, and only the rules of political doctrine aimed entirely at political success apply. The only fixed point is avoiding a relapse into the state of nature, the *bellum omnium contra omnes*. For Machiavelli, there could be no other morality in politics. To be loved or feared, to act generously or prodigally — from this vantage point,

20 Nicolas Machiavelli, *De principatibus*, chap. 18.

21 Cf. Volker Reinhardt, „Machiavellis Gott“, in *Gott in der Geschichte: Zum Ringen um das Verständnis von Heil und Unheil in der Geschichte des Christentums*, eds. M. Delgado and V. Leppin (Fribourg, 2013), pp. 245–253.

22 Nicolas Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, I, 14.

focused entirely on context-dependent strategies, all such moral alternatives in traditional theories of government shrivel away. Because people would in any case be governed by *ambizione* and *avarizia*, and thus by an unscrupulous selfishness that by its nature breaks free of all traditional fetters, leaving room for only the self, instilling a fear of loss is ultimately the surest method of rule. According to Machiavelli, humans are so constituted that they are less able to deal with the loss of their riches than with the violent deaths of their loved ones.²³ Counting on gratitude for benefits received – nothing less than the psychological foundation of the humanistic mirror for princes – is thus the surest path to ruin. People hate to owe their well-being and success to others. Gratitude thus systematically transforms into hatred. This is the anthropological reality that Machiavelli contrasted with the fatal illusions of humanistic theory of government. In his eyes, this reality was empirically proven: history had borne it out anew many times over. The work of the historian thus became an expedition into the abysses of humanity.

For Machiavelli, contrary to the humanists' belief, human nature cannot be ennobled, but it can be redirected, albeit only by the state, which the prince, as the state's first servant, must obey. He then returns his finished work, the law-abiding subject, to the republic, which will shape him into a citizen-soldier. Thus is the vast bulk of human destructive powers channelled to the advantage of the state, which uses them for permanent expansion, to avoid being destroyed by them itself. Conversely, states that do not engage in war are fated for ruin – or, more precisely, implosion – due to the effects of the egoism of individuals, families, and classes when they are not redirected outward. As the most powerful and eloquent panegyrist of war in early modern political theory,²⁴ Machiavelli conceived internal politics as a permanent training camp for armed conflict. For him, the prince must be a general at all times, and the citizen always also a soldier. Internal disputes within the republic must constantly be kept alive, maintained just below the threshold of civil war, so that the energy thereby created could be turned outward for use in mighty conquests. For the humanistic mirror for princes, war is an emergency measure to be used only in defense against unjust external aggression. For Machiavelli, in contrast, war was the very motor of the state and its development. For him, this justifies all educative measures that toughened the citizenry. His verdict

23 Nicolas Machiavelli, *De principatibus*, chap. 17.

24 Cf. Volker Reinhardt, "Niccolò Machiavelli und der Krieg", in N. Brieskorn and M. Riedenaier (eds.), *Suche nach Frieden: Politische Ethik in der Frühen Neuzeit II*, eds. N. Brieskorn and M. Riedenaier (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 353–372, which includes a literature review on the subject.

on the *bonae litterae* and the *studia humanitatis*, in contrast, is harsh: when citizens fritter away their time in aesthetic leisure pursuits, instead of devoting themselves to the work of politics, the state would inevitably come to ruin. All was lost if the powerful withdrew to their studies to delight in elegantly turned verses, instead of training in the ‘art of war’, as taught by a Machiavelli. He articulated just this reproach in the treatise of that title:²⁵ princes and republican leaders had preferred reading Cicero to warcraft; humanistic culture had softened, demilitarized, and depoliticized the powerful, and thereby plunged Italy into misfortune, instead of elevating it to a higher humanity. It is difficult to find a more blatant counterposition to the credo of the humanistic mirror for princes.

The aim of the humanistic mirror for princes was to educate the ruler, developing his good inclinations and repressing the questionable ones. It lauded the virtuous ruler, sought to convey morality and thereby to ensure a practice of rule oriented on the basis of immutable values. Machiavelli’s prince, in contrast, was a man without qualities, precisely because he could activate or discard any and all behaviours as needed, as if on demand. Correspondingly, the *modi operandi* recommended to him in *De Principatibus* are purely situational: they are generated not by a higher ethical rule system, but solely by the constellations of forces and problems that the prince faces. The *uomo virtuoso* is no longer accountable to any god or people. If he has internalized the teachings of his instructor Machiavelli, then he acts only in order to strengthen the state – which, until the transition to a republic, he incarnates – and for a glorious place in history. He can count on this only if he constantly keeps the ultimate act of self-overcoming in view as his ultimate duty and goal: stepping down, making himself superfluous, when the law has once again been impressed upon the population and the rules of the state religion internalized. In the mirror for princes of the ‘prince of the humanists’ himself, Erasmus of Rotterdam, the pious prince must step down if he is able to maintain his rule only by impious methods. Machiavelli’s ideal *principe* must also be able to step down, but on opposing grounds: namely, when he has accomplished the work he has been charged with, and not because of the constraints of conscience. These cease to be necessary in any case, as even by the standards of the most generous Christian moral teachings, he has sacrificed all hope of salvation. According to the teachings of the church (and the humanists), his place in the hereafter is hell. For Machiavelli, the final aim of all mirrors for princes, the reconciliation of worldly rule and salvation, was worthy only of witticisms. Thus Castruccio Castracani, a notably successful 14th-century ruler

25 Cf. Volker Reinhardt, *Machiavelli: oder die Kunst der Macht. Eine Biographie* (Munich, 2012), pp. 324–331.

of Lucca, was convinced that the place of truly energetic generals and men of state in the hereafter was not in the insipid paradise of the blameless, but in the underworld.

Machiavelli devoted to Castracani a novelistically free exemplary biography,²⁶ which can be read as an explanatory and illustrative appendix to *The Prince*, and thus as a personalized mirror for princes. That Machiavelli's political theory should shift into the genre of the life story is entirely logical: if the instruction of the successful ruler is dispersed across a variety of context-dependent stage directions, a concrete *vita* is the best illustrative material. And indeed, the fictional blocks that Machiavelli builds into his Castracani narrative make it unmistakably clear that the lives of previous princes have approached his ideal only loosely. In keeping with Machiavelli's self-understanding as a ruler-giver, a prince could completely fulfil the norm only after reading his work. In his Castracani story, for example, he invented the Moses-like discovery of the future ruler of the city and his upbringing by involuntary 'adoptive parents'. The 'historical' Castracani came from the highest circles of his home city. His transformation in the story into a nobody and a newcomer illustrates Machiavelli's meritocratic understanding of government. The perfect prince was to owe everything to his own talents and efforts, and nothing to his ancestry or other external conditions. This literary conceit not only cast doubt on the role of the historian as a faithful chronicler of facts, but introduced an ironic undertone that undermined the pious earnestness of the traditional mirror for princes: power is a game whose rules the powerful must master. Castracani, the nearly perfect model of the *uomo virtuoso*, also mastered these rules nearly perfectly. He carved himself a path to power with an unscrupulousness befitting each situation, and thus in each case with the appropriate combination of simulated clemency and targeted cruelty, and in the manner at once of a lion and a fox endeavoured to the best of his ability to impart political and military discipline to languishing Lucca. So far, so exemplary. Nonetheless, Castracani also failed to achieve fully exemplary status. Precisely in the same way as Cesare Borgia²⁷ – also a prince who failed to bring his long exemplary rule to an equivalently successful end – Castracani committed a decisive error, which brought upon him the corresponding effect. According to Machiavelli, he failed to establish his own son as his successor, instead favouring a ward from the family of his most important patron. In other words, after his long journey of deviation from the established rules of Christian government, fatal tradition suddenly caught up with the *homo novus*, thereby ensuring his long-term

26 Cf. Volker Reinhardt, *Machiavelli: oder die Kunst der Macht*, pp. 316–324.

27 Nicolas Machiavelli, *De principatibus*, chap. 7.

collapse. Castracani had relapsed into the – in reality long obsolete – norms of *pietas*, and was punished for it: his work died with him. It is hard to conceive of a colder farewell to the traditional mirror for princes.

4 Serious Parodies: Francesco Vettori and the Clemency of the Prince

Machiavelli announced that a first version of his *De principatibus* was ready in late 1513;²⁸ editing continued for a further three years. One of its first readers was the Florentine patrician Francesco Vettori, at the time the Florence's ambassador in Rome, which had been ruled since March of that year by Pope Leo X, the head of the House of Medici. Vettori's diplomatic duties thus took care of themselves, leaving him all the more time for discussions by correspondence with the hard-hit Machiavelli. The latter had just lost his position and narrowly escaped a conviction for conspiracy against the Medici, who had retaken the levers of power in Florence in 1512. Machiavelli and Vettori²⁹ knew and appreciated one another from a diplomatic mission that they had jointly undertaken a few years earlier in Germany, with Vettori as head and Machiavelli as secretary. Their correspondence between 1513 and 1515 shows that the protracted, difficult, and largely fruitless voyage had led to a thorough exchange of ideas between the two. It unmistakably ties in with earlier such discussions, to say nothing of its familiar tone. In other words, Vettori's own ideas and positions were unquestionably stimulated by confrontation and debate with Machiavelli's provocative theses, although this takes away nothing from their independence and distinctness – much to the contrary.³⁰

Following the legation to Kaiser Maximilian, Vettori wrote a text about it which undermined and subverted all conventions at least as radically as did Machiavelli's treatise on the perfect prince. In it he transformed the historical voyage into a novelistically constructed expedition into the abysses of the *condition humaine* and the human soul. Certain passages of the ostensible travelogue³¹ thus read like a picaresque novel, recounting a string of tragedies in a collection of novellas showing humans experiencing every conceivable

28 Cf. John M. Najemy, *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori Letters of 1513–1515* (Princeton, 1993).

29 Biographical information on Vettori can be found in Rosemary Devonshire Jones, *Francesco Vettori: Florentine Citizen and Medici Servant* (London, 1972).

30 A detailed presentation and analysis of Vettori's ideas can be found in Volker Reinhardt, *Francesco Vettori (1474–1539): Das Spiel der Macht* (Göttingen, 2007).

31 Francesco Vettori, "Viaggio in Alamagna", in *Scritti storici e politici*, ed. E. Niccolini (Bari, 1972); republished as *Viaggio in Germania*, ed. M. Simonetta (Palermo, 2003).

destiny – and, not least, as a mirror for princes of a special kind. For all its disillusionment with a world of ‘eat or be eaten’, Vettori’s thought revolves around the ideal of humane rule, and is thus closely connected to the ultimate purpose of the mirror for princes. At the same time, in its profoundly disenchanting vision of the world and of humanity, it is worlds away. For Vettori, an indifferent nature had tossed humans into a world in which only a few are conceded the resources needed for a pleasant life, while the majority are caught up in a merciless struggle for survival, which pits all against all. In this struggle for existence, all means are permitted in principle, although the powerful naturally seek to dictate their rulers’ morality to the little people, enjoining them to endure exploitation and injustice without complaint. However, this is contrary to human nature, which is geared to self-preservation and expansion. Thus, for Vettori, the *-bellum omnium contra omnes* is an enduring reality of society and state. The desire to apply moral standards is vain. There is no way out of this hopeless condition. Anyone wishing to flee, whether to a monastery or into reclusion, there too will be caught up in struggles for resources.

What remained, then, of political theory? The myth of the republic as the superior form of state had been refuted, and indeed the opposite proven: in a republic, the number of power-hungry bloodsuckers is larger, and the little people’s chance of enjoying something of the pleasures of life correspondingly smaller. What was left to be tried was monarchy. It is not better per se, given that a bad king serves as a plaything for greedy and power-hungry courtiers. Nor, naturally, can a good prince abolish the aporias of human life; but he can at least temper its hardships and prevent conditions from being even worse. All rumination and reasoning on state and politics could be reduced to this one feasible task: not to make an evil world even more evil, but to make it somewhat more bearable. This sounds Christian, but it is not. Vettori dismissed Christendom in exactly the same measure as Machiavelli: for him, the teachings of mild Jesus are not fit for this world, which was strikingly demonstrated by Jesus’s own fate. Mild rule is impossible in a republic, as in it inferior and otherwise unsuitable types of men systematically press for power. A prince, however, can be guided into an exercise of power that accommodates the needs of the weak. Vettori noted at least the principal features of this instruction, which consists above all in a renunciation of violence. Precisely in the spirit of an Erasmus, a good king must not wage wars, because they completely ruin both the state and the populace. Instead, his appropriate basic occupation is the game.³² Through play he can divert and hold in check his own destructive tendencies as well as

32 Francesco Vettori, *Viaggio in Alamagna*, pp. 130–132.

the ambition of his courtiers, and attune himself to his true duty to protect the weak. The most important of these rules is to allow those individuals to win whose *ambizione* can thereby be satisfied, and who can thus be deterred from harmful undertakings. Concretely, this means that the monarch must allow his courtiers to triumph in courtly games, and do so in such a way that they do not perceive this cheating in their favour.³³

In the search for clement monarchs, Vettori's compass oscillates considerably. Both of his favourites, Ferdinand of Aragon and Francis I of France, were anything but princes of peace – the latter in particular defined himself precisely as a chivalrous warrior. Given the ironic and playful tone of the text, the question of how seriously Vettori took the political concept of a ruler who must be made fit for his duties through a training programme in lightness remains open. In any case, he took the task of defining the underlying problem seriously enough. In a short biography with the characteristics of a mirror for princes – like Machiavelli with his life of Castruccio Castracani – Vettori showed that the conceptual figure of the *rex ludens* was more than an intriguing invention. Its originality lies in the fact that his model prince – the younger Lorenzo de' Medici, grandson of the great *Magnifico* – did not actually wish to be a prince, at least not in the sense of the demands thrust upon him by his ambitious mother and his uncle, the pope.³⁴ Lorenzo also did not wish to rule the Urbino duchy independently – it had been stolen by Della Rovere, the adopted Montefeltro, in a dirty war – but only to administer it on behalf of the papal state. He thus overcame humanity's innate power-egoism, and thus to some extent his own nature, becoming capable of clemency and unselfishness. The fact that he also let others win at courtly games completed his image as a good ruler. This portrait of the young scion as a humane prince is completely out of keeping with contemporary testimonies, which predominantly describe Lorenzo as an arrogant mummy's boy and an externally controlled stooge. Vettori was closely acquainted with the young Medici, having been his mentor. His "novella-biography" thus probably also represents an attempt to save the young man's honour, and thereby his own reputation.

For Francesco Vettori, as for so many of his contemporaries, the sack of Rome was not only a personal turning point, but also an impetus to revisit his historical and ideological views. Among the abundance of reflections on the

33 Francesco Vettori, "Sommaro della 'storia d'Italia", in *Scritti storici e politicim*, ed. E. Niccolini (Bari, 1972), p. 149.

34 Francesco Vettori, "Vita di Lorenzo de' Medici, Duca d'Urbino", in *Scritti storici e politici*, ed. E. Niccolini (Bari, 1972), pp. 259–272.

event that arose beginning in 1527,³⁵ his text³⁶ stands out in many respects. Like his 'Journey to Germany', his essay on the plunder of the Eternal City is an artful literary work, constructed as a dialogue. One of the two interlocutors has witnessed the catastrophe on the Tiber, the other at least their convulsive further effects in Florence. In the interpretation of their experiences, the two are in complete agreement. In the end, the dialogue expands into a political anthropology on the example of the popes, and thereby a further anti-mirror for princes of a very distinct kind. Other commentators on the sack of Rome drew on Clement VII's numerous strategic and tactical errors to create a portrait of the actions of an exemplary ruler in contrast to his rash and miserly ones. With an unquestionably playful zest for diametric deviation, Vettori derives exactly the opposite positions: his Clement VII was the first in many years to be free of the vices of simony and venality, decried throughout Europe for causing the division of the church, and had wished to convey his virtues through his Curia. However, his was precisely the figure – and herein lay the central point of Vettori's dialogue on the sack of Rome – who was cruelly punished by fickle Fortune through the capture of his capital. What could appear to be the purely arbitrary act of the capricious goddess of luck was in reality system and law. With this astounding or shocking conclusion began a re-evaluation from a historical perspective of all the values of the mirror for princes, and even a veritable *danse macabre* of political morality. The dead dancers were the popes of the recent past themselves.

Their reign began with Paul II – by Vettori's account an unscrupulous power-politician, who pursued a selfish policy of revenge against his personal enemies. When Paul's successor Sixtus IV, a perfidious monk and crass parvenu, acceded to the Chair of St. Peter, he turned his undignified nephews into great lords, and to this end precipitated Italy into wars as unjust as they were bloody. He and his ilk showed no trace of compunction; like all the impudent and the bold who regularly dominate the affairs of state, he considered his own more than questionable actions to be justified. And indeed, according to the refrain of Vettori's review of the popes, history had proved him right. The more misdeeds and immorality the political criminal accumulates, the greater and more numerous the rewards that fortune holds in store for him. All die at

35 An overview can be found in André Chastel, *Le sac de Rome, 1527: Du premier maniérisme à la contre-réforme* (Paris, 1984); Volker Reinhardt, *Blutiger Karneval: Der Sacco di Roma 1527 – eine politische Katastrophe* (Darmstadt, 2009), on contemporary perception esp. pp. 79–140.

36 Francesco Vettori, "Sacco di Roma", in *Scritti storici e politici*, ed. E. Niccolini (Bari, 1972), especially pp. 274–296.

peace with themselves, with God, and with history. How could it be otherwise? They all see themselves as justified by their success, precisely as Machiavelli described. According to Vettori, the next pope, Innocent VIII, was an undignified sycophant who had snatched up as much of everything that the papacy had to offer of his basest heart's desires; he had married his son to one of the daughters of the great Lorenzo de' Medici – and then, spoiled with success and sated with pleasures, left the stage of history. The next pope, Alexander VI. Borgia, marked an unsurpassable apex of papal criminality. He subordinated his entire pontificate to his criminal family, murdered rich cardinals, sold the highest ecclesiastical dignities, broke his word without hesitation, indulged his nearly insatiable sexual appetites – and yet was obviously, given his record of success, the darling of providence. His successor Pius III, who ruled for less than a month, was a good man, and thus incapable of rule; at his early death, he was reconciled neither with himself nor with the world. The story of Pius's successor Julius II, who according to Vettori could easily compete with Alexander VI in matters of vice, was altogether different. Committed only to his own power and honour, he pursued a policy that made a mockery of any sense of reason, and yet luck was constantly on his side – exactly like the next pope, the risk-taking politician Leo X. These provide rich material for contrasts with the supposedly good pontificate of the second Medici pope, Clement VII, who was punished by fate with exemplary severity for his deviation from the norms of evil.

Of course, these theses are conveyed through two fictional characters. But the fact that they correspond to the author's own view is made clear by the many analogies to his previous texts. What sort of picture of history and rulers emerges? The unscrupulous and amoral are regularly rewarded. They act in complete harmony with the laws of the world. This seems to resemble Augustine's *civitas diaboli*, but in Vettori's vision there is no dimension of dichotomy, and thus of redemption. The world rewards the evil, and there is no talk of a final judgment or compensation in the hereafter. Those who want to survive or even live comfortably must adapt to the rules of the game. This applies not only to the powerful, but – as emphatically illustrated by the brutal stories in the 'Journey to Germany' – also and especially to the little people. Does this lead to the conclusion that rulers should obey the commandments of evil? Not even Machiavelli, who at least maintained that man could be educated by the state, had gone so far. The two interlocutors in Vettori's dialogue on the sack of Rome also do not conclude that they should pay homage to victorious evil. Their interpretation is a resigned and helpless one: they preach retreat into the small and sheltered private sphere, and forbid themselves from reflecting on the way of the world, so as not to plunge into a mental abyss.

5 The Construction of the Principality

For Vettori himself, this made the task of political reflection even more difficult, and at the same time more urgent: how could a modicum of order and humanity be preserved in a world whose driving forces propel humanity into destructiveness? Beginning in 1530, this question became very concrete: the second Florentine Republic had fallen, opening the way to a Medici principality under the tutelage of Charles v, and the problem of how this long-sought and finally achievable princely rule should be designed remained unresolved. Vettori was at the forefront of the planning and implementation of this project, as creative director and advisor. Indeed, in many respects his memoranda for the new Florentine state offer a highly precise sketch of the future (grand-) ducal government.³⁷ Here we are faced with an unmistakable irony of fate: Machiavelli, who in his principal writings had so confidently understood and presented himself as the architect of solidly founded power structures, whether princely or republican, failed to attain such a position, while his correspondent and critic Vettori was given this role at an advanced age. His memoranda on the construction of the Medici monarchy offer a mature synthesis of his earlier writings and ideas: the line of anthropological-historical pessimism that runs as a leitmotif through the dialogue on the sack of Rome is unbroken, but here the art of politics lay in making man's negative inclinations useful to the new state – transforming them into positives, in a sense. Machiavelli's theory of the state was based on the same fundamental ideas, but in Vettori they found a very different, independent, and at the same time extremely precise application.³⁸

In the summer of 1530, the Medici had indeed triumphed, but much had also been lost. Because the path of their return had been cleared by foreign weapons, they had not won back their prestige. Even worse, within the city, an irreversible process of polarization had taken place, and supporters and opponents of the old and new orders were deeply hostile to one another. The ousted radical republican middle-class regime had made bitter opponents of the patriciate en bloc, and the mistrust between social strata was insurmountable. Establishing a principality in such a situation of crisis and division was a difficult, if not impossible mission. These extremely unfavourable conditions form the starting point of the four memoranda (*pareri*) that Vettori wrote in 1530–1532 on the construction of the Medici monarchy. They do not constitute

37 Cf. Volker Reinhardt, *Francesco Vettori (1474–1539)*, pp. 167–183.

38 Francesco Vettori, "Pareri", in *Scritti storici e politici*, ed. E. Niccolini (Bari, 1972), especially pp. 305–321.

a mirror for princes, either singly or as a collection, as the new prince Alessandro de' Medici was not the target of moral-political teachings. Nevertheless, he stood at the centre of new plans for government and state: he was tasked with taking the order artfully designed here and making it fit to its purposes – indeed, with bringing it to life. He was thus assigned a difficult role: in a socio-political system resting on the mistrust of all towards all, he had to trust his subjects and, even more, win their trust. This, however, implied a re-evaluation of all values, which could only be achieved through highly skilled dissimulation. That which, in the humanistic mirror for princes, was to be brought about through the power of the good example; the effect of the *bonae litterae* as a means of education; fatherly care; and, if necessary, also the strictness of the properly educated prince, was now achievable only through strategies of salutary deception. To put it very briefly, this perfect technique of power can be summarized with the formula: a negative times a negative equals a positive.

According to Vettori, the dominant characteristics of humanity, and particularly of the Florentines at the zero hour of 1530, were destructive. Individual and collective egoisms, which determine social and political action in any case, had been intensified to extremes by the dramatic events of recent times. The problem that the *pareri* was to solve was to cross and combine these drives in such a way that they would create a well-ordered socio-political system; guidance for rulers, and politics altogether, were more than ever based on the psychological penetration and control of man. The front of hatred and rejection facing the Medici was devastatingly compact, both across social strata and within particular strata. Above all, young men from all milieux were deeply frustrated, and, according to Vettori, in the chaotic closing phase of the republic, they were able to live out their destructive instincts unchecked, harassing and terrorizing their fellow citizens with impunity. This was tantamount to the negative state of nature – in short, anarchy – with all its ruinous consequences. The first and most delicate task of the Medici principality was therefore to restore order and the authority of law. Violence, however, could only be contained through purposefully directed, and thereby justified, violence. For Vettori, the question of whether it is love or fear that best binds ruler and subject, which Machiavelli had answered at least partially with 'Both, but in case of doubt, the latter', no longer arose: after the breakdown of order in the preceding years, the only option was fear. It was the last resort when everything else had ceased to help.

But the ousted regime's bands of thugs were not the principality's only enemies. The middle class had used its full political rights between 1527 and 1530 to gain a share of power. The enjoyment of power is addictive, and the loss of

power that now threatened them would inevitably produce dangerous withdrawal symptoms. Even the great families had become sceptical of the Medici; they had lost far too much influence and prestige since the harsh Medici restoration of 1512. The tried and tested means of binding all these losers of the new order to the Medici regime would consist in the family's usual methods of building patronage relationships: awarding lucrative contracts to artisans and shopkeepers, and appointing members of the highest-ranking clans to profitable ecclesiastical benefices and influential political posts. From 1530, however, all of this was impossible. Rome was still devastated from the sack of 1527, and even the Medici pope Clement VII was able to procure very little for his followers. Money, in any case, was no longer available, and neither, as described above, was trust. Thus, the good old methods that had brought the Medici to power in 1434, and which they virtuosically refined thereafter, no longer worked. New methods of domination that would direct the people from within were therefore needed.

According to Vettori, the Archimedean lever that the Medici had to pull was the boundless vanity, and the no less unrestrained self-deception, of humanity. In other words, the Medici principality had to be so constructed as to ensure that all individuals and groups with the capacity to do it harm would be kept far from the levers of actual power, but endowed with sham posts and pseudo-powers. Their self-love could thus be played on to dupe them into feeling like active participants in the new system of rule. The foundation of the Medici's power, which Machiavelli had criticized so harshly on moral grounds, their patronage network, had thus in fact proved ineffective. Even the creatures of the Medici – men and families who owed to them their rise from obscurity to positions of rank and influence in Florence and the Church – were no longer trustworthy, and thus could no longer be counted on as keystones of Medici power. For Vettori, gratitude (and here again Vettori and Machiavelli's positions meet in their contrast to the humanistic mirror for princes) is not a politically tenable category; it dissolves too quickly, and systematically turns into its opposite. The only recipe was thus to intertwine the mutually resistant and contradictory egoisms of individuals and groups in such a way that they kept each other in check, paralyzing one another, and, at the same time, could be diverted into neighbouring areas where they would not endanger the new duke's exercise of power. But the decisive political bodies such as the old city government would first be deprived of their power and then completely abolished. What would remain were the playing fields of vanity, where the various social strata and interest groups would romp, be watched over, and prevented from having real influence.

The consequence of this theory of government left a major vacuum. How would the prince act in order to keep the new system together and make it functional? Vettori set out what he must do:³⁹ take artful deception to the extreme, radiating trust and, where trust was truly no longer possible, simulating esteem and respect, where the true aim was neutralization and disempowerment. The prince could be given advice on how to conduct his policy of *divide et impera*, and his attention drawn to the dangers associated to his profession, but he could not be educated into being a good regent. This was nothing short of the ultimate rejection of the idea of the mirror for princes. People are fundamentally uneducable, they follow their passions blindly, and reason plays no substantial role in their exercise of power. The only way to prevent the political worst from coming to pass is to stand by the prince as a counselor from situation to situation. Morality has never played a role in politics, because people have no morality. As for Machiavelli, for Vettori everything depends only on deciphering and thwarting the various constellations of interests in such a way that success is achieved in the end. The difference between the two is that Vettori's focus is not on increasing power, but on tempering it. In pursuit of this aim, even tyranny, which according to the mirror for princes must be prevented at any cost, could be accepted – a second rejection of the genre and its tradition. At least in the initial phase, the prince even (and this was another concordance with Machiavelli) had to take on the traits of the tyrant, so compact and powerful was the phalanx of enemies facing him in Florence. The individuals, families, and networks that could not be won over to the new regime with the strategy of beautiful make-believe had to be eliminated by force. This was cruel but, all things considered, clement, given the internal unrest that it would prevent; Machiavelli had made a similar argument on this point as well. In addition, a secret police was needed to monitor the disarmed citizens and discourage resistance. What remains in the end is a wholly disillusioned conclusion: to govern is always to be a despot; this is ordained by the essence of man and the nature of the world. The art of politics thus consists only in arriving at the variant of tyranny that is the mildest, and thereby the most tolerable for the great majority of people. However, this is only possible in a monarchy that is correctly constructed – that is, that corresponds to the nature of man.

39 Francesco Vettori, "Pareri", in *Scritti storici e politici*, ed. E. Niccolini (Bari, 1972), pp. 313–321.

6 Francesco Guicciardini: The Refutation of the Mirror of Princes through History

Francesco Guicciardini reduced the idea of the mirror for princes to absurdity with entirely new ideas.⁴⁰ Exactly like Vettori, as the close advisor and ‘minister’ of a prince, Pope Clement VII, he had gained profound insights into the methods by which power is exercised, and thereby into the nature of power, leading to total disillusionment. For, first, ‘his’ prince had proved to be largely resistant to advice; and second, because of the prince’s inability to see through and enforce decisions once they were made, he was the worst conceivable candidate for the role of regent. Third, Guicciardini had had to admit to himself that he had failed as counselor to the prince at the decisive moment: contrary to Vettori, in the to-be-or-not-to-be question of whether to enter into an alliance with Charles V or Francis I of France in 1526, he voted for the French option, and thereby indirectly paved the way for the catastrophic sack of Rome.⁴¹ At the end of all the self-deceptions and disappointments, what remained was a picture of humanity and history in which traditional theory of governance, and thus the mirror for princes, appear as mere erratic remnants of a misguided tradition.

In the disillusioned retrospective view that Guicciardini takes at the beginning of his monumental *Storia d'Italia*, the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent represents a golden age. Until 1492 – according to the introduction to his history of Italy, written in the 1530s, which blends dramatic accusations and nostalgia – the country’s powerful followed the only durably applicable rule of politics, namely *prudencia*, a sense of proportion, combined with defensive caution and foresight. In this way, they had saved Italy from foreign innovations and – with the exception of the increasingly nepotistic popes from Sixtus IV onward – guaranteed a minimum of internal equilibrium, protection for the status quo, and basic diplomatic trust. Beginning in 1492, following the death of Lorenzo and his acolyte pope Innocent VIII, this was all quickly lost. Circumspection and restraint were replaced by high-risk politics with no heed for the consequences – which arrived quickly enough, with the French campaigns of 1494 and 1499, allowing Italy to sink to the status of stage for

40 The starting point for research on Guicciardini remains Félix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton, 1965); see also Marks Philips, *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft* (Toronto, 1977); Giorgio Cadoni, *Un governo immaginato: l'universo politico di Francesco Guicciardini* (Roma, 1999); Volker Reinhardt, *Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540): Die Entdeckung des Widerspruchs* (Göttingen, 2004).

41 Cf. note 35.

European hegemonic wars. According to Guicciardini, this path into the abyss could have been avoided if the rulers of Italy had taken their occupation seriously and exercised it correctly, that is, with due wisdom. Their failures were not due to a lack of education in their duties, but to their character, which no counselor in the world could alter.⁴²

The historian thus became a pathologist of power, his work the *danse macabre* of political reason and thereby a retrospective anti-mirror for princes. Numerous recent examples, some very fresh indeed, showed that philosophers, educators and historians could not exert a moderating influence on the powerful. Italy had not seen a more intelligent, more creative and intellectually shrewd man in power than Lorenzo il Magnifico in many years. Lorenzo had sought to pass on the wisdom he had gathered through experience to his sons Piero and Giovanni as a good educator in power and its exercise, but was only modestly successful. Piero, his successor in the difficult role of string-puller behind the scenes of the republic, failed all along the line because he had thoroughly misunderstood his role. He saw himself ultimately as a prince, which he was not, and drove off the patriciate, although he depended on their support. Although Giovanni, with his proverbial fortune, was carried onto the pontiff's throne, in this position he also remained what he had always been: a favourite child of fortune, an extravagant spendthrift, and an all-or-nothing politician. He owed the fact that his rule did not lead to catastrophe – unlike that of his cousin and second successor Clement VII – entirely to the counterbalance of a saving antagonism with the latter. Giulio de' Medici, as a sort of assistant pope, was able to prevent the worst by virtue of his exactly opposite character, and resultingly thrifty and timid policy. The worst came to pass, however, when this professional inhibitor and preventer became pope himself, with no effective countervailing force to balance out his oneness.⁴³ For all their sagacity, Guicciardini and Vettori could not play this part, particularly as the two further advisors to the pope were like fire and water and, with their antithetical orientations, allowed the government of the second Medici pope to run completely out of control. For Guicciardini, this refuted the idea of princely education. A single ruler, he argued, because of the polarity of his individual character, is not in a position to successfully confront all the vicissitudes of politics; he may be fit for some situations, but necessarily he is no match for others. Guicciardini thus did not believe in Machiavelli's model of the education of princes as universal men. On the contrary, in his critical commentaries on Machiavelli's *Discorsi*, he picked apart the older man's core ideology as the creation of

42 Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, I, 1.

43 Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, XVI, 12; *Ricordi* C 156.

baseless myth.⁴⁴ As individuals, men have their mentality, their beliefs, and their conscience; and Machiavelli's *uomo virtuoso* was therefore the product of a political imagination run riot.

Guicciardini's multilayered double portrait of the two Medici popes, and of Clement VII especially, transparently represents the antithesis of this figure, highlighting the narrowness, helplessness, and incorrigibility of these actually existing princes. Here Guicciardini and Vettori were in agreement: Clement VII actually possessed the best qualities for his high office. He lived as befitted a prince of the church, morally strict and incorruptible, and brought an uncommonly rich education and knowledge to his high position. But this very mixture proved fatal, as *prudencia* gave rise to such continual wavering, hesitation, and reversals that in a short time Rome and the Curia had completely disavowed the pope, and in the end turned almost all sides against him. What, for Vettori, spoke of a world without Nemesis or a righteous God, the triumph of evil in an amoral world, for Guicciardini stood above all as an argument against the monarchy and its ideology of the morally trained prince. The imponderables of politics could at best be mastered by an elite of the wise, acting collectively and thus subduing their individual destructiveness – not by a single ruler with his incorrigible qualities.⁴⁵ In the *Storia d'Italia*, light shines exclusively on republics, above all Venice, which was able to head off the political catastrophe that inevitably appeared following its defeat by the great European monarchies at Agnadello, thanks to the concentrated experience of a political class selected according to performance criteria and the psychological skills of individual diplomats. He portrayed the action of princes, however, as an uninterrupted succession of greed, overconfidence, irresponsibility, thoughtlessness, ingratitude, and miscalculation; not a single exemplary case appears. For him, then, the actual psychology of power definitively refuted the humanistic idea of rulers being brought up into the good through systematic education. Man in himself – as Guicciardini protests, against Machiavelli's sweepingly negative anthropology – tends toward the good; but he can always be seduced into the opposite, and the seduction of the exercise and enjoyment of power is completely irresistible. This comes out very concretely in the case of Florence. After the assassination of the first duke, Alessandro de' Medici, in January 1537, the leading patricians initially tried to put his inexperienced successor from a

44 Cf. Félix Gilbert, *Francesco Vettori (1474–1539)*; Volker Reinhardt, *Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540)*, pp. 118–124.

45 Jader Jacobelli, *Machiavelli e/o Guicciardini: alle radici del realismo politico* (Milano, 1998); Athanasios Moulakis, *Republican Realism in Renaissance Florence: Francesco Guicciardini's Discorso di Logrognò* (Lanham, 1998).

collateral line of the dynasty under the political tutelage of the great families, and thereby creating a prince trained and domesticated according to the specifications of the old elite. This final experiment in princely education backfired completely. Cosimo virtuosically exploited his room for political manoeuvre in both domestic and international spheres, quickly and enduringly breaking from this cumbersome dependency. Guicciardini's late political reflections, which found their way into the polished aphorisms of the *Ricordi*, shed light on the phenomenon of individual rule from an opposite perspective. They look at how the individual close to the ruler, who threatens to become a tyrant at any time, can assert his autonomy: namely, through the art of dissimulation. The means shielding one's inner self from the piercing gaze of the powerful, who seek also to rule over the consciences and feelings of their subjects.⁴⁶

7 Epilogue: Reason of State and the Mirror for Princes in the Confessional Age

The shift to princely rule was irrevocable: the republican patrician had become a courtier against his will. He now had to adapt his desires for self-assertion and upward mobility to the new ambiance of the court and the psyche of its master. The future belonged to whoever was able to use intelligence and insight to maintain the upper hand in this struggle. The great diplomat Baldassare Castiglione had discovered this some years earlier, as the ambassador of no less exacting a ruler than Charles V, about whom he wrote in his *Libro del Cortegiano*.⁴⁷ It was no longer the prince who was to be educated, but the substitute or supplementary self who was always available to him, the courtier. But as consummately trained as the courtier might be in how to act as a servant of the prince, it was neither possible nor desirable for him to merge completely with this role. For all his assiduity in obedience to the powerful, at the least he also had a duty to exert an influence on their morality and ethical behaviour. If he did not succeed in doing so, and if instead he was involved in ethically questionable undertakings, he was duty bound to quit the service to avoid being unfaithful to himself – just as, in the humanistic mirror for princes, the prince must give up his power if doing so is required to keep from losing his salvation. The fact that Castiglione's writing was as much addressed to princes as to those

46 Cf. Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi C* 103.

47 Cf. Umberto Motta, *Castiglione e il mito di Urbino: Studi sulla elaborazione del Cortegiano* (Milano, 2003).

who served them is widely attested by its success among the powerful, such as Charles v.

The mirror for princes was to be resurrected in altered form in the fundamentally transformed climate of the confessional age, beginning in the middle of the sixteenth century, as for example in Giovanni Botero's bestseller *The Reason of State*. As stated in his introduction, he saw his widely influential treatise⁴⁸ as a refutation of Machiavelli's *Prince*. According to Botero, a Piedmontese pupil of Jesuits, Machiavelli had sprayed his poison so lastingly that moral resistance was urgently necessary. Botero argued that Machiavelli's idea that political action which contradicts the morality taught by the church is not only permitted, but in fact required for the preservation of the state, had prevailed at courts everywhere, and that a return to the inalienable principles of Christian politics was therefore needed to eliminate these pernicious errors. Botero's counterproposal was an education of the prince in the spirit of the Council of Trent and of a resurgent papacy, inculcating the precepts of Catholic reform to ensure its political primacy. The reason of state cited in his title was sorted by confession: among Catholic powers, beyond slight remnants of harmless subterfuge for the purposes of political survival, it had no right to exist; but in the combat against 'unbelievers' – that is, against Lutherans and above all Calvinists – who aim to destroy the declared will of God, it was appropriate. However, in all problematic situations, the exemplary prince was to seek the opinion of an ecclesiastical council of conscience and, in case of doubt, also comply with the instructions of this superordinate moral authority.

However, this modified mirror for the prince's conscience did not return the genre to a position of profound influence. The idea of the reason of state, and thus of the autonomy of the state, whose interest was to be the sole determinant of the actions of the powerful, continued to make its inexorable way. The many mirrors for princes of the seventeenth century whose leitmotif, like that of Botero's, was an endeavour to reinterpret Machiavelli's reason of state and thereby bring about a modest re-moralization of politics, reflect only an apparent paradox. The great seventeenth-century texts on statesmanship very clearly reflect this supersession at a European scale: Cardinal Richelieu's *Political Testament* veils only thinly his doctrine that the strengthening of the state also justifies extralegal measures, such as the suppression of uprisings without

48 Cf. Romain Descendre, *L'état du monde : Giovanni Botero entre raison d'Etat et géopolitique* (Genève, 2009); Enzo Baldini (ed.), *Botero e la 'ragion di Stato': Atti del convegno in memoria di Luigi Firpo* (Firenze, 1992).

regular trials.⁴⁹ The most detailed instructions for princes written by a reigning prince of modern times, the *Mémoires* that the young King Louis XIV wrote for his first son and presumptive successor,⁵⁰ completely repudiate the idea of the classical mirror for princes for the ideology of absolutism. In this ideology, God alone chooses the king and confers upon him special graces for this purpose. He is thus raised so far above the category of other men that while he can indeed take advice from them in detail, he can never learn from them how to be a ruler. The secrets of successful rule are accessible to him alone, and he is thus the only one able to pass them on to his successor. Moreover, the art of rule can only be acquired through practice, never through the theories of those in circles without experience of power. Some decades later, with the help of Voltaire, the Prussian crown prince Frederick wrote his *Anti-Machiavel*, a mirror for princes in the spirit of the authoritarian Enlightenment⁵¹ – only to begin durably refuting it in practice as warrior-king only months after its publication in 1740. The fate of the genre was enduringly sealed.

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49 Herfried Münkler, *Im Namen des Staates. Die Begründung der Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987).

50 Volker Reinhardt, “Leviathan und Sonnenkönig. Zur Hobbes-Rezeption im Frankreich Ludwigs XIV”, in *Der sterbliche Gott: Thomas Hobbes' Lehre von der Allmacht des Leviathan im Spiegel der Zeit*, eds. Th. Lau, V. Reinhardt and R. Voigt (Baden-Baden, 2017), pp. 59–76.

51 Cf. A. Pecar, „Friedrich II. von Preußen – Kritiker oder Schüler Machiavellis?“, in *Der Machtstaat: Niccolò Machiavelli als Theoretiker der Macht im Spiegel der Zeit*, eds. V. Reinhardt, S. Saracino and R. Voigt (Baden-Baden, 2015), pp. 155–174.

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Specula Principum and the Wise Governor in the Renaissance

Sylvène Édouard

Charles of Ghent, who would later become the emperor Charles v, Francis I, Mary Tudor, Edward VI, Philip II, along with many other princes, were taught about their ethical duties through reading the lives of illustrious men, maxims written by ancient and modern thinkers and philosophical texts. Still, on the topic of self-government and the government of others, no book could synthesize this propaedeutic instruction better than the ‘speculum principum’ (or mirror of princes), a book of counsel for rulers, which could be found in every royal library, back then. Although rare, a few preserved inventories of princely libraries attest to this. Thus, a common body of knowledge seems to emerge from these various lists of books, formerly stored in numerous wooden chests, and later taken out of the bedroom, dressing-room and even the school room of the young prince destined to rule over the principality.¹ That is why, despite early differences of opinion due to conflicting confessional beliefs among the princes’ tutors and masters, beyond the Rhine and the Channel, the reading programme comprising classical, patristic and testamentary literature, remained invariably the same.

Aesop, Homer, Ovid, Aeschylus, Euripides, Virgil, Cicero, Seneca, Quintilian, Juvenal, Plautus, Horace, Xenophon, Thucydides, Caesar, Plutarch, Plato, Aristotle, along with many other philosophers and thinkers, were either read by the pupil in manuscripts and printed books -in carefully selected, isolated excerpts - or to him by his tutor. Therefore, all these texts have contributed to shaping the young princes’ moral character, informing their education

1 In the Vulgate, the Princeps’s status was not exclusively royal and secular: it was also sacerdotal, so that in medieval ‘mirrors’, the term usually refers to the dignitary’s government, whatever his title. Although this tradition persisted in the early xvth century - as evidenced in Machiavelli’s *Prince* - the genre was already imposing itself as being of a royal nature, back then, as *specula* were first addressed to the crown prince of a kingdom and sometimes even to the king himself, advising him on how to govern his State. For further reading on the subject, see Mario Turchetti, ‘Le statut du “prince” dans les *specula principis* à la Renaissance : bref historique sur deux millénaires’, in *Mélanges en l’honneur de Jean-Pierre Babelon*, eds. I. Pébay-Clottes and J. Perot (Paris, 2014), pp. 25–38.

and helping them define and develop their sense of ethics along the way. Consequently, whether their content was mainly historical or philosophico-moral, these books all turned out to have mirror objectives.

However, far from being directly related to the 'mirror fo princes' genre, these writings proved a worthy source of didactic inspiration and provided its subject matter. Guillaume Budé, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Juan Luis Vives, Jean Brèche, Francisco de Monzón, along with many other instructors, compiled them in their own books of counsel for princes. Still, being given such an anthology and then putting it away in his book chest was no evidence that the prince either read or consulted it regularly. Thus, was the young prince really educating himself through it? Wasn't gifting him with this book rather a crafty social, political gesture devised by authors eager to win the reigning prince's favour by paying attention to his heir? Actually, several clues - especially those drawn from the rare, few didactic exercises that have been preserved - seem to confirm that *specula principum* literature played a major part in the prince's formal training. Thus, using a triangular model based on master, mirror and pupil, this study will attempt to delineate the specular genre in the prince's humanistic education during the Renaissance.

1 'Mirrors of Princes' and the Circulation of Knowledge: A Work of Programmatic Scholarship

1.1 *A Far-reaching Corpus of Authors*

Who were these authors, eager to advise young princes with a personal gift encapsulating the classical and Christian legacies of modern political thought? Well, they were those scholars, well and lesser-known, who acted as the princes' advisers, were on friendly terms with many printers and were regarded as princes among philosophers. Whether they had been officially appointed as tutors or not, all of them belonged to the small circle of men of letters and were part of the select group of humanists: they were the favourites of capital printing houses, who fought over their letters and competed for their publication. They were philologists and jurists, but above all, they were Christians. These learned men drew from a great many sources of inspiration, so that their culture was as vast as basic knowledge was supposed to be, according to Erasmus, who claimed that commonplaces should be extensive.

Our corpus, consisting of a dozen 'mirrors', composed during the first half of the xvith century, encompasses the royal courts of Spain, Portugal, France and England, as well as the States of the Holy Roman Empire. Still, these were not all directly addressed to the prince, whose duty would some day be to reign

and rule over the kingdom - such as the Infante John of Aragon,² Francis, Count of Angoulême,³ Charles of Ghent⁴ or Mary Tudor.⁵ Some of them were actually aimed at the King, for his heirs - such as John III of Portugal⁶ - while others were truly meant for himself - such as Henry VIII of England⁷ and Demoullins for Francis I. Finally, others served princes of lesser importance: in 1541, Jean Brèche,⁸ a jurisconsult and Parliamentary counsel on friendly terms with the Tours humanists, published, back in 1541, the *Manuel royal*, a *speculum principum* dedicated to Jeanne d'Albret, niece of Francis I - the future Princess of Cleves, who would later become Queen of Navarre. Similarly, a series of German 'mirrors'⁹ was released. Before the Reformation, most of these were intended for Counts Palatine (such as Jakob Wimpfeling's, whose *Agatharchia Id est bonus Principatus* was written in 1498 for the Duke of Bavaria and his son Philip, Count Palatine of the Rhine), but they were meant for the Lutheran princes, afterwards. In 1526, the Franciscan Johann Eberlin (ca. 1470-1533), who had embraced the cause of the Reformation, compiled a 'mirror' for

-
- 2 Alonso Ortiz, *Liber de educatione Johannis Serenissimi Principis et primogeniti regum potentissimorum Castelle Aragonum et Siciliae Fernandi et Helisabet inclitya prosapia coniugum clarissimorum*, Salamanca University Library, Ms 368.
 - 3 François Demoullins de Rochefort, *Ce lvyre est intitule le Fort Chandio de Francoys De Moulins. Aultrement dyt de Rochefort*, Paris, BnF, Ms fr. 1194; *L'Institucion, condicion ou instruction morale de Cirus, roy de Perse, par Zenophon, composée, puis après par François Philelphe de grec en latin reduicte, et par François Demoullins, de latin en françois transcripée*, Paris, BnF, Ms fr. 1383; *Commentaires de la guerre gallique*, Paris, BnF, Ms fr. 13429; *Le dialogue d'un confesseur et d'un pécheur*, Paris, BnF, Ms fr. 1863.
 - 4 Erasmus, *Institutio principis Christiani saluberrimis referta præceptis, per Erasmum Roterodamum, cum aliis nonnullis eodem pertinentibus, ... Isocrates ad Nicoclem regem de institutione principis. Panegyricus gratulatorius de foelici ex Hispania reditu, ad principem Philippum, Maximiliani filium, eodem authore. Libellus Plutarchi de discrimine adulatoris et amici, in-4°* (Basileae, 1516).
 - 5 Juan Luis Vives, *Ioannis Lodovici Vivis Valentini. Introductio ad Sapientiam. Eiusdem Satellitium siue Symbola. Eiusdem Epistolae duae de ratione studii puerilis* (Lovanii, 1524); *De Ratione studii puerilis, deque uita iuuentutis instituenda, ac moribus studiisque corrigendis, opuscula diuersorum autorum perquam erudita, quae uersa pagella enumerantur* (Basel, 1539).
 - 6 Francisco de Monzón, *Libro primero del Espejo del Príncipe Cristiano* (Lisbon, 1544) and *Libro segundo del Espejo del Príncipe Cristiano* (Lisbon, 1571).
 - 7 Stephen Baron, *Incipit tractatulus eiusdem venerādi patris De regimine principū ad serenissimum regē anglie henricū octauum* (London, 1520).
 - 8 Jean Brèche, *Manuel royal, ou Opuscules de la doctrine et condition du prince : tant en prose que rythme françoise / commentaire de Plutarque, auteur grec, de la doctrine du prince, translaté en françoys. Les octante préceptes d'Isocrates, du régime et gouvernement du prince et de la république : aussi tournez en françoys / le tout par J. Brèche de Tours* (Tours, 1541).
 - 9 For further reference, see Bruno Singer, *Die Fürstenspiegel in Deutschland im Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation* (Munich, 1981) and Naïma Ghermani, *Le Prince et son portrait. Incarner le pouvoir dans l'Allemagne du XVI^e siècle* (Rennes, 2009).

Count Georg II von Wertheim. In 1535, Rieger composed his *Enchiridion*¹⁰ for the Duke of Brunswick. Initially inspired by Erasmus, this 'mirror' was later revisited and adapted by George Spalatin,¹¹ who chose to address it to Elector John Frederick's son, in 1538. Calvinist Konrad Heresbach¹² (1496–1576) and Johann Sturm (1507–1589) [*De educatione principum*, 1551] drew heavily on it as well in writing their books of counsel for the Duke William of Cleves and his son, Charles Frederick of Cleves. Lastly, Melanchthon [*Institutio Iohannis Frederici, Ducis Stetini, Pomeraniae*, 1554] made great use of it for his own *speculum principum*, which he dedicated to John Frederick of Pomerania.

These humanists - clerics, Franciscan friars, theologians and jurists - were mostly educated at university - in Salamanca, Alcalá de Henares, Paris, Freiburg, Erfurt, Cambridge and Oxford - where they read law, philosophy and theology. These masters came from various social backgrounds - they were active preachers and university professors - but most of all, these scholars all had close links with princely courts, where they acted as trusted advisers (Guillaume Budé, Erasmus, Spalatin and Johann Eberlin), esteemed chaplains and clergymen (Ortiz, Demoulins, Monzón), private confessors (Demoulins, Baron) and even as private tutors - whether that title was official or not (Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, Demoulins, Jean Thenaud, Spalatin). They pursued fairly similar studies and shared rather similar political ideas, which is why - except for Demoulins and Ortiz's earlier *Dialogues* - the rhetorical form and content of their 'mirrors' is almost identical : indeed, the arguments put forward and the thinkers chosen to discuss wisdom, virtues, the education of the prince, royal dignity and the exercise of authority are mostly the same.

In that respect, specular erudition overlaps that of study programmes. Still, the instructional quality of humanistic education lied in the real coherence of the curriculum, which was based on a new, groundbreaking openness in the field of classical and Christian texts. Commonplace moral teachings drawn from famous maxims and the lessons of history, helped royal pupils learn about moral philosophy, *exempla* and classical rhetoric. They facilitated the practice of eloquence and the transmission of skills, going as far as physical preparation, each lesson building towards the next and preparing the prince

10 Urban Rieger, *Enchiridion odder Handtbüchlin eines Christlichen Fursten* (Nuremberg, 1562) [orig. publ. in Wittenberg, 1535].

11 George Spalatin, *Christiani principis et magistratus enchiridion, Doctore Urbano Regio autore* (Magdeburg, 1538).

12 Konrad Heresbach, *De educandis erudiendisq[ue] principum liberis, reipublicae gubernandae destinatis, deque republica Christiane administranda epitome* (Francofurti ad Moenum, 1570).

for his future role as ruler, while he contemplated the glorious achievements and wise aphorisms of illustrious men.

Study plans featuring the reading programme of young princes - and only occasionally, young princesses, as reading programmes for girls were of far less ambitious scope, back then - were many and varied. However, they always kept true to ancient philosophers' moral and political intent, such as Plutarch's, whose *Moralia* claimed that "the prince should be educated." According to the most idealistic pedagogues, this most essential part of princely education, often called the "doctrine", was supposed to make the prince a wise, or even a "philosopher king" - the meaning of these terms will be clarified below. Furthermore, the means employed for his instruction, such as the books used in the prince's school room, allow us to elucidate the matter of the sources¹³ drawn on in compiling 'mirrors', in the Renaissance.

Each text introduced the next one: it was useful for learning grammar and provided a richly illustrated moral content, which facilitated the young pupil's mastery of rhetoric. Thus, every aphorism and oration submitted to the young prince's perusal reflected back to him the mirror image of the man he ought to become - that of a good, fair prince. These textbooks were not only intended for young princes: they circulated in large numbers and were meant for all readers wishing to educate themselves. Most of them were distributed and sold by printing houses based in Paris, Lyon, Basel, Strasbourg, Venice, Rome, Antwerp and Leuven. The reading material used to teach young princes the art of ruling clearly reflects a shift from a rather medieval, princely culture - which was mostly due to the great importance given to sacred texts, especially hagiographical ones - to a more humanistic one, favouring portable collections of short maxims and scholarly editions accessible to young royals.

1.2 *Some Gnomonic Literature*

Collected maxims and fables were the first reading material to be used in teaching Latin to pupils as young as six or seven: they contained a large number of commonplaces, which could be used in subsequent rhetorical exercises, and always conveyed a useful moral. Ancient thinkers mentioned in these anthologies - such as Aesop, Cato, Horace, Juvenal, Homer and Ovid - had already long been faithfully guiding young pupils' first steps in formal education, as they joined these new schools, which had been set up by Guarino da Verona and Vittorino da Feltre, back in the early xvth century, in Italy. These selected excerpts from gnomonic literature also included - no longer in textual form but

¹³ Sylvène Édouard, *Les devoirs du prince. L'éducation princière à la Renaissance* (Paris, 2014), pp. 29-31.

through religious practice and the perusal of testamentary texts – the *Psalms*, which were at the heart of the education of Protestant princes, together with the *Proverbs of Solomon*, which were essential in teaching wisdom and were related to ethics, according to the patristic tradition, and the *Canticles*, which had to do with mysticism.

As royal pupils often learnt these short sayings by heart, like every other young Christian that was being taught at the time, the young prince was introduced to Latin grammar through St Jerome's *Vulgate*, which also instructed him in religion and ethics. Pupils derived quite the same benefits from reading other authors whose works were approached didactically - such as the *Fables* and *Proverbs* - through examining several quotations and a few syllogisms.

1.3 *Aesop*

Aesop figured among the most beloved and popular Greek authors, especially because some of his stories could be enjoyed by children, which triggered a real publishing craze for the various editions of his *Fables*, which the tutors of the future king Philip II started to collect as early as 1541. In July 1554, the young Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, then aged 11, wrote to Elizabeth, the daughter of the King of France, Henry II, that she had read two fables by Aesop, which she thought were very useful and pleasant.¹⁴ She drew a valuable lesson from the tale of *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, then well known among compilers, such as Lorenzo Valla, Rinuccio d'Arezzo or Planudes, whose compilation led Bonus Accursius to publish the first printed edition of Aesop's *Fables*, at Milan, in 1474. Later, over the course of the first half of the XVIth century, other editions proliferated, such as the Dorpian collection - a selection of fables compiled by Maarten van Dorp and first printed at Leuven, in 1513 - which was mostly aimed at schoolchildren. Still, Mary Stuart didn't use this special edition. Nor did she resort to the many French translations of Aesop's *Fables* that were available at the time. Actually, Mary Stuart made good use of another tale, that of *The Two Bags* which she had probably found in Juan Luis Vives's *Satellitium Animi*, a 'mirror' consisting of various maxims which had previously been addressed from Bruges to Mary Tudor, the daughter of King Henry VIII, back in 1524.

¹⁴ Paris, BnF, Latin Ms. 8660. On this exercise, see Marie Stuart, *Oeuvres littéraires. L'écriture française d'un destin*, eds. S. Édouard, I. Fasel and F. Rigolot (Paris, 2021) and Sylvène Édouard, "The Books Used by Mary Stuart for the Exercise on "Acquérir de la doctrine" (1554-1555)", in *Schulbücher und Lektüren in der vormodernen unterrichtspraxis, Zeitschrift für Erziehungs-wissenschaft*, eds. S. Hellekamps, J.-L. Le Cam and A. Conrad, vol. xv, supp. 2, 2012, pp. 185-201.

1.4 *Juan Luis Vives*

In order to guide the princess on the path of virtue and act as the “guardian of her soul”, Vives had written more than two hundred annotated maxims (or “symbols”). Similarly, in his opusculum entitled *Introductio ad sapientiam*, consisting of more than five hundred and fifty maxims, Vives does not refer to any great authority, nor does he allude to any illustrious example. Thus, these two books are very similar: they both have an educational purpose, since they both belong to the gnomic genre, so that their appeal lies in their edifying character and their dedicated pursuit of true knowledge. These works were appended to the study programme drawn up by the same author, entitled *De ratione studii puerilis* - which included a section meant for the princess that was smaller in scope and much less ambitious - and were often published together in a single volume. Still, the *Introductio ad sapientiam* is the only one to have ultimately achieved editorial posterity.

Despite the obvious parenetic interest of these fables, the young prince’s tutors and masters very often resorted to various collections of proverbs and maxims – as indeed, it seems that the distinction between these two was seldom made, so that they were often conflated and even confused, at that time. Once again, print allowed books to proliferate massively, so that entire collections of Pseudo-Cato’s distichs and Isocrates’s and Pseudo-Isocrates’s maxims - addressed respectively to Nicocles (*Ad Nicoclem*) and to Demonicus (*Ad Demonicum*) - were issued. Similarly, comedies and satires - such as those by Lucian of Samosata - were published and even books of poetry - a genre in which Homer, the ‘Prince of Poets’, was supreme, but in which Virgil and Ovid also excelled - were released.

1.5 *Erasmus*

Erasmus himself was very fond of paremiography, for he liked drawing great lessons from the few, small words that proverbs consist of. Erasmus’s *Adagia*, mentioned above, were a great collection of proverbial wisdom meant to instruct the prince, who could consult them in abridged versions, along with *De duplici copia verborum*, which was published in 1512, and mainly consisted of commonplaces that could be used in rhetorical exercises. These proverbs, accompanied by comments of a few lines on each, sometimes written as dialogues to enlighten the reader - such as *The Colloquies* - met with such public favour that Erasmian editions proliferated: dozens of new versions were published and their content kept expanding until the 1550s. Erasmus had a taste for maxims and the memorable words of illustrious men that were perpetuated by Plutarch. That is why the first edition of his *Education of a Christian Prince* (*Institutio principis christiani*) printed at Basel, in 1516, also included

Isocrates's maxims to Nicocles (*Ad Nicoclem*), along with his own *Panegyric* for the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Handsome, father to Charles of Ghent - the future Holy Roman Emperor Charles v - and Plutarch's moral opusculum on *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*.¹⁵

In a famous episode already mentioned above, in 1554, as she was busy translating a text into Latin and practising rhetoric, Mary Stuart turned to this book for helpful inspiration and used it as a model for her own speech condemning tyranny and advocating its suppression. The aim of her rhetorical exercise being to justify the prince's political doctrine and principles of wisdom, in other short letters, mostly addressed to her younger friend, Elizabeth of Valois, Mary Stuart chose to draw her inspiration from maxims derived from the memorable words and deeds of ancient kings, captains and philosophers, as they had been previously collected by Plutarch, in his *Moralia*, and commented on by Erasmus, in his *Apophthegmata*, which were reissued countless times - nearly 70 - between 1531 and 1574.¹⁶ Mary Stuart kept resorting to this book and borrowing ideas from the three thousand maxims that she had personally selected, until the completion of her educational exercise, in January 1555 - she probably used the edition that had been printed at Lyon, in 1548. She used the examples that she regarded as worthy of illustrating her argumentation in twenty-three letters, which represented more than a quarter of the entire exercise.

Besides the brevity of their form, apophthegms were beneficial in many ways: they facilitated memorization, they made practising Latin and essay writing easier, and finally, they helped pupils learn ethics and absorb moral values.¹⁷

1.6 *Encyclopedia*

Encyclopedic types of books and publications were also particularly well-suited for princes, for whom, for example, Plutarch's works were intended, as he assumed that they were too busy to read lengthy books. Therefore, they needed books to be short but edifying. By positing such an argument, Plutarch justified the concision of his own works. Following in his wake, Renaissance pedagogues applied the same principle to their teaching and always made a

15 Erasmus, *Institutio principis Christiani*.

16 Erasmus, *Apophthegmatum sive scite dictorum libri sex, in-16* (Paris, 1531); *Apophthegmatum ex optimis utriusque linguae scriptoribus per Des Erasmum Roterodamum collectorum libri octo* (Lugduni, 1548); *Les Apophthegmes, c'est à dire promptz, subtilz et sententieux ditz de plusieurs roys, chefz d'armées, philosophes et autres grans personnaiges tant grecz que latins translatez de latin [de d. Erasme] en français par l'esleu Macault* (Paris, 1545).

17 Olivier Guerrier (ed.), *Moralia et Œuvres morales à la Renaissance* (Paris, 2008), pp. 21-31.

point of using a comprehensive approach and synoptic material with their princely pupils. Thus, Filelfo reported that the Duke of Milan had little time to devote to reading complete works, but that he could always take a few minutes to study apophthegms. Encyclopedias and other books arranged thematically perfectly answered this purpose and were often used to educate young princes.

As for the letters that Mary Stuart wrote discussing the prince's political doctrine, the young queen probably turned to Ravisius Textor's *Officina*, which was issued in several different editions after 1520. Due to its encyclopedic nature, this book broaches several themes, which are then enriched with many illustrative maxims and examples drawn from ancient and more recent history. When Mary chose to seize this book and take advantage of it to illustrate her letters, her aim was to show her young addressee how many women were actually learned. Throughout these fifteen letters, she almost copied Tixier's remarks, which had been directly drawn from Plutarch's own list of illustrious women. In this respect, the information put forward by the Queen of Scotland, in her correspondence, is quite comparable to the argumentative section drawn up in 'mirrors of princes', which usually provides a compilation of memorable words and deeds, like Guillaume Budé's *Institution du prince*.

1.7 *Plutarch*

Plutarch seems to be the common reference point in all the compendiums compiled by Erasmus, Vives, Tixier, and so many others. Indeed, as Mary Stuart herself reckoned, in her rhetorical exercise, Plutarch is a philosopher worthy of instructing the prince. This Greek historian and moralist was actually the one most often quoted and recommended by masters and tutors for shaping the young prince's mind, which is why the psychological portraits of ancient, illustrious characters, drawn in his moral works, abound in *specula principum*. Although they remained scattered for a long time, these *Moralia* were partially collected and translated by many different scholars, in the early xvth century, in Italy. Among them was Guarino da Verona, whose Latin translation of *De Liberis Educandis* helped Enea Silvio Piccolomini, the future Pope Pius II, write his *Institution* for King Ladislaus of Hungary.

The first Greek edition, including ninety-two treatises, was then published by Aldus Manutius (also known as Aldo Manuzio), in 1509. It was followed by Jean Froben's edition, which was issued at Basel, in 1542. The complete edition was compiled much later, in 1570, on Xylander's initiative. However, it was probably the small Erasmian edition of 1514, established from Manutius's Greek version, which best facilitated its circulation among princes, together with several translations into vernacular languages. Sir Thomas Elyot, the author

of the *Boke named the Governour* - a 'mirror' intended for English dignitaries and members of the governing class, published in 1531 - translated Plutarch's *Moralia* into English. Later, on the Continent, the great French edition of 1572 was initiated by Jacques Amyot,¹⁸ former tutor to the royal Children of France. Therefore, in the xvith century, especially in Lyon, humanist circles lent their support to Plutarch's moral works, so that they met with great success. In 1542, Sébastien Gryphe published a collection of his *Moralia*, based on the translations drawn up by various scholars, such as Guarino da Verona, Budé, Melancthon, Poliziano, Pirckheimer and Erasmus.¹⁹ This was not a first, though: Josse Bade had already edited his own, personal selection of Plutarch's *Moral Works*, in a volume entitled *Opuscula Plutarchi Chaeronei*, at Paris, back in 1521.

However, throughout the years 1530–1540, several editions showed the dynamism and vitality of the Lyon humanist circle, formed around the figures of Maurice Scève and Jean de Tournes, and revealed their close connection with the royal court and the world of princely preceptorship. Plutarch was then regarded as the master most worthy to instruct the prince, as Amyot wrote in his preface to his *Moralia*, which he dedicated to Charles IX. As a result, his lessons permeated all textbooks, including educational treatises for young princes - also known as '*Institutions of the prince*'. This is evidenced in Jean Brèche's *Manuel royal*, published in 1541, which also features Plutarch's treatise on the necessary instruction of the prince, entitled *Commentaire de Plutarque, authœur grec, De la doctrine du prince*.

As for Mary Stuart, who benefited greatly from the lessons given by our ancient moralist and philosopher, considering Amyot's French translations of Plutarch's works included in his 1572 edition, she probably read the following essays: *Instruction pour ceux qui manient les affaires d'Etat, De la Vertu, si elle peut s'enseigner* and *Deux traitez De la Fortune ou Vertu d'Alexandre*. The young queen of Scotland probably used a later Latin edition of Plutarch's *Moralia*, such as the one issued by Sébastien Gryphe, at Lyon, in 1542, and published in two octavo volumes. Thanks to the many, precious collections of maxims and *exempla* contained in 'mirrors', the young royal was able to develop a culture perfectly suited to princely ethics - and thus, educate himself to his political ideal.

18 Plutarch, *Les Œuvres Morales et meslées de Plutarque, Translatées de Grec en François par Messire Jacques Amyot, à présent évêque d'Auxerre, conseiller du Roy en son privé Conseil et grand Aumosnier de France* (Paris, 1572).

19 Erasmus, *Opuscula Plutarchi nuper traducta, Erasmo Roterodamo interprete* (Basileae, 1514).

1.8 *Classical Rhetoric*

1.8.1 Eloquence

However, being able to summarize Caesar's *Gallic Wars* (also known as *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*) and cite such and such an example, drawn from history, wasn't sufficient for him to become a wise king: he still needed to know how to think for himself and make up his own opinions, in order to be able to write and deliver speeches worthy of a prince living in the Humanistic era. To this end, from the age of ten or slightly later, depending on each child's own abilities, young pupils were made to study classical rhetoric. They started by doing easy exercises, very similar to those of Mary Stuart, who first began by translating her tutor's annotations and comments into Latin. She then gradually moved on to examples of her own choosing, which she only commented very briefly, while drawing a moral lesson from each story. From then on, letter writing became an exercise in rhetoric regarded as highly appropriate for young pupils. However, precocious, hard-working pupils, such as the young king Edward VI of England, learnt how to master rhetoric through writing a great many speeches usually interpreting and commenting on a selected quotation.²⁰ In these cases, pupils started practising oratory at around fourteen, which was then considered as the age of adulthood, according to Elyot. Still, Henry VIII's son started learning public speaking much earlier, in 1548, before he was even eleven years old.

Eloquence, acquired by the mastery of rhetoric, was regarded as a necessary quality in a prince, a virtue and a grace, and a way for him to exercise and display his authority. As it was a skill bound to have been acquired after receiving a good education, except for Guillaume Budé, who devoted a few pages to it in his *Institution, specula principum* authors usually didn't expand on the subject, which was generally limited to the necessity of the prince's doctrine. Holding up the way Cicero faced Caesar and ultimately convinced him thanks to "his marvellous virtue of eloquence"²¹ as an example, Budé praised this "science" as being scholarly "among all other sciences", as being "the living memory of all past mores and ancient stories", and as being naturally expert in "graceful style,

20 John G. Nichols (ed.), *Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth. Edited from his Autograph Manuscripts with Historical Notes and A Biographical Memoir* (London, 1839).

21 Guillaume Budé, *De l'institution du prince*, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Ms 5103 (reserve), f° 22 r°. The handwritten version differs from the 1547 printed edition, *De l'institution du Prince. Livre contenant plusieurs Histoires, Enseignements, et Saiges Dicts des Anciens tant Grecs que Latins: Faict et composé par Maistre Guillaume Budé, lors Secretaire et maistre de la Librairie, et depuis Maistre des Requestes, et Conseiller du Roy. Reveu, enrichy d'argumens, divisé par chapitres, augmenté de scholies et annotations par hault et puissant seigneur, Missire Jean de Luxembourg, abbé d'Ivry* (Paris, 1547).

originating command, discretion and prudence".²² Thus, eloquence is a science truly useful in politics, since it allows rulers to maintain peace "through persuasion, which keeps men from avenging themselves or directing their wrath and malice towards others",²³ and perform justice.

Yet, although it was clearly regarded as a visible sign of the prince's doctrine, verbal eloquence had little effect without that of the body, which was trained and tamed to acquire grace through, among other things, perfect mastery of body language - especially when delivering public speeches, during which the body, under complete control, was as expressive as speech itself. This requirement of appearance rendered physical preparation for grace necessary. According to Cicero, authority was rooted in grace, so that the latter was advocated both by Elyot, in his *Governour*, and by German authors of 'mirrors' for princes.

1.8.2 Cicero

Nevertheless, as far as verbal eloquence was concerned, it was incumbent upon the tutor to teach it to his pupil through reading and analysing Cicero's and Agricola's *Topics*, at first. For this purpose, Prince Edward kept a folio volume of Cicero's rhetorical treatises²⁴ in his own personal library. At the dawn of the xvth century and beyond, one of the most famous treatises was that of Rudolph Agricola, who had drawn on Cicero's *Topics* in his very own *De Inventione Dialectica*, which was completed around 1479–80, and then printed later, in 1515. With this in mind, pupils living in those days also made much use of the *De inventione*, one of Cicero's early works. This short treatise, later expanded upon in Cicero's own *De oratore*, but also in Pseudo-Cicero's *Rhetoric to Herennius*, expounded an art of rhetoric (or *inventio*) largely relying on *copia*, that is to say, on oratorical abundance. That was fed by a treasure trove of commonplaces that were classified methodically, so that pupils could easily find suitable arguments whatever topic was broached.²⁵ However, considering book inventory lists and rhetorical exercises meant for princes, Cicero far outweighed both Quintilian and Seneca.

22 In the original French, Budé alludes to a "merveilleuse vertu", "science [...] de toutes les sciences, et mémoire de toutes antiquitez et histoires", whose "grâce de stile par nature, et invention a commandement, et discrétion et prudence" are highly laudable.

23 The original French text reads: "par la persuasion qui garde les hommes de soy venger ou de user de leur ire et malveillance".

24 Cicero, *In Omnes de Rhetorica M. Tulli Ciceronis Libros* (Venetis, 1546), in J.G. Nichols (ed.), p. 326.

25 Francis Goyet, *Le Sublime du « lieu commun ». L'invention rhétorique dans l'Antiquité et à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1996).

The rhetoric exercise book of Edward VI, where Cicero and Aristotle feature prominently and are most often quoted together, clearly attests to it. Commentaries upon Plato's maxims can also be found there, at times. For instance, the philosopher's remark about the duty to be useful to the Republic serves as an introduction to the first lesson in Edward VI's workbook.²⁶

1.8.3 Aristotle and Moral Philosophy

Although a few humanist pedagogues, such as Erasmus, Wimpfeling and Vives, used St Augustine's writings to shed light on Cicero's and Aristotle's texts, in their great Christian compendiums, and though the young prince acquired moral virtues through *exempla*, reading about the lives of illustrious men and saints, the political philosophy excerpts, selected to teach him his duty and instruct him how to govern, remained mostly Aristotelian. Indeed, most of them drew heavily on the Stagirite's three great moral works: *Ethics*, *Economics* and *Politics*.

Still, we can hardly prove that the young prince may have read Aristotle's moral philosophy works the way a young humanities student would have. Actually, in 1509, the future Charles V was the dedicatee of a Saragossan edition of the *Ética de Aristóteles*,²⁷ a manuscript work, predating 1461, that formerly belonged to the Prince of Viana, Charles of Aragon. Although that book was personally intended for him, the young prince, who was but nine years old, back then, was probably unable to read it - at least, on his own.

However, it is a known fact that Prince Edward's royal tutor, John Cheke, made his young charge read the ancient Greek version of Aristotle's *Ethics* when he was but about fourteen years old. After long hesitating between Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Aristotle's *Ethics*, Prince Edward's preceptor had finally opted for the latter, which he believed to be more eloquent as regards moral values - and hence, more likely to properly guide his young pupil's judgment as future ruler.

By contrast, the former mostly emphasised martial virtues, so that it seemed less suitable for the young royal's education, although it was generally regarded as a potent source of inspiration for 'mirrors'. It is also quite certain that the princely child had access to shorter, lighter books that were easier for him to read. It was all a matter of equally important strategic editorial choices

26 British Library, Add. Ms 4724.

27 See Aristotle, *Ética de Aristóteles traducida del latin en romance por D. Carlos, Príncipe de Viana, XVth C., 338 folios*, National Library of Spain, Ms 6984, and the printed version, *La Philosophia moral del Aristoteles: es a saber Ethicas; Polithicas; y Economicas; en Romance por D. Carlos principe de Viana primogenito de Navarra* (Saragossa, 1509).

regarding format, language and translator's style. Back in the xvith century, it is generally acknowledged that John Argyropoulos's Latin version of Aristotle's *Ethics* was preferred to that of Leonardo Bruni.²⁸

Although not always mentioned explicitly, given its moral and philosophical vision of self-governance - and thus, that of others²⁹ - Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* was the moral philosophy book most commonly used for the young prince's instruction. As a result, both 'mirrors for Princes' and the didactic writings of Renaissance humanists are suffused with Aristotelian semantics and dialectics. Considering that natural endowments - divided into those of body, of soul and of fortune - and acquirable virtues, *habitus* and happiness are a most important topic in 'mirrors for Princes', we are forced to admit that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* largely inspired the political thought of humanists instructing young princes, thereby heavily influencing the intention underlying *specula*.

Without actually disregarding the Neo-Platonic studies of the Academy of Careggi, humanist pedagogues educating young princes thus favoured Aristotle's philosophical approach, considered to be more didactic and firmly rooted in social life than Plato's, which was deemed too metaphysical. The prince's "doctrine" didn't require him to be learned but to be wise, nor did it expect him to philosophise but to command. The prince's knowledge was supposed to be pragmatic, drawn from experience and guided by virtue. Despite these requirements, the 'mirrors' under consideration often favoured the idea of a philosopher king, which is why, back in the xvith century, Aristotle's moral works were so often used to support the prince's learning and teach him the doctrine. This is undeniable proof that the Stagirite's moral philosophy actually advocated Christian virtues - and thus, supported the ethical guidance given in *specula*.

Through reading these books, the young prince thus learnt as much about courage - which entails performing noble, heroic deeds and sometimes being willing to make the ultimate sacrifice - as he did about prudence - which demands moderation, and hence, restrains risk-taking behaviour. Though Aristotle's moral works were favoured by royal tutors, their great popularity should not lessen the impact of Stoicism for all that, since it was also influential in the

28 Gert Sorensen, "The Reception of the Political Aristotle in the Late Middle Ages (from Brunetto Latini to Dante Alighieri). Hypotheses and Suggestions", in *Renaissance Readings of the Corpus Aristotelicum: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Copenhagen, 23-25 April 1998*, ed. M. Pad (Copenhagen, 2001), pp. 9-25.

29 Sylvène Édouard, "L'Éthique à Nicomaque d'Aristote, l'un des "meilleurs livres" pour le prince", in *Aristote dans l'Europe des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles : transmissions et ruptures*, eds. M.-N. Fouligny and M. Roig Miranda (Nancy, 2017), pp. 135-52.

young prince's propaedeutic instruction of mirrors. Indeed, during his preliminary education, the royal pupil imbibed principles laid down in both Cicero's and Seneca's writings - studying the former's *De Officiis* and *De finibus* and reading through the latter's maxims and letters.

Given its many sources and trends, Christian humanism was eclectic indeed. Seen from that perspective, Erasmus was by far the most interesting figure of all, since he was a scholar of ancient Greek and Latin, a pedagogue, a Renaissance moralist with ancient philosophical views and a theologian, all at once. Still, Erasmus regarded classical scholarship simply as a means of achieving the political ambitions of his Christian humanism - and no more.

2 That the Prince Be Instructed to Be Wise and of Worthy Memory

The idea of elevating the prince's knowledge to the rank of political virtue was probably drawn from William of Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, published in 1260, which revolutionised medieval political thought and found particular resonance in the *Regnum Italicum*, where new forms of government were being devised.³⁰ Thereafter, through creating a lexicon that would allow thinkers to invent new concepts,³¹ vernacular versions of Aristotle's moral philosophy - especially Oresme's French translations - were those which best met this recent need for a better definition of the political field.

2.1 Teaching Virtue

Thus, political virtue, most highly prized by ancient philosophers, became the privilege of those that had received adequate instruction, since according to Aristotle, virtue could be taught. Hence, it was the prince's own royal prerogative and duty to transcend his material inheritance - his earthly possessions gained by birth - and elevate himself through his only true wealth - wisdom and knowledge acquired through studying the humanities and receiving moral instruction.

Like Budé and Plutarch before them, Erasmus's and Brèche's 'mirrors' associated the idea of a perfect prince with the virtue of liberality, which is derived from a certain disregard for riches. In the Aristotelian tradition, despite the

30 Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1978). About Aristotle's influence, see the chapter about "the Pseudo-Aristotelian Secret of Secrets" by Steven J. Williams.

31 Charles Brucker, "Aspects du vocabulaire politique et social chez Oresme et Christine de Pizan. Vers une nouvelle conception de l'État et de la société", in *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* 8 (2001), pp. 227-49. URL: <http://crm.revues.org/index408.html>.

undeniable importance of material goods, which are necessary to the royal dignity – a point incidentally stressed and defended by the young Edward VI in his Greek rhetorical exercises - these are much inferior to spiritual goods, nevertheless.

Actually, these spiritual goods were acquired through reason – through the humanities, and thus through “philology”, which dispels the shadows of barbaric ignorance: “every lively, bright man endowed with a natural gift for eloquence should have, as his daily and nightly companion, a lady named philology, that is to say, a love for the humanities and an inclination for studying. The ancients called these subjects “human” because, if it wasn’t for their intrinsic knowledge of humanity, we would almost live like brutes, since there is nothing in which man really differs from a savage beast except in his scholarly talk [...]”.³² Hence, this is an indictment against ignorant beasts, an apologia for the philosopher king, who is also a learned prince, given his education, and a plea for the princes’ patronage of the humanities.

In one of her short Latin letters written to Elisabeth of Valois, back in August 1554, Mary Stuart used one of Pseudo-Isocrates’s maxims to Demonicus (in *Ad Demonicum*) to illustrate the *topos* of political humanism: “be certain that it is better to be rich in doctrine than to accumulate treasures”. This very same precept was also borrowed by Plutarch and Cicero - who used it in the sixth paradox (“That the wise man alone is rich”) of his own *Paradoxes of the Stoics* and thus popularised it through the textbooks that were traditionally recommended for the prince’s instruction, such as Erasmus’s *Institutio principis christiani* and Juan Luis Vives’s *Introductio ad sapientiam* (n^o 21). In order for the prince to be “rich in doctrine”, according to Erasmus’s *Declamatio*, published in 1529, it was the duty of every good king to train his successor and entrust him to the care and guidance of an honest tutor.

In his *Moralia*, Plutarch expounded both the king’s moral obligation and the ethical qualities required in the prince’s tutor. Elyot later heavily drew on these points and developed them extensively, in his own *Governour*, and so did Roger Ascham, in his *Schoolmaster*.³³ The *specula* authors who tackled the subject

32 Budé, *De l’institution du prince*, f^o 34 v^o. The original middle French reads: “et fault que tout homme mercurial qui a naturelle aptitude a éloquence ayt pour sa compaignie de cour et de nuit une dame qui sappelle philologie, cest a dire amour des bonnes lettres et inclination a lestude, lesquelles lettres les anciens ont appellees humaines pource que sans lerudition dicelles le monde vit quasi brutalement, car il nya riens parquoy lhomme differe tant des bestes brutes, que par parler fondé en science”.

33 Roger Ascham, who acted as royal tutor to Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII, from 1548 to 1549, published his *Schoolmaster* in 1570. For further reference, see J.A. Giles (ed.), *The Whole Works of Roger Ascham*, 4 vols. (London, 1864–1865).

all concurred in their view of the intellectual skills and abilities required in princely tutors: they should be able to teach their young royal charges the many remarkable historical events they needed to know, in order to acquire a sound political conscience, and were supposed to master philosophy and rhetoric.

Knowledge being a source of virtue, the prince's tutor needed to be well-educated in the humanities and tolerably learned - especially in the classical Greek and Latin languages and literatures, as well as in history and religion. According to Eberlin, in the Reformed tradition, a good tutor should have read the *Proverbs of Solomon* and *Ecclesiastes*, Pseudo-Isocrates's maxims to Demonicus (*Ad Demonicum*), Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, Cicero's *On Duties*, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, Plutarch's *De liberorum institutione*, St. Ambrose's *De officiis* and Jean Gerson's instructional treatises. What is more, he should also be familiar with Vergerio's, Mancinelli's, Agricola's and Filelfo's writings. Lastly, he should be well-acquainted with Enea Silvio Piccolomini's *Tractatus de liberorum educatione*, have read Wimpfeling's *Adolescentia* and *De Integritate* and know Erasmus's *Colloquia familiaria* and *Institutio principis christiani* very well.

That is why finding a good, learned and benevolent tutor, attentive to the princely child and yet firm in his "taming", one that would not seek to flatter him, but would simply be friendly - in accordance with Plutarch's famous advisory essay on the training of children, included in his *Moralia*, published in many different editions over the years - was crucial to his formal education.

In fact, Erasmus, Budé, Jean Brèche, Elyot and German authors of *specula* were much more concerned about unsuitable royal tutors and princely corruption. That is why, in their writings, they all drew on Plutarch, using his image of the poisoned public fountain as a metaphor for the prince's mind, which risked being corrupted by an immoral, unprincipled tutor. Incidentally, breaking the mould of normative rhetorical discourse in *specula*, some *Institutions* addressed to future rulers relied neither on *exemplum*, nor on exhortation nor on eulogy, but merely gave valuable teaching guidance to the prince's tutor, reminding him of his duties and providing him with a short study programme, so that his young pupil would receive a sound education.

3 Mirrors as *ratione studii*

Due to their size and format, a small number of 'mirrors' seemed more akin to study programmes. However, just like their larger counterparts, they aimed to give proper instruction to the prince, so that he would eventually gain the virtue necessary to command. By study programme (or *ratione studii*), we mean a programmatic intention extensively listing the different contents and stages

of learning sequences, according to the pupil's age - or rather, according to his talent, that is to say, his natural intellectual abilities. Therefore, according to Johann Eberlin's advice to the son of George II, Count of Wertheim, pupils needed to receive religious instruction, which was essential, as soon as they rose, through reading the Holy Scriptures - ideally in their mother tongue. In a letter, published later, in 1503, in the Antwerp edition of Erasmus's *Manual of a Christian Knight* (*Enchiridion militis christiani*), offering his advice to Henry of Burgundy, the son of the Prince of Veere, back in 1499, Erasmus himself urged princely pupils to model themselves on Jesus Christ, the ultimate *exemplum*, through daily imbibing religious instruction.

Then came Latin lessons, and only occasionally, Greek lessons, taught to pupils from the age of about seven, according to Sir Elyot, for almost seven to eight hours a day, according to Konrad Heresbach, who had offered to organise the studies of the Duke of Cleves's son, in his 'mirror for princes', *De Educandis Erudiendisq; Principum Liberis*. The list of books recommended in these programmatic 'mirrors', most of which were cited by the authors themselves, covered - for reasons mentioned above - both classical and Christian texts, mostly Gnomonic (such as the *Proverbs of Solomon*, Pseudo-Cato's *Distichs* and the *Isope*), but also included Juan Luis Vives's Latin grammatical exercises, Donatus's Latin grammar (or either Melanchthon's or Wimpfeling's for Protestant princes), Erasmus's *Colloquies* and many other works written by thinkers deftly handling maxims, such as Isocrates. For young princes less inclined to study - and even reluctant, like Prince Eberhard, who was born in 1545, son to Duke William of Wurtemberg, the range of books was limited to Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* - which were fewer than Erasmus's - Cicero's *On Duties*, Erasmus's *Colloquies* and his *Education of A Christian Prince* (*Institutio principis christiani*), which remained the only alternative in the reformed Germanic world.³⁴

In their *Institutions*, Heresbach and Eberlin advised royal tutors to compel pupils to do one prose translation into either ancient Greek or Latin and study one extract from a classical work, drawn from Plutarch's *Moralia*, Erasmus's or Isocrates's apophthegms, or Cicero's *On Duties*, every week. At this point in his studies, the young prince gradually learnt the basic principles of the Latin language, while soaking up moral precepts, so that during this initial stage of instruction, his memory operated at almost its full capacity. As studies described in programmatic 'mirrors' became more arduous, the young royal pupils gradually move on to, among other things, mastering the Latin language

34 Louis John Reith, *Prince Eberhard and His Preceptors: The Education of Princes in Sixteenth-Century Württemberg*, Stanford University, Ph.D. thesis, 1976 (Stanford, 1976), p. 235.

and studying classical rhetoric, requiring him to enrich his general knowledge through reading historical texts.

Erasmus had been very receptive to Pseudo-Plutarch's treatise on the education of children, which he had read with great interest. Erasmus's *De Pueris Statim ac Liberaliter Instituendis Declamatio* (*Declamation on the Subject of Early Liberal Education for Children*), published by Froben, in 1529, heavily drew on this treatise. It also inspired his study programme, which was first printed back in 1512. Erasmus's *Declamatio* was dedicated to the then thirteen-year-old William, Duke of Cleves, who was initially contracted to marry Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre - their marriage was not consummated and later annulled with papal approval, in 1543 - but eventually wed Maria of Habsburg, also known as Maria of Austria, daughter of Ferdinand I, Holy Roman Emperor, in 1546. It was so popular that it was republished in nine different editions in the author's lifetime.

The preface flatters the tutor and praises the good learning dispositions of the pupil, for whom Erasmus intends "this little book", "entirely" written by him, which shall "teach him to grasp a great many things in few words", and "whose oratorical style is best suited for people of very high social rank. [...]" Finally, "this educational method is especially appropriate for princely children who, though in need of solid, rigorous instruction, first and foremost, should not be deprived of a liberal, humanistic education for all that".³⁵ The *De pueris instituendis* deals with the issue of education as a whole and heavily draws on both Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* and Pseudo-Plutarch's *De liberis educandis*.

The pedagogical triad comprising nature, reason and exercise, all regarded as necessary to give a child proper instruction, thus re-emerges. Its three components refer to the child's natural talents (Nature) - which must not be corrupted by bad examples - knowledge gained through instruction (Reason) and, lastly, the experience of virtue, acquired through learning (Exercise), and likely to forge a *habitus*, in the Aristotelian sense of the term - that is to say, virtuous behaviour, even in posture: "the universal principle of human bliss essentially lies in three things: nature, method and exercise. What I mean by "nature" is a deep-seated aptitude and disposition for goodness. When I use the term "method", I refer to a knowledge based on maxims and precepts. By

35 Claude Blum, André Godin, Jean-Claude Margolin and Daniel Ménéger (eds.), *Érasme* (Paris, 1992), p. 477. The original French version of Erasmus's dedication reads: "ce petit livre [...] entièrement de [moi qui] enseigne à embrasser une foule de choses en peu de mots ; que ce style oratoire ne convient à personne mieux qu'à de très hauts personnages. [...] Enfin parce que cette méthode d'éducation est adaptée tout particulièrement à des enfants de princes qui, s'ils ont besoin avant tout d'une éducation rigoureuse, ne doivent pourtant pas en recevoir d'autre libérale".

“exercise”, I mean practising the habit that nature has instilled in us and that method has developed. Nature requires method and without method, exercise can mislead and endanger us in countless ways”.³⁶

Programmatic ‘mirrors’ recommended nothing but benevolence, well-reasoned erudition, a certain exemplariness, recreation and physical exercise. They also advocated training the young prince to be in perfect command of his emotions, so that he could behave flawlessly in public. Hence, to become the good, perfect prince idealised by humanists, the royal pupil could adopt no better method than modelling himself on illustrious men of bygone days.

3.1 *Historical Exempla and Military Virtue*

History definitely played a major part in the art of educating young princes – all the more so as Renaissance pedagogues were particularly fond of wise, edifying historical anecdotes. Many European royal families used to pretend that their ancestors were descended from biblical and mythological figures.³⁷ Such claims were intended as propaganda glorifying royal dynasties by trumpeting the antiquity and nobility of their ancestry. In the second half of the XVth century, the proliferation of national myths popularised this idea and gradually turned their pretensions to such high descent into an officially endorsed paradigm. Consequently, humanist pedagogues strongly encouraged princely pupils to learn about history in their study programmes. Following their lead, royal tutors favoured it to feed the princes’ minds, broadening its scope to include the most noteworthy tales from classical Antiquity.

Juan Luis Vives, who was probably the tutor of this generation most heavily influenced by Erasmian thought, had thus also advised royal pupils to study history, in his *De ratione studii puerilis*, which was intended for two princely children: Princess Mary Tudor and the future fifth baron Mountjoy, Charles Blount, whose father was William Mountjoy, the queen’s chamberlain.

36 *Érasme*, ‘Il faut donner très tôt aux enfants une éducation libérale’, p. 497. The original French version says: “le principe universel de la félicité humaine réside essentiellement en trois choses : la nature, la méthode et l’exercice. J’appelle nature une aptitude et une disposition profondément implantée en nous pour ce qui est bien. Par le terme de méthode, je désigne une connaissance reposant sur des avertissements et des préceptes. Par exercice, j’entends l’usage de cette habitude que la nature a instaurée et qu’a développée la méthode. La nature a besoin de la méthode, et l’exercice, s’il n’est pas dirigé par cette dernière, conduit à des erreurs et à des dangers sans nombre”.

37 For further reference, see Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas: The Habsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor* (New Haven, 1993) and Alexandre Y. Haran, *Le Lys et le Globe. Messianisme dynastique et rêve impérial en France à l’aube des temps modernes* (Seysse, 2000).

He recommended the boy to read Tacitus, Caesar and Sallust, but suggested that Mary should rather focus her attention on Justin, Florus and Valerius Maximus. He also urged them both to read Plutarch, whose stories were imbued with highly moralistic virtues.

Historical knowledge was also at the heart of the dialectic in the specular work of Guillaume Budé, advisor to the king, philologist, real connoisseur of ancient Greek literature and author, back in 1516, of an *Institution* meant for the young king of France, Francis I. Thus, Budé attests to the essential function of history, which is to help the prince know the truth and teach him rhetoric and the art of eloquence: “[...] this vital history, which Cicero, the father of Latin eloquence, calls a witness of times past, an enlightened truth, the preservation of memory, the master of human life and a messenger from Antiquity”.³⁸ Jean Brèche, who had published, back in 1541, the *Manuel royal* to Jeanne d’Albret, was similarly preoccupied with history education. Therefore, history was regarded as a collection of the famous words and heroic deeds of illustrious men. As such, it was supposed to edify the royal pupil by feeding his imagination with a myriad *exempla*. From Thucydides to Tacitus, ancient wars were models of military virtue – as shown, in particular, in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* and Caesar’s *Gallic Wars* – and strategy – as evidenced in Vegetius’s *De re militari*, which was later heavily drawn on by Giles of Rome, in his own *De Regimine Principum*.³⁹

Besides, not only was the young hero moral and wise, but he was also endowed with a military virtue comparable to that of the young Cyrus, whose exploits were related by Xenophon. A pupil of Socrates, Xenophon had proposed a model of Republic based not on the philosopher king, but on the conqueror, a heroic figure whose virtue was essentially military, and thus no longer philosophical. Filelfo’s Latin version, dating back to 1474, was the one most widely printed and translated, thereby introducing princely modern political culture into the court of Burgundy – among other royal courts – through Vasco da Lucena, whose French translation of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, was commissioned by the Duke. In France, Demoulins, royal tutor to Francis I, King of France and Count of Angoulême, regarded the *Cyropaedia* as a *speculum*

38 Budé, *De l’institution du prince*, f° 15 v°. The original middle French is: “[...] ceste maistrresse histoire, laquelle cicero père deloquence latine appelle temoing des temps, lumière de vérité, vie de la mémoire, maistrresse de la vie humaine et messagère de lantiquité”.

39 Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, *Les traductions françaises du ‘De regimine principum’ de Gilles de Rome. Parcours matériel, culturel et intellectuel d’un discours sur l’éducation* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 115–16.

principum likely to educate the young prince and instruct him in his royal dignity.⁴⁰ Claude de Seyssel's French version, *Histoire du voyage que fit Cyrus à l'encontre du Roy de Perse Artaxerxès*, was printed in 1529. What is more, during the first half of the xvith century, the Greek version of the *Cyropaedia* was translated into Castilian, Italian, English, and other vernacular languages.

As this work extolled the ideal figure of a virtuous prince, justifying the merits of an education that was both physical and intellectual - in a word, a model of Spartan instruction - and that would make him a great army captain, a brave conqueror, a victorious and merciful prince, a liberal ruler, a faithful, steady man, and a believer, respectful towards the gods - it can fairly be said to have given birth to modern political thought. Xenophon's ambition was then quite similar to humanist pedagogues', so that his influence was perceptible in works as varied as Machiavelli's *Prince* and other xvith-century *specula*, such as Erasmus's *Education of A Christian Prince*, Elyot's *Boke named the Governour*, Budé's *Institution du prince* - addressed to King Francis I - and Roger Ascham's *Schoolmaster* - intended for Elizabeth I.

As for Julius Caesar, another model of great conqueror, his writings were most certainly read and at least partially taught to young men from noble and princely families. Demoulins revisited Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War* (*Commentarii de Bello Gallico*), inventing a dialogue⁴¹ between Caesar and Francis I. As for the latter's son, Henry II - who probably knew the history of the conquest of Gaul very well - one day in 1553, he questioned Louis Gonzaga, the son of the Marquess of Mantua and the future Duke of Nevers, about the lesson that Pierre Danès, royal tutor to the Children of France, had just taught on this historical work and its presumed author.⁴² But, just like that of Alexander, the figure of the conqueror was already deeply ambivalent. These two military geniuses, whose boldness and fortitude were supposed to inspire princes at any age, had waged wars which were deemed too dangerous and less necessary by Renaissance humanists, who urged that military affairs be taken seriously.

40 François Demoulins, sieur de Rochefort, *L'Institution, condicion ou instruction morale de Cirus, roy de Perse, par Zenophon composée, puis après par François Phélephe de grec en latin reduicte, et par François Demoulins, de latin en françois transcripée*, Paris, BnF, Ms fr. 1383.

41 François Demoulins, sieur de Rochefort, *Commentaires de la guerre gallique*, Paris, BnF, Ms fr. 13429. See Sylvène Édouard, *Les devoirs du prince*, pp. 350-58.

42 Sylvène Édouard, "Vivre et mourir à l'ombre de Sa Majesté. Louis de Gonzague, futur duc de Nevers, à la petite cour des Enfants de France", in *Jeunesses(s) et élites. Des rapports paradoxaux en Europe de l'Ancien Régime à nos jours*, eds. C. Bouneau and C. Le Mao (Rennes, 2009), pp. 281-93.

Though he greatly admired both Caesar (“the first of the Caesars [...] was a man of great heart and mind”)⁴³ and Alexander, and though he was truly awed by the famous accounts of their exploits, perpetuating their renown, Budé insisted on the cost at which it was gained - namely through intemperance - contrary to Pompey, whose clement nature earned him a reputation for mildness and moderation, and made him a “serene” military commander. This hardly veiled criticism of Caesar and Alexander already conveyed a sense of the princes’ desire for peace. Yet, as he was “both valiant and knowledgeable”,⁴⁴ Caesar remained central to princely military training and political education, just like Alexander - well-known through Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* and Quintus Curtius Rufus’s *Histories of Alexander the Great* - who similarly embodied both the adept military commander and the learned king taught by an eminent master: no less than Aristotle himself, an avid reader of Homer, most often praised for his liberality, in *specula principis*.

Therefore, role models were essential to moral teaching, as their life experiences showed the benefits of practising virtue. In his *Triumph of Virtues*, a ‘mirror for princes’ intended for the instruction of Louise de Savoie’s children, Margaret and Francis of Angoulême, Franciscan friar Jean Thenaud had emphasised their efficacy: “The prince must be shown honorable examples, which he can easily commit to memory, through paintings, mottoes, sermons, orations and readings, since practising talking, listening, living and living well daily will be useful to him in so many ways”.⁴⁵

3.2 *The Wise King*

The lives of illustrious men and collections of maxims were both much more widely read and frequently taught to edify the pupil. Since humanists considered that virtue - and especially wisdom, the mother of all virtues - could be learnt through knowledge and experience, thus the *exemplum* of princely virtues might be taught. Initially drawn from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, this

43 Budé, *De l’institution du prince*, f° 68 r°. The original middle French reads: “Le premier des césars [...] fut homme du plus grand cueur et hault esprit”.

44 The phrase “vaillant et sçavant tout ensemble” can be found in Ronsard’s Ode XII: ‘Sur la naissance de François, dauphin de France, fils du roy Henri II’, in *Œuvres complètes de Ronsard* (Paris, 1924), vol. 4.

45 Thenaud’s original French version says: “le prince doit avoir esgart a exemples honorables qui luy doyyent estre reduictz a mémoire en peintures, devises, prédications, orations et lectures, car l’usage quotidien d’oyr, parler, vivre et bien vivre sert moult au prince”. See Pierre Benoist, ‘Le clergé de cour et la décision politique’, in *La Prise de décision en France (1525–1559)*. *Recherche sur la réalité du pouvoir royal ou princier à la Renaissance*, eds. R. Claerr and O. Poncet (Paris, 2008), p. 64.

ambition was also shared by Plutarch - who devoted his entire moral works to it - and the humanists - who believed that mankind would be enlightened by *bonae litterae* ("good letters"), and thus were confident in the future of humanity.

However, Renaissance 'mirrors' were generally more pragmatic, programmatic and contextual - except for Vives's *Ad Sapientiam*, which still showed a rather spiritual conception of royal dignity - so that their purpose was not only limited to drawing up princes' study plans. Actually, in keeping with Aristotle's *Ethics*, these were but a means of instructing the prince in wisdom, which was not an end in itself, but a mere necessary condition for the prince to govern fairly, and thus be a good prince. According to specular dialectics, wisdom is therefore only a basis - often introducing the discourse, as in Erasmus's *Institutio principis christiani*, which itself is built on certain foundations - such as education - whose soundness depends on the exemplarity of the prince's entourage and on that of his royal tutor.

Erasmus was definitely the most influential figure in this movement: his handbooks fed the princes' learning exercises and provided them with a certain ethical integrity and moral culture, while his *Education of a Christian Prince* was a model for other *specula* authors to emulate, and a real source of philosophical and methodological inspiration, imposing his vision of the prince and his governing style. In 1531, Sir Elyot advised everyone to read Erasmus's manual, but insisted that it should be revisited regularly, like *The Iliad* by Alexander and *The Cyropaedia* by Scipio - the former being known for constantly re-reading Homer's epic poem and the latter for keeping Xenophon's fictional biography by his bedside: "It would not be forgotten that the little book of the most excellent Doctor Erasmus of Rotterdam (which he dedicated to Charles, who is currently emperor [Habsburg Emperor Charles v] and was then Prince of Castile), which book is entitled *The Institution [Education] of A Christian Prince*, would always be as familiar to gentlemen, at all times, and at every age, as Homer used to be to the great king Alexander or Xenophon to Scipio".⁴⁶

Even though Erasmus's *speculum principis* was contemporary with Budé's *Institution du prince* in its handwritten version, it was yet utterly at variance with the latter's rhetorical style. It is believed to have greatly inspired both

46 Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, p. 48. The original middle English text is: "It wolde nat be forgotten that the lytell boke of the most excellent doctour Erasmus Roterodamus (whiche he wrate to Charles, nowe beynge emperour and than prince of Castile) whiche boke is intitules the Institution of a christen prince, wolde be as familyare always with gentilmen, at all tymes, and in every age, as was Homere with the great king Alexander, or Xenophon with Scipio".

Jean Brèche's *Manuel royal, ou Opuscule de la Doctrine et Condition du prince* and Francisco de Monzón's *Mirror of a Christian Prince (El Espejo del Príncipe Cristiano)*. Furthermore, Erasmus's *Education of a Christian Prince* was recommended as essential reading to young princes and future rulers, for whom programmatic 'mirrors' were intended. Besides, as was the case with Prince Eberhard, if one single 'mirror' was to be recommended for princes struggling in their studies to read, it was most likely to be Erasmus's *Education of a Christian Prince*, as we have already mentioned.

Over the course of June 1516, while Erasmus was staying in Brussels, he was informed by publisher Jean Froben that his *Education of a Christian Prince*, along with several other appended treatises, were then fresh off the printing presses. The humanist had left Basel in early June for the Spanish Netherlands, where he had been appointed advisor to the young Charles of Ghent, a few months earlier. Later, through the intervention of chancellor Jean le Sauvage, he gained a position as royal tutor to the Prince Charles and his brother Ferdinand, to whom the 1518 edition of his book of counsel for princes was dedicated.

This 'mirror' was composed, published and distributed at a time when Christian Europe was seriously divided. In the midst of these incessant and threatening wars, Western Christianity could find neither unity – in order to jointly fight against the Ottomans, who were coming ever closer - nor harmony with its own spiritual expectations - the church reform movement having been stopped in its tracks by the Fifth Lateran Council, back in 1515. From that year onwards, hegemony was seriously jeopardised with Francis I's accession to the throne, in January, and the resumption of the war in northern Italy, in the Duchy of Milan, which rapidly followed. However, in January 1516, the death of Ferdinand II, king of Aragon, opened up a difficult succession for the young prince Charles, destined to inherit the four legacies of territories and thus become the powerful king of France's most redoubtable adversary. In short, that was another potential danger, thereby reinforcing Erasmus's desire to raise the new young king of Spain's awareness of the perils of war.

Still, in the 'mirror' intended for the young prince, who would soon hold Europe's fate in his own hands, learning to be free entailed a wholly different kind of instruction. That is why, war - and thus peace - was the main topic of his lessons, and almost an entire quarter of the *Education of a Christian Prince* was devoted to it. Although he had already dealt with the subject in his 1515 adage, *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, far from thinking that he had sufficiently explored the question, Erasmus took it up again, two years later, in his 1517 popular tract, *Querela Pacis*. Considered one of his major works, this plea for peace soon became Erasmus's 'signature' piece, showing both his humanistic

calling to strive for social pacification and his own personal mission to instruct the prince in his irenic ambitions:⁴⁷ “But as much as you surpass Alexander in good fortune, mighty Prince Charles, so much do we hope you will surpass him in wisdom when facing it [adversity]. For this prince had gained a mighty empire, albeit one not destined to endure, solely through bloodshed. You have been born to a splendid kingdom and are destined to a still greater one. Just as Alexander had to toil to carry out his invasions, so will you have to labour even harder to willingly yield, rather than to gain, part of your kingdom. You owe it to the powers of heaven that you came into a kingdom untainted with blood, bought through no evil connection; from now on, it will be the lot of your wisdom to keep it bloodless and peaceful. The goodness of your nature, the integrity of your mind, the strength of your character, the education you have received from the most reliable tutors, as well as the many examples from your ancestors, surrounding you on every side, are all so very great that we have the highest hopes that Charles will some day do what the world long hoped his father Philip would do. If death had not cut him off before his time, he would not have disappointed the nations’ expectations.”⁴⁸

The prerequisite for this ambition, shared by a great many humanists, was ‘*sapientia*’ - namely the wisdom acquired through knowledge (including erudition and political virtues, such as prudence). Actually, Erasmus opens his discourse with the figure of the wise king, quoting several proverbs from Solomon, and a few aphorisms from Plato, on the duty of wisdom incumbent upon the one ruling in the name of God, whether he be elected by the people or superior to them all - not in rank or in wealth, but rather in spirit, in his being a

47 Erasmus, *La Formation du prince chrétien. Institutio principis christiani*, ed. M. Turchetti (Paris, 2015): the editor’s introduction develops the concept of peace in Erasmus’s works and demonstrates the influence of Nicholas of Cusa’s ideas on his writings.

48 Erasmus, *La Formation du prince chrétien*, p. 137. The original French version says: “Autant vous êtes plus heureux qu’Alexandre, ô illustre prince Charles, autant nous espérons que, face à celles-ci [les difficultés], vous le surpasserez en sagesse. En effet, ce prince avait occupé, non sans verser le sang, un immense empire qui n’allait pas durer longtemps. Vous qui êtes né pour un magnifique empire, qui êtes promis à un empire plus vaste, de même qu’Alexandre a dû suer sang et eau pour mener ses conquêtes, le sort exigera peut-être de vous des efforts plus considérables encore pour abandonner volontairement quelque partie de votre domaine plutôt que de vous en assurer la possession. Vous devez aux puissances célestes d’avoir reçu un royaume sans effusion de sang et sans causer le malheur de personne ; ce sera dorénavant le rôle de votre sagesse que de le maintenir en paix sans blessure. La bonté de votre esprit, l’intégrité de votre esprit, la force de votre caractère, l’éducation qui vous fut donnée sous l’égide des précepteurs les plus loyaux, enfin l’exemple de vos ancêtres, qui vous entourent de toutes parts, sont tels que tous ont le très ferme espoir que Charles accomplira un jour ce que le monde attendait naguère de votre père Philippe, qui n’aurait pas déçu l’attente de ses États si la mort ne l’avait prématurément arraché à la terre”.

philosopher king, ruling wisely and embracing philosophy. He is the one who surpasses others in wisdom and works tirelessly to develop the faculties of his soul. In this regard, Renaissance ‘mirrors’, especially Erasmus’s *Education of a Christian Prince*, seem to have borrowed their portrait of the perfect prince from Isocrates’s speech *To Nicocles* - son of Evagoras I, king of Salamis, in Cyprus - which describes him as noble, merciful, liberal, moderate and fair. But, above all, it depicts him as a prudent ruler, surrounding himself with wise, reliable advisors.

However, “indoctrinating” the prince by requiring him to read *bonae litterae* was not aimed at his gaining disinterested knowledge or his enjoying the sheer pleasure of learning for learning’s sake. On the contrary, this was supposed to give him proper ethical instruction, instilling into his mind a truly Christian moral doctrine. Therefore, teaching him to be wise really had no other purpose than to teach him to govern like a Christian king. Thus, the “good doctrine” inculcated into the prince would have so great an effect upon his mind that he would acquire wisdom - not through custom but through reason. Hence, he would become strong and powerful, but would nonetheless behave fairly. Plato claimed that the king should be a philosopher, whereas Plutarch considered that he should be the living image of God and reflect Him through his virtue: “God created the sun as His most beautiful representation in heaven and placed a visible and living image of Himself among men: the king”.⁴⁹

This naturally leads us to the topic of virtue, which was expounded to the prince, at some length. Later, he practised and experienced it himself, since no prince can be more miserable and contemptible than the one who fails to curb and tame his vices and evil passions.

3.3 *What Does It Mean to Be a Good King?*

The Thomistic and Scholastic idea of the divine origin of political power once again prevailed over the conception of royal dignity, so that the latter was regarded more as a duty performed in the fear of God than as a due and a legacy. Hence, a rather doloristic view of sovereign power, making it akin to a divine mission, wholly devoted to serving the interests of the *res publica*, and crushing the king under the weight of its moral responsibility, as he struggles to be a fair ruler, caring for his subjects in a fatherly way, seems to constantly recur throughout *specula*. This echoes Aristotle’s own idea that the perfect ruler is a caring ‘father’ to his people, and that the ideal kingship is thus paternal government.

49 Erasmus, *La Formation du prince chrétien*, p. 197. Plutarch, *Les Œuvres Morales*, f° 135 v° and Jean Brèche, *Manuel royal*, p. 33. The original French translation reads: “Dieu a créé le soleil comme sa plus belle représentation dans les cieux et, parmi les hommes, il a placé une image visible et vivante de lui-même : le roi”.

But what does it mean to be a 'good' king and what does it imply? Solomon, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch, have all thoroughly examined the question and written extensively about the royal virtues that keep tyranny at bay, thus leaving us an entire legacy of material penned on the subject. Inspired by these authors and their treatises, François Demoulins composed several speeches dealing with virtue - such as his *Dialogus* (1505), a discussion between a devout confessor and a poor, penitent sinner about games of chance, dedicated to Francis of Angoulême, and intended to counter the young prince's liking for cards and dice - which all remained in their handwritten form.

So did Stephen Baron, an English Franciscan friar living at Cambridge. His *De Regimine Principum* (1509) was dedicated to Henry VIII, to whom he acted as royal confessor. Baron's 'mirror for princes' was a paranetic speech, modelled on Seneca's *De Clementia*. It was meant to advise the young royal on how to be a wise Christian king, and thus eulogised charity. Armed with Christian virtues, the prince eschewed bad advice and abstained from indulging his vicious passions, so as to make his subjects happy and spread the benefits of his charity all over the world by refraining from waging war. To prove his point and demonstrate the soundness of his condemnation of war, Baron borrowed his arguments from many different sources, since numerous humanists shared his own abhorrence of bloodshed.

Drawing on Cicero's *Tusculanae Disputationes* and *De officiis*, Aristotle's *Ethics* and Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae*, Baron's book of counsel for princes was certainly imbued with Thomistic ideas, whose effects on the prince's education were many and varied, since their purpose was to ensure the future ruler's happiness by teaching him to learn to obey, seek advice and accept criticism. Still, the Christian virtue of charity was but the product of justice - the mother of all virtues - and liberality. By combining these three moral virtues - all necessary to ensure public happiness and tranquility - Erasmus thus greatly emphasised the importance of the duty of justice, from which charity stemmed, according to Jean Brèche. That was why a fair king avoided being too liberal and did not deprive his subjects of food by imposing heavy taxes on them, thereby keeping social unrest at bay. This was also a subtle, indirect way for Erasmus to denounce the lavish spending and extravagant way of life of royal courts, whose members lived in sheer luxury.

The good king is therefore the one who protects the weak, endeavouring to "cure their sorrows"⁵⁰ and enforce the law, being himself - according to Erasmus - the "living embodiment of it", assisted in his tasks by a small circle of

50 Here, Erasmus clearly draws on Isocrates's speech *To Nicocles*, which makes it the first duty of kings.

magistrates and advisers. Since the royal dignity was the highest office, the one requiring the most wisdom, according to Isocrates's advice to Nicocles, it was necessary for the king to be well advised and, for this purpose, that he should "elect, among all, principled individuals leading a good, moral life, and appoint them as magistrates and judicial office holders, so that the popular masses should not be overwhelmed by heavy, unfair taxes or subjected to undue pressure and abusive investigation by public law officers".⁵¹

By extending his model of the ideal, virtuous prince to society as a whole, Erasmus confirmed his organicist vision of the latter and demonstrated its relevance - every member of the body being in its proper place, dependent on every other member and subject to the soul, which actually stood for the wise, uncorrupted prince.

4 Conclusion

In those days when Europe was plagued by wars of religion, despite great internal discord, Erasmus's Christian humanism still aroused emulation, thereby making new disciples. These truly appreciated the genuine virtue of the prince's advisers and magistrates, pinning their hopes on the eventual restoration of justice.⁵²

The humanists who compiled *specula principis* in the first half of the xvith century were mostly philologists and pedagogues, using their extensive knowledge of *bonae litterae* to fulfill an ambition that far exceeded the mere purpose of princely instruction. Renaissance 'mirrors' were distinctive in that their authors all shared a common purpose: they intended to address the multitude through the prince, who was meant to serve as a role model. However, most importantly, using other printed materials, they also aimed to contribute to children's education as a whole, whatever their background or circumstances. While their former endeavour was not particularly innovative at the time, their latter one was rather original.

The great purpose of Christian humanism, of which Erasmus was the most influential figure, was to pave the way to a peaceful society. It was not only

51 Jean Brèche, *Manuel royal*, "Octante préceptes d'Isocrate", n° 14. His original French translation is: "[il faut qu'il] élise entre tous gens de bien et de bonne vie pour leur bailler les magistratz et offices de judicature : affin que le commung et la turbe populaire ne soit iniquement grevée, et par droict public tormentée".

52 Pierre de La Place, *Traitté de la vocation et manière de vivre à laquelle chacun est appellé* (Paris, 1561).

about condemning princely rivalries and the hardships of the age resulting from the wars - especially the Italian Wars. Actually, it was also about contemplating a pacified society, where every individual would have been taught to tame his passions and would be employed fairly, according to his own vocation. Therefore, Renaissance humanists devised a fair society, placed under the aegis of an honest, uncorrupted and wise prince.

Yet, in order for this utopia to be conceivable, specular rhetoric drew on historical events and past experiences considered to be genuine and true, so that 'mirrors for princes' generally tended to historicise, thereby inciting young princes to get involved in politics and make history themselves.

Translated by Antonine Thiolier

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PART 2

*Thoughts in Motion: The Circulation and the
Uses of the Mirrors for Princes*



The Influence of Aristotle's Thought on Arab Political-Philosophical Ideas

Makram Abbès

1 Introduction

Studying the influence of Aristotle's political philosophy on Medieval Arab philosophers presents three major challenges.¹ Firstly, it is dependent on the interpretation of Aristotle's texts, and of how his doctrine may have evolved in relation to that of Plato. Even today, there is considerable disagreement amongst specialists of Aristotle's works. For example, *phronēsis*—one of the most crucial notions of Aristotelian thought—is considered by some to be an elevated form of knowledge based on right reason that serves as a guide for practical intellect, while others believe that the standard of practical wisdom is less epistemological than it is anthropological in nature, with the *phronimos* himself acting in a contingent, indeterminate universe that is the immanent incarnation of this virtue.² These interpretations may also differ according to context. In the Middle Ages, following the 13th-century translation of Aristotle's *Politics* by William of Moerbeke, the main discussions revolved around the mixed constitution. But in the 20th century, in the wake of the human disasters that seemed to be an effect of arrogant and senseless technological modernity, the return to Aristotelian *phronēsis* allowed us to think of practical reason as wisdom and to push for harmony between correct desire, the sort of goods a human being can pursue, and the identification between happiness (*eudaimonia*) and the excellent activity of the rational soul.³

The second obstacle in studying the influence of Aristotle's political ideas on Arab philosophers concerns their understanding of the actual identity of Aristotle. Certain apocryphal texts, such as the *Theology*, were attributed to

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- 1 The author uses in this chapter the transliteration system proposed in the journal *Arabica*.
 - 2 About this debate in the French philosophical context between Pierre Aubenque and René-Antoine Gauthier, see Enrico Berti, "Phronēsis et science politique", in *Aristote politique*, eds. P. Aubenque and A. Tordesillas (Paris, 1993), pp. 435–459.
 - 3 See on this interpretation, Richard Kraut, *Aristotle on the Human Good*, (Princeton, 1989).

him and used in the writings of numerous authors, even though in this case it was actually a compilation of Plotinus' *Enneads IV–VI*.⁴ Already distorted by having attributed to him a number of doctrines that he perhaps would have renounced, the Aristotle who reached the Arabs as early as the 9th century was further transfigured by centuries of commentaries on his works by both the Peripatetics and Neoplatonists of Athens and Alexandria.⁵ Such interventions, which sometimes became consensus doctrines or undisputed postulates within the various schools of thought, undoubtedly made their mark on the manner in which the Arab philosophers approached Aristotle. Even Averroes (1126–1198)—who aimed to revise the Commentators' opinions formed around the work of the Stagirite and instead to explain Aristotle through Aristotle, in order to find overall coherence among his texts as well as the significance of his scientific work—had to give way to the influences of Greek commentators, of Arab Peripatetics or even of those, such as Avicenna, who, in his eyes, sought to alter the 'true' Aristotle.

Finally, at a strictly political level, we know that Aristotle's *Politics* had a decisive impact on the Latin context from its translation in the 13th century and its arrival, together with the texts of the Arab philosophers, in the intellectual centers of Medieval Europe. It was thus that it developed as the origin of the major works of Giles of Rome, Bartholomew of Lucca and Marsilius of Padua, whereas the text had never been translated into Arabic in the Middle Ages, and played no role in the philosophical careers of al-Kindī (801–873), al-Fārābī (870–950), Miskawayh (932–1030), Avicenna (980–1037), Avempace (d. 1138) or Averroes. As such, can we continue to speak of how these Arab philosophers were influenced by Aristotle's political philosophy?

These various factors (firstly, the interpretation of Aristotle's political philosophy in comparison, notably, with that of Plato; secondly, the acknowledgement of the Arabs' interest in these two philosophers' texts in a philosophical

4 For further readings on the reception of this text and the various influences it had on Arab philosophers, see Cristina D'Ancona, "The Textual Tradition of the Graeco-Arabic Plotinus. The Theology of Aristotle, Its *"ru'ūs al-masā'il"*, and the Greek Model of the Arabic Version", in *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, eds. A.M.I. van Oppenraay and R. Fontaine (Leiden/Boston, 2012), pp. 37–71.

5 Regarding the reception of Aristotle in the Arabic context, see Gerhard Endress, "L'Aristote arabe : réception, autorité et transformation du Premier Maître", in *Medioevo* 23 (1997), pp. 1–42, Ahmed Alwishah and Josh Hayes, *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition* (Cambridge, 2015), Charles Butterworth (ed.), *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy. Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi* (Harvard, 1992) and Rafael Ramón Guerrero, "Recepción de la *Ética Nicomachea* en el mundo árabe: la teoría de la virtud en la filosofía islámica", in *Studia graeco-arabica* 4 (2014), pp. 315–334.

context (i.e Neoplatonism) that may have led to opposition to certain aspects of or, indeed, total rejection of Aristotle's philosophy; and, finally, the total absence of any text copy of *Politics* in the intellectual centers of the eastern Islamic world and Andalusia) have allowed, ever since the pioneering works of Leo Strauss and Muhsin Mahdi on Arab political philosophy, particularly al-Fārābī, for the establishment of a bias towards the Platonism of the *falāsifa*.⁶ As such, political science—usually approached as an *effect* of metaphysics by al-Fārābī—becomes, through the reversal of reading perspectives practiced by Leo Strauss, the field that *gave birth* to metaphysics and founded theology.⁷ A historical accident (the absence of a translation of *Politics*) becomes the sign of a deliberate refusal to use this text, and of a preference for Plato's *Laws* as a means of understanding the field of political philosophy. Even amongst authors such as Averroes, who undoubtedly adhered to Aristotle's thinking, some have found signs of veiled Platonism in his manner of interpreting particular points, departing from Aristotle or working to make the overall approach of his texts more coherent.⁸ Deemed too dangerous for Islamic religious culture due to his excessive trust in the powers of human reason, Aristotle, as a political thinker, had to be relegated to second place to make way for Plato, who taught that people should make an effort to attain wisdom, but that this wisdom comes as a result of teaching the prophetic revelations. It can therefore only be accessed by man if he submits himself to God. Wisdom, the object of human desire, can only be obtained through divine assistance. For reasons unexplained, Aristotle and his *Politics* were perceived as compatible with Christianity, whereas in the case of Islam, there was a need for texts like the *Republic* and the *Laws* to perfectly articulate prophecy and political legislation. Analysis based on a Straussian reading links unsettled postulates as if they were indisputable truths, asserting that Aristotle had no political influence on the Arab philosophers, that he did not develop a philosophy of law and that his teaching was incompatible with the revealed religions. In addition to these postulates, on the one hand there are personal interpretations of religions as if they were

6 See Leo Strauss, *Farabi's Plato, American Academy for Jewish Research, Louis Ginzberg, Jubilee Volume*, 1945, pp. 357–393, Leo Strauss, "How Farabi Reads Plato's *Laws*", in *Mélanges Louis Massignon*, Institut Français de Damas, 1957, Vol. 3, pp. 134–154, Muhsin Mahdi, "Philosophy and Political Thought. Reflections and Comparisons", in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 1 (1991), pp. 9–29.

7 For an illustration of this kind of interpretation of al-Fārābī, see Joshua Parens, *Metaphysics as Rhetoric: Alfarabi's Summary of Plato's "Laws"* (Albany, 1995).

8 See for example, Charles Butterworth, "Averroes' Platonization of Aristotle's Art of Rhetoric", in *La Rhétorique d'Aristote: traditions et commentaires de l'Antiquité au XVIIe siècle*, eds. G. Dahan and I. Rosier-Catach (Paris, 1998), pp. 227–240.

fixed entities deprived of all historicity and, on the other hand, a method of reading the works of a given author who builds a text as the center from which other books are analyzed and understood. This central text must contain the author's last word, with his ultimate doctrinal position or secret intellectual vision (camouflaged through the art of his esoteric writing) being turned into the instrument of tension resolution; the tool to resolve the discrepancies or justify the contradictions within the work.⁹

In response to these readings, other approaches have sought to adhere to 'positivist' principles, trusting only what the history of the texts' transmission has taught us about their availability and circulation within philosophical circles. However, from this point of view, the political texts read by the Arabs, whether written by Plato or Aristotle, probably came from summaries or paraphrasing by Galen (in the case of the *Republic*) or Porphyry (in the case of the *Nicomachean Ethics*). The true Greek masters were not accessible due to these historical contingencies, and their ideas ended up being explored only through a range of distorted sources, whether Hellenistic, Neoplatonic or otherwise. In these approaches, when a significant gap is discovered between the texts of al-Fārābī or Averroes and those of the Greek masters, it is justified by the presence of an incomplete corpus, and as long as original points are found, it is assumed that they were taken from an anonymous source or a Greek commentator, with original text surviving only in Arabic.¹⁰ Arabic authors thus reflect either a failure of interpretation (due to the unavailability of the genuine texts) or the wonderful discovery of a known or anonymous Greek thinker, whose genius can be contemplated in the surviving Arabic translation of his work. In both cases, the center of the approach and starting point for analysis is not the Arab political philosophy but the philosophy of the Greek predecessors.

Through an interpretative approach that remains conscious of these various difficulties, this paper aims to identify the major dimensions of this influence, while also taking into account the fact that such influence may come from

9 For a clarification of these questions, we would like to refer to our work, "Leo Strauss and Arab Philosophy: Medieval versus Modern Enlightenment", in *Diogenes*, Number 226, Volume 57, Issue 2, 2010, pp. 101–119. At the time of completion of this work, we read David Wirmser's article "Arabic Philosophy and the Art of Reading. I. Political Philosophy", in *La philosophie arabe à l'étude. Sens, limites et défis d'une discipline moderne*, eds. J.-B. Brenet and O.L. Lizzini (Paris, 2019), pp. 179–244, which deals with the Straussian reading of Arab philosophy. This work will be discussed in another publication.

10 Richard Walzer offers a perfect example of this approach in the commentary of his edition and translation of one of the major texts by al-Fārābī on the Virtuous City. See Al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State (Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila)*, revised text with introduction, translation, and commentary by R. Walzer (Oxford, 1985).

texts that are not necessarily political in nature. Similarly, addressing the question of influence does not entail compiling an inventory of references to 'political Aristotle' by various authors, nor does it involve ignoring the originality of an approach in works by al-Fārābī or Averroes in order to show, by any means, that they were faithful transmitters of the Stagirite's ideas in the Medieval Arab context. Such an approach would overlook the interactions between different ideas and disregard the forms of intelligence or intellectual daring that may help reveal an aspect that is poorly explained in Aristotle's texts, or even show how one can, by way of defending one's theoretical positions, arrive at conclusions that render one's starting positions unrecognizable.

2 Aristotle's Political Corpus in Arabic

If we set aside the apocryphal texts addressed at the end of this article, only Aristotle's *Politics*¹¹ is absent from the ensemble of the Aristotelian corpus that fuelled the political reflections of Arab philosophers. However, this 'ensemble' can be narrowed down to one text, namely the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle's *Politics* which had a significant influence on the Latin world from the late thirteenth century, was not translated into Arabic with the rest of Aristotle's works, and was not available to Arab thinkers at that time. Certain writers cite the text and intimate that it did indeed exist, while others explicitly state that it was not at their disposal and therefore not available in Arabic. Of this second category, Averroes is the most unequivocal. In the opening pages of his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, he states that since he cannot procure Aristotle's book which contains the second part of the science (the first being the *Nicomachean Ethics*), he chose instead to explore the content of Plato's *Republic*.¹²

11 For textual influences, see in particular Vasileios Syros (ed.), "Forgotten Commentators Society: Aristotle's Political Ideas in Arabic, Syriac, Byzantine, and Jewish Garb", in *Well begun is Only Half Done*, Tempe, Arizona, ACMRS, 2011, pp. 1–16, Vasileios Syros, "A Note of the Transmission of Aristotle's Political Ideas in Medieval Persia and Early-Modern India. Was There any Arabic or Persian Translation of the *"Politics"*?", in *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 50 (2008), pp. 303–309, Vasileios Syros, "Political Treatise", in *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, Volume 3, ed. A. Classen (Berlin/New York, 2010), pp. 2000–2021, Shlomo Pines, "Aristotle's Politics in Arabic Philosophy", in S. Pines (Author) and S. Stroumsa (Editor), *Studies in the History of Arabic Philosophy* (Jerusalem, 1996), pp. 251–261, Rémi Brague, "Note sur la traduction arabe de la *Politique*. *Derechef, qu'elle n'existe pas*", in *Aristote politique*, eds. P. Aubenque and A. Tordesillas (Paris, 1993), pp. 423–433.

12 *Averroes Commentary on Plato's Republic*, (edited with introduction, translation and notes) E.-J. Rosenthal (Cambridge, 1956), p. 112. The Arabic original of this text has been lost; it

As for writers that cited *Politics* and intimated that it was in their possession, it is important to note that these citations are based on bibliographical works or content descriptions in various commentaries of the Stagirite's works. This can be seen in the section where al-Kindī lists Aristotle's works, and describes the aim Aristotle assigned to each philosophical study. In his work entitled *On the Quantity of Aristotle's Books*, al-Kindī mentions *Politics*, comprised of eight books, which could suggest that such a book did in fact exist. Nonetheless, al-Kindī notes that its content, like certain books, is identical to that of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. This reveals that it was instead the *Eudemian Ethics*, a text that features these characteristics.

The aim of Aristotle's second book on ethics and politics entitled *Politika*, meaning "civil", dedicated to one of his friends, is similar to the aims of his first book [i.e. *the Nicomachean Ethics*]. In these pages, he addresses civil politics in more detail, yet certain chapters are identical to those of the first book.¹³

Other authors mention the *Book of Politics* or *the Book on the Government of Cities* by Aristotle, yet they are referring to either *Secretum secretorum*, also known as *Of Politics*, or to one of Aristotle's treatises to Alexander the Great *On the Government of Cities*. This is the case for the Andalusian science historian Šā'id al-Andalusī (1029–1070). In a list of Aristotle's works, he cites treatises on cities, the administration of the household and ethics.¹⁴ Similarly, in his *Book of Caution and Revision*, al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) notes that Aristotle's political philosophy is featured in his book *The Political Regime* (*al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*). This could be construed to be Aristotle's *Politics*, yet the description of the text's contents and main ideas show that al-Mas'ūdī briefly summarizes ideas set out in al-Fārābī's work of the

has been preserved thanks to a Hebrew translation by Samuel ben Judah at the beginning of the 14th century in Provence. In 1331, Joseph Caspi summarised it, then two Latin translations were published, first by Elia del Medigo in 1491, then by Jacob Mantinius in 1539. In the twentieth century, E.-J. Rosenthal translated it into English as *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's "Republic"* (Cambridge, 1956), then R. Lerner produced a second English version, *Averroes on Plato's Republic* (Ithaca/London, 1974). We have used the translation of E.-J. Rosenthal in this chapter.

13 Al-Kindī, *al-Rasā'il al-falsafīyya (Philosophical Epistles)* (Cairo, 1950), p. 384.

14 Šā'id al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* (Beirut, 1912), p. 26.

same name.¹⁵ Caution should then be exercised when it comes to works in Arabic credited to Aristotle's *Politics*.

Turning now to political philosophers with an in-depth knowledge of the Aristotelian corpus, al-Fārābī's *Book of Letters* refers to a "book by Aristotle on political science", which immediately brings *Politics* to mind.¹⁶ However, this interpretation adopted by Shlomo Pines to support the general idea of the existence of at least the first book—and perhaps the first two books of *Politics*—was incorrect. In actual fact, the book al-Fārābī is referring to in this passage is none other than the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The cited text addresses the theory of relatives and their relation to categories, a subject that Aristotle does not cover at the beginning of *Politics*.¹⁷ The passage in *Politics* (1, 3, 1253b 21–23) that Shlomo Pines compares to al-Fārābī's text, discusses the nature of slavery: is it just because it is determined by nature, or is it unjust because it is founded on force? Similarly, the text by Miskawayh that Shlomo Pines used to prove the existence of two books of Aristotle's *Politics* in Arabic is more likely to refer to one of the *Letters*' principal pieces Aristotle sent to Alexander. According to the manuscripts, this text is called, *Of Politics (al-Siyāsa)*, *The Politics of Cities (Siyāsat al-mudun)* or *General politics (al-Siyāsa al-āmmīyya)*. The word *siyāsa* is interchangeable with *tadbīr* (rule, government, management, direction), making it highly possible that the work Miskawayh cited (*Tadbīr al-mudun, On the Government of Cities*) refers to this book.¹⁸ The fact that he states that the text contains two books (*maqālatān*) confirms this hypothesis, since the treatise attributed to Aristotle does indeed have two parts in certain manuscripts: "The qualities of the king" ("Fī ṣifāt al-malik") and "The Reform of the cities" ("Fī iṣlāḥ al-mudun").

Generally speaking, when analyzing the Aristotelian corpus mentioned by Islamic philosophers and its passages cited in their works, it can be useful to distinguish three levels. The first one pertains to the citation of works and their content that may be sourced from bibliographical catalogues and secondary

15 Al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Tanbīh wa l-iṣrāf*, French translation by C. de Vaux, *Livre de l'avertissement et de la révision* (Paris, 1896), p. 166.

16 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf (the Book of Letters)*, ed. M. Mahdi (Beirut, 2004), p. 91.

17 We agree with the opinion of R. Brague who discussed this point in his article "Note sur la traduction arabe de la *Politique*. *Derechef, qu'elle n'existe pas*", in P. Aubenque and A. Tordesillas, *Aristote politique*, p. 432.

18 See the text of this treatise in Miklós Maróth, *The Correspondance Between Aristotle and Alexander the Great* (Budapest, 2006), pp. 85–101. Concerning Miskawayh, see *Tartīb al-Sa'ādāt (The Order of Happiness)*, ed. al-Suyūṭī (Cairo, 1928), p. 59.

works that listed a given volume. Aristotle's *Politics* is most often cited in this way, which indicates that there was no copy in Arabic. Even al-Fārābī's reference to this book in the *Enumeration of the Sciences* should be treated as a simple second-hand quote.¹⁹ If the author truly had the *Politics* at his disposal, he would have drafted a number of compendiums on the subject. Furthermore, many questions would have arisen given the highly intellectual subject matter of the topics Aristotle addressed, and the rigour with which he conducted his research. Aristotle's *Politics* includes subjects such as the legitimacy of slavery, his critique of Plato's theory of the community of women and children and the community of property, the issue of revolt and the upheavals that affect the cities, the analysis of constitutions from a historical point of view and also from a judicial point of view. If Arab philosophers had had knowledge of these ideas, it would have had a major impact on their approach to this branch of philosophy.

The second level relates to citation of certain textual fragments, whether it be developments of varying significance attributed to the texts of commentators including Alexander of Aphrodisias, Porphyry, Simplicius, John Philoponus and Nicolaus of Damascus, or maxims compiled in anthologies that attracted a wide audience in the East from the 9th to 12th centuries.²⁰ Admittedly, most of these maxims and aphorisms had no connection to the authentic texts of Aristotle. The image some of these writings evoke of the Stagirite can be surprising: of a neo-platonic philosopher yearning to purify his soul, a mystic eager to rid himself of his body's influence, or an ascetic that holds this lowly world in contempt and thinks of nothing but the afterlife. However, other passages do indeed reflect biographical aspects of Aristotle's authentic ideas. In this respect, the text by pseudo-al-ʿĀmirī is even more exemplary as it is the only work to have recorded a few lines which are equivalent, in terms of ideas, to Book I of Aristotle's *Politics*.²¹ But these passages do not reflect Aristotle's text verbatim, meaning that it is a secondary citation by Greek commentators of Aristotle, or Alexandrian authors. The Aristotelian work from which pseudo-al-ʿĀmirī sourced the moral and political aphorisms therefore remains the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The numerous citations taken from this work prove

19 Al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm*, ed. O. Amine (Cairo, 1931), p. 105.

20 See Miskawayh, *Al-Ḥikma l-ḥālida (Eternal Wisdom)*, ed. A. Badawi (Cairo, 1952), and Ibn Fātik, *Muḥtār al-ḥikam wa maḥāsin al-kalim (The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers)*, ed. A. Badawi (Beirut, 1980).

21 See the summary of these passages in Shlomo Pines, "Aristotle's Politics in Arabic Philosophy", pp. 252–253. Note that quotes suggesting that they come from *Politics* are juxtaposed against other quotes from *Nicomachean Ethics*.

that this reference was available at the time *al-Sa'āda wa l-is'ād* was written, probably in the second half of the 10th century.

The third level concerns Aristotle's authentic texts, the contents of which are strictly political. Here we are forced to restrict ourselves to one sole text, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. This text had by far the most influence on Arab philosophers' studies of not only politics, but philosophy in general.²² It played a pivotal role in this crucial moment for scientific and philosophical thought in the 10th and 11th centuries, as manifested by its central position in the works of young al-Fārābī, which combine the search for happiness and perfection with the mastery of the art of logic.²³ The short treatise of al-Fārābī, *al-Tanbīh 'alā taḥṣīl al-Sa'āda*, illustrates this influence of Aristotelian thinking in the first two books of *Nicomachean Ethics* on happiness and perfection. This is the starting point of the young al-Fārābī, known above all as a logician, in his overall philosophical endeavour.²⁴ Miskawayh follows the same path in *Tartīb al-Sa'ādāt* (*The Order of Happiness*) and devotes the first pages to a study inspired by the first two books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, leading to a lengthy development of Aristotle's philosophy supported by a text by Paul the Persian. Here, it should be noted that he follows al-Fārābī's plan by linking research on happiness (*eudaimonia*) to scientific knowledge, particularly the work of Aristotle, and the way in which he perfected the tools of the logical arts.²⁵ These two examples illustrate that Aristotle's work was the basis for both authors' philosophical works, since they will devote most of their work to ethical and political and questions, relating them to their psychologies, cosmologies and metaphysics. The same influence can be identified in the work of Avempace.²⁶ In the *Governance of the Solitary*, he conveys an original approach based on the idea that a philosopher must attain the perfection described by Aristotle, but in absence of an ideal political environment and a city willing to carry out this aim, must take this charge upon himself. Avempace then carried out

22 For the text used by Arab philosophers, see Anna Akasoy and Alexander Fidora (eds.), *The Arabic Version of The Nicomachean Ethics* (Leiden/Boston, 2005).

23 See our work, "Al-Farabi", in *Le bonheur. Dictionnaire historique et critique*, ed. M. Gally (Paris, 2019), pp. 245–249.

24 Al-Fārābī, *al-Tanbīh 'alā taḥṣīl al-Sa'āda*, ed. Ja'far al-Yasin (Beirut, 1992), pp. 227–265.

25 Miskawayh, *Tartīb al-Sa'ādāt*. For a presentation of the contents of this text, see Roxanne D. Marcotte, "Ibn Miskawayh's *Tartīb al-Sa'ādāt* (*The Order of Happiness*)", in *Monotheism and Ethics: Historical and Contemporary Intersections among Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Y. Tzvi Langemann (Leiden/Boston, 2011), pp. 141–161.

26 Concerning Avempace, see the exhaustive study of the influences of Aristotelian sources on this author in Jules Janssens, "Ibn Bājja and Aristotle's Political Thought", in *Well begun is Only Half Done*, pp. 73–95.

exhaustive research on the quest for individual excellence in *Farewell Letter*, drawings on Aristotle's descriptions of the highest virtue of a man in Book x of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in his central thesis.²⁷

3 Practical Philosophy

The different levels of Aristotelian corpus found in the writing of Arab philosophers in the Medieval era come to light in how they present the branch of practical philosophy. Accordingly, there is generally a tripartition between ethics or self-government, economics or the administration of the household, and politics or the government of the city based on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Economics* and *Politics*. This tripartition inspired by Aristotle was preserved in the most vivacious philosophical tradition Islam immediately encountered in different cities in which it became established, namely the currents of Alexandrian Neoplatonism.²⁸ Aristotle's work *Economics*, like *Politics*, was not available in Arabic. This explains its replacement with a text by Bryson, a 1st century Neopythagorean who wrote a small treatise on the administration of the household (*oikonomia/tadbīr al-manzil*), practically the only reference on the subject.²⁹

This tripartition, which can be traced back to Aristotle, would be systematized in philosophical encyclopaedias and scientific catalogues, especially in the post-Avicennian era. The first significant treatises combining all three parts of practical philosophy only came to light at the end of the classical era. Paradoxically, the inclusion of ethics, economics and politics in one volume increased the division between the three fields on an epistemological level. It is important to note that in philosophical writings in the post-Avicennian era, these three fields took on a scholastic nuance insisting on the specific nature of each branch as an individual science. Al-Ṭūsī's *Nasirean Ethics*, a work written in Persian and then translated into Arabic in the 14th century by al-Ġurġānī, illustrates this position. In the introduction of al-Ṭūsī's work, one of Avicenna's most famous commentators, he explains that he had been commissioned by

27 See on this topic my article, "Le statut de la raison pratique chez Avempace", in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 21 (2011), pp. 85–109.

28 See Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis, Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 53–68.

29 See *Penser l'Économique*, texts by Bryson and Ibn Sīnā, ed. and trans. Y. Seddik and Y. Essid (Tunis, 1995), and concerning economic dimension of *tadbīr*, Y. Essid, *A Critique of the Origins of Islamic Economic Thought* (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1995).

a prince to translate Miskawayh's *Refinement of Character*. He deemed it necessary to instead write a book on practical philosophy as a whole, choosing to summarize Miskawayh's work and adding two parts on 'household wisdom' and 'civil wisdom'. According to this approach, ethics relates to an individual, whereas the two other sciences pertain to the participation of several individuals in community affairs, that of the household and the city.

Practical Philosophy, says al-Ṭūsī, is the acknowledgement of benefits in voluntary movements and disciplined acts on the part of the human species, in a way that conduces to the ordering of the states of man's life here and hereafter, necessitating arrival at that perfection towards which he is directed. It likewise is divided into two: that which refers to each soul individually, and that which concerns a community in association. The second division is itself subdivided: that which refers to a community associated within a dwelling or home, on the one hand; on the other, that which concerns a community associated within a city, a province, or even a region or a realm. Thus, Practical Philosophy too has three divisions: the first is called Ethics, the second Economics, and the third Politics.³⁰

This approach to practical philosophy shows that each discipline is autonomous, to a certain extent, and that the distinction between them is made through adding or subtracting the number of individuals involved in the exercise of governance in each sphere. According to this concept, ethics has no part to play in the political domain, nor any purpose that corresponds to the entire community as a whole. Although this was not originally the authors' intention, we note that the prevailing scholarly approach at the end of the classical age of Islam supported the idea that practical philosophy was based on the autonomy of each branch as part of the whole. They were inclined to create divisions and subdivisions and identify different categories that made up the scientific disciplines.³¹ Avicenna appears to be the source of this approach to practical philosophy. In the *Eastern Philosophy*, he notes that ethics "teaches how the human individual should behave for himself and for the states that concern him, so that he will

30 Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. from the Persian by G.M. Wickens (London, 1964), p. 28. For the Arabic version, see J. Lameer, *The Arabic Version of Ṭūsī's Nasirean Ethics* (Leiden/Boston, 2015), pp. 82–83.

31 This trend can be seen, for example, in Faḥr al-dīn al-Rāzī, *Šarḥ 'uyūn al-ḥikma*, vol. 2 (Cairo, 1986), pp. 6–16, al-Dawwānī, *Akhlaq-i Jalālī*, trans. W.T. Thompson, *Practical Philosophy of Muhammedan People* (London, 1839), and Ṭāš Kubrā Zādeh, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1985), pp. 378–394.

be happy in both the here below and in the hereafter".³² In contrast to the other branches of practical philosophy, ethics is individual (*ḥāṣṣ*) and not shared. The social and political dimension which reveals human aspects of association (*mušarakāt, Koinoniat*) concerns only the household or city government. Avicennian literature, which included detailed descriptions of the three branches, and aiming to separate ethics as a discipline applicable only to the individual, was used as a key reference by the intellectual tradition in philosophical studies. This paradoxically weakened practical science overall and distanced it from the teachings of Aristotle that emphasized ethics as a political book, as we saw earlier with al-Fārābī who named it the *Book on the Government of Cities*. In parallel, from Avicenna onwards, prophetic revelation and the religious sciences with the overarching discipline of Islamic law (*fiqh*) were assigned the same aims previously entrusted to practical philosophy. By relying on legal scholars and religious moralists, the discourse on education of the individual and the government of the State seems to break away from philosophy, despite the appearance of in-depth research, precision and technical prowess in delineating the divisions and subdivisions in the different domains of practical wisdom.³³

This perspective is not shared by all Arab philosophers. Some insist on the indivisibility of practical philosophy, while still precisely listing its individual parts. This point can be made clear by analyzing the role of the household governance as part of the whole, on the one hand, and examining the link between ethics and politics, on the other.

Concerning the administration of the household (*tadbīr al-manzil*), philosophers like al-Fārābī stressed that the aim of this part of the city must be linked with the city as whole. Despite the absence of Aristotle's *Politics* in which he critiques imperfect associations (tribe, family or village) because they do not make it possible to achieve man's political destination, we observe that al-Fārābī applied this teaching to texts such as *Political Aphorisms*, *The Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City*, *The Enumeration of the Sciences* and *The Political Regime*. In the first text for example, there is a series of aphorisms sourced from ancient philosophical texts. These were undoubtedly adapted by al-Fārābī and carefully chosen in order to reflect his own point of view. There are many sections that address the management of the household, such as the following passage:

32 Ibn Sinā, *Maṭīq al-mašriḳīyyīn* (Cairo, 1910), p. 7. See also *Risāla fī aqsām al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya*, in *Tis' rasā'il* (Constantinople, 1880), pp. 73–74.

33 On Avicenna's lack of interest in practical philosophy, see Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* (Leiden/Boston, 2014), pp. 292–296 and pp. 497–498.

Both the city and the household have an analogy with the body of the human being. The body is composed of different parts of a definite number, some better and some baser, adjacent to one another in rank, each doing a certain action, so that from all of their actions they come together in mutual assistance to perfect the purpose of the human being's body. In the same way, both the city and the household are composed of different parts of a definite number, some baser and some better, adjacent to one another in a rank of different ranks, each performing on its own a certain action, so that from their actions they come together in mutual assistance to perfect the purpose of the city or the household. Even though the household is a part of a city and households are in the city, their purposes are nonetheless different. Yet there comes together from those different purposes, when they are perfected and brought together, a mutual assistance for perfecting the purpose of the city.³⁴

The biological analogy employed here by al-Fārābī helps explain the nature of the relationship between the household and the city, reduced to the relation of the whole to the part. The aim of the parts of the body is considered as part of the whole to which they belong. For this reason, the ruler of the city (*madanī*), who acts as the city's physician, must intervene to cure its diseases and safeguard the health of the whole, including individuals and households. As with Aristotle, political science is regarded as the supremely authoritative science in the realm of the practical, and the perfection of a part is considered from the perspective of the perfection of the whole. This is confirmed in the following aphorism:

In the same way [as the physician] ought the governor of the city to govern every one of the parts of the city, whether it is a small part such as a single human being or a large one like a single household. He treats it and provides it with good in relation to the whole of the city and to each of the rest of the parts of the city by endeavoring to make the good that part provides a good that does not harm the whole of the city or anything among the rest of its parts, but rather a good useful to the city in its entirety and to each of its parts in accordance with its rank of usefulness to the city.³⁵

34 Al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, in *Alfarabi, Political Writing*, trans. C.E. Butterworth (Ithaca, 2001), § 25, p. 23.

35 Al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, § 26, p. 24.

When compared to Avicenna's texts, analyzed above, the divergence of two prevalent ideas comes to light. The first is the autonomy of each science, and the second deals with the subordination of the specific aims assigned to each sphere of the government of self and the administration of the household to the overall aims of the city. Furthermore, unlike al-Fārābī, Avicenna stresses the need to separate each type of government in the *Eastern Philosophy*, to the point of advising not to let the ruler of a city take care of the government of the houses. This approach thus divides the two parts, the only change being that the prophetic revelation has the power to legislate on all aspects of practical life and may determine the purpose of each sphere.³⁶

In addition to the epistemological phase that made it possible to identify the role of the different parts of practical philosophy by drawing on analogies found in biology, we note that the reflections on the government of the household as a 'science' disappears altogether in the principal works of al-Fārābī. This can be seen in *The Political Regime*, where he clearly stipulates that perfection and happiness can only be achieved by moving from the lower forms of association such as the family or the village to the superior form which is the city.

Human beings are [one] of the species that cannot complete their necessary affairs nor gain their most excellent state except by coming together as many associations in a single dwelling-place. Some human associations are large, some medium, and some small. The large association is an association of many nations coming together and helping one another. The medium is the nation. And the small are those the city embraces. These three are the perfect associations.

Thus, the city is the first in the rankings of perfections. Associations in villages, quarters, streets, and houses are defective associations. Of these, one is very defective, namely, the household association. It is part of the association in the street, and the association in the street is part of the association in the quarter. And the latter association is part of the civil association. The associations in quarters and the associations in villages are both for the sake of the city. However, the difference between them is that quarters are parts of the city, while villages serve the city. The civil association is part of the nation, and the nation is divided into cities. The absolute perfect human association is divided into nations.³⁷

36 Avicenna, *Maṅṭiq al-mašriqīyyīn*, pp. 7–8.

37 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsa al-madaniyya (Political Regime)*, trans. C.E. Butterworth, in Alfarabi, *The Political Writings*, Volume II (Ithaca, 2015), pp. 60–61. We have slightly modified the translation.

The emphasis given to the importance of any discourse on the government of the household makes it clear that al-Fārābī is a proponent of Aristotelian principles, according to which man is a political animal by nature and the character of a citizen can only be attained in the city environment, i.e. through participation in the common purpose of the city or overarching structure, as we shall see below.

To conclude this section on the role of the administration of the household and the relationship it maintains with ethics and politics, it is important to note that two Andalusian philosophers, Avempace and Averroes would address this question and develop a highly critical stance on the discourse of household governance.

Avempace raises this in *The Governance of the Solitary*, in which he discusses how an individual must do everything to attain the supreme goal of man in an imperfect political environment, regardless of whether or not the excellent city is yet a reality. Following a philological and philosophical explanation of the concept of *tadbīr* (government, management, conduct, care), the cornerstone of Arab political philosophy, he attempts to restrict the domain of the individual and the city by rejecting the idea of a *tadbīr* for the household alone.

[...] The perfection of the household is not something desired for its own sake, but only for the sake of rendering perfect either the city or the natural end of man, and the treatment of the latter clearly forms part of man's governance of himself [that is, ethics]. In any case, the household is either a part of the city and its treatment forms part of the treatment of the city, or a preparation for another end and its treatment forms part of the treatment of that end. This explains why the treatment of the household in the popular manner is pointless and does not constitute a science.³⁸

Avempace's critique of the science of the organization of the household implies that the techniques of civil government cannot be reduced to those at work in the organization of the household, and that a city cannot be considered as such. In other words, the art of managing a city cannot be likened to managing a household. Despite Plato's influence on these various developments, the fact remains that Avempace begins with the problem of government that seeks to identify the original relationship, enshrined in Aristotle's political philosophy, between the individual and the city. Self-governance and city government, ethics and politics are locked in a relationship of identity that negates any

38 Avempace, *The Governance of the Solitary*, trans. L. Berman, in *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, eds. R. Lerner and M. Mahdi (New York, 1967), p. 125.

separation between the city and the individuals who comprise it. As explored above, Avempace's opposition to the administration of the household can only be interpreted by the fact that this type of government imposes separate aims on family clans, replacing the shared civil aim, and thereby preventing the city from forming a Whole that transcends other types of *tadbīr*.³⁹

This same logic serves as the foundation for Averroes' criticism—not of the science of the household government itself, but rather of the transformation of certain societies into spaces governed by clan or family-based systems. Rather surprisingly for modern thinkers, it is democracy that is likened to the government of the household. To understand this particular view of the democratic regime, it should be noted that in the *Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, democracy is referred to as the 'city of groups' (*al-siyāsa al-ġamā'iyya*) and that it is likened to arbitrary government, and to individuals' desire i) to be free, and ii) to be able to eliminate the ideally merit-based hierarchical relationships enjoyed by the rulers in relation to the governed.⁴⁰ Another idea is put forward in the *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, and is in line with Avempace's remarks. Averroes notes that most Muslim cities of the time were 'democratic', as for him, the essence of democracy was the division of society into family and clan groups that broke the bond of political unity, and reorganized all spheres of society and the economy according to the interests of the parties rather than the interests of the whole. The contradiction of this regime lies in that democracy really does form a whole, however one that is entirely disjointed and disconnected, a contradiction that is perfectly reflected in the term '*ġamā'iyya*', which encapsulates both 'the whole' and the 'separate groups'.

The association in these States is of necessity only one of chance, since they do not aim at one end in their association. Consequently, authority in them is only accidental. The associations among many of the Muslim kings today are communities exclusively based upon homes. Of the norm only that which observes the first laws is left among them. It is clear that in this State all property appertains to the home.⁴¹

39 See Makram Abbès, "Gouvernement de soi et des autres chez Avempace", in *Studia Islamica* 100/101 (2005), pp. 113–160.

40 Averroès (Ibn Rushd), *Commentaire moyen à la Rhétorique d'Aristote*, ed. and trans. M. Aouad, vol. 2 (Paris, 2002), p. 68.

41 *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, p. 214.

Averroes' critique here is of major political relevance: if family ties and lineage are the basis of political association, this means that the State is only the product of the juxtaposition of all the clans. This also means that state order remains dependent on the order of the clan, and the domination of one clan over the others. Here, we can see how Aristotelian and Platonic typologies have not only been studied from a normative point of view, but also used to understand the historical reality of the societies of classical Islam. Such a critical look at social reality shows how Averroes anticipated the formation of Ibn Khaldūn's realist political thought, one of the strengths of which resided in the study of anthropological mechanisms and concrete factors leading to the birth of a powerful clan, endowed with a social solidarity (*ʿaṣabiyya*) and capable of nurturing the ambition of founding a State. However, while for Ibn Khaldūn, the clan is the cornerstone of any political structure, for Averroes and Avempace, it leads to the ruin of the State and the fragmentation of members of the political body.

4 Aristotle's Influence: Moral Philosophy or Political Philosophy?

In light of the absence of *Politics* in the Arab context, in which Aristotle undertook the singular task of studying one hundred and fifty-eight constitutions, with the particular judicial or political functions that characterizes them, and their effects on morals, social habits and laws, can we still support the existence of truly political thinking among Arab philosophers, or should we simply refer to their writings as 'moral'? Ibn Khaldūn himself, at a crucial moment in the final decades of the classical age of Islam, when he began examining the political knowledge of his predecessors, described the works of philosophers such as al-Fārābī as politically useless, and valid only for self-governance.⁴² As such, would these treatises not be – at most – valid only for ethical reform and self-improvement, given that they in no way address the matter of political power, nor explain the genesis of the State, its evolution, or disintegration? Based on this observation by Ibn Khaldūn and other philological considerations, Dimitri Gutas sought to defend the notion of the *absence* of political philosophy in the person generally considered to be the very founder of political philosophy in Islam: al-Fārābī.

According to Dimitri Gutas, true political philosophy only arrived in Islam with Ibn Khaldūn, whereas the technical terms and vocabulary used by

⁴² Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History*, trans. F. Rosenthal (Princeton, 1958), chapter III: section 50, p. 138.

al-Fārābī and other authors to address the matter of belonging to the city or to discuss political activity actually only have a slightly political, and even purely moral dimension.

Discussions [on human communities and their governance], says D. Gutas, are always derivative, not central, and they depend for their philosophical validity on al-Fārābī's metaphysical scheme and his theory of the intellect (noetics) rather than on any properly political analysis or argumentation.⁴³

The term '*madanī*', an adjective derived from '*madīna*' (city), which refers to everything civil, is present in the very name of political science ('*ilm al-siyāsa*') used by the philosophers, who also call it *al-'ilm al-madanī* (civil science), '*ilm tadbīr al-mudun*' (the science of city government), *al-'ilm al-insānī* (human science) or *al-'ilm al-irādī* (voluntary science).⁴⁴ Focusing on the term '*madanī*', frequently used by al-Fārābī, D. Gutas, observes that translators in Baghdad between the 9th and 10th centuries used it without any real political connotation. It simply means "a person or thing that belongs or pertains to a city".⁴⁵ At the same time, the watchword of Greek political philosophy, *politeia*, which, in the historical and cultural context of ancient Greece, refers to the constitution of the city-state, was not correctly understood by the translators, leading them to overlook the legal and political meaning of the term and to retain only the moral meaning of 'way of life', *bios* or moral conduct. Expressions such as *al-sīra al-madanīyya*, referring to the type of constitution adopted by a given city has therefore taken on a moral and psychological hue. A correct translation of the Greek term *politeia*, had it been understood correctly, bearing in mind the general interest of a State and the advantages provided by the arrangement of offices (magistracies or powers), established there, would have resulted in the Arabic terms *qawānīn* (regulations, laws, *nomoi*) or *aḥkām* (legal rules, legislative ordinances) rather than the vague and only slightly political term *sīra*.⁴⁶

For Dimitri Gutas, if the Fārābīan understanding of Aristotelian political philosophy is correct, it should be limited to what is said about *politeia* in

43 Dimitri Gutas, "The Meaning of *madanī* in al-Fārābī's 'Political' Philosophy", in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004), p. 259.

44 We find this term in Avempace's Commentary on the Logic of al-Fārābī, *Al-Ta'ālīq al-manṭiqīyya*, ed. M.I. Alouza (Tunis, 1997), p. 27.

45 Gutas, "The Meaning of *madanī* in al-Fārābī's 'Political' Philosophy", p. 261.

46 Gutas, "The Meaning of *madanī* in al-Fārābī's 'Political' Philosophy", p. 263.

Nicomachean Ethics, as it refers to the moral way of life (virtuous, vicious, timocratic, tyrannical, etc.) adopted by individuals within the city.

Al-Fārābī's so-called 'politics' is thus actually based on ethics for two reasons: first because he derives it primarily from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which leads him to develop an ethical framework for understanding what we call 'political life, and second because the mistranslation of *politeia* as 'way of life', *sīra*, led him to concentrate on an ethical concept as the key feature of 'political life'.⁴⁷

Although Dimitri Gutas' analyses are based on a high level of philological competence, the central interpretation involving removing the political content of al-Fārābī's philosophy and reducing it solely to morality merits some comment. Firstly, it would seem that in Dimitri Gutas' use of the words 'political' or 'politics', the term should be unambiguous and apply exclusively to the legal organization of power. Now, we see that there are several ways of approaching politics, which may be judicial (tradition of public or constitutional law), historical-literary (mirrors of princes and the arts of governing), theological (writings on the *imamate*) or philosophical (as we approach it here).⁴⁸ Moreover, given that politics is the art of leading the people or affairs of the city, it is therefore hard to support an understanding limiting it to the legal and institutional aspects of the organization of power, as stated by D. Gutas in this work. The polysemy of the terms *siyāsa* and *tadbīr*, for example, two pivotal concepts in Arab political philosophy, as well as the plurivocity of the objects and domains to which they apply, encourages us not to fall prey to the modern representation of this work, which reduces it to technical-practical or purely legal-institutional dimensions. The fact that Ibn Khaldūn is considered the first political philosopher in the Arab tradition is even more surprising, given that he i) fiercely opposes the philosophers, and that ii) his thinking is not founded on the legal aspects that D. Gutas presents, based on his reading of Aristotle, as fundamental criteria to legitimize the use of the term 'political'. The desire to remove all political meaning from the vocabulary of Arab

47 Gutas, "The Meaning of *madanī* in al-Fārābī's 'Political' Philosophy", p. 264.

48 The same is valid for the intellectual traditions developed in the West. Does Machiavelli approach politics as Bodin, Erasmus, Bossuet or Thomas More do, only choosing authors close in time? The range of approaches (theological-religious, historical-literary and legal-institutional) should not result in the exclusion of one aspect in favour of another. In our view, they try to account for the complexity of relations between people, which reflect their political condition in different ways.

philosophers preceding Ibn Khaldūn leaves us all the more perplexed, as it reduces the approach to power alone, and to the concrete elements of State administration.⁴⁹

Regarding the philological analysis of the term *madanī*, it would be fair to say that it is a relational adjective formed from the words *madīna* (city) and designating “of the city, politikè”, but would be strange to say that when the adjective is turned into a noun and applied to the man in charge of governing the city (the king, the statesman, *politikos*), the term must always be taken in a non-political sense.⁵⁰ In the *Selected Aphorisms*, al-Fārābī clearly notes that the politician (*madanī*) is responsible for caring for souls just as the doctor is the one who cares for bodies. In this definition, he is presented as the statesman (*al-insān al-madanī*) or the king (*al-malik*).⁵¹ Likewise, the adjective ‘*madanī*’, when used in conjunction with philosophy (*falsafa madaniyya*), art (*ṣināʿa madaniyya*) or science (*ilm madanī*), refers to political philosophy, its principles and purposes, as detailed in the *Enumeration of Sciences*.⁵² Here, the spatial, geographical or territorial meaning (belonging to a city’s territory) gives way to other more elaborate meanings. The philological analysis conducted by D. Gutas is very competent, however she merely finds the Arabic equivalents to the Greek terms, in assessing their adequacy or divergence with respect to the understanding of Aristotle’s original text. However, to measure the effect of the translation of an idea or the introduction of a concept in a new linguistic culture, we would need to further question the semantic innovations and lexical creations it may have given rise to. This is what we observe in the new reflections led by Arab philosophers, who show that the word *madanī* did not solely have a geographical meaning referring to the territorial space of the city (city-dweller). In a text by Miskawayh, a contemporary of al-Fārābī and whose political philosophy owes much to *Nicomachean Ethics*, we see that the Arabic root (*MDN*) resulted in the formation of the notion of ‘*madaniyya*’, which can be translated as ‘citizenship’ or ‘political sociability’.⁵³ The creation of this

49 For conceptual clarifications, we would refer to our work, “Le concept de politique dans la pensée islamique. Qu’est-ce que la ‘*siyāsa*’?” (“The Concept of Politics in Islamic Thought. What is *siyāsa*?”), in *Archives de Philosophie* 82/4 (2019), “Penser la politique en Islam”, pp. 683–699.

50 This is what leads Dimitri Gutas, “The Meaning of *madanī* in al-Fārābī’s ‘Political’ Philosophy”, p. 269, to consider Dunlop’s translation, “statesman” incorrect.

51 Al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, in *Alfarabi, Political Writing*, § 4, p. 12.

52 Al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm*, pp. 102–107.

53 In contemporary times, the word is used to refer to “civilization” and is synonymous with *tamaddun*, a word of the same root. The roots of this meaning are already present in the analysis put forward by Miskawayh, as shown below.

abstract noun expressing quality (*maṣdar šināʿī* in Arabic grammar) shows that we have moved beyond the grammatical stage of the relational adjective (of the city, city-dweller) to reflect on the *state and the quality of citizenship*. This is what we find in an in-depth reading of certain passages in Miskawayh. Referencing the Aristotelian postulate according to which man is political by nature, before establishing that human association and mutual assistance among its members constitute *madaniyya*, Miskawayh specifies that this term comprises two states: the first, prosperity (*ʿimāra*) and the second, ruin (*ḥarāb*).

The state of prosperity", he says, "is achieved by the large number of auxiliaries, and the promotion of justice among them, thanks to the might of the political power that ensures their conditions, safeguards their ranks and eliminates insecurity from their lives. By the great number of auxiliaries, I mean the mutual assistance of physical strength and wills through great works, some of which are necessary for survival, others useful for living well, and a third category, useful for enjoyment. It is the combination of these three things that constitutes prosperity. But if the city is lacking any of these three elements, then it falls into ruin, and if it is lacking two of them – the good life and the enjoyment of life – then it is in an extreme state of ruin.⁵⁴

Miskawayh adds that the way of life satisfied with the mere necessities, such as in ascetics, is a negation of *madaniyya*, since it calls into question the material conditions for the attainment of happiness and prosperity. This depends on the cultivation of the land, the disciplines associated with this activity, the defense of the State by military means, and the intensification of transport and commercial activities. Without these three elements (1. agriculture and industry, 2. military arts and 3. transportation and trade), Miskawayh says, one cannot attain the 'excellent life' (*ḡawdat al-ʿayš*). *Madaniyya* manifests as an element through the participation of individuals in the common affairs of the city, in order to ensure its prosperity and create the conditions for an excellent life. Truly civil life is therefore not limited to the mere belonging to the space the city inhabits, where individuals are content with their basic needs being met, as in ascetics, nor a mere space for the exercise of virtuous ethics. The excellence of political sociability rests on the distinction between living and living *well*, which is at the basis of Aristotle's political thought, as can be seen in an opening passage of *Politics* (I, 2, 1252b 29–30) where he states that the

54 Miskawayh and al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Hawāmil wa l-šawāmil* (Cairo, 1951), p. 250.

city is formed “for the sake of mere life” but unlike other imperfect communities such as the household or the village, “it exists for the sake of a good life.”⁵⁵ This expression, synonymous with *eudaimonia*, means that man blossoms in the city by accessing the virtues within his reach and of which he is capable. For this reason, the ‘*madaniyya*’ (state and quality of citizenship) is not only confused with ‘*siyāsa*’ (politics, government) but also with ‘*al-insāniyya*’ (the realization of the human essence).

Another equally as important passage in the same book describes political power as an art (*ṣināʿa*) at the foundation of *madaniyya*, leaving no doubt as to the political meaning of the term, and dispels the ambiguities created by D. Gutas’ reading.

Political power (*mulk*) is an art at the foundation of citizenship (*madaniyya*), as it is capable of leading men to pursue the interests that derive from their laws and leadership, whether by choice or coercion. It is also an art that safeguards people’s positions and livelihoods, so that they are guided in the best way possible.⁵⁶

Certainly, al-Fārābī’s approach, which is at the heart of this discussion, is unique in that it cannot be traced to that of other authors such as Miskawayh, Avempace or Averroes, philosophers whose political ideas can be appreciated using other criteria and assume different meanings. However, this kind of analysis by one of al-Fārābī’s contemporaries shows that the term ‘*madanī*’ had an eminently political meaning. In addition, the term ‘*madanī*’ and its derivatives were used a century before, as we saw above with al-Kindī, to refer to political science. The presence of this kind of analysis in the work of a contemporary of al-Fārābī thus reflects the permanence of this political meaning assigned to the term. One could concede to Dimitri Gutas, of course, that al-Fārābī’s political approach is unique because it is overdetermined by ethics. The constitutions referred to in his works exceed the number found in Aristotle or Plato, to the point of increasing the number of cities based on the aims pursued by their leaders, and the ways of life that prevail there. The proliferation in the number of bad cities (double the number of Aristotle’s) shows that their nature varies, ultimately, according to the aim pursued by the leader, and above all, according to the conduct and morals they establish by acceding to government. In the same way, the focus on the leader means the governed only gains access

55 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. E. Barker (Oxford, 1995), I, 2, 1252b 29–30, p. 10.

56 Aristotle, *Politics*, p. 333.

to politics by emulating the prince's conduct, and it is the imitation of the prince's way of life that makes citizens virtuous, ignorant or vile. But is this conception, however moralizing, a betrayal of the teachings of Aristotelian political philosophy?

We know that Aristotle conceives *politeia* not only as an arrangement of offices, but also as a widespread temperament amongst people, leading them to choose one type of government over another.⁵⁷ In his important article retracing the meaning of the word *politeia* and its different philological, literary, philosophical and political uses, J.J. Mulhern argues "that Aristotle had in mind mainly four distinct senses in using *politeia* in the *Politics* – citizenship, citizen-body, constitution or arrangement of offices, and regime".⁵⁸ At the end of his article, he argues that "an exact understanding leads away from treating Aristotle's argument as focused on constitutions or forms of government in every case".⁵⁹ Thus, the understanding of both translators and Arab philosophers of the term *politeia* and its translation by *sīra* was quite accurate and appropriate. To define the best city, Aristotle calls for an examination of the most worthy way of life (*Politics*, VII, 1, 1323-a). The problem of *the good life* therefore joins that of the *best city*; the two subjects are inseparable from each other, as confirmed by the division of political science into two parts: ethics, studying the characters and virtues of justice, prudence, friendship, etc., and politics, which deals with types of cities and regimes. As Ch. Genequand notes in his critical discussion of the work of D. Gutas, Gutas' argument disregards a number of philological points relating to the meaning Aristotle gives to the term *politeia* in *Nicomachean Ethics*, which goes beyond the simple legal-institutional framework in which D. Gutas seeks to confine it.⁶⁰

For al-Fārābī, Charles Genequand says, moral action is therefore not conceivable outside a political framework, which is expressed rather accurately by the adjective *madanī*. However, it can still be considered from two angles: moral in the sense of action determined by an internal motivation (*huluqī*), or political as conditioned by external rules (*siyāsī*).⁶¹

57 Aristotle, *On Politics*, III, 17.

58 John J. Mulhern, "Politeia in Greek literature, inscriptions, and in Aristotle's *Politics*: Reflections on translation and interpretation", in *Aristotle's Politics: A Critical Guide*, eds. T. Lockwood and T. Samaras (Cambridge, 2015), p. 84.

59 Mulhern, "Politeia in Greek literature", p. 100.

60 See Charles Genequand, "Loi morale, loi politique : al-Fārābī et Ibn Bāḡḡa", in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 61 (2008), pp. 501–502.

61 Genequand, "Loi morale, loi politique", p. 503.

Gutas' interpretation runs up against the fact that the best experts on Aristotle insist on the inseparability of ethics and politics in his works, and on the common goal that drives any research on happiness.⁶² M. Crubellier and P. Pellegrin criticize the approaches that separate ethics and politics in Aristotle, and insist on the "consanguinity" between the two spheres:

[...] Ethical treatises identify sovereign good as happiness. However, *Politics* also begins with observations on 'supreme good', stating that it can only be the good of the most accomplished community.⁶³

Al-Fārābī follows this path of the inseparability of ethics and politics in all his works on the perfect city. That path is clearly explained by Averroes at the beginning of *Commentary on Plato's Republic*: he points out that ethics and politics are the same science, the parts of which differ only in that the first generally describes the principles of good deeds, while the second relates to the means of fostering virtuous habits in individuals.

[...] This art (of Politics) is divided into two parts: in the first part acquired habits, volitional actions and behaviour in general are mentioned in a comprehensive exposition. Their mutual relationship is also explained, and which of these habits are due to which others. In the second part will be explained how these habits become entrenched in the soul, and which of them are co-ordinated so that the action resulting from the intended habit should be perfect to the highest degree; and which habits hinder one another. Generally, in this part are placed things which are capable of realization, if they are conditioned by general principles.⁶⁴

The description of two parts of political science in this passage means that it is possible to distinguish between them, not separate them. Averroes adheres to

62 See Richard Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), Malcolm Schofield, "Aristotle's Political Ethics", in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. R. Kraut (Malden, 2006), pp. 305–322, Emma Cohen de Lara, "Aristotle's *Politics*: Ethical Politics or Political Realism", in *Aristotle's Practical Philosophy. On the Relationship between his Ethics and Politics* (Dordrecht, 2017), pp. 13–33, Richard Bodéüs, *Politique et philosophie chez Aristote* (Namur, 1991), particularly ch. 1 "Les dimensions de l'excellence politique", P.-M. Morel, *Aristote* (Paris, 2003), and Pierre Pellegrin, *L'excellence menacée. Sur la philosophie politique d'Aristote* (Paris, 2017).

63 Michel Crubellier and Pierre Pellegrin, *Aristote. Le philosophe et les savoirs* (Paris, 2002), pp. 188 and 208.

64 Averroes' *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, p. 112.

Plato's idea that the good of the individual and the good of the city are one and the same thing. But unlike Plato, this idea rests less on the analogy between the human soul and the city than on an epistemological basis of Aristotelian thinking, leading him to compare politics to medicine to show that the bipartite division of political science into theory and practice also applies to the medical discipline. The science of ethics is therefore compared to that which, in medicine, studies health and disease, while political science relates to preserving health (*hiḥẓ al-ṣiḥḥa*) and avoiding disease (*izālat al-maraḍ*). Here, Averroes introduces a parallel between politics and medicine, inasmuch as they have a common epistemological ground, making it possible to read in both the principles and foundations vital to their practice. It demonstrates inseparability of ethics and politics, and adheres to the theory that self-governance is essential for the government of others. This is the view held by most Arab philosophers having addressed ethical-political issues, as illustrated by Miskawayh in this short passage:

It has been said that he who has attained perfect self-governance and correction of his morals, tamed the enemy of his soul lodged between his flanks, is in good condition to administer a house, and that he who is in a fit state to govern a household is also in a fit state to govern a city; and that he who is in a fit state to govern a city is also in a fit state to govern a kingdom.⁶⁵

The link between ethics and politics, which is at the heart of both Aristotle's and Plato's philosophies, is therefore accepted by Arab philosophers. What changes, however, is the geographical scale of the pursuit of the supreme good, which extends far beyond the city-state of the Greek philosophers. This is one of the most important aspects marking the distance taken by the Arab philosophers from the Greek masters. To explore this aspect, a study of human excellence will be the key to understanding the foundations of Arab political philosophy.

5 On Human Excellence and the Politeia

The question of human perfections (*al-kamālāt al-insāniyya*) is at the heart of the philosophical investigations conducted by Arab peripatetics. On the one

65 Miskawayh, *al-Fawz al-aṣḡar*, French translation by R. Arnaldez (Tunis, 1987), p. 56.

hand, they are in keeping with the spirit of ancient tradition; on the other, they unveil new interpretations. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, each type of virtue and excellence is divided into two main categories: ethics (with its main criterion, the middle ground between two extremes) and dianoetics (related to thought and the search for Truth).⁶⁶ Al-Fārābī is credited with exploring the core of Aristotelian thought. He replicated it without alteration in his first writings, while significantly transforming and enriching this philosophy by rendering it more consistent and relevant in his later works.⁶⁷ In the opening pages of the *Attainment of Happiness*, he outlines the existence of four virtues (*faḍā'il*):

The human things through which nations and citizens of cities attain earthly happiness in this life and supreme happiness in the life beyond are of four kinds: theoretical virtues, deliberative virtues, moral virtues, and practical arts.⁶⁸

The concepts of *kamāl* and *faḍīla*, which is the translation of “*aretē*”, have no moral or religious meaning for Arab philosophers (nor for Aristotle, incidentally). They are instead synonyms for excellence in function, the perfect realization of the full potential of something, and flawlessly performing a task. The concept of *kamāl* is fundamental because it first cultivates reflections on the kind of life most worthy of being lived (which is the purpose of ethics). It then calls for a search for the excellent city, one which fosters happiness and ensures that everyone can attain excellence as part of the city, according to their individual skills and aptitudes (a point which brings us to the realm of politics). Finally, the search for excellence that is truly human necessarily prompts us to reflect on the distinction between humans and other beings (reason), which leads us to psychology and metaphysics.

In a lengthy passage in the *Commentary on Plato's Republic*,⁶⁹ Averroes restates the typology of four types of excellence set out by al-Fārābī, and largely preserves their essence. Theoretical excellence relates to sciences such as astronomy and metaphysics, for example, which are not related to practical activities. Ethical excellence is what shapes a morally exemplary individual. Deliberative or cogitative excellence (*fikriyya*) relates to the field of practical

66 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book II 1, 1103a.

67 This is what he does in a treatise entitled *al-Tanbihih 'alā taḥṣil al-Sa'āda* (“Reminder of the Way to Happiness”) or in the *Selected Aphorisms*.

68 Al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, in *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. M. Mahdi (New York, 1962), p. 13.

69 *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, pp. 188–197.

disciplines and applies to those that require established knowledge; a scientific study addressing the fundamental concepts of science, its universals, and theoretically demonstrate the rules for performing the art. This is the case for politics or medicine, for example. Theoretical knowledge is indispensable in these fields in order to master the discipline, yet their practical purpose takes precedence and outweighs the theoretical function. Lastly, excellence in craftsmanship pertains to making an object and crafting something in the best possible way; this relates to production activities, in general.

The theory of excellence put forward by al-Fārābī, later taken up by Averroes and other philosophers such as Avempace and Maimonides,⁷⁰ is key to understanding the role of politics in their overall philosophical vision. The reorganization of Aristotle's ideas described above provokes reflection on the ensemble of human activities, organized in such a way as to point to one distinct, ultimate goal. This creates the necessary conditions for humankind to undertake that which sets it apart from other beings, namely that which allows individuals to fully express their humanity (*insāniyya*). However, this is confused with intellect, as noted by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* (X 7, 1178a 5–10), as intellect designates humankind's true function (*ergon*), and meets the definition of happiness as an activity in keeping with virtue, namely an individual's potential (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1, 6). Averroes analyzes this typology in the context of an Aristotelian discussion: what is more noble, a contemplative life or an active life? And what is the highest excellence? Activities for the city's common good and its political wellbeing, or intellectual activities relating to matters that the will (*irāda*) does not seek or cannot bring about? The answer to this question relates to the role of each excellence and gives rise to the establishment of an ontological ordering for each one, in order to ensure that the ultimate goal (theoretical knowledge, life according to what is intelligible) may be recognized as such, and the other types of excellences may act as propaedeutical to this goal. The criteria defining supreme excellence and the ultimate goal of humankind are threefold: plurality and unity, materiality and immateriality, and self-sufficiency or dependence of the excellence. According to these criteria, the supreme excellence must be unique, immaterial and sought for its own sake, not to serve the purpose of another excellence. Only theoretical science

70 For Avempace, see *Risālat al-wadā'* (*Letter of Farewell*), in *Rasā'il Ibn Bāḡḡa al-ilāhiyya* (*Opera metaphysica*), ed. M. Fakhry (Beirut, 1991) and *Épître de l'adieu*, in Ibn Bāḡḡa, *La conduite de l'isolé et deux autres épîtres*, introduction, critical edition of the Arabic text, translation and commentary by C. Genequand (Paris, 2011), pp. 89–120. The same typology from Avempace is used by Maimonides, with some minor differences. See Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. S. Pines (Chicago, 1974), vol. 2, 111 54, pp. 634–636.

satisfies these criteria and meets the requirements, resulting in its selection as humankind's ultimate goal.

The hierarchy of excellences and their arrangement towards a distinct goal is what maintains their plurality on the one hand (as it is not a question of cultivating one excellence at the expense of another) and demonstrates, on the other, that the ontological order unifying them under the banner of a supreme excellence cannot be upturned without giving rise to disastrous consequences for the possibility of attaining what embodies man's humanity. It is critical to our discussion that setting the order of each excellence, in addition to complying with noetic and ontological considerations, must be seen to bear a highly political meaning. In reality, it embodies the political order that the perfect city must produce and safeguard. According to al-Fārābī and Averroes, an excellent city is one in which the statesmen, administrators, strategists, secretaries, etc., recognize the superiority of theoretical sciences and purely scientific knowledge, and give primacy to nurturing this knowledge, despite it being remote from practice. Similarly, a city that deems moral excellence to be the ultimate goal in life is mistaken, and thus misleads the citizens who comprise it, since the excellent character is not solely a human attribute. Indeed, certain animals set the example through their courage (the lion) and generosity (the rooster). The same can be said for the excellence in craftsmanship observed in bees or ants. Since Aristotle's best constitution is based on the definition of a certain order (*taxis*), but applied to the distribution of powers among citizens, the two great political philosophers of Islam, al-Fārābī and Averroes, would determine this order from the hierarchy of human excellence, and the best constitution (the *aristē politeia*) would therefore be the one that manages to maintain it according to the hierarchy that facilitates the study of man's nature or his own function. The excellence of producers and artisans supplies the city with material goods; since statesmen, judges, strategists, etc., must be virtuous, ethical excellence is propaedeutical to deliberative excellence, and the moral education of the people is one of their political tasks. Finally, the excellent leadership of the city makes it possible to attain extreme happiness by adhering to sound thought on metaphysical matters (God, the manner with which He must be described and represented) and psychology (the fate of the soul in the afterlife, and divine fortune and misfortune).

If there is a reflection on the excellent government in al-Fārābī or Averroes, it should be explored not in the judicial order as D. Gutas states, but from the theory of human excellence, and the definition of political science as the art of making people happy in the earthly world and ensuring their divine fortune. The approach of Arab philosophers is certainly abstract, and sits at the intersection between noetics, metaphysics and politics. This approach

is justified, however, as D. Gutas quickly evokes,⁷¹ by the fact that a revealed law that is supposed to be perfect already exists for the organization of social affairs and dealing with legal-political matter. The notion of common advantage at the heart of Aristotelian thinking on the forms of constitution and the way the judiciary is ordained is addressed, within the civilization of classical Islam, through the discipline of law (*fiqh*). Various treatises address *maṣlaḥa*, the general interest, both from an epistemological standpoint relating to the origins and foundations of law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and from a teleological standpoint, relating to the study of the purpose or aim of the law (*maqāṣid al-ṣarīʿa*). This cultural context is responsible for the dearth of reflections by Islamic philosophers on the constitution as a legal form in which the concrete advantages that each constitution offers over other ways of organizing the distribution of powers within the City are addressed. This may suggest that philosophers, as compared to lawyers or religious scholars, lacked realism—however they were far from overlooking these issues, which they were involved in on a daily basis as judges, political advisers or physicians. The concrete aspects found in the administrative and legal literature were deliberately overlooked, however, as they were not, in their view, a matter of philosophical inquiry. Al-Fārābī affirms this in the following passage:

Political science that is a part of philosophy is limited—in what it investigates of the voluntary actions, ways of life, and dispositions, and in the rest of what it investigates—to universals and to giving their patterns. It also brings about cognizance of the patterns for determining particulars: how, by what, and by what extent they ought to be determined. It leaves them undetermined in actuality, because determining in actuality belongs to a faculty other than philosophy and perhaps because the circumstances and occurrences with respect to which determination takes place is infinite and without limitation.⁷²

For al-Fārābī and Averroes, as discussed below, philosophy does not, in addressing politics, determine concrete measures relating to the organization of the judiciary or the distribution of power within the State. In place of this work, which is at the heart of the Aristotelian undertaking in *Politics*, we see the emergence of a reflection on *politeia* as a perfect entanglement of human excellence, and the realization of the nature of man, i.e. of his ontological

71 Dimitri Gutas, "The Meaning of *madanī* in al-Fārābī's 'Political' Philosophy", p. 263.

72 Al-Fārābī, *The Book of Religion*, in *Alfarabi: The Political Writings*, trans. C. Butterworth (Ithaca, 2001), § 15, p. 106.

destination. This is particularly true of the relationship between theoretical excellence and deliberative excellence, and between deliberative excellence and ethical excellence: a City that ensures prosperity and material comfort for its citizens, a State that acquires power in the military, financial, scientific or other fields, by abandoning the moral purpose of action, could give rise to evils by becoming materialistic, despotic or imperialist, for example. The same interdependence between excellences exists in the practical arts: the epistemological nature of *technē* is called into question when the thing is not known (absence of theoretical investigation), when one does not have the competence to consider errors in its performance, or when one fails to understand the purpose for which it is performed. In such cases, art, such as that of war, is not exercised properly and according to criteria that can truly bring about good or prevent harm to the City and its citizens.

Thanks to the reading and commentary of Aristotle, the theory of human perfections, as we see it in al-Fārābī and Averroes, goes beyond what seems to be a contradiction in Aristotle's texts, highlighting the fact that it is simply a shift in perspective. This apparent contradiction can be seen in a comparison between Book VI of *Nicomachean Ethics*, which posits that prudence constitutes happiness, and that it is activity within the city that provides it, and Book X, which establishes, in Chapter 8, that prudence, the supreme virtue of the practical intellect, is linked to the passions and thus to the irrational nature of the soul. This opposition between the virtue of the rationally calculating part of the soul (*phronēsis*) and the excellence of its scientific part (*sophia*), is abandoned in *De Anima*, in which the terminology pits practical intellect against theoretical intellect. It is indeed the same intellect, however when it undertakes reasoning with a goal in mind, it is practical, whereas when the reasoning relates to objects unrelated to practice, it is theoretical (*De Anima*, III 10, 433a). The difficulty resides in the fact that the *Nicomachean Ethics* widens the gap between prudence and the other virtues in order to emphasize what distinguishes the excellence of the politician, whereas the other texts that adopt a noetic perspective draw them closer by subsuming these various cognitive aspects under the rational part of the soul.

In view of these diverse perspectives on the approach to the virtues man is capable of, Arab philosophers undertook to resolve the tensions underlying the different parts of the Aristotelian corpus. For them, the happiest life is not political life, but rather life according to intellect. This is what brings us closer to the shores of the divine and promises us a kind of separation. Fulfilment therefore corresponds to supreme bliss, and it is continuous thought that achieves the purpose for which man exists. The Arab Aristotelian philosophers therefore settle this debate by taking noetics, i.e. the study of man's cognitive

faculties and the rational soul, as the basis for determining his ultimate purpose. Although it is grounded in Aristotle's doctrine and constitutes one of the most successful attempts to shed light on its depth and richness, the interpretative work carried out by al-Fārābī and Averroes will lead us away from the perspectives initially adopted by the Stagirite. While theoretical excellence must be recognized with the greatest dignity, in the spirit of Aristotle, it does not necessarily follow that those endowed with it must be the rulers of the city. The influence of the image of the Platonic king-philosopher on al-Fārābī or Averroes, however, prompts them to emphasize the role that a man of exceptional qualities can play in the founding or preservation of the perfect regime. Here, Aristotle makes way for Plato, whose texts had a considerable influence on the representation of the abilities and status of the political leader.

6 Downgrading *Phronēsis*, Highlighting Practical Intellect: Still Aristotle?

These developments demonstrate how the tensions that enliven Aristotle's political philosophy have been resolved by Arabic Peripatetics thanks to the articulation of noetic, metaphysical and ethical-political levels. Although this work takes its inspiration from commentaries on Aristotle's texts, its results lead to territories where Aristotle's doctrine is no longer fully recognizable. However, these results nevertheless maintain a common thread that connects them to the other texts that are subject to commentary. To measure meaning and impact in the field of political philosophy, three points resulting from the reformulation of the theory of human perfections by Arab philosophers must be addressed.

The first point relates to the status of practical intellect, in which prudence is, according to Aristotle, the highest virtue as it plays a role in the determination of practical syllogism and in making good decisions in the realm of human matters. Based on work by al-Fārābī and the reformulation of human excellence in accordance with a new structure, practical intellect was afforded a higher theoretical function than that accorded by Aristotle. This framework is clearly laid out by al-Fārābī in *Attainment of Happiness*, where deliberative virtue (*al-faḍīla fikriyya*) is responsible for the existence of intelligibles that are said to be 'voluntary', meaning they largely concern political association and the organization of human societies. The approach adopted by al-Fārābī here is purely noetic, as it outlines the intelligibles and is interested in how they are taught and occur in reality. The actions of the deliberative faculty are closely tied to those of the theoretical faculty because the difference ultimately lies

only in the fact that they render intelligible aspects related to practical life, such as material goods, wealth, war. Civil laws are equally legitimate examples of these intelligibles as the reason for which they occur in existence, by considering the contingent conditions that are inherent in their creation, depending on the time, location and various contexts.⁷³ Unlike the deliberative virtue of the soul, theoretical virtue is applied when considering intelligibles that are not subject to change. The noetic perspective preferred here by al-Fārābī thus shows that the intellective faculty is one, and that only the nature of the intelligible requires the addition of another faculty (*quwwa*) in order to make something happen by taking into consideration different accidents that can affect it. Paradoxically, while an analysis of deliberation and practical syllogism is the core of this passage, al-Fārābī does not at any point mention prudence *ta'āqqul* (prudence or practical wisdom in Arabic philosophy). We will come back to this point. For the time being, it should be noted that deliberative excellence is thus connected to *nous* and closely linked to general examinations of intelligibles. Conversely, the figure of the philosopher who takes advantage of leisure available in a well-governed city in order to cultivate science is criticized by al-Fārābī, who believed that an accomplished philosopher must convey to others his theoretical knowledge, otherwise he would be imperfect. Hence the abolition of barriers between active life and contemplative life:

When the theoretical sciences are isolated and their possessor does not have the faculty of exploiting them for the benefit of others, they are defective philosophy. To be a truly perfect philosopher one has to possess both the theoretical sciences and the faculty for exploiting them for the benefit of all others according to their capacity. Were one to consider the case of the true philosopher, he would find no difference between him and the supreme ruler. For he who possesses the faculty for exploiting what is comprised by the theoretical matters for the benefit of all others possesses the faculty for making such matters intelligible as well as for bringing into actual existence those of them that depend on the will. The greater his power to do the latter, the more perfect is his philosophy.⁷⁴

By establishing that teaching theoretical sciences is essential to attaining ultimate happiness, and that deliberative excellence should be considered as a propaedeutic that prepares one for more elevated excellence, the Fārābian

73 Al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, in *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 26.

74 Al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, p. 43.

city obscures the dividing lines that Aristotle wanted to draw between, on one hand, the prudent and the legislator and, on the other hand, the philosopher who is not interested in the city, does not understand what is useful for himself and others and lives like an immortal god. However, some passages from *Nicomachean Ethics* are testament to the desire to reconcile these two aspects,⁷⁵ although for al-Fārābī, this merging of human excellence with civic excellence is more extreme to the extent that philosopher, leader, legislator and king are synonymous terms.⁷⁶ Furthermore, what is shown in several parts of his work is the interchangeability of nomenclature between political science (*al-ʿilm al-madanī*) and human science (*al-ʿilm al-insānī*).⁷⁷ The resolution of the tension between the political happiness of the citizen (the good man, Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*) and human happiness (whose purpose is contemplation, Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*) is thus the first and primary effect of the theory of human perfections founded by Arab philosophers.

The secondary effect of restructuring Aristotelian elements around a purely noetic axis relates to the question of happiness, which is no longer solely political, but, above all, intellectual and metaphysical. It can even be described in its theological aspects because it is turned towards the idea of God, the source of absolute perfection, and because it is then linked to all of the dogmas and theoretical knowledge taught in the perfect society with regard to divine attributes, the hierarchy of intellects, prophecy, the status of well-guided leaders and all that constitutes opinions and right actions leading to the salvation of souls. However, as has been highlighted above, the same distinction between deliberative excellence and theoretical excellence is paradoxically dedicated to strong subordination of the political to the metaphysical, and prohibits the autonomy of the latter with regard to the former. According to this analysis, it is therefore impossible to succeed in making political art fully independent from the objectives of salvation in the afterlife. However, this analysis is not based on religious considerations, but is the result of al-Fārābī's noetic, which has been extended variously by Miskawayh, Avicenna and Averroes by turning the salvation of the soul into a real philosophical problem.

Although it is possible to express this noetic-eschatological plan in line with al-Fārābī's political philosophy, it can be seen that the difference between ignorant cities and the perfect city lies, definitively, in the fact that the latter promises its citizens the celestial purpose described above. Other cities,

75 See Michel Crubellier and Pierre Pellegrin, *Aristote. Le philosophe et les savoirs*, pp. 211–213.

76 Al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, p. 46.

77 Al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, pp. 23–24.

whether timocratic, oligarchic, tyrannical, democratic, wicked or other, are not concerned with the future of its citizen's souls and do not put in place a policy to look after them. The description of the destiny awaiting the souls of individuals belonging to ignorant cities, dedicated to destruction or misfortune because they are chained to material things, confirms this intellectual notion of happiness by al-Fārābī and shows how politics and metaphysics have been conceptually linked, just like other pairs, such as power and action, or matter and form. This illustration of the eschatological nature of true happiness indirectly shows that the foundation of civic happiness suffers from an original flaw that prevents it from being established as a fully immanent and autonomous end. It also demonstrates how, by moving away from praising philosophy as the reigning discipline of knowledge, through which study provides a systematic understanding of being and thus of happiness, it can result in another definition of philosophy as assimilation to God and sharing truly divine attributes, through the clarification of the eschatological nature of happiness.

Despite these aspects that draw us considerably further from Aristotle's political thinking, it is not necessary to interpret subordinating politics to metaphysics from a religious perspective. We must not lose sight of the fact that this representation of the purpose of civil association by al-Fārābī has simultaneously led to the ultimate purpose of man becoming more secular as the fact of converting it into active intellect and cultivating the understanding of intelligibles is an action that starts here on earth. However, it is the expectation for this end that is described as the equivalent of future life and the sheer happiness of the soul after death. In addition, in the movement that relegates honor and utility to pseudo-happiness, as they do not achieve the ultimate purpose of man, al-Fārābī provides a strong theory that would find its way into Latin Averroism and be condemned in the context of Christianity by Etienne Tempier in 1277 because it rightly establishes a strong secular nature to the ultimate purpose of man. This theory states: "There is no position more excellent than attending to philosophy".⁷⁸

The third, and no less important effect of the theory of human excellence lies in the distinction between *phronēsis* and practical intellect. *Phronēsis*, which is rendered in Arabic as *'ta'qqul*, is described as a capacity for inference and deliberative excellence, which can relate to the direction of cities or achieving human welfare, just as it can concern legislation within cities, as quickly indicated in the *Book of Letters*, by incorporating *phronimos* with the work

⁷⁸ See Alain de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1991), p. 147.

of the jurist (*faqīh*).⁷⁹ Despite the diversity of forms related to *phronēsis*, the scope of this virtue is much more restrained in the sense that it is tantamount to a type of intelligence that cannot exhaust the overall sense of practical reason, which is responsible for determining the universal and specific principles of political science. *Phronēsis* is thus limited to the long experience acquired within the company of man and the resolution of particular matters.⁸⁰ By presenting *phronēsis* as the pinnacle of practical truth and the *phronimos* himself as a living example that embodies prudence and being exempt from having knowledge about it, Aristotle insisted on the autonomy of this virtue from the *nous* and emphasized its orientation towards the contingent and the particular.⁸¹ Arab philosophers went beyond this point, with a difference in scope that consists of entrusting practical intellect with the responsibility for designing, in and by thought, the universal principles of practical arts.⁸² Unlike Aristotle, the notion of '*ta'āqqul*' (which in the Arab philosophical context should be rendered as 'prudence' rather than 'practical wisdom') does not encompass the entire field of practical philosophy and although it is part of the fundamental qualities for a leader of the perfect city,⁸³ it leads to a form of cleverness, a description of which also existed in Aristotle's work.⁸⁴ Al-Fārābī also innovated by comparing *phronēsis* with notions such as cunning and wisdom, while he contrasted practical intellect and theoretical intellect, which, in his opinion, is dedicated exclusively to speculation on the First Being and on the nature of true happiness.

It is this limitation in the scope of prudence that led al-Fārābī to compare this capacity with extreme cunning (*al-dahā'*) and other forms of inference. This shows that this capacity to properly deliberate focuses less on the means than on the purpose as such and that the variation of the latter makes it possible to specify the type of deliberation being addressed. In addition, the cunning person, like the prudent (*muta'āqqil*, *phronimos*) has an excellent disposition, allowing him to deliberate and to choose well. However, the difference lies in the purposes that, for the prudent, are arranged in line with

79 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, § 112, p. 133.

80 Al-Fārābī, *The Book of Religion*, § 18, p. 107.

81 See Pierre Aubenque, *La prudence chez Aristote* (Paris, 1962), in which he brilliantly demonstrated this aspect of Aristotelian political philosophy.

82 See on this point the illuminating analyses by Deborah L. Black, "Practical Wisdom in Arabic Philosophy", in *Les philosophies morales et politiques au Moyen-Âge*, ed. C. Bāzan (New York/Ottawa/Toronto, 1995), pp. 451–464.

83 Al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, §58, p. 37. See also, Al-Fārābī, *The Book of Religion*, § 14d, pp. 105–106.

84 Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. D. Ross (Oxford, 2009), vi. 12, 1144a 25, pp. 115–116.

civil good, which should necessarily be considered as propaedeutic towards the good in the afterlife, while for the deceitful, there are other virtues (wealth, pleasure, power, honors).⁸⁵ It is thus shown that, epistemologically, *phronēsis* is on an equal footing with cunning, as both are perceived as instruments leading to a virtuous or evil end.

Far from being at the core of political philosophy for Arab followers of Aristotle and playing the role that Aristotle gave them in his work, analysis on *phronēsis* have been mobilized to assess the action of two men who were the origin of a historic period in the story of the beginning of Islam, namely the conflict between 'Alī, the fourth Caliph, and Mu'āwiya, the winner of the civil war that pitted him against his adversary, and the founder of the Umayyad Caliphate in 661. This historical example is mentioned by al-Fārābī in the *Epistle on Intellect* and Avempace in the *Governance of the Solitary*. It can lead back to the question of moral purpose in practical intellect and the option of whether to admire a man whose capacity to infer and deliberate is not directed at the common good, but rather his calculated personal interest. For Aristotle, the distinction between *phronēsis* and cleverness is in the moral purpose of the action, but, at the same time, shows that *phronēsis* is not without the mastery of a certain intelligence that is noble when its goal is good and villainy when it is bad (VI. 12, 1144a). This reading axis was adopted by al-Fārābī and Avempace in order to correct the common opinion regarding the appreciation of this historical episode of the *Fitna*. For al-Fārābī and Avempace, the common representation of practical intellect tended to confuse the *phronimos*, as described by Aristotle, meaning the politician whose practical intellectual capabilities are focused on the good of the city, and the cunning man or the crafty politician who places his personal interest above that of the group. The two philosophers show that it is necessary to go beyond this common opinion which confuses many things about the true nature of *phronēsis*. It is commonly held, with the exception of Shiites, that Mu'āwiya is the model for crafty intellect and diplomatic finesse in Arabic political thinking, especially among historians and mirrors for princes' authors, and this is reason for which he is described as '*muta'āqqil/phronimos*'. Thus, the two philosophers show that there is a need to look beyond this commonly held belief, which conflates many aspects of the true nature of prudence. Furthermore, the mass has a proven fascination with this extreme intelligence, which can be separated from any moral assessment of the purposes of political action, and it is for this reason that prudence is also aligned by some authors of political treatises with

85 Al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, § 39, pp. 31–32.

extreme cunning (*dahā'*) and power, of which Mu'āwiya is the embodiment in the history of Islam, with the exception of Shiites. However, for al-Fārābī and Avempace, the real man endowed with practical intelligence is one who takes into account the purpose of his action and the ethical elements involved therein. Thus, contrary to popular opinion, they show that it is 'Alī who conformed to the model of *phronēsis*, even though he was defeated by his enemy. It is therefore this, primarily historic, interpretation that fuels discussion on *phronēsis* in Arab philosophical tradition.

7 From the City-State to the City-World: Signs of Universalization in Aristotle's Political Thinking

One of the most prominent aspects of the theory of human perfections, as we have seen above, consisted of illustrating the need for command in philosophy and legitimizing its objective of organizing all of human knowledge. Theologians, jurists, holders of religious knowledge (hadith, Koranic exegesis, etc.), secretaries, politicians, strategists are all placed under the umbrella of the only intellect that knows the ultimate happiness of man, as well as the means of making people happy. This assumption is the foundation of many discussions on al-Fārābī, which all strike a controversial note, for the recognition of philosophy, rather than religion or other human knowledge, as the queen of sciences and the ultimate origin of knowledge, from both chronological and ontological perspectives.

On the basis that philosophy reached maturity thanks to Aristotle, who perfected reasoning methods in *Organon*, and established the path to achieving human excellence, al-Fārābī then arrived to assess the knowledge available in Islamic era, in particular religious knowledge, such as theology (*kalām*) and law (*fiqh*), as disciplines inferior to philosophy.

It is clear, al-Fārābī says, that the arts of dialectical theology and jurisprudence are subsequent to religious law, which in turn is subsequent to philosophy, that the dialectical and sophist faculty predated philosophy and that dialectical philosophy and sophist philosophy preceded demonstrative philosophy. Overall, philosophy came before religious law, in the same way that over time, those who use tools come before the tools.⁸⁶

86 Al Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, p. 132.

Al-Fārābī was persuaded that philosophy pre-dates the divinely revealed religions. To phrase it another way, he was certain that the chronological precedence of philosophy over revelation thus confirmed that which is originally innate in humans and belongs to their ontological condition, namely natural reason. This chronological precedence is coupled with epistemological pre-eminence that originates from the fact that only philosophy has developed reasoning that leads to certainty and not persuasion, as is the case in religious discourse.⁸⁷ The latter aims to achieve agreement from the most people possible and does not hesitate to resort to poetic and rhetorical arguments. However, in social and political terms, it is religion that is given merit to educate human beings, once its principles, teachings, sections (theoretical and practical) and its purposes (leading to happiness both on earth and in the afterlife) are tied with those of philosophy.

In the *Book of Religion*, the same assimilation and subordination of religious knowledge and philosophy is reviewed and extended to other aspects, such as examining the respective role of the prophet who founded a virtuous religious community, and that of the philosopher king who founded the perfect city. These observations demonstrate that philosophy is the only carrier of wisdom permitted to be the origin of norms. Whence discussions on the need to afford philosophers exclusive status at the top of the elite, even if several other groups, such as bearers of religious knowledge and politicians, also vie for the status of the elite within the elite.⁸⁸ Many issues related to teaching religion, its relationship with philosophy, the difference, within logical arts, between demonstrative and non-demonstrative arguments and, lastly, the use of images and symbols to teach some metaphysical truths to the wider population, originated from the establishment of philosophy and assigning philosophy a political role in guiding the community.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, it is intellect that

87 For an exhaustive approach to these points, see Emma Gannagé, “Y a-t-il une pensée politique dans *Kitāb al-ḥurūf* d'al-Fārābī ?”, in *Mélanges de l'Université saint-Joseph* 57 (2004), pp. 229–257.

88 See al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, § 113, pp. 133–134.

89 With regard to the influence of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* on the political ideas of Arab philosophers, see in particular Uwe Vagelpohl, *Aristotle's Rhetoric in the East* (Leiden/Boston, 2008), John W. Watt, “Aristotle's Rhetoric and Political Thought in the Christiana Orient and in al-Fārābī, Avicenna and Averroes”, in *Well Begun is Only Half Done*, ed. V. Syros, pp. 17–47, and Frédérique Woerther, “La Rhétorique d'Aristote comme moyen de diffusion des idées politiques aristotéliennes dans la philosophie politique arabe: Les *Didascalia Rhetoricam ex glosa Alpharabii*”, in *Well Begun is Only Half Done*, ed. V. Syros, pp. 49–71, Charles E. Butterworth, “The Rhetorician and His Relationship to Community: Three Accounts of Aristotle's Rhetoric”, in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, ed. M.E. Marmura, pp. 111–136 (Albany,

should govern the city, but it can also take charge of a nation or several nations, or even claim to govern human beings in a universal state.

It should be noted that in these developments as brought about by Arab philosophers from *Organon*, the rhetoric to which Aristotle already assigned an important function within the city⁹⁰ was further politicized due to the fact that it was integral to teaching the general population (*al-ġumhūr*) and for taking responsibility for conveying theological opinions and moral values taken from religion as truths, expressing the same message as in philosophy using demonstrative methods that were adapted from the teaching of philosophical elites.⁹¹ The major consequence for our assertion is that the validity of teachings expressed by a religion, both in terms of dogma and moral practice, is measured in al-Fārābī and Averroes by the universality of the religion and its ability to play the same role for the masses as philosophy plays for the academic elite. That is why al-Fārābī believes that virtuous government may involve several religious communities, and Averroes only defends the superiority of Islam compared to other monotheistic religions because it conveys a more universalist message.⁹² This way of tackling the relationship between religion and philosophy shows how the former can only be virtuous or lead Man to happiness when it is based on the universal teachings of the second.

As the fundamental issue is the transmission of excellence such as defined by a philosophy which lies at the origin of human knowledge and which

1984), Charles E. Butterworth, "Averroes' Platonization of Aristotle's Art of Rhetoric", in *La Rhétorique d'Aristote: traditions et commentaires de l'Antiquité au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. G. Dahan and I. Rosier-Catach, pp. 227–240 (Paris, 1998), Charles E. Butterworth, "Rhetoric and Islamic Political Philosophy", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3, no. 2 (1972), pp. 187–98, Lameer, Joep, "The Organon of Aristotle in the Medieval Oriental and Occidental Traditions", in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 1 (1996), pp. 90–98, Maroun Aouad, "Le texte arabe du chapitre sur la rhétorique d'Ibn Ridwan et ses correspondant dans la *Didascalía Rhetoricam Aristotelis ex glosa Alfarabi*", in G. Dahan and I. Rosier-Catach, *La Rhétorique d'Aristote*, pp. 169–225.

90 Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 1, 2, 1356a 25, trans. G.A. Kennedy (Oxford, 2007), p. 39. "rhetoric is like some offshoot [paraphues] of dialectic and ethical studies (which is rightly called politics)".

91 In al-Fārābī and Averroes, there is a true philosophy of religion which is the principal effect of the study of the logical arts, and which has been stimulated by the conflict between philosophers and theologians in Islamic lands. In view of the limits of this work, and the fact that this philosophy is not Aristotelean in origin, this point, which is very important in studying the relationship between religion, philosophy and politics, will not be tackled here.

92 Averroes, *Kitāb al-Kašf 'an manāhiġ al-adilla wa 'aqā'id al-milla*, ed. Mohamed-Abid Al Jabri (Beirut, 1998), p. 184.

reached perfection with Aristotle, and seeing that this teaching that would lead peoples and nations to happiness must be conveyed by religion to reach the largest number of people, there must be universal grounds which can transcend differences between people in terms of dogmas and religious opinions. The only condition for the success of this contention is that religions should be linked with good philosophy and not with its altered or primitive forms such as sophistry or pre-Socratic philosophy. Positive religious laws must themselves be subject to the natural law which emanates from the first universally shared intelligibles and which bear witness to the existence of a certain ethical universalism that goes beyond distinctive religious, ethnic or linguistic identities.⁹³

This opening to the universal where political science guided by philosophy and assisted by religion no longer recognizes the territorial boundaries of the Greek city is the last point that must be developed in this work. As the thinking of Arab philosophers centers around an issue of government focused on happiness and the attainment of excellences, it is very far removed from speculation on the State, the study of anthropological mechanisms relating to its genesis, or power relationships that make it possible to think of power *in concreto*. This is important to note because it shows the sense in which they understood Man as a political being. And as this is an issue focused on government and not on power, we must ask ourselves why they were led to think of this tie-in between political philosophy and the idea of universal government, rather than between political philosophy and the City-state, as is the case with Aristotle. Would a pseudo-Aristotle, he of the *Letters to Alexander*, have played a determining role in this scaling up from the territorial dimensions of the city to that of nations, or even of the federation of several nations?

From the beginning of Islam – to be specific, under the government of the Umayyads – and long before the beginning of the great movement of systematic translation of the texts of Aristotle in the ninth century, a collection of letters entitled the *Letters from Aristotle to Alexander* was translated to meet the political needs of the new Arab Empire and assimilate certain major teachings of the art of governing as practiced by the Ancients. This text paints a picture of an Aristotle by his pupil's side, acting as an adviser or minister, dictating to him the best policy for the administration of the lands conquered in Persia and India, bestowing upon him his precious advice and supporting him from

93 See on this point Thérèse-Anne Druart, "Al-Fārābī, Ethics and First Intelligibles", in *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione filosofica medievale* 8 (1997), pp. 403–423. For an overview of the theological and legal schools of thought of Islam, see Anver M. Emon, *Islamic Natural Law Theories* (Oxford, 2010). See also, Al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State (Mabādī' arā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila)*, IV, 13, § 3, pp. 202–205.

a distance in constructing the universal State of Alexander the Great.⁹⁴ This text, which has greatly influenced historians, men of letters and politicians, differs from the famous *Secret of secrets* in that it does not contain any exposés of the occult sciences, and it also diverges in relation to its western equivalent which is the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes because it focuses on the political dimensions of governance of the Empire, and leaves aside the legends that developed from the biography of the conqueror. It is for both these reasons that it was adopted as one of the main sources of political literature in Islam, and that it was a determining factor in creating the genre of mirrors for the princes (*al-ādāb al-sultāniyya*).⁹⁵

Aristotle presents himself in the *Letters* as a fervent partisan of a virtuous *pambasileia*, the defender of a universal and ecumenical State, uniting humankind under the authority of a just and benevolent king, which conflicts with his true political ideas centered on the city, and in general opposed to the idea of the royalty of a single person because it denies the concept of a *politeia* formed by citizens who are equal and who take turns to be governors and governed.⁹⁶ Here we find ourselves far from the negative views of barbarians in general, and Persians and Asians in particular (for example in *Politics*, I, 2, 1252b 8–10 and I, 6, 1255a 29–40 where Aristotle claims that barbarians

94 See about the figure of Alexander the Great in the East, and his links with Aristotle: Mario Grignaschi, "La "Siyāsatu-l-ʿamiyya" et l'influence iranienne sur la pensée politique islamique", in *Acta Iranica. Hommages et opera minora, Volume III, Monumentum H. S. Nyberg* (Leiden, 1975); "Les "Rasāil 'Aristāṭālisa 'ilā-l-Iskandar" de Sālim Abū-l-'Alā et l'activité culturelle à l'époque omayyade", in *Bulletin d'études orientales* 19 (1965), pp. 7–83; "Le roman épistolaire classique conservé dans la version arabe de Sālim Abū-l-'Alā", in *Muséon* 80 (1967), pp. 211–64; Faustina Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus* (Paris/Leuven/Walpole, 2010).

95 As far as this corpus, which is largely apocrypha, is concerned, although it has played a fundamental role in the Arab tradition of the mirrors for princes, as well as in the literature of maxims and aphorisms, see the complete text in Miklós Maróth, *The Correspondance Between Aristotle and Alexander the Great*.

96 These are controversial points because some passages of *Politics*, from pieces of the *Letters to Alexander* that may be considered authentic, as well as the biography of the two men, leave open the question of the evolution of Aristotle's political thought, and multiply the interpretations which could reconcile the various different sources. See, in connection with this, the discussions relating to the authenticity of one of the pieces of this corpus, Józef Bielawski and Marian Plezia, *Lettre d'Aristote à Alexandre sur la politique envers les cités* (Wrocław/Warszawa/Krakow, 1970), Pierre Thillet, "Aristote conseiller politique d'Alexandre vainqueur des Perses?", in *Revue des Études Grecques* 85/406–408 (1972), pp. 527–542, Pierre Carlier, "Étude sur la prétendue lettre d'Aristote à Alexandre transmise par plusieurs manuscrits arabes", in *Autour de la Politique d'Aristote, Ktéma* 5 (1980), pp. 277–288. On the specific question of universal government, see Samuel M. Stern, *Aristotle on the World-State* (Oxford, 1968).

are slaves by nature).⁹⁷ Of course, the Arab philosophers who studied the true doctrine of Aristotle took no interest in this corpus, no doubt because they thought it apocryphal, with the exception of Miskawayh and the pseudo-al-Āmirī who quote from it frequently in the *Eternal Wisdom* and in the *Happiness and how to Attain it*. Some philosopher-physicians, fascinated by the array of maxims and aphorisms such as Ibn Hindū or Ibn Fātik, and men of letters such as Qudāma ibn Ġaʿfar also frequented it, not to mention the authors of the mirrors for princes for whom certain passages of the *Letters* are heights of achievement condensing political wisdom expressed with great literary elegance. Although this text may have influenced the men of letters, historians and political thinkers of Islam, it clearly did not have a significant impact on the peripatetic philosophers. So where did this idea of universal government that underlies their political ideas come from?

In response, it is possible to maintain that dynastic government bringing together several nations (*umam*, pl of *umma*) was already at the heart of the political model established by Islam from the Umayyads and especially with the Abbasids. Considering the perfect government on a broader scale to that of the territorial limits of the city may therefore be interpreted as an effect of the culture of Islam and of the institutional model of the universal caliphate. The *Letters from Aristotle to Alexander* would in that case constitute only a further intellectual caution to support institutional practices already rooted in the societies of the Muslim world.

But there is also another interpretation, which is no less interesting as it is purely philosophical (and not cultural or historic), and which comes from global appreciation by these philosophers of the Aristotelian project. Al-Fārābī, for example, despite the presence in its philosophy of certain Neoplatonic elements (especially in cosmology) is directly influenced by Aristotle in his political thinking. Indeed, this is based on the biological studies carried out by Aristotle, especially in his defense of the key role of the heart in the human body at the center of the organism, and on certain analogies between the well-governed city and the body as managed by the heart. In one of the rare texts which defends Aristotle against other philosophers, in this case Timaeus, Plato and Galen, all three partisans of a position according to which there are multiple directions in the human body, belonging to the brain, the heart and the liver, al-Fārābī uses the model of political leadership where there is unity of

97 The question of Aristotle's true opinion on the barbarians remains debatable as in certain texts such as *The Nicomachean Ethics* (VIII, 1, 1055a 21–22), he puts forward ideas on the existence of friendship between men, independently of their ethnic or other origins, which leads to the severe judgments pronounced on non-Greeks being relativized.

command in order to illustrate the shortcomings of the Platonic model marked by the multiplicity of directions, and by the absence of a natural hierarchy between the three organs.⁹⁸ In *On the Perfect State*, the same analogy between the heart (the principal director at organic level) and the philosopher king (the principal director at political level) is taken up by al-Fārābī, but in the opposite direction, that is from the political to the biological. The head of the virtuous city, also called the 'ruling organ' (*al-ʿuḍw al-raʿīs*) is described as the man capable of leading the citizens to ultimate happiness. Now, what we must note in this connection, is that the analogy in Aristotle speaks of a city, whereas in al-Fārābī, the philosopher king is empowered to lead the world:

This is the sovereign over whom no other human being has any sovereignty whatsoever; he is the guide; he is the first sovereign of the excellent city, he is the sovereign of the excellent nation, and the sovereign of the universal state (the *oikumenē*).⁹⁹

We therefore see that the natural philosophy of Aristotle, in addition to the theoretical positions expressed regarding other aspects of philosophy, have indeed contributed to shaping the opinion according to which he was a proponent of the unity of mankind. This Aristotle is the one who forged the universal laws of reasoning and permitted the transformation of human reason into an authority capable of founding social and political norms, and engaging confidently in the search for truth. It is this Aristotle who is venerated by the Arab Peripatetics as the 'First master'. He himself, as Averroes claims, is an example of the attainment of perfection in mankind:

How strange is the fate of this man, exclaims Averroes concerning Aristotle, and how different is his nature from other human beings! You could say that divine providence has distinguished him in order to show us, we humans, the existence of ultimate perfection in mankind, embodied in such a sensitive and recognizable person. This is why the Ancients called him 'the divine'.¹⁰⁰

98 Al-Fārābī, *al-Radd ʿalā Ḡālīnūs (The Refutation of Galen)*, in Al-Fārābī, *Risāla fī Aʿdāʾ al-in-sān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī *Rasāʾil Falsafīyya li-al-Kindī wa-al-Fārābī wa-Ibn Bājjā wa-Ibn ʿAdī* (Beirut, 1980), pp. 83–87.

99 Al-Fārābī, *On the Perfect State (Mabādīʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīnat al-fāḍilah)*, v, 15, § 11, p. 247. The translation is slightly modified.

100 Ibn Rušd (Averroes), *Talḥīṣ al-qiyās*, ed. A. Badawī (Kuwait, 1988), p. 91.

It is by taking account of these elements that one can understand the critique addressed by Averroes to Plato in the *Commentary on the Republic* where he takes charge of the discussion on the question of the number of guards needed by the city to tackle the question of its size and that of the government of several virtuous cities. He calls upon Aristotle as the authority defending the universality of good and the accessibility of all men to virtue, by deeming this thesis to be true and in accordance with the universal mission of Islam, as opposed to the opinion of Plato which remains limited to the restricted territorial representation of the good city.¹⁰¹ It is in the name of this same principle that he critiques, in his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, the opinion of Islamic lawyers who adopted the principle of the holy war and refused peace between peoples. This critique shows he is a proponent of the need to mitigate the negative effects of the particular positive law (even if it is religious) via the universal natural law.¹⁰² This is the subject of a theorization based on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and more specifically, on the opposition between written and unwritten laws. The principal characteristics of the latter are generality and naturalness; they are in the image of axioms, that is, we find them in ourselves, without knowing "when these laws were instituted or by whom".¹⁰³ M. Aouad, in his commentary on this passage, rightly notes that Averroes has a particular interest in this pairing formed by written and unwritten laws and that he establishes the idea that the former (i.e. the positive laws) are merely the particularization of the latter. "Averroes, suggests M. Aouad, comes to believe that certain written laws may be an application of unwritten laws".¹⁰⁴ But natural unwritten laws (for example thanking a benefactor or filial piety) must also correct deviations from positive laws which may diverge from the spirit of justice and fairness, like the resistance of Antigone to the laws of Creon that were contrary to the dignity of his brother Polynices and respect for his body. The dual plan of the universality of the first intelligibles and of ethical principles therefore made Aristotle the defender of the unity of mankind, and the methodological tool making it possible to think of man coming together under one single political command.

101 *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, p. 153.

102 George F. Hourani, "Averroes on Good and Evil", in *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 268–269.

103 Averroès, *Commentaire moyen à la Rhétorique d'Aristote*, 1. 13. 2 p. 113 & 1. 15. 9, p. 125.

104 Averroès, *Commentaire moyen à la Rhétorique d'Aristote*, vol. 1, p. 121.

8 Conclusion

Our work has shown that the political influence of Aristotle exerted on Arab philosophers is equally due to his strictly political ideas (contained in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Rhetoric*) as to the frequentation of his system, the defense of his method founded on the *apodeixis*, or the radicalization of certain theses that were powerful yet had not yet been much evidenced in his corpus (the doctrine of the separation of the intellect, the choice of his noetic as the guiding light of any investigation into Man, including politics, the assimilation of the First Mover to the creator God, to the Artisan, to the First Cause or to the Necessary Being). But, ultimately, was this political thinking by the Arab philosophers Aristotelian or not? The response to this question requires taking account of the particular nature of the corpus of each philosopher, something we have tried to emphasize throughout the various different developments. It also involves a critique of the labels that are both massive and reductive, of 'Neoplatonist', 'Platonist' and 'Aristotelian'. One could say that al-Fārābī was a political thinker influenced by Neoplatonism because the theory of emanation is present in his cosmology and it affects his political thought. But how can we explain, in that case, the absence of the theory of the scale of sciences, fundamental in these movements, and which implies a gradation in the mastery of virtues and a to-ing and fro-ing between the practical sciences and the theoretical sciences, a mastery of mathematics before descending towards ethics and ascending towards the world of the intelligibles once the soul is purified and brought nearer to the divine?¹⁰⁵

Turning to the Aristotelian corpus as such, one may postulate that its influence was limited by the absence of reflection on the regimes and the *politeia* as Aristotle theorized it, But one may also go beyond the observation of a particular fact (the absence of the *Politics*) to realize that other biological texts (on the central role of the heart in the animal body) or disciplines *a priori* without any link to practical philosophy (logic) have had determining consequences on the representation of the perfect city, the characteristics of its leader, or how to educate its citizens. Even further, one may maintain that mastering the major lines of the Aristotelian project as a whole has led Averroes, al-Fārābī and Avempace to resolve, each in their own way, the tensions in the practical philosophy of Aristotle between the happiness of Man and the happiness of the citizen. For us, this point is the cornerstone of the political thinking of the Arab philosophers who believe, each according to their own viewpoint, that

105 Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, pp. 53–68.

happiness lies in scientific knowledge, and the connection of Man with the source of the intelligibles which is the active Intellect. Political science which is “the philosophy of human things” in Aristotle has become simply “the philosophy of Man” in al-Fārābī.¹⁰⁶ The choice of these philosophers consisted in considering Aristotelian psychology as the ultimate guide for determining the supreme end of Man. But the consequence of this choice was that the autonomy of political science has been overtaken because the accomplishment of its potential which at the same time reveals a unification of the diversity and multiplicity that characterizes the Being cannot ignore the spiritual ends of Man.¹⁰⁷ Thanks to these readings which energize Aristotle’s texts and enrich them with fresh lines of interpretation emanating from the use of the Arabic language as the vehicle for expressing their thinking, the religious and civilizational context of Islam, or simply the genius of each author, the political Aristotle has on the one hand been deepened and on the other transfigured. This is particularly seen in the philosophy of religion developed by Miskawayh, Avicenna, al-Fārābī and Averroes. In one sense, one may claim that it is taken from Aristotle’s philosophy as it is inseparable from his views on written law and unwritten law, and the distinction between positive justice and equity. But what is also certain is that with this philosophy of religion which turns toward the question of the secularization of human happiness, that evaluates the status of philosophy in the city, and the conflicts between the philosophical doctrines and the revealed texts (concerning the creation or the eternity of the universe, and the fate of the human soul after death or the status of prophecy itself) we are already very far from the texts of Aristotle, and rather in an *epistēmē* that recalls the preoccupations of the modern Enlightenment.

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106 See for Aristotle, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 10, 1181b 15, and for al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, p. 23.

107 See on this aspect the relevant remarks of Pierre-Marie Morel in the conclusion to his work *Aristote*, pp. 250–252.

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The Arabic Mirrors for Princes as Witnesses to the Evolution of Political Thought

Makram Abbès

Following the departure of Bonaparte's troops from Egypt, Muḥammad Alī (1769–1849), an ambitious officer, eager to modernize the country and introduce the necessary reforms, took power in 1805 and set about creating a new regional power, inspired by Europeans in the fields of economics, the army and education.¹ The sovereign of Egypt was not the only one in this situation. In the first half of the 19th century, many Turkish or Tunisian politicians, having become aware of their country's lack of development, believed that the science of government should be relearned, thanks to the considerable progress made by Europeans in this field. However, the case of Muḥammad Alī reveals the intensity of this desire. His will to master the art of governing led him to learn to read at the age of forty-seven. In addition to Arabic political works such as Ibn Khaldūn's (1332–1406) *Al-Muqaddima*, he sought to learn about the innovative ideas circulating in Europe, which might unlock the secrets that had given Napoleon's armies technical and strategic superiority in their battles against the Turks and Mamluks in Egypt and Syria. Muḥammad Alī also read Napoleon's biographies and was passionate about Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*. Intrigued by Machiavelli's fame, he asked his Armenian minister Artin to translate *The Prince* for him. Artin says that he gave him ten translated pages every day, but on the fourth day Muḥammad Alī stopped him and said:

I have read all that you have given me of Machiavelli. I did not find much that was new in your first ten pages, but I hoped that it might improve; but the next ten pages were not better, and the last are mere commonplaces. I see clearly that I have nothing to learn from Machiavelli. I know many more tricks than he knew. You need not translate any more of him.²

¹ The author uses in this chapter the transliteration system proposed in the journal *Arabica*.
² Nassau William Senior, *Conversations and Journals in Egypt and Malta* 2 (London, 1882), p. 177.

This anecdote is interesting in that it allows us to situate the work of Machiavelli in the general movement of the foundations of modern political thought, but from an external appreciation of this modernity, that of a prince from the Middle East. We know that Machiavelli's work created a shock wave in a European intellectual landscape that had been marked by the values of Renaissance humanism and steeped in religious morality. Herein lies the meaning of Muḥammad Ali's reaction. His remark that Machiavelli had taught him nothing is explained by the fact that the idea of an armed prince, who did not reject the use of tricks and ploys, had played a part in the literature produced in Islam on the art of governing for several centuries already. While in Europe this was a novelty that revolutionized political thought in the 16th century and beyond, it was a treatment that had been conventional, even well-worn, for a very long time in the *ādāb sultāniyya*, the Arabic equivalent of the mirrors of princes. But since these questions were known in the East, what was the science of government that this sovereign was seeking to acquire from the West? Without European knowledge, would Islam have been familiar with what L. Strauss called the first wave of modernity,³ and would it have strayed into impasses in relation to other dimensions of modernity? And why, when the Western conception of the Middle East was established in the 18th century, were Middle Easterners said to be unfamiliar with the science of government? Why was it thought that their politics was limited to despotic domination?⁴

These questions can be answered, at least in part, by addressing the Arabic texts of the mirrors for princes and examining their content to see if they focus solely on the themes of the "Reason of State", as suggested by the reflection of Muḥammad Ali, or if they address other important dimensions, which may no longer have been valid for modern times. Debated by specialists in these texts, these themes place us at the heart of their reception by contemporary scholarship, and of the way they have been interpreted and judged. This is what we will try to see by examining, in turn, the centers of novelty that these texts have been the repositories of from the point of view of political thought. Above all, we will see how, based on ancient materials, a secular genre marked by an immanent and universal vision of ethics was forged at the very beginning of Islam. This genre, which is represented by numerous treatises on the art of governing, has advanced reflection on the link between politics and religion, war and peace, as well as on the epistemological status of politics and its place in the global system of human knowledge.

3 Leo Strauss, "The Three Waves of Modernity", in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays* (Wayne State University Press, 1989), pp. 81–98.

4 Constantin-François de Chasseboeuf Volney, *Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie (1787)* (Paris, 1959), p. 71.

1 The Genesis and Evolution of Arabic Mirrors for Princes

A study of the founding texts of political thought in Islam allows us to see how open the first Muslims were to the knowledge of the ancients (Persian, Greek and Indian), and that they did not reject it in the name of religion or the existence of an exclusively “Islamic” model rooted in sacred texts. In addition to the practical knowledge of government that was of Greek or Persian origin, transmitted directly through the Arabization of the administration under the Umayyad caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (d. 705),⁵ the period from the end of the seventh to the beginning of the 8th century saw the emergence of a great interest in the translation of texts on the conduct of political affairs. Almost a century before the beginning of the great movement to translate Greek scientific and philosophical texts into Arabic, political literature of Greek, Indian and Persian origin was translated around the 8th century and was integrated into the heart of Islam, gradually forming the basis of future government treatises. Three major texts were translated in the very beginning of Islam: the *Letters of Aristotle to Alexander*, an apocryphal correspondence between Aristotle and Alexander the Great; *Kalila and Dimna*, fables of Indian origin by the philosopher Bidpai (or Pilpay) translated by Ibn al-Muqaffā (720–757), in the middle of the 8th century from a version in Pehlevi; and the *Testament of Ardashīr*, the Persian king of the 3rd century who bequeathed to his son Shapūr advice and maxims relating to the government of the Sassanid Empire.

The entire political literature stemming from this tradition, which lasted until the Ottomans, is indebted to these founding texts, which opened up a veritable reflection on kingship (*al-mulk*), power (*al-sulṭān*) and government (*siyāsa, tadbīr*).⁶ Firstly, the *Letters of Aristotle to Alexander*, the Pseudo-

5 See Al-Ġahšiyārī, *al-Wuzarā’ wa l-kuttāb* (Cairo, 1980), p. 40.

6 This article is devoted to the study of the mirrors for princes written in Arabic. About 200 texts were produced between the 8th and the 20th century. Generally speaking, during the rebirth of Persian culture in the tenth and eleventh centuries, writings on politics were inspired by the Arabic texts of the mirrors for princes written before this period; Turkish political writers were influenced by Persian literature before they came to translate some Arabic texts at the very beginning of the modern era. For the studies focusing specifically on Persian and Turkish texts, see Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Le sage et le prince en Iran médiéval. Les textes persans de morale et politique (Xe–XIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2009); Nequin Yavari, *Advice for the Sultan* (London, 2014); Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden, 2019), ch. 2 “Political Philosophy’ and the Moralistic Tradition”, pp. 63–98; and Linda T. Darling, “Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability”, in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. A. Classen (Berlin, 2013), pp. 223–242.

Aristotle, marked the beginning of the tradition of the mirror for princes, initially through its maxims and reflections on war and peace, and then through elucidating the link between knowledge, embodied by the figure of Aristotle, and power, represented by Alexander the Great, as well as the ethics of the prince and the construction of a perfect model of sovereignty. One of these *Letters*, “On the Government of the Cities”, was often included in manuscripts dealing with politics together with the famous *Secret of Secrets*, which enjoyed a long period of success in both East and the West during the Middle Ages. The second text that contributed greatly to the constitution of the government treatises is *Kalila and Dimna*. This book presents a vision of the ideal relationship between knowledge and power. As in the previous text, knowledge is embodied by the philosopher who must educate the prince and explain to him the duties of a good head of state. This text is a powerful reflection on the human passions that determine political anthropology, and a broad conceptualization of the theme of self-government as the foundation for governing others. These fables were widely circulated in the Arabic tradition and were also translated into Latin and other languages during the Middle Ages. The third text is the *Testament of Ardashīr*, the Persian king of the 3rd century whose action had been politically decisive: he had unified Persia, founding the Sassanid Empire. After Alexander’s conquests, the Persian Empire had become fragmented, and various kingdoms coexisted for centuries. Ardashīr put an end to this political fragmentation, unifying the kingdom under one authority, neutralizing dissent and centralizing leadership, in contrast to the previous system of rule by local princes and lords (known as “*Mulūk al-tawā’if*”, or the “*taifa* kings” in the Arabic historical tradition). In addition to the maxims on war, political division, or the relationship between governing rulers and the governed, the strongest element of the text concerns the question of religion. Ardashīr was the contemporary leader at the turning point of religious thought in Persia, which would later lead to the preaching of Mani, founder of Manichaeism from Zoroastrianism and borrowings from other religions, such as Christianity. The *Testament of Ardashīr* echoes this, particularly considering the place of religious doctrine in the empire, and the need for a sovereign power to contain the influence of clerics and those who speak in the name of religion. The major teaching of this text is that political power must not give way to religious leaders; sooner or later they will destroy it.

The three texts we have just described were present for centuries, to varying degrees, in literature of the art of governing. They led to the political epistles of Sālim Abū l-‘Alā’, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Yaḥyā al-Kātib (d. 750) and Ibn al-Muqaffā, the first that testify to the formation of political knowledge at the beginning of Islam. Paradoxically, despite the early date of this literature, it is

often approached only from an esthetic point of view, as a major focus of the birth of Arab prose (the *adab* literary genre) or, when addressed from the point of view of political thought, with an emphasis on its sources and provenance, rather than on the influence it would later have on the formation of the art of governing in Islam. This explains why the question of the Greek or Persian origins of work on the art of governing in Islam has so often been addressed by scholars. Zakeri's significant work on al-Rayḥānī (d. 834) has shown the extent of the borrowings by Arab prose writers from *Andarz* Persian literature,⁷ as well as the discussions relating to the origins of the *Letters* from Aristotle to Alexander the Great. Notably, the famous "On the Government of the Cities" has been the subject of an exciting debate among scholars about its authenticity and the possibility of its being a genuine work of Aristotle.⁸ This dimension, dealing with the reception of ancient texts, is undeniably fundamental, and many scholars are eager to show the links between late antiquity and the beginnings of Islam. However, in this article it is the influence that mirrors for princes exercised over future government treatises, and the exploration of the content of these texts from the perspective of political thought, that will be studied: the relationship between politics and religion, the identity of the genre of mirrors for princes, meditations on the art of self-government, and more.

Beginning in the 8th century, these texts fostered the reflections of later authors, and led to the maturation of this major political genre, rightly assimilated to the universal genre of mirrors for princes. In his bibliographical work *al-Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 990) mentions nearly twenty titles written between the 8th and the 10th centuries that deal explicitly with politics and the government of the state. The number of books dealing with statecraft and the education of statesmen would double or even triple if we take into account texts that address the history of kings and caliphs, treatises devoted to viziers (*wuzarā'*) and secretaries (*kuttāb*), or different versions of the same text, such as the translation of *Kalila and Dimna* by al-Ahwāzī, a transposition of the same text into poetry by Abān al-Lāhiqī, or the imitation that was made of it by Sahl ibn Hārūn in his book *Tha'la wa 'Afrā'*. In the period between the eighth

7 Mohsen Zakeri, *Persian wisdom in Arabic garb: 'Alī b. 'Ubayda al-Rayḥānī* (d. 219/834) and his *Jawāhir al-kilam wa-farā'id al-ḥikam*, vols. 1 and 2 (Leiden, 2007).

8 See József Bielawski and Marian Plezia, *Lettre d'Aristote à Alexandre sur la politique envers les cités* (Wrocław, 1970); Faustina Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus* (Paris, 2010); Mario Grignaschi, "Le roman épistolaire classique conservé dans la version arabe de Sâlim Abū-l-'Alā", in *Muséon* 80 (1967), pp. 211–264; Dimitri Gutas, "On Graeco-Arabic Epistolary 'Novels,'" in *Middle Eastern Literature* 12/1 (April 2009), pp. 59–70; Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian Netton, *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East* (Groningen, 2012).

and tenth centuries alone, the quantity of texts relating to the art of governing is impressive, and reflects the dissemination of the literary material found in *The Testament of Ardashīr* or *Kalila and Dimna* into many other books, such as Ibn Qutayba's (828–889) *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* or Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's (860–940) *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*.

This literature, most often produced by secretaries of the administration, is a pillar of the *adab*, the aim of which is to inculcate universal rules of good conduct in the individual, predisposing him to a successful life in society and giving him the means to instruct himself. While they are primarily addressed to princes in the form of advice, these writings also reveal their authors' desire to theorize the art of governing, and to describe political science. After this founding period, we witness the emergence of genuine political treatises. In taking such titles as "*Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*" (advice to kings), "*Ādāb al-mulūk*" (the rules of conduct of kings) or "*al-Ādāb al-sultāniyya*" (the rules of the conduct of political power), many texts such as that of the pseudo-al-Māwardī⁹ in the 10th century, al-Māwardī in the 11th century,¹⁰ or al-Ṭūsī in the 13th century¹¹ bear witness to changes in the genre, and its transformation during the classical age of Islam into a true repository of political science. From the 10th or 11th centuries, political treatises were better structured than the above texts, divided into parts and sub-parts, and aimed at both a theoretical demonstration of ideas and their thoughtful illustration through historical anecdotes and wisdom literature; at a later stage, at the end of the classical age of Islam, i.e. in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), we witness the birth of great summaries by Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406), Ibn al-Azraq (1427–1491), and al-Qalqaṣandī (1355–1418).

This literature deals with the prince's interests (ensuring a glorious reign, retaining his power, defeating his enemies through cunning or war), as well as goals centered on his subjects (security, prosperity, justice, happiness). Their diverse and sometimes conflicting rationalities drew their patterns and paradigms from many disciplines and textual genres that should be studied in a way that respects their internal codes, while highlighting their complementarity. Hence the interdisciplinary nature of these texts, consisting of philosophers' maxims, historical accounts of great sovereigns, religious quotations, poetry,

9 Louise Marlow, *Counsel for Kings: Wisdom and Politics in Tenth Century Iran*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 2016).

10 Al-Māwardī, *De l'éthique du Prince et du gouvernement de l'État*, translation and commentary by M. Abbès, preceded by *Essai sur les arts de gouverner en Islam*, Sagesses médiévales (Paris, 2015).

11 Joep Lameer, *The Arabic Version of Ṭūsī's Nasirean Ethics* (Leiden, 2015).

and developments in political science, its parties, divisions and subdivisions. These texts, based on advice given to princes (*Fürstenspiegel*), also exist in other ancient and medieval cultures, as in China or Europe. They constantly overlap with Platonic and Aristotelian-inspired literature dealing with practical philosophy, and attempt to determine the epistemological and cognitive status of this philosophy as opposed to logic or metaphysics. Thus, their interest lies, among other things, in the richness of their content, which integrates philosophy (theoretical reflections on politics and on the rules for the conduct of princes and the leadership of the state), history (knowledge of the lives of great sovereigns) and literature (in many forms, such as testaments, maxims, and poetry).

Indeed, the genre of the *ādāb sultāniyya* or *ādāb al-mulūk* (the equivalent to *ars regiminis* in the Western tradition, widely represented by mirrors for princes until Machiavelli's *Prince*) was formed by the use of heterogeneous and disparate elements: maxims and quotations attributed to the scholars of antiquity and Islam; accounts of the wars, tricks and ploys of great rulers like Alexander the Great or Ardashīr; descriptions of political institutions and state offices (ministries, chancelleries, taxes, diplomacy, etc.); instructions on court etiquette and administrative or diplomatic protocols that must be observed; assertive developments on the virtues of the perfect prince (justice, prudence, resolution, deliberation, magnanimity, liberality, etc.); considerations regarding the relationship between the ruler and his subjects, and the respective duties and rights each party fulfills or enjoys; definitions of the fundamental concepts of government and leadership (*tadbīr*, *siyāsa*) as well as of power or empire (*sulṭān*, *mulk*, *dawla*). All these elements and many other literary forms and philosophical content were brought together, giving rise in about the 10th century to detailed government treatises, a genre that spanned centuries and continued through to the beginning of the 20th century, with a treatise dedicated to Sultan Abdulhamid II (1842–1918).

2 Politics and Religion

Exploration of the genesis of the mirrors for princes leads to a fundamental question related to the cultural identity of these texts. Do they embody the classical culture of Islam, despite their foreign origin? Were they integrated into the new religious fabric, or did they evolve concurrently with authentically “Islamic” traditions, without really influencing political concepts, power practices, or representations of the best government? These questions have been asked by many modern intellectuals, starting in particular from the analysis of

current political situations in the countries of the Muslim world. In the 1950s, Badawi affirmed that mirrors for princes were one of the reasons for the maintenance of archaic forms of power in the Arab world. In the introduction of Miskawayh's *Al-Ḥikma l-ḥālida* (Perennial wisdom), he explains, beginning with the study of maxims, the literary form that dominates these texts, that the genre of maxims and quotations spread in the Middle East because of the sacralization of the word in Middle Eastern religious traditions.¹² Because of their repetitive and monotonous nature, these texts have prevented creativity and constituted an obstacle to the introduction of rationalism into the political practices of the Middle East. Later on, at the beginning of the 21st century, M-A. Al Jabri systematically examined the moral and political philosophy of Islam, into which mirrors for princes, very much inspired by the Persian imperial model, are accused of introducing the value of blind obedience, perpetuating the mechanisms of subjugation to the state.¹³ The authors of these texts were therefore intellectuals in the service of the maintenance of domination, rather than of criticism or the defense of the interests of the governed. A withdrawal from authoritarianism, therefore, would require the deconstruction of the despotic intentions and mechanisms contained in mirrors for princes. Other readings go even further in the view that these texts, like Greek philosophy, cannot be considered "Islamic", as they do not adhere to the political model advocated by the Prophet and applied by his Companions.

These examples demonstrate that in the modern era, literature on the art of governing has been caught in the trap of cultural and religious identity. Its interpretation has suffered from anachronistic approaches and considerations.¹⁴ Only recently has the work of specialists in work on the art of governing allowed us to discard the negative vision that for decades has accompanied the reception of these texts. This has led to an appreciation of their true value, far from the ideological instrumentalization and massive interpretation of Islam's intellectual heritage. Any new reading of these texts, then, must focus on scientific issues going beyond the limits of the approaches criticized above, and must endeavor to demonstrate the value of these texts by studying them in their contexts, with the notional and conceptual apparatus they mobilize and the effects they aim to produce in the training of statesmen. We may therefore remark that sources that were initially foreign were soon inserted

12 Ibn Miskawayh, *Al-Ḥikma l-ḥālida* (Perennial wisdom), ed. A.R. Badawi, (Cairo, 1952), pp. 7–14.

13 Mohamed-Abed al Jabri, *Al-'Aql al-aḥlāqī l-'arabī* (Arab Ethical Reason) (Casablanca, 2001), p. 622.

14 For criticism of this interpretation, see Makram Abbès, *Islam et politique à l'âge classique* (Paris, 2009), pp. 34–37, and Al-Māwardī, *De l'éthique du Prince et du gouvernement de l'État*, pp. 20–24.

into quotations, references, and narrative canvases, which gradually acquired a special character that made them an integral part of classical Islamic culture.

There are many testimonies to the integration of this literature into the Arab cultural fabric from the beginning of Islam. At the height of their imperial ideology, in which they were the heirs of the ancient Persians, the Abbasid authorities institutionalized the use of certain books as “manuals” of political science, used for the basic training of the young princes. Al-Mubarrad (826–898), for example, mentions that the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (786–833) ordered the tutor of al-Wāṭiq (d. 847), the heir to the throne, to help al-Wāṭiq memorize *Kalila and Dimna*, in addition to the *Koran* and the *Testament of Ardashūr*.¹⁵ Even under the Umayyads, described as the founders of an “Arab” Kingdom, as opposed to the Abbasids, who had massively integrated their Persian allies (*al-Mawālī*) to meet the universalist and egalitarian requirements of Islam’s initial message, we observe that interest in government and administrative knowledge was being expressed by the beginning of the 8th century, that is, halfway between the foundation of the dynasty by Mu'āwiya in 661 and its fall in 749. It can even be argued that this desire to be seen as the masters of the East was expressed in the political field through early research and the translation of the founding texts mentioned above, in the same way that it was expressed in the field of art through imitation of the artistic achievements of the Romans in Qūṣayr Amra.¹⁶ The mastery of the art of governing in this case not only reflects the desire to gain access to ancient literature on the government of empire, but also indicates, artistically and symbolically, the desire to develop the signs and insignia of triumphant power.

Beyond the genesis of the Arabic tradition of mirrors for princes, one of the important aspects that we must highlight is the place that religion occupied in texts on the art of governing, and the attitude that the authors of these texts had towards struggles among religious doctrines, theological movements, sects and denominations that emerged after the Discord (*Fitna*) in the mid-7th century. The authors mentioned above, as well as compilers like Ibn Qutayba (*‘Uyūn al-aḥbār*) or Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (*al-‘Iqd al-farīd*), who wrote the first encyclopedias of *adab* (rules of conduct) using the material found in *Kalila and Dimna* and the accounts about Persian kings or Alexander the Great, are contemporaries of authors who wrote about political discord and developed theses around the question of the best *imam*. Generally entitled *Kitāb al-imāma* (*On the Imamate*), these texts deal with the events of the first

15 Al-Mubarrad, *al-Fāḍil*, quoted in Ihsan Abbas, *Ahd Ardashūr* (Beirut, 1967), p. 34.

16 Garth Fowden, *Qūṣayr ‘Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley, 2004), especially ch. 7, “The Six Kings”, pp. 197–226.

schism in Islam, and mix their reading of history with partisan considerations and ideological struggles among factions, parties and doctrines. The purpose of these treatises about Muslim rulers is not really to define the prince's statecraft nor how to make a population happy and prosperous, but rather to defend a particular politician ('Alī, Mu'āwiya, Abū Bakr and 'Uṭmān), showing that he is more worthy than others to assume the legacy of the Prophet, and to embody continuity with the Prophet's perfection as the leader of the first Muslim community. Although they are not directly part of the corpus of mirrors for princes, these texts must, however, serve as a point of comparison with the literature on the art of governing that was developing at the same time, and that took a resolutely secular course. In the 8th century, therefore, reflection on politics took the form of theological treatises about the imamate or followed the paths of scientific research on government and the conduct of public affairs. The place of religion, dogmas and theological polemics in these two political approaches was not the same at the very beginning of Islam and later. As a result, the research community has long been divided between those who believe that politics in Islam is in thrall to religion¹⁷ and those who think it enjoys a certain autonomy, opening up forms of secularized political thought.¹⁸ Our approach is part of the second reading, and will seek to deepen the analysis of the concrete conditions that enabled the emergence of such secular thinking. Recent work on the mirrors for princes, whether devoted to particular authors¹⁹ or dedicated to the themes in these texts,²⁰ has made decisive progress in this direction, analyzing the secular dynamics that animate them.

We could then extend this analysis, and make forceful arguments on the thesis of an empowerment of politics in the early days of Islam. Unlike the hagiographic strain that runs through the works of dogmatists of Kharijism, Shiism, Ash'arism or Mu'tazilism, the first texts on the art of governing, by authors like Ibn al-Muqaffa', Ibn Qutayba, Sahl ibn Hārūn and al-Balḥī,

17 See Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge, 1986), and Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh, 2005), pp. 396–397.

18 See for instance Ira M. Lapidus, "The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6/4 (oct., 1975), pp. 363–385, and "The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam", in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 524, Political Islam (nov., 1992), pp. 13–25.

19 See Alireza Shomali and Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "Sa'di's Treatise on Advice to the Kings", in *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft* ed. M. Boroujerdi (Syracuse, 2013), pp. 45–81.

20 Negin Yavari, *Advice for the Sultan* (London, 2014), ch. 5, pp. 81–94.

proposed different observations on power and government, not following the same paths as the literature of apologetics. The example of the reflections on war and peace found in the representative authors of this tradition is a good illustration of this; they break with the religious justifications for war, ruminating on the criteria that would make a war just, and even on the concrete conditions for limiting it. The enhancement of the secular character of the tradition of the art of governing does not, however, mean the absence of any interest in religion in these texts, nor of any willingness to construct an immoral discourse on politics, a reproach that was also leveled at the Machiavellian tradition in the West. There are, in fact, many religious references in these texts, or discussions of the conduct of the Prophet and his Companions. However, their function differs markedly from the purposes assigned to these discourses in the many treatises on the imamate, where bitter theological discussions have developed about the founders of Islam and the reasons that led to the divisions of the *Umma*. Moreover, when we find an assertion such as that the state should be based on religion, or a statement according to which religion is the pillar of political government, one must not therefore conclude that society was run as a church; the institutions that represented religious knowledge were not totally independent from political power, and most of the bearers of this knowledge (exegetes, lawyers, theologians, etc.) had a function in the administration of the state and were in fact subject to political power. Thus we should understand accurately Ardashīr's famous aphorism about the relationship between political power and religion, which circulated in many Arabic mirrors for princes in the Middle Ages:

Know that kingship and religion are twin brothers, neither one of which can be maintained without the other. For religion is the foundation of kingship, and kingship is the guardian of religion. Kingship cannot subsist without its foundation, and religion cannot subsist without its guardian.²¹

It should be noted that the word "*dīn*" here means not so much religious laws (it is the word "*milla*" or "*sharī'a*" that expresses this meaning) as moral habits and social traditions rooted in a society or a community. By keeping a nation to good morals and commendable habits, and acting without shocking it in its beliefs or provoking innovations that could lead to revolt, the prince ensures that power is maintained. It is for this reason that "*dīn*" (religion) is the best

²¹ *Ahd Ardashīr* (Testament of Ardashīr), ed. I. Abbas (Beirut, 1968), p. 53. We cite here the translation of Louise Marlow, in *Counsel for Kings: Wisdom and Politics in Tenth-Century Iran*, vol. 1, p. 192.

foundation, and that it presents itself as a solid support to power, more than force or money, as al-Māwardī says,²² and even more than firmness or passions, as Ibn al-Muqaffa' claims in a famous aphorism. If power must safeguard religion, it is because religion ensures the subjects' obedience. But as soon as obedience is acquired, the prince can devote himself to the ideal of political justice required and supported by religion, and it is in this ethical sense that religion can be regarded as the foundation of sovereignty. A system of reciprocal duties between the prince and his subjects is thus set up. The king Ardashīr establishes this equation between the duty of justice that binds the Prince and the duty of obedience incumbent on his subjects, claiming that "when the king renounces justice, the people renounce obedience".

We can go further in this analysis by arguing that the texts of *al-ādāb al-sultāniyya*, while focusing on practical issues (like the means of ensuring a fair government and of achieving security and prosperity for the population), contain an in-depth reflection on religion as a moral link between people. This aspect, linked to the very condition of civil society, can be discovered through the presence, in al-Māwardī, al-'Abbāsī and Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, of robust deliberations on the status of religion within the City and on the attitudes that princes must adopt towards religious doctrines, the divisions they generate, and the real problems they pose to their governments. This dimension relating to the social and political status of religion is a major focus of scrutiny in the mirrors for princes, and this enables us to see how, within Islam and through its intellectual traditions, the link between dogma and individual and collective conduct, or the relationship between religious beliefs and worldly actions, might be contemplated—various points that feed the complex issues of the theological-political problem.

What argues in favor of this interpretation is that the maxims are not illustrated exclusively by the figures of the pious or the caliphs of Islam, but above all by men like Alexander the Great, whose military action was motivated, according to these readings, in part by his desire to spread justice among conquered peoples and to realize an ethical ideal, perceived as universal. Our reading is corroborated by the fact that texts in mirrors for princes mention another maxim that apparently denotes the opposite of that previously cited. It is said in many books that "Sovereignty can endure despite impiety, but cannot be maintained in injustice".²³ Quoted in several mirrors and even in some texts written by theologians, this maxim serves the argument that religion

22 Al-Māwardī, *De l'éthique du Prince et du gouvernement de l'État*, pp. 358–360, on this question see pp. 89–97.

23 Al-Ṭa'ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk* (The Conduct of Kings) (Beirut, 1990), p. 51.

could not be regarded as the criteria of good rule in mirrors for princes unless we understand it as an ideal of ethical virtues like justice, prudence, temperance and liberality.²⁴ These virtues attributed to religion are therefore marked by a secular approach that made it possible to integrate all the Greek or Persian heritage of this field and to realize the objective of building a scientific discourse on politics, as we will see.

3 Generic Identity of the Mirrors for Princes Texts

The discussion of the cultural identity of the texts on the art of governing necessarily leads to the question of their generic identity. This dimension is explored with great care and skill by al-Azmeh in his book *Muslim Kingship*. Al-Azmeh has attempted to go beyond the identity considerations discussed above, making the entirety of the political literature produced in the classical age of Islam a reflection of ancient political models cultivated in the Middle East since Mesopotamian or Egyptian royalty. *Fürstenspiegel* written in Arabic in the 8th century influenced other genres, philosophical and legal, including the writings of theologians ('*ulamā'*), at the end of the classical age.²⁵ This thesis, which has the merit of explaining the continuity between late antiquity and the beginning of Islam, also has the advantage of going beyond sterile discussions about the identity of these texts and their relationship to foreign sources. Nevertheless, it does pose the problem of the very possibility of the evolution of political thought or innovation in this area. Apart from being treated as a homogeneous block in which theologians' texts on politics were not distinguished from the texts of philosophers, jurists or historians, works on the art of governing produced within Islam, according to this approach, had become a pale shadow of earlier versions, and the study of their originality is already compromised by the fact that they could only reproduce paradigms and patterns already rooted in the ancient culture of the region.

Unlike this thesis, which approaches politics as an undifferentiated whole, we think that the *Sīyāsa šar'īyya* treatise of the theologian Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) and the *Atār al-Uwal* of his contemporary al-'Abbāsī cannot be set on an equal footing. Distinguishing between the textual genres that addressed politics is necessary to show the internal coherence of each tradition, its specific

24 In the ethical systems produced in Islamic civilization, we notice the absence of the equivalent of the Christian medieval opposition between cardinal virtues (prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice) and theological virtues (faith, hope, charity).

25 Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship* (London, 1997), ch. 5, pp. 83–114.

qualities and irreducible dimensions, making a philosophical approach something different from a theological one. It also enables us to study the authors' assumptions, their sources, their arguments, the goals they pursue in discussing political subjects, and above all the methodology they employ, so that the knowledge they produce could reach the highest level of scientific thinking, or, on the contrary, fall into overtly ideological considerations.²⁶ In general, the political thought of Islam is often reduced to a single and undifferentiated referent, the one that relies on its theological specificities (imamate, caliphate, sharia, jihad, etc.). This approach has also been propagated by ideological discourses produced within the contemporary cultures of Muslim countries and then relayed by the media, including in the West. The result has been the construction of a vision far removed from the historical realities and textual heritage of the classical age of Islam. For this reason, adopting rigorous methodological criteria for differentiating texts will help us to understand them better, to highlight the epistemologies from which they originate, the intentions of their authors, and the public for which they are intended. Moreover, we know that in the Western tradition, Machiavelli, for example, does not approach politics as would a jurist of the same period, like Jean Bodin, nor according to the same methods and postulates as a philosopher heir to the Platonic tradition, like Thomas More, and even less like a theologian such as Bossuet a few decades later. Authors can, then, be distinguished according to their approach, which can be philosophical, theological, literary, legal, etc. These remarks also apply to the civilization of classical Islam, where the same plurality can be found in the approaches to politics as a fundamental category of human existence and its different manifestations in society and in history.

Before exploring the specificities of the mirrors genre, let us recall that a single author, without being redundant, can write several books on politics, each time starting from distinct skills and respecting the codes specific to each tradition. What becomes clear, then, is that sometimes the same author feels the need to write about politics from a lawyer's perspective, or to adopt a position on the same issues as a specialist on *ādāb sultāniyya*. The example of al-Māwardī demonstrates how an 11th-century thinker could address political issues from a legal-institutional point of view, in the *Ordinances of Government*,

26 See Makram Abbès, *Islam et politique à l'âge classique*, pp. 309–311. In this book, our approach consisted of treating the political thought of Islam from three major textual traditions: mirrors for princes, political law, and philosophy. The aim of this tripartite division is to show how politics within each tradition was determined from a major referent: the history of the great conquerors for the authors of mirrors, the standard and the exception for the jurists, and the acquisition of human happiness for the philosophers.

then from a historical-literary perspective, in *The Ethics of the Prince and the Government of the State*, and then combining the two, as in his book *Rules for the Vizierate*. In taking different views on politics, al-Māwardī emphasizes the complexity of this field, while showing himself capable of respecting the internal codes of each textual tradition. This approach gives the texts their unique specificities, respecting the purposes assigned to the genre to which they belong. In preventing them from being regarded as a single homogeneous block, we will be able to consider the diversity of political productions in the classical age of Islam, without losing sight of their unity.

By questioning the specificity of the writing style adopted in literature on the art of governing, we could then emphasize the singularity of the genre, which is sometimes lumped together with popular philosophy (as opposed to a scholarly philosophy accessible only to a restricted elite), sometimes with historical literature (because it relies on *exempla*), and more often than not with “Belles-Lettres” literature (due to the presence of forms such as testaments, epistles, or poetry, but also because of the care given to the style and the art of writing in general). The combination of these diverse elements makes the mirrors an original genre, whose essence combines many different registers. This can be illustrated by one of the last examples of this literature at the end of the classical age of Islam, *Nasirean Ethics* by al-Ṭūsī, whose Arabic version, coming from Persian, was written in the 14th century by al-Ġurġānī. The text divides political science into the categories of self-government, domestic government, and city government (this is the subdivision of practical science found in most epistles on the subject); it combines rigorously philosophical elements going back to Plato, Aristotle, Miskawayh and al-Fārābī (theoretical study of virtues, reasons that lead to civil association, types of political constitution), with analyses from *ādāb al-mulūk*, such as how to work in an administration, or the precepts that must be followed to adopt the best conduct in society. Al-Ṭūsī’s book, like many other treatises that await further study, embodies the fusion of philosophical, historical and literary elements within this tradition of works on the art of governing.

Despite significant differences between the contexts in which these texts were written, the structure of the books mentioned, and the means by which the authors came to possess the available material, we can see that the genre has retained the characteristics that set it apart from three other major traditions: that focusing on legal and administrative rules, and modeled on the al-Māwardī *Ordinances of Political Power*; that addressing the well-being of the population and the government within the virtuous city, as found in the works of al-Fārābī; and finally the theological tradition of the imamate, which remained dependent on a reading of the history of discord between

the Prophet's Companions in the mid-7th century. Strictly speaking, the *ādāb sulṭāniyya* are distinct from these three traditions in terms of the tools they use and the purpose attributed to the genre. The mirrors are based on the training of the prince, who must learn the types of rationality (ethical, political, military) that will be at the heart of his decisions during the exercise of power. The tools used to instill values and transfer knowledge primarily comprised maxims and stories. Maxims aimed to provide a rule to follow when confronting an enemy, preserving the state, fighting corruption or choosing assistants; as for stories, these were drawn from actions taken by the founders of the empire and from politicians who were elevated as models of intelligence, justice and wisdom. While maxims condensed ideas into just a few words, stories illustrated them in detail, sending a prince's imagination into the lives of great rulers. However, beyond the differences between the tools used by these texts, we can also see a solidarity between the moral philosopher, who entrusts Plato, Aristotle or Anūšīrwān with the role of codifying exemplary conduct, and the authors' use of history as the source of inspiration for political action. The relationship between history and the art of governing is addressed in a surprisingly modern way, as seen in Miskawayh, who, in the introduction to his book *Experiences of Nations*, states that meditating on historical events will provide politicians with the means to learn valuable lessons about the birth of states, dysfunctions that can affect them, how to reform a bad situation and overcome a crisis, how to achieve prosperity, unite the people, master war tactics, effectively fight an enemy and, finally, how to govern political leaders such as ministers, army generals or state officials.²⁷

This function assigned to the *exempla* is based on a cyclical conception of history, in which political events of the past must resemble those of the present. Interaction between the two temporal regimes turns the past into a paradigm that the prince, rather than trying to reproduce it on demand, must internalize in order to be inspired by it in how he treats the people, his officials, or his enemies. The notion of experience (*tağriba*) means the kind of experiences that the prince has not personally lived, but that he could make his own through his reflections on the past.

“All of these events that man keeps in mind become experiences of his own”, said Miskawayh, “into which he is propelled and from which he draws confirmed wisdom, as if he had lived through all of this time, and as if he himself had dealt with these events”.²⁸

27 Miskawayh, *Tağārib al-umam* 1 (Beirut, 2003), p. 59.

28 Miskawayh, *Tağārib al-umam*, p. 59.

Far from leading them to glorify the past, or transforming it into a crushing weight on the present, the relationship that politicians must maintain with the past was to make it an instrument to predict the future and anticipate outcomes. This concept, combining politics and history, is at the heart of the very notion of *tadbīr*, meaning government and management, and most often interchangeable with *siyāsa* (politics, conduct); *tadbīr* is the action that predicts outcomes, and commands a temporality ever focused on future consequences.²⁹

The insistence placed on history as a source of knowledge for political action shows that the tradition of the art of government in Islam follows a path marked by realism and positivity, faithful to an anthropological approach that first studies humankind as it is, then as it should be. This anchoring in a realistic political anthropology gives the texts a surprisingly modern focus, like that of European political treatises of the Renaissance rather than works of the Middle Ages. For example, in *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, Machiavelli explores, in a very similar way to Miskawayh, the need to use ancient models as a remedy identified and advised by doctors for centuries—not reading history for mere pleasure or entertainment, but rather in order to find a way to emulate the greats.³⁰

4 The Art of War in the Arabic Mirrors for Princes

One of the distinctive features of the books on *ādāb sulṭāniyya* is that unlike the Western mirrors of the Middle Ages, they did not simply give the prince spiritual advice and remind him of correct conduct in accordance with religious law. Such content can indeed be found in some writers,³¹ but most of them regarded the genre as equivalent to political science, whose rules and precepts were to be drawn from the history of great empires and great kings. Such a positive and pragmatic orientation of these texts on the art of governing accounts for a major difference between these and Western mirror treatises, a

29 On the economic dimensions of this concept see Yassine Essid, *A Critique of the Origins of Islamic Economic Thought* (Leiden, 1995). On the political aspects, Makram Abbès, *Islam et politique à l'âge classique*, pp. 49–53.

30 Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, trans. N.-H. Thomson (London, 1883), pp. 4–5.

31 See for instance al-Ġazālī (pseudo?), *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk*, trans. F.R.C. Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings* (London, 1964). Although very famous among contemporary scholarship, this text is far from being representative of the *ādāb sulṭāniyya* genre due to the lack of adequate choice in the subject matter of the book, and the focus on admonition and sermons, rather than on the effective rules of the art of governing.

difference which boils down to the question of war. For while this question was practically absent in Western texts, and while Machiavelli deeply shocked political and philosophical tradition when he painted a new portrait of the prince, henceforth armed and chiefly concerned with war, in the Arabic tradition the theme had been central in the writing of mirrors as early as the 8th century. In certain texts, such as *Kitāb al-tāǧ* (Book of the Crown) attributed to al-Ġāḥiẓ, or *Kitāb al-siyāsa* (Book of politics) by al-Murādī, the 11th-century Andalusian writer, one can indeed find short chapters on war and on the importance of stratagems in military strategy. In larger treatises like *Sirāǧ al-mulūk* (Lamp for Kings) of al-Ṭurṭūšī (1059–1126) or al-ʿAbbāsī's book *Ātār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal* (Traces of the Ancients in the Preservation of the States), the theme of war takes up much more room, while other works deal exclusively with military strategy, weapons, and stratagems employed by the great monarchs to defeat their enemies at a lesser cost. *Lutf al-tadbīr fī siyāsāt al-mulūk* (The Delicateness of Government in the Policies of Kings), written by al-Iskāfī (d. 1029), and al-Harawī's *al-Taḍkira al-Harawīyya fī l-ḥiyal al-ḥarbiyya* (Memorandum on War Stratagems), dedicated at the beginning of the 13th century to one of the Ayyubid princes who succeeded Saladin, are rooted in the spirit of the *ādāb sultāniyya*, particularly as far as the themes of advice, the prince's skills, and espionage are concerned, but also offer valuable information on strategy, army divisions and, among other things, assault, defense and siege techniques.

These texts are characterized by a backdrop of historical reflection, giving them the realistic and positive character found in several other traditions of political thought, such as those of Thucydides or Machiavelli. Most chapters on the art of warfare in the mirrors for princes open with a chapter urging the prince to show prudence and suspicion even when he feels firmly established in his estates. The authors generally write an introduction to these treatises on the development of "*ḥaḍar*", the fact of being cautious about something, of being constantly watchful and wary. The prince must always be vigilant even when the situation is completely safe; he must be suspicious of his soldiers and generals, and not place too much trust in them, and he must be prepared for a possible betrayal on the part of his collaborators. The choice of this virtue, which can be considered as the cardinal virtue of the political chief, may be accounted for by the overall view of humanity pervading the texts of mirrors. Although no pessimistic or optimistic anthropology describes human beings as naturally good or evil, the authors insist on the idea that they are constantly tormented by baser instincts that often prevent them from acting as reason dictates. These remarks on human nature do not necessarily imply an essentialization of human beings, but that such passions as jealousy, envy, and the craving for glory are constantly at work and not easily stifled, especially in

political circles. Because evil passions are rooted in human nature, all political constructions are artificial and carry within them the seeds of their own destruction. The feeling of envy is that most often described as the source of a whole range of actions and types of behavior responsible for permanent conflicts within society.³² These ontological considerations give rise to a vision present in the mirrors, namely that conflict is permanent and latent within society. Therefore, in concrete terms, we live in a permanent state of war, as conflicts are consubstantial with politics. The acute awareness of this phenomenon in the mirrors leads the authors to think that political power is in constant need of maintenance and preservation. As the chapters on the preservation of power show, this implies that power suffers from some original flaw that requires that it be forever re-established and renewed, and that this is more important than the simple fact of conquering or seizing power.

The knowledge of the nature of those human passions that are a constant source of conflict aiming both at constructing and deconstructing the political bonds thus encourages the prince to make warfare his primary concern. Suspecting the ambitions of rivals both at home and abroad, he must be ready to face dangers, and, to do so, to assemble the necessary means in preparation for the event of war. At this point in the study, it might be thought that we are dealing with a tradition praising the merits of war, because it sees enemies everywhere and, to a large extent, reduces the art of governing to the art of stabilizing the state and preserving power. But in fact, and in spite of this realistic policy based on the amassing of instruments of power, war must be considered the final resort, and should be initiated only after the prince has exhausted every resource of intelligence and diplomacy that might enable him to solve the conflicts peacefully. This doctrine, which seeks by all possible means to prevent the wheels of war from rolling, advocates peaceful relations (avoid attacking other states or provoking other, rival princes) and systematic recourse to diplomacy, without, however, rejecting a possible intensification of the conflict and declaration of war. This leads to the elaboration of a strategy to construct peace while insisting on the need to prepare at all times for war.

What characterizes the treatment of this topic in the mirrors is that the authors take the force of intelligence, not the force of weapons, as the absolute benchmark for success or failure in war. The importance of stratagems in this tradition fits into a universal literature, dating back to antiquity, that praises politicians and strategists who were able to achieve victory through intelligence rather than force. How is this notion presented in the

32 For example, the first book of *Kalila and Dimna* is devoted to this topic.

Arabic political tradition, and how does it fit in with the general strategic system? First, the notion of stratagem is not precisely defined. Instead, the authors underline its protean character; it includes, as al-Murādi writes, all “that thought and experience produce”.³³ Looking up the etymology of the word in Arabic, we see that the root *ḤYL* refers to turning something around in order to reach a goal. It has to do with hedging, looking for roundabout ways, not getting straight to the point, using indirect means to achieve objectives. According to al-Murādi, the highest degree of strategy consists in seeming to be the exact opposite of what someone really is.³⁴ The prince must look incompetent, silly, unintelligent, when in fact he is in complete control of the ins and outs of the fight. The gap between being and seeming is welcome in this sort of situation because it creates surprise and has a totally unexpected effect. It is a form of hypocrisy and duplicity with nothing pejorative about it: this is not a question of feigning virtue or moral rectitude, but of making the enemy believe the prince is completely naive, overtaken by events and ignorant about warfare, when in fact he is controlling the situation perfectly and is only awaiting the right moment to act effectually.

These counsels in the Arabic mirrors for princes show that this world was Machiavellian before that word existed. Machiavelli states that

[a prince must] know how to make good use of the nature of the beast, he should choose from among the beast the fox and the lion; for the lion cannot defend itself from traps and the fox cannot protect itself from wolves. It is therefore necessary to be a fox in order to recognize the traps and a lion in order to frighten the wolves: those who base their behaviour only on the lion do not understand things.³⁵

The lion and the fox represent the two criteria of the politician’s action, namely force and tactics, and, according to Machiavelli, it is because men are bad that princes may be justified in resorting to these tactics, and have the right to simulate and dissimulate. Machiavelli broke new ground in the Western political tradition in describing what he calls the “effectual truth” of politics, in spite of the Christian moral legacy and the teachings of humanism, both of which strongly oppose this vision of policies that resort to unjust behavior to achieve their ends.

33 Al-Murādi, *Kitāb al-siyāsa (The Book of Politics)* (Casablanca, 1981), p. 156.

34 Al-Murādi, *Kitāb al-siyāsa*, p. 157.

35 Nicolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. and trans. P. Bondanella and M. Musa (Oxford, 1984), p. 60.

This leads us to the last point, the defense of the superiority of stratagems over force. In the wake of *Kalila and Dimna*, which is a veritable plea for their use, al-Murāḍī declares that subtle stratagems are more efficient than material means. To those who wish to rank among great men, force alone does not suffice; it must be supported by intelligence. These texts of the Arabic mirrors are thus closely akin to the universal literature that since antiquity has described the beauty of stratagems, possibly because of the belief in the superiority of mind over body, of art over brute force, of subtlety over crude means. A cunning man is an expert schemer; he is clear-sighted, capable of anticipating the moves of his adversary, creating surprise, winning through methods that are not considered important, or trapping or deluding an enemy to get rid of him. All this is the product of a form of intellectual refinement that humanizes warfare and keeps it away from the barbarity resulting from the clash of weapons.

5 The Politics between Art (*technè*) and Science (*épistémè*)

Strictly speaking, the *ādāb sultāniyya* are distinguished by the desire to describe the outlines of political science and the universal precepts that guide it. The goal of this science is to educate the prince so that he can learn the different types of rationality (ethical, political, military) that lie at the heart of the exercise of power. The genre of the art of governing is based on lessons from history (*exempla*) and on the teachings of philosophers (maxims), and provides criteria to differentiate among other approaches to politics. But what about the epistemological status of this field? And if history provides authors with concrete examples of political anthropology, how can this knowledge be compared to other disciplines that claim to establish normative standards for human action and define the good and the bad, the just and the unjust?

The texts entitled “*On politics*” or “*On Government*” (*Kitāb al-Siyāsa*) answer these crucial questions. Their aim is to define politics and to demonstrate that it is the true architectonics of the field of practical philosophy, along with self-government (ethics) and domestic government (*oikonomia*, economics). In the strict sense of the term, political science or civil government (*al-‘ilm al-madani*) is, then, what relates to the association between individuals within the City, to the types of political constitutions, and to the administrative and general conduct of the state. But in the general sense of the term, politics integrates self-government and domestic government, as the art of leading people depends on the ability to lead oneself. Ethical achievement is therefore inseparable from political achievement. “The sovereign must begin by exercising his power over himself, so that he can exercise his power over others in

a straightforward manner". This exhortation by Ibn Razīn al-Kātib to kings in his book *Rules for the conduct of kings* is the foundation of thought on political government.³⁶ To be able to structure the field of action by others, and to assume the function of "sā'is" (politician, director) or "mudabbir" (governor, ruler), they must first pass through self-control. It is on the basis of reflection on self-government that precepts are developed on the government of others, who are divided into two spheres—private, concerning the domestic household (wife, children, slaves), and public, relating to the court, the direction of the army and control of the territory, and the various organs of government (secretariat, chancellery, vizierate, diplomacy, etc.).

Stemming from the Aristotelian heritage, this subdivision of politics is present even in the earliest epistles dealing with this topic, as we see in al-Mağribī's *On politics* or in the epistle attributed to Avicenna, also entitled *On politics*. The government of the state therefore remains subject to the same overall requirements of *siyāsa* and *tadbīr*. It is part of a system not limited solely to the domain of the state, but refers to a sophisticated culture of government, ranging from self-control and the control of passions to activities on which the life and death of subjects depend (war and peace). The problem is to know whether these tasks are related and whether their exercise requires an ordering and control of the smallest sphere, even attaining the upper reaches of the City and Empire; or whether they are separate tasks. Ibn al-Ṭīqṭaqā considers that links of continuity between these governmental tasks are not mandatory; nor is a certain range in their performance (a good king, according to him, is not necessarily a good ruler of his household, just as an excellent household administrator may not be able to direct major affairs of the state).³⁷ However, most authors of *ādāb sulṭāniyya* do not discuss activities that are strictly political, *i.e.* that are devoted solely to the conduct of the state and public affairs, independently of other governmental spheres.

This epistemological status of politics is addressed in a section by Abū Zayd al-Balḥī in a book in which he defines politics on the basis of Aristotelian thought. This section, preserved in al-Tawḥīdī's book *al-Baṣā'ir*, defines politics (*siyāsa*) as a supreme "ṣinā'a" (*technè*) through which a ruler achieves prosperity for a country and provides security to its people. Al-Balḥī thus approaches the subject, according to its definition, from the system of Aristotelian causes,

36 Ibn Razīn, *Ādāb al-mulūk* (Beirut, 2001), p. 51.

37 Ibn al-Ṭīqṭaqā, *al-Faḥrī fī l-ādāb al-sulṭāniyya wa l-duwal al-islāmīyya* (The Glorious Book on the Rules of the Conduct of the State and Muslim Dynasties) (Beirut, undated), p. 50. See the French translation: Al-Fakhrī. *Histoire des dynasties musulmanes*, trans. E. Amar (Paris, 1910), p. 82.

drawing an analogy between politics and medicine, one of the traits of reflection on the epistemological status of politics. For him, the politician, like a builder or doctor, needs a material cause, a formal cause, an efficient cause, a final cause, and instruments used by craftsmen to work with the materials. To build a house, we need materials (stone, wood, etc.), a representation of the form these materials will take, a builder, an ultimate cause (to take shelter in the house, move in), and finally, the appropriate tools to work with the material. Al-Balḥī applies this schema to medicine and then transposes it to politics.

In the art of politics, he says, the affairs of the subjects the king deals with are the “material”. The form is the targeted use or purpose (*maṣlaḥa*). It is the equivalent of health, because utility is a form of health, and health a kind of profit, in the same way that damage is disease, and that the latter is, in a way, damage. In this case, the agent is the care that the king takes in supervising the affairs of subjects. The final cause is to maintain profit, and ensure that it prospers. The thing that serves as an instrument of his art is the incentive to take action, and the inspiration to do more. The actions of politicians, similar to the care provided by doctors, are divided into two parts: the first is the *‘ta’ahhud’* (diligence that one applies to something with great care, constantly inquiring about its condition), and the second is *‘istiṣlāḥ’* (a pursuit of interest and quest for profit). The first involves preserving what is right, keeping the subjects’ affairs perfectly in order, calmly and serenely, so that these affairs do not deviate from the virtuous form. As for *‘istiṣlāḥ’*, it involves restoring well-being and unity, where damage and disorder prevail. These two actions specific to the political art find their equivalent in medicine, which, as policy of the body, involves maintaining health on the one hand, and recovery on the other. And just as all medicine falls under these two parts, the art of politics is reduced to the action of carefully preserving one thing and reforming it.³⁸

In addition to basing political practice rationally on the various points explored above, this definition sets out the appropriate purpose of politics by linking it to the interests of subjects, the generation of any related benefits, and the exclusion of any damage, imbalance or corruption (*fasād*) that might present an obstacle to this goal. The comparison with medicine shows that politics was the subject of the same epistemological reflections on its status: is it a science

38 Al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Baṣā’ir wa l-ḍaḥā’ir* 9 (Beirut, 1999), pp. 146–147.

(*‘ilm*), in which axioms lead to certain conclusions and irrefutable forms of demonstration? Or is it an art (*ṣinā‘a*), based on appreciation for the temporal element and the appreciation of contingent factors, upon which the prince's action, prudence and perceptiveness depend? This extremely exciting component could be studied from metaphors taken by the art of governing from Galenic medicine, Aristotelian noetics, or Platonic psychology. Indeed, there are many sections in the mirrors for princes that deal with the virtues of the soul (*faḍā'il al-nafs*), self-government (*siyāsat al-nafs*), or the rules for self-conduct (*adab al-nafs*). All these texts combine noetic development (what is the soul?), with biological analyses (analogies between the political body and the human body; cardiocentrism and encephalocentrism), philosophical anthropology (what is happiness, and how can it be achieved?), and the concern to define political virtue (what does it mean to be a good citizen?). This leads to observations on the similarity between politics and medicine, which enjoy the same epistemological and cognitive status. However, this strong relationship between the two disciplines has several dimensions.

Some authors use parts of the human body, i.e. the object of the physician's knowledge, to describe government offices. According to al-‘Abbāsī for example, the prince is helped in his tasks by chamberlains who are like eyes, spies and intelligence-gatherers who are like ears, hands that are like soldiers, etc. In this metaphor, where certain parts of the body are compared to political functions, the prince is described as the soul of the body, which is the population, in order to emphasize the interdependence between the two elements:

The governed, says al-‘Abbāsī, cannot exist without the prince, just as the body cannot survive without the soul.³⁹

Another comparison refers not to the organicist aspects, but to the profession of politics as practiced by a City doctor. Inherited from the Plato's *Republic* where the King-Philosopher is the City's doctor, this point is present in different ways in the texts. In Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, for example, the prince must know the character of the people in order to choose the most appropriate remedy for the conduct of individuals. The comparison between politics and medicine is all the more relevant because the example chosen is that of the humors of the people (*mizāj*). This combines both physiological and bodily aspects (within the doctor's competence) and psychological and spiritual knowledge

39 Al-‘Abbāsī, *Āṭār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal* (Traces of the Ancients in the Preservation of the States) (Beirut, 1989), p. 58.

(linked to the competence of the prince, who instructs the people in virtue and reforms their morals).

Know, he said, that the king is to his subjects what the doctor is to the sick. If the patient's temperament is delicate, the doctor will soften the treatment; for him, he will make him swallow the unpleasant remedies in things of pleasant taste and will do his best to achieve his goal, which is to heal him. On the contrary, if the patient is of a harsh temperament, the doctor will apply violent, natural and energetic treatment. [...] To be able to discern these different states from each other, I mean to be able to recognize the temperament for which threats are sufficient without the need for prison, or for which prison is sufficient without the need for blows; this knowledge requires finesse of mind, accuracy of discernment, purity of heart, completed insight and perfect mental attention. For how difficult it is to distinguish the naturals; and the temperaments and characters, how difficult it is to untangle them!⁴⁰

Originating in the Hippocratic theory of humors, the comparison between politics and medicine is very frequent in mirrors for princes. However, Al-Balḥī's text goes beyond this metaphorical use to develop the analogy between the two sciences systematically, equating the postulates, purposes, and tools employed. In a certain way, the fact that a fifth cause has been added, specifying the appropriate instruments for good government, constitutes further rationalization of this practice. Through this trend, politics becomes an instrument of power, a tool for working on raw material, shaping it and polishing it according to well-defined plans. This representation of politics as a supreme *technè*, distinct from power (*sultān*) is made clear in the definition provided by Al-Ṭa'ālibī:

The *siyāsa* is the instrument (*āla*) and the tool (*adāt*) of power; it is on this that the organization of sovereignty (*mulk*) is based, and it is the cornerstone.⁴¹

These definitions establish the univocity of the *sultān* (power), which cannot be ignored due to its necessity, and the plurivocity of the *siyāsa* (politics), which, as an instrumental and contingent activity, may have widely differing positions and degrees, either in terms of the way it is exercised (good, bad; soft, violent) or

⁴⁰ Ibn al-Ṭīqṭaqā, *Al-Faḥrī*, p. 41, and French translation, p. 68.

⁴¹ Al-Ṭa'ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk* (The Conduct of kings), p. 31.

the constraints it is subjected to (security, the interests of subjects, the prince's interests, prosperity).

6 Conclusion

In this article, we have tried to analyze the main characteristics of a literary genre, the *ādāb sulṭāniyya*, which contains the major expression of political thought in Islam. We have shown to what extent it must not be confused with the purely philosophical tradition that extended Platonic philosophy to the land of Islam through the writers' reflections on the virtuous City and the Philosopher King (al-Fārābī, Avempace and Averroes). We have also explained how it should be distinguished from the work of theologians (treaties on the imamate) or lawyers (books on *aḥkām*, legal rules).⁴² The exploration of the nature of this genre has led us to affirm that its pillars are edifying narratives of great rulers and maxims of wisdom relating to the government of the self and others, and to show, from the perspective of the general history of political thought, the major centers of meaning that it conceals. Although the teachings in these texts concern the conservation of power, the art of war, and themes that Western authors of the 17th century subsumed under the concept of "Reason of State",— which testifies to a modernity before the letter, provoked in Europe by the Machiavellian shock wave—, the fact remains that the Arab mirrors for princes turn away from the question of the organization of power—its division, as well as the study of the constitutional forms in which it must take shape—to focus on governmental issues. Thus ethics and politics are inseparable, and politics is primarily defined by the governmental tasks that make it the art of "conducting the conduct of others".⁴³ This expression, by which Foucault wanted to show the genealogy of modern governmentality, which was established between the 16th and 18th centuries but whose roots go back to antiquity, meets the very meaning of the word *siyāsa* or its synonym *tadbīr*, which is the conduct of a thing or a being in order to achieve a virtuous end. *Siyāsa* is therefore understood as the global teleological activity that must be carried out in precise steps in order to achieve an end that transcends the particular tasks, and guides them towards a *telos* that merges with rectitude

42 This does not exclude the presence of texts in which these different elements are mingled. The purpose of these distinctions is not so much to describe rigid and closed molds as to show the diversity of the paths taken by different authors in understanding politics.

43 M. Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, trans. G. Burchell (Basingstoke, 2010), p. 4.

(*al-ṣalāh*), virtue (*al-faḍīla*), good (*al-ḥayr*), prosperity (*al-ʿumrān*) or justice (*al-ʿadl*). It is the art of guidance through forms of rationality that are finalized and constantly oriented towards the good of the governed (*masūs*), not of the ruler (*sāʿis*).

If the themes relating to the Reason of State are approached, as we have shown, in the art of war, this is not to teach the prince how to crush the people under his dominion, but to show him that this rationality should be integrated into a more general system centered on the realization of the interests of the governed. *Siyāsa* is the set of techniques, precepts, knowledge and modalities for directing power towards ends that go far beyond the simple logic of domination. One of the maxims used to account for it states that the conduct of the power to command is more difficult than the fact of commanding.⁴⁴ *Siyāsa* is therefore what, ontologically, fills an empty place called power and determines the relationships between the parties involved in these relationships. Also, although the political art can resort to violence, it is defined mainly as a way to control state violence and remove all claims to supremacy that are not the result of actions aimed at the good of the individual and the group. In this sense, politics integrates resistance to power, which, as the texts state, is most often blind and arbitrary; it is therefore a means of stopping the claim to indefinite growth and confinement in a purely tautological logic. “Anyone who is powerless in politics (*siyāsa*) cannot reach a preeminent rank (*rʾāsa*)”, says one of the political maxims. In promoting these fundamental concepts from this point of view, the Arab mirrors for princes join the Western tradition of “*ars regiminis*”, for despite their divergences and their distinct trajectories, the two traditions have made the distinction between dominating and ruling, reigning and guiding, one of the most fertile sources for reflection on the art of governing.⁴⁵

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44 See Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *Al-Faḥrī*, p. 57, French translation, p. 93.

45 On Western tradition and “*regimen*”, see Michel Senellart’s important book *Les arts de gouverner* (Paris, 1995), pp. 30–31, and comparisons we have drawn between these concepts in *Islam et politique à l’âge classique*, p. 53.

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Royal Power and Its Regulations: Narratives of Hārūn al-Rashīd in Three Mirrors for Princes

Louise Marlow

Although many mirrors for princes offer a certain amount of specific advice to their royal audiences, they characteristically present it in relation to universal and timeless principles of virtuous governance. They elaborate on these principles, of which justice is perhaps the primary example, by recourse to a diverse repertoire of scriptural quotations, moral teachings, historical narratives, wise maxims and verses of poetry, often presented with minimal attention to their spatial, temporal and circumstantial settings, in order to construct an image of the ideal ruler. Contemplation of these principles and of their applications in specific contexts, however, was a collaborative enterprise, entailing the participation of each writer and each audience, contemporary and posterior. It is this invitation to ponder continually the meanings of ancient wisdom, to interpret its relevance in ever new situations, that perhaps accounts for mirrors' enduring popularity throughout the premodern period in widely diverse environments. This essay explores constructions of the perfect ruler, and seeks to demonstrate that each presentation of the ideal responds to the particular conditions of the individual mirror's genesis. It suggests further that mirrors offer more than reflections; they constitute interventions, and are intended to effect change.

Taking three textual examples, this essay seeks to demonstrate that mirrors for princes, their predilection for de-historicised and universalised truisms notwithstanding, reflect and respond to the specific political and social conditions of their times. The three authors, two of whom composed their mirrors in Arabic while the third wrote in Persian, hailed from and resided in the eastern regions of Iran, and lived within the space of two centuries of one another. This relatively confined temporal and geographical frame facilitates comparison of the three authors' purposes and approaches. The essay explores the ways in which they shaped their narrative materials to direct their audiences' interpretations and applications of these stories to the environments in which they lived.¹

¹ The excellent studies in *Writing 'True Stories'*, ed. Papaconstantinou et al., detail several late antique and early medieval examples of authors' mouldings of exemplary stories to

The earliest of the mirrors to be considered is the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Pseudo-Māwardī. This Arabic mirror, traditionally attributed to Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī (364–450/974–1058), is likely to have been composed in the vicinity of Balkh, close to the River Oxus, and to date from the first half of the tenth century, when the Samanids (204–385/819–1005) held sway in Transoxiana and Khurasan. It seems probable that the unidentified author, a Mu‘tazilite *littérateur* linked with the Ḥanafī legal-intellectual tradition and the Kindian philosophical tradition, wrote his mirror, apparently unsolicited, primarily for the benefit of the Samanid Amīr Naṣr II b. Aḥmad (r. 301–31/914–43), although it is quite likely that he envisaged a regional and local audience as well. Pseudo-Māwardī’s mirror reflects a moment when the memory of the social and political upheavals attendant upon the heterodox movement known as the Mubayyiḍa or Safidjāmīgān, the “Wearers of White”, followers of al-Muqanna‘ (d. 163/779–80 or 166/782–3), remained strong in the Samanid domains; this memory, which informed contemporary anxieties surrounding religious dissent, found expression in the significant attention the movement received in Samanid historiography. A pre-occupation with the political dangers of heterodoxy characterises all three of the mirrors considered in this essay, and perhaps especially the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Pseudo-Māwardī, likely to have been composed during the period when the Isma‘īli movement, which would claim the allegiance of the Amīr Naṣr and several of his viziers and administrators, had achieved its greatest prominence at the Samanid court.²

The second mirror to be discussed in this chapter is the *Ādāb al-mulūk*, “Regulations for Kings”,³ of the well-known *littérateur* and philologist Abū Manṣūr ‘Abd al-Malik Muḥammad al-Tha‘ālibī (350–429/961–1038). Al-Tha‘ālibī, who spent his entire life in the eastern Islamic world, composed his *Ādāb al-mulūk* between 403/1012 and 407/1017 and dedicated it to the Khwārazmshāh ‘Abū l-‘Abbās Ma‘mūn II (r. 399–407/1009–17), who held court at Gurganj (= Ar. Jurjaniyya). Like Pseudo-Māwardī, al-Tha‘ālibī lived in an environment in which Persian rather than Arabic had emerged as the leading *lingua franca*, and at a time when contemporary authors were choosing that language as the medium for a prestigious literature in an increasing number of genres; yet al-Tha‘ālibī, like Pseudo-Māwardī, chose to compose his mirror in Arabic.

the conditions of their milieu; see especially Khalek, “He Was Tall and Slender”, and Bray, “Christian King, Muslim Apostate”.

2 In this summary, I follow the reading of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* that I have proposed in *Counsel for Kings: Wisdom and Politics in Tenth-Century Iran. The Naṣīḥat al-mulūk of Pseudo-Māwardī*, vols. 1 and 2 (Edinburgh, 2016). Other highly informative studies of this work include Ansari, “Yek andīsheh-nāmeḥ-yi siyāsī”, and Aḥmad, “Muqaddimat al-taḥqīq wa-l-dirāsa”.

3 On the meanings of *ādāb* (sg. *adab*) in this context, see Sadan, “*Ādāb* – règles de conduite et *ādāb* – dictions, maxims”.

Al-Tha'ālibī, who associated with al-Bīrūnī (362–after 442/973–after 1050) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) at Ma'mūn's court in Gurganj, apparently shared their preference for Arabic, in which he was immensely learned, as a glance at the topics covered in his oeuvre makes plain.⁴ Al-Tha'ālibī wrote his mirror at the request of Ma'mūn II, who, he informs us, instructed him to compose a book on the subject of governance, *siyāsa*.⁵ Pseudo-Māwardī and al-Tha'ālibī consciously and deliberately adopted a ten-chapter structure for their mirrors.⁶

The third mirror to be considered is the Persian *Naṣīhat al-mulūk* of or attributed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (450–505/1058–1111).⁷ The addressee of this text is a Seljuk ruler, referred to in the Persian version of the text as “King of the East” (*malik-i mashriq*), a possible allusion to Sanjar (r. 490–552/1097–1157 [as ruler of Khurasan], 511–52/1118–57 [as supreme sultan of the Seljuk family]), and in its Arabic translation, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīhat al-mulūk*, as “King of the East and West” (*malik al-sharq wa-l-gharb*), the latter identified in several manuscripts as Muḥammad b. Malikshāh (r. 498–511/1105–18).⁸ (The present article makes use of the Persian version of Ghazālī's mirror.) The authenticity of the mirror's attribution to Ghazālī remains a subject of scholarly disagreement; in this essay, it is assumed, following in large part the arguments advanced by Patricia Crone and Carole Hillenbrand, that Part I of *Naṣīhat al-mulūk* is the work of Ghazālī, while Part II is likely to have been a separate work, written by an unknown author.⁹ It is nevertheless important to note that *Naṣīhat*

4 On al-Tha'ālibī's writings, see Orfali, “Works of Abū Manṣūr al-Tha'ālibī”. It should be noted that neither Ibn Sīnā nor Bīrūnī wrote exclusively in Arabic, though both used that language for most of their writings, and the latter expressed reservations over Persian's fitness for certain types of written communication (see further Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, pp. 302–30).

5 Al-Tha'ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, p. 31. It is perhaps to this book that al-Tha'ālibī refers in *Ajnās al-tajnis*, p. 51.

6 On the popularity of this form for mirrors for princes, see Marlow, “Way of Viziers and Lamp of Commanders”, pp. 180–84.

7 Ghazālī composed several mirrors in various forms, some as independent texts and some as parts of his larger works. For some examples and discussion of his political writings, see Hillenbrand, “Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik?”; eadem, “A Little-Known Mirror for Princes by al-Ghazālī”; Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, pp. 111–24; Zakharia, “Al-Ghazālī, conseiller du prince”; Said, *Ghazālī's Politics in Context*, pp. 92–113; and for a fascinating discussion of an anonymous animal fable indebted to Ghazālī's political ideas, see Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, pp. 87–95.

8 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 1 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 3; al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, p. 84. See also Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, xvi–xvii.

9 Crone, “Did al-Ghazālī Write a Mirror for Princes?”; Hillenbrand, “Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik?”. While I agree with these scholars' conclusions regarding the authorship of *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, Glassen (*Der mittlere Weg*, pp. 87–93 and n. 66) and Safi (*Politics of Knowledge*, pp. 115–21) have articulated substantial arguments in studies that conclude in favour of Ghazālī's authorship of both parts of the text.

al-mulūk, in its two parts, has been received as a single text and as the work of Ghazālī at least since its translation into Arabic, which occurred early.¹⁰ For this reason the present essay discusses the entire text, though it distinguishes between Part I and Part II.¹¹

The three mirrors are known under the generic rubrics *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* and *ādāb al-mulūk*. These rubrics designate the subject matter and functions of the works to which they refer; they are not set “titles” announced by the authors. Pseudo-Māwardī refers to his motivation in writing when he describes his mirror “as an [offering of] counsel for kings (*naṣīḥatan lil-mulūk*) and as a demonstration of love for them (*iḥḥāran li-maḥabbatihim*), in solicitude for them and for their subjects (*ishfāqan ‘alā anfusihim wa-ra‘āyāhum*);¹² it is probable that a copyist or librarian adopted the phrase “counsel for kings”, which was eventually taken to represent a title. Al-Tha‘ālibī, unlike Pseudo-Māwardī, discusses his deliberations over the choice of a title for his mirror at some length. Having wished initially to call the work *al-Ma’mūnī*, after its recipient, he rejected the choice owing to the name’s having been taken already as the title of a work of theology. Then he considered the titles *al-Mulūkī* (“Royal”) and *Tuḥfat al-mamlūk wa-‘umdat al-mulūk* (“Gift of the Slave and Support of Kings”), the former of which, he avers, would be truthful and the latter not entirely untruthful; but he decided at length in favour of *al-Khwārazmshāhī*, a term that would emphasise and perpetuate the book’s associations with its illustrious addressee.¹³ In his discussion of possible titles, al-Tha‘ālibī never mentions the phrase *ādāb al-mulūk*; as in the case of Pseudo-Māwardī’s mirror, it is likely that a copyist or librarian applied the term to the work, probably for purposes of classification and easy retrieval.¹⁴ Ghazālī refrains from announcing a title for his mirror, which circulated under several “titles”;¹⁵ indeed, his text begins immediately, without explicit reference to the occasion or purpose

10 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, p. 84. Ghazālī’s mirror, which, as Ibn Khallikān (608–81/1211–82) points out explicitly, he composed only in Persian, was translated into Arabic by one of his followers, Ṣafī al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn al-Mubārak al-Irbilī (Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 4: 151, no. 159).

11 The importance of the mirror’s long reception as a single composition, by Ghazālī, is articulated thoughtfully in Zakharia, “Al-Ghazālī, conseiller du prince”, pp. 218–19. See also Figueroa’s discussion of the notion of “consistency” in relation to Ghazālī’s oeuvre (“Algunos aspectos del pensamiento político de Al-Ghazālī”).

12 Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, p. 45.

13 Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, p. 32.

14 The sole manuscript bears the heading *Kitāb Ādāb al-mulūk al-Khwārazmshāhī*[ī]; see the discussion of ‘Aṭīyya, “Muqaddimat al-taḥqīq”, pp. 17–18. For other titles applied to the text, see Orfali, “Works of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha‘ālibī”, p. 280.

15 For an example, see Gottheil, “A Supposed Work of al-Ghazālī”.

of its composition. The inclusion of the phrase *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* in the title of the Arabic translation of Ghazālī's Persian text confirms its currency as a generic marker, and Ibn Khallikān's reference to its translation into Arabic indicates that by the thirteenth century, when he wrote his *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, its designation as *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* was established.¹⁶

To explore these mirrors' navigations between idealised models of governance and contemporary circumstances, I shall discuss a series of narratives involving the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–93/786–809). The number of stories that feature this caliph is, of course, vast. I shall discuss the mirror-writers' uses of narratives that fall into three groups, according to the common themes and *topoi* that they deploy: firstly, the caliph's annual alternations of warfare and pilgrimage; secondly, his widely reported seeking of and responsiveness to exhortation; thirdly, his relationship with, and especially his summary dismissal from power of, the Barmakid family. All three of these topics feature prominently in contemporaneous constructions of the caliph's image; poets invoked and commemorated them in their verses, historians recorded large numbers of accounts (*akhbār*) that related germane episodes from differing perspectives. The first two themes contributed to the projection of an idealised religious image of the caliph.¹⁷ In this essay, I shall treat the narratives related to these themes in the three mirrors under study in turn, and strive to demonstrate that the three authors' selections, wordings and placement of their narratives suggest the specific inferences that they intended their respective audiences to infer.

1 Al-Rashīd's Annual Alternation of Warfare and Pilgrimage

Al-Rashīd was widely celebrated for his alternation by year of two meritorious activities: *jihād*, campaigning at the frontier, and *ḥajj*, participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca.¹⁸ His annual alternations recapitulated the pattern attributed to his contemporary, the *muhaddith* and warrior-renunciant

16 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 4: 151; see also al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-mashbūk*, where the translator refers to the book he has undertaken to translate as [*Kitāb*] *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (p. 83). For a discussion of the different connotations of *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* and *akhlāq al-mulūk*, as well as their generic and titular usages, see Zakharia, "Al-Ghazālī, conseiller du prince".

17 El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 21–31.

18 See Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*, p. 65; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, p. 28.

‘Abdallāh Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797).¹⁹ Narratives that invoke Hārūn’s display of one or both of these two emblems of leadership of the Muslim community appear in Pseudo-Māwardī’s, al-Tha‘ālibī’s and Ghazālī’s mirrors.

In his seventh chapter, devoted to the governance of the common people (*siyāsat al-‘amma*), Pseudo-Māwardī relates a well-known narrative set in the context of al-Rashīd’s military campaigning at the Byzantine frontier. The event to which the narrative refers occurred in 187/803, when, having been defeated at the Anatolian city of Heraclea, the Byzantine Emperor Nikephorus negotiated a truce with Hārūn, but promptly broke it; confident that the exceptionally cold weather would prevent the caliph from returning to march against him, Nikephorus raided the Muslim frontier territory and took a number of prisoners.²⁰

Pseudo-Māwardī recounts a brief narrative related to this episode in his treatment of ten responsibilities that rulers bear towards their subjects. Under the heading of the second royal responsibility, preservation of the subjects’ lands from external enemies and internal rebels and promotion of their prosperity and wellbeing, Pseudo-Māwardī writes:

It has reached us concerning the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd that he set out by night during one of his journeys and military expeditions (*fī ba‘ḍ asfārihi wa-ghazawāthi*). Snow was falling, and it caused him great hardship. One of his companions said to him, “Will you not consider, O Commander of the Faithful, the hardship (*jahd*) that we are in, while the subjects are at rest?” He said, “Be quiet. It is for them to sleep and for us to keep vigil: the shepherd must keep his flock and suffer for them”.

Concerning this episode, Abū Muḥammad [‘Abdallāh] al-Taymī²¹ said:

Shafts and lances stood erect at your wrath
When you stirred again for the support (*nuṣra*) of Islam
Your subjects slept in the shadows made spacious by your justice
While you remained sleepless, keeping vigil over the subjects, sleeping
in happy oblivion.²²

19 See Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History*, pp. 97–117; Tor, *Violent Order*, pp. 42–43; Melchert, “Asceticism”.

20 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 307–10 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 240–41. See Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*, pp. 80–81.

21 On this poet and his intervention in this episode, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 308–09 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 241 and n. 838, 243.

22 Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 258–9. Cf. Bray, “A Local Mirror for Princes”, from whose discussion part of this translation is drawn (p. 42).

In al-Ṭabarī's account of these events, the poet's intervention forms an integral part of the narrative; not merely an act of laudatory commemoration of al-Rashīd's celebrated victory against Nikephorus, al-Taymī's verse performed the strategic function of informing the caliph, who had already returned as far as Raqqa, that the Byzantine emperor had broken his agreement.²³ Pseudo-Māwardī's report of this episode, however, occurs in the context of his exposition of the ruler's duty to guarantee his subjects' security against external or internal foes, and provides an exemplary case of royal dedication to this duty. It depicts the caliph, used to comfort and luxury, as the willing sufferer of extreme physical hardship for the sake of his subjects' security; his commanders' reluctance to endure these conditions highlights further the caliph's exceptional commitment to the tireless defence of his people. For Pseudo-Māwardī's audience, the narrative perhaps brought to mind the Samanid Amīr Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad (r. 279–95/892–907), who also campaigned frequently at the (eastern) frontier, and who reportedly endured acute bodily discomfort, including long exposure to conditions of rain and snow, in order to maintain his subjects' access to his person for the redress of grievances; such stories of devotion to the cause of justice for the least of his subjects contributed significantly to the shaping of the Amīr's royal persona.²⁴

In *Ādāb al-mulūk*, al-Tha'ālibī includes an account of the same episode, complete with al-Taymī's verse. His account appears in his first chapter; it is, in fact, the first narrative to appear in the mirror. Al-Tha'ālibī begins his chapter with the assertion that princely rule proceeds by divine mandate. This mandate requires the ruler above all to protect the life and property of his subjects against threats, whether internal or external to the kingdom.²⁵ This proposition echoes Pseudo-Māwardī's second royal duty. Al-Tha'ālibī, however, places

23 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 308 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 241–42, where al-Taymī alludes to the obligation (*farīda*) placed upon the people to offer "good counsel" (*nuṣḥ*) to the Imam. The verses cited by Pseudo-Māwardī do not appear in al-Ṭabarī's lengthy quotations from al-Taymī's verse on this occasion; in fact, in al-Hamadhānī's continuation of al-Ṭabarī's work, the incident and the verses (unattributed) appear in association with 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb rather than Hārūn (al-Hamadhānī, *Takmilat Ta'rikh al-Ṭabarī*, 1: 189). Ibn al-Jawzī relates the account, with the (unattributed) verses, in connection with al-Rashīd (*al-Miṣbāḥ al-muḍīr*, p. 275).

24 See, for example, Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, p. 69; Niẓām al-Mulḥ, *Siyar al-mulūk*, pp. 28–29 = Darke, *Book of Government*, pp. 21–22; Mīrkhwānd, *Rawzat al-ṣafā'*, 4: 36. Pseudo-Māwardī praises Ismā'īl for his campaigning, humility, high aspiration, support for the external dimensions of the religious law, clemency towards the subjects, fear of God, observance of religious precepts, and avid pursuit of justice and right (*Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 107).

25 Al-Tha'ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, pp. 33–35.

the narrative in the context of an exposition of the high status and exceptional circumstances of kings. He writes:

I have said many a time, and am pleased to have it recounted from me, that, while the circumstances of kings are elevated, their commands effective and their way of living conducive to contentment, their burdens are many, their troubles onerous and their tribulations great. Any one who reflects upon their affairs by the light of his intellect should not overestimate the abundance of their resources, for they are obliged to (use them to) protect and defend their subjects, and their burdens are double the weight of the bounty that their situation in life bestows upon them. Nor should the person who considers the lot of kings underestimate the (responsibility placed upon them by) the common people: it may occur that while the people are asleep, persons who wish to impede their freedom (*hurriyya*) will appear; that while they are resting, persons will strive to fan the flames of discontent. In such cases, the wealth that the king has amassed is converted into necessary supplies for the subjects' defence against the onslaught of their enemies. It is spent in confronting the adversities that kings face, and in strengthening their supporters, whom they must neither abandon nor envy. How remarkable was al-Rashīd, on the occasion when he had embarked on one of his journeys (*fī ba'd asfārihi*)! Snow was falling constantly, and he was caught in it at night. One of his companions said to him, "Will you not consider, O Commander of the Faithful, the hardship (*jahd*), exertion (*naṣab*) and discomfort of travel (*wa'thā' al-safar*) that we are undergoing, while the subjects are at peace, resting and asleep?" He said, "Be quiet. It is for them to sleep and for us to keep vigil: the shepherd must keep his flock and suffer for them".

In this vein Abū Muḥammad al-Taymī said, in an ode for al-Rashīd:

Shafts and lances stood erect at your wrath
 When you stirred again for the support of Islam
 Your subjects slept in the shadows made spacious by your justice
 While you remained sleepless, keeping vigil over the sleepers' oblivion.²⁶

²⁶ *Ādāb al-mulūk*, pp. 34–35. The translation of al-Rashīd's riposte again follows Bray, "A Local Mirror", p. 42.

Both Pseudo-Māwardī and al-Tha‘ālibī adduce their narratives to illustrate the absolute nature of kings’ responsibility to ensure the subjects’ security, and the high reputation that their dedication to this duty earns them. By its placement in his text, however, al-Tha‘ālibī’s narration acquires a slightly defensive aspect that is absent from Pseudo-Māwardī’s sparser telling: as if against imputed accusations of physical indulgence and irresponsibility, al-Tha‘ālibī positions his account in an exposition of the onerous physical as well as moral burden that kings bear, a burden that offsets their seemingly boundless riches and comfort. *Jihād* was not a prominent feature of the Kh^wārazmshāh Ma‘mūn II’s military activities, a point perhaps relevant to al-Tha‘ālibī’s failing to mention the militant nature of al-Rashīd’s nocturnal travels.²⁷ Instead, al-Tha‘ālibī deploys the story to buttress his presentation of the divine mandate for princely rule. To underline this intended reception of the narrative, al-Tha‘ālibī follows this passage with a selection of Qur’ānic quotations, adduced in an associative manner and similarly intended to consolidate kings’ unique position in the divinely ordered universe.²⁸

In the Persian *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, Ghazālī narrates an account in which Hārūn appears in a posture that suggests his other characteristic activity, participation in the pilgrimage. The image of al-Rashīd engaged in humble, sincere and intense prayers of supplication at the Ka‘ba, the most powerfully sacred point of the earth, represents a *topos* that often appears in the narratives associated with his frequent pilgrimages. Part I of Ghazālī’s *Naṣīhat al-mulūk* presents a description of the “tree” of faith, its roots (sg. *aṣl*) made up of ten principles of belief, and its branches made up of the actions that issue from belief, also treated under ten headings.²⁹ The narrative in question appears under the rubric of the second principle of the branches of the tree of faith, namely, that the ruler should perpetually seek the company of scholars of religion (*‘ulamā-yi dīn*) and listen to their counsel (*naṣīhat*). Ghazālī recounts:

A great man (*yakī az buzurgān*) saw Hārūn al-Rashīd standing bareheaded and barefooted on the hot gravel at ‘Arafāt. He had raised his hands and was saying: “O Lord God, You are You and I am I. My occupation is to be ever involving myself in sin, Yours to be always engaged in forgiving. Have

27 On the Ma‘mūnids, see Bartold, *Turkestan*, pp. 275–78; Bosworth, “Kh^wārazm-Shāhs”.

28 As Julia Bray has noted, these Qur’ānic phrases in fact provide little support for his thesis (“Local Mirror”, pp. 33, 42).

29 After the roots and branches, Part I describes the two “springs” that water the tree of faith, the first of which is knowledge of the lower world, detailed in ten analogies, and the second of which is knowledge of the last breath, treated in five narratives.

mercy upon me!" The great men said: "(See) how the all-powerful ruler of the earth (*jabbār-i zamān*) is supplicating the Omnipotent Ruler of the heavens (*jabbār-i āsmān*)!"³⁰

This anecdote appears after a sequence of narratives that depict other exemplary monarchs, such as ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99–101/717–20), who, in Ghazālī's portrayal, were, like al-Rashīd, exceptionally amenable to counsel, and repented. The account locates Hārūn's supplication at ʿArafāt, where pilgrims spend the day of 9th Dhū l-Ḥijja in prayer, meditation and spiritual companionship. Although Ghazālī places this narrative in a section that exhorts rulers to heed the advice of religious scholars, it features Hārūn alone. It nevertheless depicts the caliph's sense of mortality and his personal humility before God – qualities highlighted in the large number of narratives that display al-Rashīd's receptivity to religious exhortation. For Ghazālī's audience, it is likely that the account summoned images of the caliph's searches for improving counsel, which form the subject of the following section.

2 Al-Rashīd's Responsiveness to Exhortation

Numerous narratives portray Hārūn as an eager seeker of edifying advice, characteristically from religious scholars and renunciants.³¹ Although many scholars and renunciants eschewed contact with rulers, there remained a substantial number, including several figures of great prestige and eminence, who were willing to associate with and offer counsel to them. Indeed, Ghazālī himself was deeply involved in political life, and composed mirrors for caliphs and, as the case of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* shows, sultans, even after his decision to leave Baghdad and pursue the ideal of a secluded life (*uzla*) in Khurasān.³² As Tayeb El-Hibri has written, most of the early Abbasid caliphs are credited with piety in their demeanour, deference to mainstream religious principles and admiration for spiritual figures; but the stories of al-Rashīd's "scrupulous observance of the tenets of Islam, and ... [sensitivity] ... to the mildest words of religious

30 Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, p. 35 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 22; al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, p. 110. See further Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 312, 357. In my translations from the Persian text, I have referred to, and often adopted, Bagley's wordings, sometimes with certain modifications.

31 On the occurrence and typology of these narratives, see El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 25–31; Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, pp. 45, 154–87.

32 See Garden, *The First Islamic Reviver*, pp. 17–29; Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, pp. 49–59.

advice” far outnumber those ascribed to other Abbasid caliphs.³³ Al-Ṭabarī (224–310/839–923) reports numerous narratives in which Hārūn al-Rashīd solicits and responds with marked emotion, usually copious weeping, to moral exhortation,³⁴ and the historian and polymath al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) reports that the philologist al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 213/828) encountered the caliph, shortly before he died, in floods of tears, occasioned by his stumbling upon some inscribed verses of the poet Abū l-ʿAtāhiya (d. c. 210/825), who, after years of service as a court poet, abandoned the composition of love poetry and panegyric for *zuhdiyyāt*, ascetic verse.³⁵

Al-Thaʿālibī, who was neither a religious scholar nor seeking to instruct his patron and addressee in religious matters, did not include a narrative of this kind in *Ādāb al-mulūk*. But Pseudo-Māwardī, who was well versed in religious matters and seeking to coax his royal audience away from heterodoxy and towards a rationalist approach to religious belief and practice, includes several narratives that deploy the *topos* of the ruler who seeks and is moved by the advice and admonition of a spiritual figure. He relates a sequence of such accounts in his first chapter, “On urging the acceptance of counsels”. Having expounded six reasons why kings are especially appropriate recipients of counsel and admonition, he warns the king against deceitful and self-interested advisers, possibly a reference to the viziers who surrounded Naṣr II, who had acceded to the throne at the impressionable age of eight.³⁶ To develop his argument, he adduces examples of rulers who had resisted self-interested persons’ efforts to manipulate them through deceit and flattery, and had sought and heeded improving counsel, which pointed out their faults to them and urged them to correct them. After quoting an eclectic set of *ḥadīth*, maxims and *sententiae*, Pseudo-Māwardī relates a series of *akhbār* in which the Abbasid caliphs al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75) and Hārūn al-Rashīd solicit and respond to the counsel of men of religious excellence and personal austerity. In Pseudo-Māwardī’s narrations, these accounts appear as abbreviated, allusive indicators of royal humility, even in the face of criticism. After narratives that feature the Caliph al-Manṣūr with Sufyān al-Thawrī (97–161/716–78), the specialist in exegesis, law and Prophetic tradition, and ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd

33 El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, p. 25.

34 Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 8: 347; 347–59 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 306, 305–25; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 6: 217–21. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (b. 284/897, d. shortly after 360/971) describes Hārūn as exceptionally responsive to exhortation: *wa-kāna al-Rashīd min aghzar al-nās dumūʿan fī waqt al-mawʿiza* (*Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 4: 104). See also Ibn Khaldūn: *The Muqaddimah*, 1: 33; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 25–31.

35 *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 366–67. On the genre of *zuhdiyyāt*, see Hamori, “Ascetic Poetry”.

36 Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 49–51.

(80–144/699–761), the ascetically inclined theologian linked with the beginnings of the Mu‘tazila,³⁷ he relates an example in which Hārūn seeks counsel from the Kufan traditionist and frequent preacher (*wā‘iz*) at the Abbasid court, Ibn al-Sammāk (d. 183/799):³⁸

Hārūn al-Rashīd said to Ibn al-Sammāk, “Admonish me”. He replied, “Know that that you are not the first caliph to die”. The caliph said, “Admonish me further”. Ibn al-Sammāk said, “Had those who came before you not died, then that which you now enjoy would not have passed to you”. He said, “Tell me more”. The renunciant then recited in verse,

Miserable wretch, do you aspire to live forever?
 Are you troubled lest the hand of fate should seize you?
 By God, fate has a messenger who, once
 He reaches you, will not release you
 It is as if the earth were already piling up over you
 And the mourners were dividing up your wealth
 Depart, then, from the world in salutary and sound condition
 And shrug off the earthly things that now compel you
 For you will leave nothing behind among the people
 And will be accompanied by nothing but your deeds.³⁹

Such were the early kings. Alexander frequently asked the philosophers to supply him on his journeys with (wisdom) to which he could have recourse in his sovereignty, and he constantly wrote to his teacher Aristotle, who replied to him with admonitions and conveyed counsels to him.⁴⁰

In this narrative, as in his narrative of Hārūn’s weathering of harsh wintery conditions for the sake of his subjects’ welfare, Pseudo-Māwardī employs

37 Although Sufyān al-Thawrī is sometimes reported to have eschewed all association with power, both he and ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd often appear in the role of admonishing counsellor; see, for example, al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 302–03; van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 2: 280–310; Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong*, pp. 50–67 and passim.

38 Ibn al-Sammāk likewise appears in many anecdotes with the caliph; see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 357 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 322; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta’rīkh Baghdād*, 5: 368–73; al-Ṭurtūshī, *Sirāj al-mulūk*, 1: 120. El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 24, 26, 27.

39 Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 58. The poem, by Abū l-‘Atāhiya (see *Abū l-‘Atāhiya: ash‘āruhu wa-akhbārūhu*, p. 273, no. 290), appears in various versions; the version recorded in al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā*, 3: 242, is similar but not identical to the text produced in Pseudo-Māwardī’s *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*.

40 Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 58.

a prosimetric form in which the prose of the *khavar* involving Hārūn and Ibn al-Sammāk is followed, in a process of associative development, by a well-known poetic meditation. The verses alter the register of the passage, detach it from the individuals named in the prose narrative and transform its sentiment of *memento mori* into eternal and universal wisdom. This shift facilitates Pseudo-Māwardī's invocation of the early kings, and his reference to Alexander and Aristotle as paradigmatic exemplars of the relationship of receptive ruler and sage counsellor. He then moves to the conclusion of his chapter, in which he observes that sincere advice, impartially delivered, should not be expected to coincide with rulers' immediate desires. The entire chapter is intended to prepare the mirror's audience for the critical counsel that will follow, and models the humble response that the virtuous monarch displays.

In Part I of his Persian *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, Ghazālī also relates several narratives that depict Hārūn al-Rashīd as a seeker of counsel.⁴¹ Indeed, with 'Umar I b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–44) and 'Umar II b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Hārūn is one of the royal figures most frequently invoked in Part I. 'Umar I and 'Umar II also appear repeatedly in Part II, where, however, it is Anūshīrvān who predominates among the author's exemplary royal figures,⁴² and Hārūn, as the following section will show, figures only in an incidental and ambiguous manner.

In Part I of *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, Ghazālī relates two narratives in which Hārūn appears as the quintessential representative of royal power tempered by self-control and humility. In both cases he solicits counsel from a renunciant, who somewhat reluctantly supplies it, in a series of terse pronouncements. Like Ghazālī's *khavar* concerning Hārūn's prayer at 'Arafāt, the two narratives involving renunciants appear one directly after the other under the heading of the second principle of the branches of the tree of faith, that is, the embodied enactments that proceed from the ten principles that comprise the root of faith, namely knowledge and belief. This second principle, as previously mentioned, is that the ruler should constantly seek the company of men of religion

41 The *Maqāmāt*, the authorship of which, like that of *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, is open to question, but which Zakharia counts among Ghazālī's works of advice ("Al-Ghazālī, conseiller du prince", p. 227), consists of eighty-two *akhbār*, which depict the *topos* of the king overcome (often with tears) by the admonition of a sage (p. 228). Hārūn and Mu'āwiya figure with particular frequency in these narratives (p. 230).

42 See the several narratives clustered in Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 114–21 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, pp. 65–69, where the sequence follows narratives concerning Anūshīrvān, and passim.

and request their counsel; he should also avoid scholars who, by flattery and deceit, aim to manipulate him.⁴³

In the first example, Hārūn appears with the celebrated renunciant Shaqīq-i Balkhī (Shaqīq b. Ibrāhīm al-Zāhid al-Balkhī, d. 194/810), and addresses him as “Shaqīq the Renunciant” (Shaqīq-i Zāhid). Shaqīq denies the epithet (he belonged, in fact, to a wealthy family in Balkh; he engaged in lucrative commerce, owned three hundred villages in Balkh, and possessed a fortune of 600,000 dirhams).⁴⁴ When the caliph asks him for advice (*pand*), he responds by invoking the examples of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and calls on Hārūn to emulate them:

God on High has seated you in the place where the Truthful (Ṣiddīq = Abū Bakr, r. 11–13/632–4) sat, and demands from you the same truthfulness (*ṣidq*) as from him. He has set you in the place of the Discerning (Fārūq = ‘Umar I b. al-Khaṭṭāb, r. 13–23/634–44), and demands from you the same discernment between right and wrong (*farq ... miyān-i haqq-o bāṭil*) as from him. He has put you in the position of (‘Uthmān of) the Two Lights (Dhū l-Nūrayn, = ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, r. 23–35/644–56), and demands from you the same modesty (*sharm*) and generosity (*karam*) as from him. He has placed you in the station of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (r. 35–40/656–61), and demands from you knowledge (*‘ilm*) and justice (*‘adl*), as he possessed.⁴⁵

When, following a common structure in narratives involving rulers and renunciants, as Pseudo-Māwardī’s *khavar* also indicated, Hārūn requests further *pand*, Shaqīq responds:

God on High owns a house (*sarāy*) called Hell, and He has made you the door-keeper (*darbān*) of that house. (At the same time) He has given you three things: the Public Treasury (*bayt al-māl*), the sword (*shamshīr*), and the whip (*tāziyāneh*). He has told you to keep people out of Hell with these three things. When a needy petitioner comes to you, do not deny him access to the Public Funds; when a person disobeys God’s commands, chastise him with the whip, and when one person wrongfully kills another, put him to death with the sword if that is the demand of the murdered person’s executor (*valī*). Unless you do these things, you

43 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 27 = Bagley, *Ghazālī’s Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 19.

44 Al-Nasafī, *al-Qand fi dhikr ‘ulamā’ Samarqand*, p. 238; Vā’iz, *Faṣā’il-i Balkh*, pp. 130, 131.

45 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 28 = Bagley, *Ghazālī’s Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 19.

will be foremost among the denizens of Hell, and other (rulers) will replace you.⁴⁶

At Hārūn's reiterated request that he continue, Shaqīq likens him to a fountain and his officials to the streams that flow from it:

You are a fountain (*chashmeh*), and the other officials (*'ummāl*) are streams (*jūy*) (which flow from it). If the fountain is clear, there can be no damage from silt in the channels; if the fountain is turbid, there will be no hope (of maintaining) the channels.⁴⁷

In the second example, Ghazālī relates a narrative in which Hārūn seeks the advice of another celebrated renunciant and transmitter of *ḥadīth*, Fuḏayl-i 'Iyād (d. 187/803).⁴⁸ Several accounts report Fuḏayl's meetings with al-Rashīd, his sermons for him and their striking effects on the caliph.⁴⁹ In Ghazālī's narration, al-Rashīd, in the company of his frequent companion, the poet 'Abbās (= al-'Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf, c. 133–92/750–807)⁵⁰ and members of his inner circle (*khavāṣṣ*), reaches Fuḏayl's abode at night, and as they approach, they hear the renunciant reciting the Qur'ān:

Do those who seek evil think that We shall make them equal in life and death to those who believe and do good? How bad is the judgement that they make! [45:21]. The meaning of this verse (*ma'nā-yi in āyat ān ast*) [in Persian] is: Do those who do evil deeds (*kār-hā-yi bad*) suppose that We shall treat them equally with those who believe and do good deeds (*kār-hā-yi nīkū*? They judge ill.⁵¹

46 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 28 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 19.

47 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 28–29 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, pp. 19–20. See also al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, pp. 104–05; Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, 308, 399 (Arabic).

48 See Chabbi, "Fuḏayl b. 'Iyād"; Tor, "al-Fuḏayl b. 'Iyād".

49 Chabbi, "Fuḏayl b. 'Iyād", esp. pp. 343–44; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 25, 27 n. 30; Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, p. 45.

50 See Blachère, "al-'Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf"; Enderwitz, "al-'Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf".

51 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 29 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 20. For the Qur'ānic passages cited in this essay, I have adopted the translation of Ahmed Ali (*Al-Qur'ān: A Contemporary Translation*, p. 428).

The incorporation into the *khobar* of a Qur'ānic verse constitutes a significant detail: Fuḏayl is reported to have wept copiously whenever he heard the name of God uttered or the Qur'ān being recited.⁵² Hārūn observes that the audition of this verse conveys counsel (*pand*) enough, but proceeds to order 'Abbās to knock at Fuḏayl's door. When 'Abbās announces the presence of the Commander of the Faithful, Fuḏayl asks what business the caliph might have in approaching him? 'Abbās, tellingly a poet known for his amatory verse, commands the renunciant to show obedience to the caliph, and to open the door. Fuḏayl, setting down a lantern, opens the door, and in the dark, the hands of the caliph and the renunciant touch one another. Fuḏayl exclaims at the softness of Hārūn's hand, and expresses the fear that it will suffer divine punishment, unless God should spare it. He admonishes Hārūn to prepare for the day when he will find himself the equal of every Muslim, and will be called upon to answer before God for his justice towards each one of his subjects. Hārūn weeps. When 'Abbās cautions Fuḏayl lest his harsh words should cause the caliph to die from the force of his emotion, Fuḏayl addresses the courtier as Hāmān, Pharaoh's minister, and asserts that 'Abbās and his kind have already slain the caliph, by making him a Pharaoh, the paradigmatic wicked monarch of the Qur'ān.⁵³ Finally, Hārūn implores Fuḏayl to accept a gift of lawful funds, but Fuḏayl refuses, calling on Hārūn only to take refuge in the Lord.⁵⁴

In this pair of narratives, Ghazālī deploys several *topoi* to display the virtue of royal humility. His purpose is to urge the ruler, in emulation of the examples he adduces, to acknowledge his subservience to an extrinsic moral authority, and to constrain his use of power accordingly. The narratives involving Hārūn and the renunciants take as their central structural feature the *topos* of the vastly powerful ruler who, of his own accord, seeks admonition and submits to censure from a reticent renunciant able, through his detachment from worldly concerns, to speak honestly, without fear of or concern for the consequences of his words. The first narrative omits mention of Hārūn's response to Shaqīq's exhortation. The second narrative includes the detail of Hārūn's weeping, his characteristic response in narratives of the caliph-scholar or caliph-renunciant type.

52 Tor, "Fuḏayl b. 'Iyād"; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, p. 25. On the practice of weeping, especially in the course of reciting or listening to the Qur'ān, see Melchert, "Exaggerated Fear", pp. 288–90.

53 For the Qur'ānic references to Hāmān, linked with Pharaoh and sometimes with Qārūn as well, see Q. 28:6, 8, 38; 29:39–40; 40:24, 36. Compare Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong*, p. 65, where Sufyān al-Thawrī addresses al-Manṣūr's chamberlain as Hāmān.

54 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 29–30 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 20. See also al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk*, pp. 106–07; Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 309 and 355, 400 (Arabic).

The second narrative includes the *topos* of the intermediary, the poet al-‘Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf, a suitable foil to the renunciant Fuḏayl on account of his reputation for amatory verse, his close ties to the caliphal court and his enjoyment of its pleasures.⁵⁵ In another trope, Fuḏayl’s refusal of the caliph’s gift, despite assurances of its legality, displays the incorruptibility that only withdrawal from public life made possible;⁵⁶ the narrative contrasts the incalculable abundance of royal wealth with the spiritual riches of the renunciant. The narratives convey Ghazālī’s message that power, unless tempered by voluntary restraint, leads to moral as well as physical and political corruption.

Ghazālī concludes this section of his mirror, devoted to the second principle entailed in the branches of the tree of faith, with the exhortation that the ruler should keep these narratives (*ḥikāyathā*) in his mind’s eye and accept their counsels (*pandhā*), which have been delivered to other sovereigns before him. He should seek counsel from every scholar whom he meets.

Additionally, every scholar who gives counsel (*pand*) to kings should offer the sort of advice displayed in the narratives. In other words, the scholar-counsellor should not withhold the truth (*kalimeh-yi haqq*) and should abstain from deceitful flattery (*ghurūr*), for these qualities render him complicit in tyranny (*ẓulm*).⁵⁷ Ghazālī, the scholar who expended considerable efforts in advising caliphs and sultans, urges his colleagues to acknowledge their duty to follow his example. Both Pseudo-Māwardī and Ghazālī, the first a Mu‘tazilite rationalist and the second an Ash‘arite theologian, make extensive use of the figure of al-Rashīd to project for their contemporary audiences an idealised state in which ruler and men of religion supported one another, the former deferring to the latter in religious matters and the latter not shrinking from their responsibility to offer moral guidance to the former.

3 Al-Rashīd and the Fall of the Barmakids

The Barmakids, individually and collectively, figure in all three of the mirrors under consideration in this essay. Pseudo-Māwardī’s *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* and al-Tha‘ālibī’s *Ādāb al-mulūk* include narratives concerning Hārūn al-Rashīd’s

55 On al-‘Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf’s life and poetry, see Enderwitz, *Liebe als Beruf*. For further examples and analysis of such worldly intermediaries, see El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 24, 26, 27.

56 Chabbi recounts a similar narrative in which Fuḏayl refuses the caliph’s recompense for his exhortation (“Fuḏayl b. ‘Iyāḍ”, p. 344).

57 Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, p. 35 = Bagley, *Ghazālī’s Book of Counsel for Kings*, pp. 22–23.

dismissal of the Barmakids from their positions of power, a sequence of events that included his execution of Ja'far b. Yahyā al-Barmakī (150–87/767–803).⁵⁸ In Part 11 of *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, Ghazālī devotes greater attention to the Barmakids, especially Yahyā b. Khālīd b. Barmak (115 or 199–90/733 or 737–805), father of Ja'far, than to al-Rashīd. The Barmakids, who hailed from Balkh, entered the service of the caliphs in the early Abbasid period, and became intimately interconnected with the Abbasid family.⁵⁹ Under Hārūn al-Rashīd, they rose to the highest levels of power in the caliphate before the caliph caused their sudden fall in 187/803. The fall of the Barmakids generated countless accounts, many of which highlight one or both of two prominent perspectives: portrayal of the episode as a paradigmatic instance of the capriciousness of royal power and the dangers of proximity to it; and exploration of the perils attendant upon passionate love, in connection with Hārūn's intensely close relationship with Ja'far b. Yahyā and with Ja'far's marriage, at the caliph's behest, to the latter's sister al-'Abbāsa.⁶⁰ The relationship between Hārūn and Ja'far provides an illustration of an individual whose elevation, despite his merits, was dependent upon royal favour. Such royal attachments aroused a mixture of anxieties, not only with regard to the protégé, whose position and even life were subject to the monarch's volatile passions, but also with regard to the king, whose excessive and uncontrolled passion exposed him to the transgression of rational boundaries and loss of control of his kingdom, perhaps to the very protégé whom he had elevated. The two perspectives focus on the arbitrary exercise of royal power and the perilous consequences, personal and political, of unrestrained passion. As Jocelyne Dakhlia has demonstrated, it provided authors and their audiences with fruitful material for the examination, criticism and (implicit) rejection of the autocratic exercise of power.⁶¹ Pseudo-Māwardī, al-Tha'libī

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- 58 Like his brother al-Faḍl b. Yahyā (148–93/765–808) a leading administrator and provincial governor, Ja'far was also tutor to the future caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 189–218/813–33). On the Barmakids, including Ja'far, see Van Bladel, "Barmakids"; 'Abbās, "Barmakids"; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 17–58; Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*, pp. 37–44, 62–65; id., *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, pp. 132–47.
- 59 El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 31–51. Ibn Khallikān's entries for Yahyā b. Khālīd and Ja'far b. Yahyā convey several elements of this close relationship (*Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 1: 328–41, 6: 219–29). On the foster relationship between the families, see also Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*, pp. 41–42.
- 60 Drawing on al-Ṭabarī's treatment (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 287–302 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 201–30), Dakhlia has studied four interpretations of the Barmakids' fall; see *L'empire des passions*, pp. 40–47. On the theme of passionate love and its relevance, see especially al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3: 368–87; Meisami, "Mas'ūdī on Love and the Fall of the Barmakids"; Sadan, "Death of a Princess"; Dakhlia, *L'empire des passions*, pp. 15–16.
- 61 Dakhlia, *L'empire des passions*. I have drawn on Dakhlia's study in formulating several of the points raised in this paragraph.

and Ghazālī all employed narratives related to al-Rashīd and the Barmakids to participate in this multifaceted discourse.

Pseudo-Māwardī invokes and refers to the Barmakids, individually and collectively, at various points in his mirror, in generally favourable contexts.⁶² In a treatment of the cardinal qualities that the ruler should cultivate, he relates a narrative that comments on Hārūn al-Rashīd's decision in 187/803 to order the execution of Ja'far b. Yaḥyā:

Among the qualities (that the ruler should cultivate) is circumspection in difficult matters (*al-tathabbut fī l-umūr al-mushkila*), seeking clarification in obscure situations, and the adoption of deliberation and slowness to action (*isti'māl al-ta'annī wa-l-tu'ada*). God has commanded such conduct in His Book, since He said, "If a dissolute person (*fāsiq*) brings some news, verify it first lest you attack a people ignorantly and later regret what you had done" (49: 6) He also said to His Prophet, "Do not try to anticipate the Qur'ān before the completion of its revelation" (20: 114).⁶³ It is related from the Prophet that he said, "Haste is from Satan, and deliberation is from God".

The king's unrushed deliberation in matters should not be due to stupidity or laziness, but rather to reflection and caution, so that he may avoid the slips to which the hasty person is prone and the failure that befalls the negligent, and out of desire to achieve the rational person's confidence in his judgement (*raghbatan fī iṣābat al-'āqil*). It is related from the Prophet that he said, "If you wish to accomplish an affair, reflect on its consequences; if it proceeds according to rectitude (*rushd*), then pursue it; if it deviates into transgression (*ghayy*), then abandon it".

It is related from Qutham b. Ja'far b. Sulaymān that Ḥusayn al-Khādim said to him, "I testify by God, I was with al-Rashīd on one occasion. He was clinging to the coverings (*astār*) of the Ka'ba, and I was so close to him that my clothes touched his clothes and my hand his hand. He was saying in his private supplication to His Lord: "O Lord God, I beg for guidance regarding the execution of Ja'far b. Yaḥyā [the Barmakid]". Five or six years after that, he killed him".⁶⁴

62 See, for example, Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 224, 363–64.

63 I have adopted Ali's translations for the Qur'ānic quotations in this passage (*Al-Qur'ān: A Contemporary Translation*, pp. 443, 273).

64 Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 194–95. This account, which al-Ṭabarī does not include, appears in al-Jāḥiẓ (attrib.), *Tanbīh al-mulūk wa-l-makā'id*, p. 190 (where it illustrates the Caliph's wiliness and secrecy with regard to his intentions), and al-Ṭaghlibī,

Pseudo-Māwardī's narrative deploys the *topos* of the caliph in earnest prayer at the Ka'ba, where sincere prayer is held to be most efficacious.⁶⁵ The presentation, wording and placement of the account invite reflection on the inferences he intended his audience to draw.

Significantly, Pseudo-Māwardī's narrative is related in the voice of Ḥusayn al-Khādim, a prominent member of Hārūn's *khadam* and frequently mentioned with the caliph's executioner Masrūr al-Khādim, who circulated a distinct strand of stories related to the events surrounding Ja'far's execution.⁶⁶ Read alone and apart from the context in which Pseudo-Māwardī placed it in his mirror, the narrative might seem to imply that, contrary to the impression created in several other accounts, al-Rashīd's action was not the impulsive expression of strong emotion, and that on the contrary, the caliph had acted only after thorough reflection and forethought. His positioning of the narrative, however, conditions his audience's interpretation of his meaning. He relates the account on the heels of several quotations from the sacred sources, the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, all of which praise extensive forethought and warn against the consequences of ill-considered action. Pseudo-Māwardī's spare telling, and its placement, highlight the moral burden that mere contemplation of the controversial act placed upon the caliph. Pseudo-Māwardī's decision to precede his narration of al-Rashīd's supplication with authoritative quotations from the sacred sources is likely to have disposed his audience to consider whether the caliph's action had caused him, as the cited *ḥadīth* warns, to experience subsequent remorse, as some accounts assert or suggest.⁶⁷ The inference that Pseudo-Māwardī, without criticising the figure of the caliph, intended his audience to see in his execution of Ja'far an unprovoked and unjustifiable act of violence is further supported by his next remarks:

Kitāb al-Tāj, p. 66 = Pellat, *Le livre de la couronne*, pp. 93–94 (where the narrative provides an example of kings' concealment of their designs [*Kitāb al-Tāj*, p. 61]).

65 Yahyā b. Khālid, father of al-Faḍl and Ja'far, is also depicted in prayer at the Ka'ba; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 292 = 30: 211–12; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 37–38.

66 Sadan, "Death of a Princess", p. 135, notes 5, 7.

67 Al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā'*, p. 258; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafiyāt al-a'yān*, 6: 228 (citing al-Jahshiyārī). See also al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 299 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 224 (the suggestive report of al-'Abbās b. Bazī'); Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*, p. 78. El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 50–1, points out that while most contemporary writers reported al-Rashīd's acknowledgement that the removal of the Barmakids from power had hurt the Abbasid state, they stopped short (perhaps for pragmatic reasons) of claiming that he had expressed explicit regret for his actions; slightly later, however, al-Ma'mūn is reported, without criticising his father, to have joined in the widespread sentiment of regret for the fall and ill-treatment of the Barmakids.

It is incumbent on the virtuous king that no act should issue from him without his deliberation and reflection over its rightness (*rushd*) and error (*ghayy*), its goodness and wickedness, so that he chooses the good in it and leaves aside the wicked. If he decides on a bad action then at all costs he should postpone it, whereas if he decides on a good action he should hasten to carry it out, since the failure to perform a bad action will not harm him and might in fact benefit him, whereas failure to perform a good action will harm him and will bring him no benefit. In fact, sometimes an individual's regret over a good action not performed will mount (in his conscience), and the sorrow of it will grow continuously. If he accomplishes something good and executes a good act, he should praise God for promoting his success in it, assisting him in his achievement of it, and guiding him towards it. If he accomplishes a bad action and acts wickedly, he should regret it, beg God's forgiveness and repent of it to Him, for God does not reckon pardon to any of His servants unless they seek forgiveness and abandon repetition of the offence. He cannot hope for his repentance to earn him God's mercy unless he has fully repented of his disobedience to Him and forsaken it (*lā tawbata bi-l-raḥma 'alayhi illā ba'da tawbatihī min al-ma'ṣiya lahu*).⁶⁸

Read in the context of the passages that precede and follow it, Pseudo-Māwardī's brief narrative supplies a prefiguration of the regret that follows ill-considered and impetuous action. It also supports Pseudo-Māwardī's Mu'tazilite position regarding the religious status of the sinner: that divine forgiveness is contingent on sincere repentance and its practical result, abstention from future sin.⁶⁹ Alongside these literary and theological dimensions, which suggest Pseudo-Māwardī's projection of the story as a cautionary tale, the circumstances of his environment are likely to have conditioned his meaning and his audience's understanding of his text. It is probable that Pseudo-Māwardī's urging of caution and restraint in the exercise of the royal prerogative of punishment

68 Pseudo-Māwardī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 195–96.

69 For Pseudo-Māwardī's position in this matter, see Marlow, *Wisdom and Politics* 2, pp. 84–85. *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* reflects Pseudo-Māwardī's Mu'tazilite theological disposition in numerous places, and sometimes bears a resemblance to a Mu'tazilite treatise; see Ansari, "Yek andīsheh-nāmeḥ-yi siyāsi"; Marlow, *Wisdom and Politics*, esp. 2, pp. 73–138. The association of Mu'tazilite teachings with al-Rashīd is striking, in the light of the "rewriting" that El-Hibri has observed in narratives concerning al-Rashīd, whereby later scholars sought to disassociate him from the upheavals of subsequent years, which saw the civil war between his sons al-Amīn and Ma'mūn, and the *mīḥna* (*Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 22–25).

evoked for his audience the current or recent situations of individuals considered to have been unfairly treated. Several prominent individuals familiar to Pseudo-Māwardī and his audience might have been regarded in this manner. Ishāq b. Aḥmad, governor of Samarqand and the senior member of the Samanid dynastic family, had challenged Naṣr II's accession in 301/913–14; Pseudo-Māwardī belonged to the substantial constituency that had favoured Ishāq, who had been imprisoned after the defeat of his challenge. The military commander Aḥmad b. Sahl (d. 307/920), appointed governor of Khurasan in 306/918 and for decades a loyal vassal of the Samanids, eventually rebelled against Naṣr's suzerainty; after his defeat, he was imprisoned, and died in detention. The Mu'tazilite theologian Abū l-Qāsim al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī (d. 319/931), who had served as Aḥmad b. Sahl's vizier, was imprisoned in the aftermath of the same events.⁷⁰ It seems likely that Pseudo-Māwardī and his audience might have associated his discussion of the necessity for deliberation and forethought to take precedence over impulsive and punitive action with individuals whom they knew to have suffered punishment that seemed excessive or unjust.

Al-Tha'ālibī's narration of al-Rashīd's conduct in ordering Ja'far's execution lacks the theological dimension present in Pseudo-Māwardī's telling, and occurs in a different literary context. He addresses the episode in his fifth chapter, dedicated to the praiseworthy and reprehensible moral dispositions, habits and customs of kings. Al-Tha'ālibī opens this chapter with praise for the quality of justice, "the most virtuous disposition of kings". He writes:

It is justice that holds erect the heavens and the earth. Justice, in the view of all people regardless of their religious communities and sects, and in the opinion of the heads of state among the Arabs and the non-Arabs, is the support of religion, the pillar of sovereignty and the root of governance. Indeed, it is the pinnacle of governance and the greatest virtue. Anyone who reckons the fine qualities of the just king and the kindnesses and benefits that justice brings to humankind, and anyone who doubts these things, will find that if the king chooses justice and causes it to spread, if he gains a reputation for it, gives it its due rights and fulfils its conditions, the kings who are superior to him will glorify him, his peers will exalt him, his enemies will live in awe of him, and his friends will increase in their obedience to him.⁷¹

⁷⁰ On these individuals and events, see Marlow, *Wisdom and Politics* 1, pp. 32–33, 88–89, 112–13, 140–41 and passim.

⁷¹ Al-Tha'ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, p. 89.

Al-Tha‘ālibī follows these remarks with the exemplary words of Yaḥyā b. Khālid al-Barmakī, whom he thus establishes as a leading authority on the subject of justice:

How excellent are these words of Yaḥyā b. Khālid: “The land-tax is the pillar (*‘imād*) of sovereignty. Nothing renders it abundant like justice, and nothing renders it paltry like injustice”.⁷²

The invocation of Yaḥyā the Barmakid’s aphorism regarding the land-tax establishes his wisdom and excellence, and identifies him with the principles of just governance extolled by al-Tha‘ālibī. The main body of al-Tha‘ālibī’s chapter, which follows this opening section, treats a number of themes: consultation, pardon, generosity, high aspiration, keeping secrets; the combination of good and bad features in kingship; granting audience and the office of the chamberlain, acquiring information and sending spies; royal hunts; protecting children from their fathers, kings’ relationships by marriage to one another (*muṣāhara*); royal buildings, kings’ listening to poetry; verses recording the excellent and witty customs of kings; kings’ dislike of sharing glory with anyone, cautioning kings from acting precipitously upon their decisions when they are displeased with a person, kings’ haste to anger, and their special predilection for elephants.⁷³

It is in his section on kings’ dislike of those who share in their glory that al-Tha‘ālibī first refers to the fall of the Barmakids. He writes:

The only reason for al-Rashīd’s elimination of the Barmakids was that he witnessed the steady rise of their powers (*maqādīr*), the elevation of their stature, the force of their commands, their intrusion into affairs and into matters of wealth, and their exceeding the limits of generosity.⁷⁴

In other words, the Barmakids incurred the caliph’s displeasure when their power, influence and wealth became too great, their famed generosity too extravagant. This claim is one of the more commonly cited explanations for al-Rashīd’s actions, on the part of medieval and modern historians alike.⁷⁵

72 Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, pp. 89–90. Pseudo-Māwardī cites the same aphorism, attributed to a member of another eminent Iranian family of administrators, ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir (r. 213–30/828–445) (*Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 241–42).

73 Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, pp. 91–122.

74 Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, p. 120.

75 Ibn al-Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 1: 333. See the discussions of El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, pp. 17–21, 45–58; Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*,

Despite his earlier invocation of al-Rashīd as an exemplary ruler, al-Thaʿālibī implies his dismay at this action on Hārūn's part when he returns to the topic in his next section, on restraining kings from acting in precipitate manner upon the decisions they have taken regarding persons who have lost their favour. He writes:

It is one of the dispositions of kings, indeed it is among their secret characteristics that when they withdraw their favour from a vizier, or from one of their leading commanders or companions, and when they plan to act against that person, they increase their displays of intimacy and friendliness towards him, and they are exceedingly careful to ensure that the person who has incurred their displeasure receives no warning as to their intentions. They continue in this manner until they seize the opportunity in the matter, and find a way to enact their plans and take revenge against the person. To borrow a metaphor from archery, they resemble the bow: the closer the arrow is drawn in, the further the shot.

Al-Rashīd was enamoured of Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā; the ardour of his love for him and the abundance of his graciousness towards him were widely reputed and generally known. The honour and welcome that al-Rashīd showed to Jaʿfar were never greater than in the week during which he killed him. When the day came that he gave the command concerning the taking of Jaʿfar's life, he went hunting with Jaʿfar, conversed with him, and jested with him. When he returned, he said to Jaʿfar, "Spend the rest of your day in conviviality; I'm going to the *ḥaram*". So Jaʿfar went to his house and sat drinking with his boon-companions. Al-Rashīd sent gifts every hour until evening fell. Then al-Rashīd called for Masrūr al-Khādīm and said, "Go, and bring me the head of Jaʿfar; do not contradict me in this matter" - and so his command took effect.⁷⁶

While al-Thaʿālibī refrains from explicit criticism of the in other respects exemplary caliph, he conveys, by his placement of this chilling narrative, well towards the end of an eclectic chapter that begins firmly in the realm of virtuous and praiseworthy qualities, such as justice, and moves in a general way

pp. 71–79; id., *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, pp. 140–42; Abbās, "Barmakids"; Van Bladel, "Barmakids".

76 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, pp. 120–21. Al-Thaʿālibī's narrative draws on the account transmitted from Abū Ḥafṣ al-Kirmānī (al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 8: 299 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 223–24; on al-Kirmānī, see p. 47, n. 190). Al-Jahshiyārī relates a narrative in which Jaʿfar is executed at the end of a day's hunting with al-Rashīd as well (*Kitāb al-Wuzarāʾ wa-l-kuttāb*, p. 234).

towards reprehensible ones, his astonishment at this case of royal behaviour. Throughout *Ādāb al-mulūk*, al-Thaʿālibī, as indicated above, emphasises the distinctive circumstances and characteristics that render kings different from their subjects. He implies further the negative import of the narrative regarding al-Rashīd when he follows it with a section devoted to kings' quickness to anger and slowness to contentment.⁷⁷

The ambiguous or negative light in which Hārūn appears in many narratives that relate or allude to the fall of the Barmakids also characterises the caliph's few and incidental appearances in Part II of the Persian *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*. No longer a pre-eminent model of royal virtue, as he had been in the narratives recounted in Part I, the caliph is a peripheral figure in Part II, where he appears exclusively in contexts associated with the Barmakids. Indeed, if it is Anūshīrvān who emerges as the leading exemplar of royal virtue in Part II, it is the Barmakids who represent the pinnacle of humane excellence: they dominate the author's depictions of the virtues of intelligence, forbearance, magnanimity, generosity and forgiveness. He writes that after their fall, the stewardship of the kingdom and the office of the vizierate had lost status and fallen into a long decline, to be revived only with the rise of the family of Ghazālī's contemporary and patron Nizām al-Mulk (410–85/1019–92).⁷⁸

In Part II of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, as in the previously cited example from al-Thaʿālibī's *Ādāb al-mulūk*, Yaḥyā b. Khālīd is singled out for praise, and depicted as an embodiment of excellence. Numerous narratives illustrate the limitless generosity for which the Barmakids became proverbial. On one occasion, when he was riding from Hārūn's palace to his own, Yaḥyā encountered a petitioner. He proceeded to lodge him at his gate and give him a thousand dirhams daily in an open-ended arrangement until the petitioner departed.⁷⁹ In another narrative, placed in the chapter devoted to royal magnanimity (*boland-himmatī*), Yaḥyā advises Hārūn on matters of royal etiquette. When Hārūn orders a gift of five hundred dirhams to a soldier who had fallen off his horse, Yaḥyā signals his reservations. To the caliph's enquiry after the reasons for his disagreement with this decision, Yaḥyā replies that it is unseemly for a king (*malik*) to utter figures less than a thousand. In a case in which an amount over five hundred dirhams would be disproportionate, he advises, the king should instead bestow a horse, to avoid the appearance of pettiness (*ḥaqīr-himmatī*).⁸⁰

77 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, pp. 121–22.

78 Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 183–84 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 111.

79 Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, p. 201 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 122.

80 Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, p. 198 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 120.

Another episode, said to have occurred after the Barmakids had already incurred Hārūn's displeasure (*mutaghayyir shodeh būd*), presages the cruelty soon to be visited upon them. The caliph instructed Šāliḥ (= Šāḥib al-Muṣallā, "Keeper of the Prayer Rug")⁸¹ to deliver word to Manṣūr (b. Ziyād), a protégé of the Barmakids, that he was to pay ten million dirhams by nightfall or suffer execution. Manṣūr, unable to raise more than one hundred thousand dirhams, is desperate, and prepares for his imminent demise. Šāliḥ then advises him to seek assistance from Yaḥyā b. Khālīd, who not only gives him the entire contents of his treasury, but also obtains large sums from his sons Faḍl and Ja'far. He is able to raise eight million dirhams by these means, but Šāliḥ refuses to take less than the full amount to the caliph. Yaḥyā, distressed, finally retrieves a priceless jewel, a gift from the caliph, from his slave girl Danānīr.⁸² Knowing it to be worth two million dirhams, Yaḥyā tells Šāliḥ to bring it to the caliph in exchange for Manṣūr, whose debt of *muṣādareh* would be thereby discharged. Rather than expressing gratitude, however, Manṣūr utters a disparaging verse (in Arabic), attributing Yaḥyā's extraordinary efforts not to friendship but to fear for himself. Šāliḥ, dismayed at Manṣūr's ill-will (*bad-gawharī*) and malevolence (*muḥsīdī*), says to him,

On the face of the earth, there are no people better and greater than the Barmakids; and there is no one worse than you. They bought you back from perdition and saved your life; but you have shown neither gratitude (*shukr*) nor graciousness (*āzādī*) – and now you say such words (behind their backs).⁸³

Hārūn, hearing of these events, returns the jewel to Yaḥyā. When Šāliḥ tells Yaḥyā about Manṣūr's insolence (*bad-fi'lī*), Yaḥyā only displays still greater magnanimity, minimising Manṣūr's mean-spiritedness and assigning its source solely to the strain of duress.⁸⁴

The narrative showcases several of the themes associated with Hārūn and the Barmakids: Hārūn's arbitrary exercise of his power, for which the narrator supplies no grounds; the Barmakids' unstinting liberality and generosity

81 On Šāliḥ, see *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 53 and n. 210, pp. 54, 74; Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*, pp. 39–40.

82 On Danānīr, a celebrated singer, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 297 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 220 and n. 755; al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā'*, p. 241.

83 Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 209–10 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 127.

84 Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, pp. 205–10 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, pp. 125–27. A version of the story appears in al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb*, pp. 222–24.

to all who sought their support, regardless of their backgrounds or their merit; their never-failing forgiveness of the errors and frailties of other people, and their refusal to speak ill even of their enemies. The pathos with which (Pseudo-)Ghazālī imbues his telling of this episode, which evokes by association the cruel treatment that ineluctably awaits the Barmakids, contributes to the mood of nostalgia that the narratives in Part II of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* often carry; the Barmakids appear as semi-legendary embodiments of a lost moral and cultural excellence.

The Caliph Hārūn plays a peripheral role only in a third example, the central point of which is once again the portrayal of Yaḥyā as a moral paragon, his sterling qualities thrown into relief when displayed for the benefit of individuals who display moral weaknesses at his expense. The narrative begins with the author's establishment of an unspoken hostility between Yaḥyā b. Khālīd and 'Abdallāh b. Mālīk al-Khuzā'ī,⁸⁵ on account of Yaḥyā's anxiety that Hārūn's fondness for 'Abdallāh had grown to excessive proportions ([*ū-rā*] *bi-ghāyat-i dūst dāshitī*). After Hārūn had appointed 'Abdallāh governor of Armenia, an unnamed individual in difficult circumstances, ignorant of the strain between Yaḥyā and 'Abdallāh, forged a letter from the former to the latter. 'Abdallāh, on receipt of the letter, immediately suspected it was forged. He summoned the man, who, despite 'Abdallāh's assurances that he would be rewarded regardless, insisted that the letter was genuine. 'Abdallāh offered him a choice: either he would initiate an investigation into the case, and, if the letter were found to be genuine, the man would be generously rewarded, and if it were found to be a forgery, he would be punished; or he would pardon the man immediately. The man chose the former alternative, and was duly detained for the duration of the investigation. 'Abdallāh's agent then brought the letter to Yaḥyā, whom he found in the company of his retainers (*khāṣṣagīyān*) and boon-companions (*nadīmān*). Having read the letter and dismissed the agent until the following day, Yaḥyā asked his boon-companions what should be the punishment of a man who had forged a letter to his enemy. Each one replied, and recommended punishment of some sort or another. But Yaḥyā rejected their suggestions, which he regarded as manifestations of meanness (*khaṣṣī*) and petty-mindedness (*dūn-himmatī*). Instead, he took the episode as an opportunity to reconcile with 'Abdallāh, and, seeing the forger as an agent of reconciliation, wrote to 'Abdallāh averring that he had indeed written the letter, and that the man should be treated well and rewarded generously. 'Abdallāh acted accordingly.

85 Appointed to a number of provinces for limited periods, and head of the *shurṭa* under Caliphs al-Mahdī, al-Hādī and al-Rashīd, prominent under this last caliph despite his earlier support for al-Hādī against Hārūn's accession; see Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 181–82.

The man eventually returned to Baghdad and sought an audience with Yaḥyā. Having reported 'Abdallāh's generosity towards him solely for Yaḥyā's sake, the man expressed his gratitude, and offered the goods he had received from 'Abdallāh first to Yaḥyā. Yaḥyā assured the man that the debt of gratitude was on his part, and added to the gifts that 'Abdallāh had already bestowed on the man an equivalent largesse of his own.⁸⁶

The narrator states that his purpose in relating this story is to show that persons who possess the quality of magnanimity (*mardom-i bā himmat*) do not remain in straitened circumstances for long, just as the man in the story soon recovered his position, through the risk he took of approaching a person of magnanimity and munificence.⁸⁷ This explanation should be understood in terms of the juxtaposition of this story with the tale of Manṣūr, which immediately preceded it: in the earlier story, the protagonist Manṣūr displayed insolence despite the generous treatment he received; in this story, the man who forged the letter resorted to a dishonest stratagem, but having benefited from an act of clemency and generosity, being an educated and well-mannered person (*khudāvand-i adab va-farhang*) of high moral aspiration (*boland-himmat*),⁸⁸ he behaved with renewed honesty and gratitude. In both cases, the true exemplar of magnanimity is Yaḥyā, whose peerless moral excellence remains unchanged regardless of the injury he suffers.⁸⁹

86 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 211–15 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, pp. 127–30. Yaḥyā appears, without reference to Hārūn, in two additional locations in Part 11: as a defendant in a case brought to the *qāḍī* Abū Yūsuf, who, demonstrating his impartiality, placed him on an equal footing with the Zoroastrian plaintiff (*Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 170–71 = *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 104); and as the author of a letter sent to the official Muḥammad b. Layth, in which he describes the best kind of pen (*Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 192 = *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, pp. 115–16). On Muḥammad b. al-Layth, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 8: 288 = *History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30: 203 and n. 701.

87 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 215 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 130.

88 Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, p. 211 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, p. 127.

89 Yaḥyā's sons, Faḍl and Ja'far, appear in a more ambiguous narrative. In this case, the narrator relates the personal report of Sa'īd b. Sālim al-Bāhilī, who fell into indigence during reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, and is advised to seek out the Barmakids for assistance. The speaker demurs on account of their reputation for pride (*kibr*) and high-handedness (*jabbārī*), but nevertheless proceeds as advised. Faḍl and Ja'far do not offer to help him directly, but they intercede for him with Hārūn, who, on hearing of Sa'īd's plight, gives generously from the public treasury to settle his debts and adds a gift from his private funds (Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, pp. 204–05 = Bagley, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, pp. 123–24).

4 Conclusion

In Arabic and Persian historiographical sources and *belles lettres*, the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd features in a vast number and wide variety of narratives. Many of these narratives conform to certain types and provide vehicles for the exploration of particular themes. Pseudo-Māwardī's, al-Tha'ālibī's and Ghazālī's selection and presentation of examples drawn from this repertoire illustrate the specific meanings that familiar materials could be made to carry. Outwardly similar, retellings of these narratives carry different meanings in different contexts. I have attempted to show, through the narrations found in the mirrors of these three writers, the skill and subtlety with which they selected narratives, positioned them in their works and chose their wordings, in order to convey largely implicit messages and guide the responses and interpretations of their audiences. These examples suggest the multiple levels at which mirrors for princes might be read, and demonstrate authors' careful deployment of exemplary narratives in order to shape the reception of their works in distinct historical situations.

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The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets* as a Mirror of Princes: A Cautionary Tale

Steven J. Williams

1 Introduction

We begin with two scholarly truisms: the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets* (*Secretum secretorum*) was the most popular book of the entire Middle Ages; the *Secret of Secrets* is a mirror of princes.¹ Given statements 1 and 2, one might be tempted to complete the syllogism and to draw the following conclusion: the *Secret of Secrets* was the most popular medieval mirrors of princes. But is this last statement indeed true; is the conclusion a valid one? And, it should be asked, are the premises true: most importantly, is the *Secret of Secrets* a mirror of princes? This chapter will try to answer these questions. In so doing, the hope is that we will come to a better understanding of the *Secret of Secrets* and, to be sure, mirrors of princes generally, the subject of this volume.

Before we can proceed, however, a crucial issue requires discussion: what is a mirror of princes?² One might think that, in a collection of essays dedicated to this literary genre, such a question would not require asking and that a common understanding of the concept undergirded the entire project; given the frequency with which the term appears in scholarly discourse, it would also be natural to assume that there is a standard definition of the term and that one could count on it being used with a certain consistency. But things are not as easy as that (a fact that on its own provides ample justification for a volume like this one). In perusing the scholarship on medieval political culture, it doesn't take long to discover that the label "mirror of princes" can be applied to all sorts of texts.³ So, Deuteronomy 17 is a mirror of princes; part of Book 24 of

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- 1 The first claim originates with Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 2 (New York, 1923), p. 267 and is oft-repeated; the second appears regularly in scholarship on the *Secret of Secrets*.
 - 2 The bibliography on mirrors of princes is large and growing, and there is no need to provide it all here: see, for example, the list compiled by Roberto Lambertini as part of his entry "Mirrors for Princes" (see n. 7 below). Other basic bibliography can be found at the end of the present volume.
 - 3 Cf. Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters* (Darmstadt, 2006), p. 3: "*Fürstenspiegel* ist ein Begriff, der durchweg unscharf verwandt wird, für ein breites

Augustine's *City of God* is a mirror of princes; Dante's *De monarchia* is a mirror of princes; Évrard de Trémaugon's *Le Songe du Vergier* is a mirror of princes.⁴ Like the nouns "renaissance" and "revolution", or a recent favorite, the adjective "long" (as in "the long 12th century"), extensive use of such – yes, *useful* – terms can easily lead to overuse, with the consequence that their meaning becomes stretched to the point of near-meaninglessness.⁵ For us the problem is that extrapolating from the above claims about Deuteronomy, etc. yields a definition of mirror of princes that is extremely broad – basically, a mirror of princes is any kind of text with any kind of content that might be of some relevance to a prince and that a prince might read.⁶ However, one expects a definition to describe the essential characteristics of the thing being defined and to separate it from other, related entities: the aforementioned definition fails on both counts. For the purposes of this chapter and this volume, such looseness will not work: we have to do better.

Spektrum von Schriftum: für Traktate politische-theoretischer, staatsphilosophischer and publizistischer Natur, für Ratgeber-Texte diversen Zuschnitts, für Tableaus und Spiegel der Gesellschaft". Jean-Philippe Genet, "L'évolution du genre des Miroir des princes en Occident au Moyen Âge", in *Religion et mentalités au Moyen Âge : mélanges en l'honneur d'Hervé Martin*, eds. S. Cassagnes-Brouquet et al. (Rennes, 2003), p. 531, notes the "laxisme dans la définition du genre".

- 4 See Bratu, C., "Mirrors for Princes (Western)", in *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms, Methods, Trends*, ed. A. Classen, 3 vols. (Berlin, 2010), vol. 3, pp. 1921–1949. An expansive take on mirrors of princes is the norm among modern scholars. So, José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Les Miroirs des princes dans l'historiographie espagnole (couronne de Castille, XIIIe-XVe siècles) : tendances de la recherche", in *Specula principum*, eds. A. De Benedictus and A. Pisapia (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 193–207. Nieto Soria puts under this rubric, among other texts, three classics of wisdom literature, namely, *Calila e Dimna*, *Libro de los Buenos Proverbios*, and *Bocados de Oro*. And in two fine books – one by Judith Ferster and the other by Ulrike Graßnick (for details, see the Bibliography) – Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* from the *Canterbury Tales* is taken to be a mirror of princes. This view of things is already on view in the two classics on the subject, viz., Lerner Kruger Born, "The Perfect Prince: A Study in Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Ideals", in *Speculum* 3 (1928), pp. 470–504, and Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Leipzig, 1938).
- 5 E.g., in an article perfectly placed in the prestigious journal in which it is published, an entirely convincing conclusion that a mural in a knight's manor-house, namely, the so-called "Longthorpe Wheel", which has heretofore resisted the efforts of scholars to explain fully, portrays a "vision of ideal government and kingship", also includes its questionable characterization as a "visual mirror of princes" (Bee Yun, "A Visual Mirror of Princes: The Wheel on the Mural of Longthorpe Tower", in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 70 (2007), pp. 1–32).
- 6 Definitions, even of an informal sort, are only rarely given, which could well be part of the reason why the term is used so loosely: with no definition but only a vague sense of what it is, the term can be used any which way.

So let me essay a definition forthwith.⁷ A mirror of princes is a formal, stand-alone work primarily containing political and moral advice that is directed by an author specifically to a prince so that the prince might see, as in a mirror, something of his ideal self and thus conduct himself better both as a ruler and as a person.⁸ This definition will serve as the yardstick with which we can measure the *Secret of Secrets* in our subsequent discussion. Of course it might also be applied elsewhere, with the consequence that a number of texts heretofore ranged under the rubric mirror of Princes are removed (e.g., the titles mentioned in the previous paragraph). When such a culling has previously been attempted, many scholars seem to have been none too pleased – “John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* not a mirror of princes? It is one of the two or three most important examples of the genre!”; beyond whatever irritation that has sometimes been expressed, the consensus reaction has largely been to ignore the critics and to hold to the broader view of the term. One might gently point out that a ruler might take inspiration and lessons from all manner of texts – e.g., imagine him being especially moved by a particular romance or sermon – but that doesn’t mean all texts are mirror of princes. Moreover, no opprobrium attaches to a text that is not so labeled *mirror of princes*, and if we could bring John of Salisbury from his own time to ours and explain the issue to him, it is

7 Helpful in the clarification of my thinking on the issue and the formulation of the definition above have been Roberto Lambertini, “Mirrors for Princes”, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, ed. H. Lagerlund, vol. 2 (Dordrecht, 2011), pp. 791–797; Allan H. Gilbert, *Machiavelli’s Prince and its Forerunners. The Prince as a Typical Book De regimine principum* (Durham, 1938), p. 5; Einar Már Jónsson, “La situation du *Speculum regale* dans la littérature occidentale”, in *Études Germaniques* 42 (1987), pp. 391–408; idem, “Les « miroirs aux princes » sont-ils un genre littéraire ?”, in *Médiévales* 51 (2006), pp. 153–166; Cary J. Nederman, “The Mirror Carck’d: The *Speculum principum* as Political and Social Criticism in the Late Middle Ages”, in *The European Legacy* 3, no. 3 (1998), pp. 18–38; Julie Barrau, “Ceci n’est pas un miroir, ou le *Policraticus* de Jean de Salisbury”, in *Le prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l’Antiquité aux Lumières*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), pp. 87–111; Frank Tang, “Royal Misdemeanour: Princely Virtues and Criticism of the Ruler in Medieval Castile (Juan Gil de Zamora and Álvaro Pelayo)”, in *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages, 1200–1500*, eds. I.P. Bejczy and C.J. Nederman (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 99–121. My definition of mirror of princes is very similar to that offered by Lambertini, Gilbert, Jónsson, and Tang. It also relies on Derek Pearsall’s wonderfully clear statement, “Princes were to look in such books as in a mirror, and there see displayed the image of what they should truly be” (Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. C.R. Blyth (Kalamazoo 1999), available online at <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/blyth-hoccleve-regiment-of-princes/>, p. 386).

8 Two clarifications: 1) A *prince* is the solitary ruler of a polity – usually this means a king, queen, duke, count; 2) A mirror of princes might include instruction on military affairs, political theory, medicine/health, etc., but this must always be ancillary to, and its total amount smaller in size than, the mirror of princes material.

easy to imagine him wondering what all the fuss was about. The concept of mirror of princes is a modern invention, albeit one that is based on medieval terminology and practice. In the Middle Ages we see a number of didactic texts written for princes: some of the latter are titled *De regimine principum* or a close variant of this, and some have “Speculum” in the title (*Speculum regum*, *Speculum morale regium*, *Speculum regis*, and in the early 16th century, *Speculum principis*).⁹ There was no set mirror of princes formula as there was, say, for a saint’s life; medieval authors who wrote something with a prince in mind as the most important reader didn’t have any hard-and-fast concept of mirror of princes in front of them – certainly not ours as defined above, though the later in the Middle Ages, the more precedents for their work there were, and in a number of instances authors were aware of at least some of them. Authors composed their texts for many different reasons, and the range of didactic texts produced by them was extremely rich and varied. If some of these texts – many, even – don’t match our definition of mirror of princes, so be it: one should simply note that fact and move on from what the work isn’t to what the work is. Such is the approach that will be taken here.

2 The *Secret of Secrets*: The Nature of the Text

The *Secret of Secrets* had an extraordinary, half-millennium run of popularity in Europe, from the High Middle Ages into the Early Modern era; many hundreds of manuscript copies and then multiple printings in Latin manifest its publication success, as do several dozen translations from Latin into a host of vernaculars.¹⁰ The *Secret of Secrets* already had a long history behind it in the Islamic world before its introduction to the Christian West. There is much that is uncertain about that earlier history, but what is clear is that the *Secret of Secrets* as we know it and as it was known to medieval readers is a

9 On use of the word *Speculum* in titles for didactic texts of all sorts, see Ritamary Bradley, “Backgrounds of the Title *Speculum* in Medieval Literature”, in *Speculum* 29 (1954), pp. 100–115; Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and the English Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1982); Einar Már Jónsson, *Le miroir : naissance d’un genre littéraire* (Paris, 1995). It should be noted that titles with some close variant of *Speculum principis* are not necessarily mirrors of princes in the modern sense of the term: e.g., *Speculum regale* (anonymous), *Speculum regum* (Godfrey of Viterbo), *Le miroirs aus princes* (Watriquet of Couvin).

10 Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 2003).

composite work whose genesis required centuries of time.¹¹ The text of the *Secret of Secrets* itself provides evidence for this. Imagine a rock core sample showing layers of sediment sitting one atop another: similar is the *Secret of Secrets'* Table of Contents, with its stratification lines easily visible in the sharp breaks in subject-matters.¹²

Prefatory Matter

Anonymous Redactor's Introduction

Pseudo-Yahya ibn al-Bitriq's Introduction

Pseudo-Aristotle's Introduction

Table of Contents

Book 1: On the Kinds of Kings

Book 2: On the Position & Character of a King

Apology for astrology

Section on health, including chapters on parts of the body, the seasons, diet, baths, wine, a panacea, etc.

Section on physiognomy

Book 3: On Justice

Book 4: On Ministers

Section on natural philosophy (cosmogony, the soul, sensation)

Practical advice regarding ministers

Anecdotes to illustrate the importance of the planets in determining character

Man the Microcosm

Anecdote to illustrate the importance of faith: The Mage & the Jew

11 On the genesis of the *Secret of Secrets*, the two "big names" are Mario Grignaschi and Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui: a synthesis of their views with detailed bibliography is provided in Chapter 1 of Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*. One of the former's articles is little cited and only recently came to my attention: Mario Grignaschi, "Un roman épistolaire gréco-arabe : la correspondance entre Aristote et Alexandre", in *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western representations of Alexander the Great*, eds. M. Bridges and J.C. Bürgel (Bern, 1996), pp. 109–123. Also add to the bibliography on this issue two items: Kevin van Bladel, "The Iranian Characteristics and Forged Greek Attributions in the Arabic *Sirr al-Asrar* (*Secret of Secrets*)", in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004), pp. 151–172; Regula Forster, *Das Geheimnis der Geheimnisse. Die arabischen und deutschen Fassungen des pseudo-aristotelischen Sirr al-asrār, Secretum secretorum* (Wiesbaden, 2006).

12 This table is a modified version of the one found in Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 10–11, which itself is modeled on Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui (ed.) *Secretum secretorum: Nine English versions* (Oxford, 1977), pp. xii–xiv. Please note that the above represents what is seen late in the Arabic tradition, when the *Secret of Secrets* had reached its maturity; things get a bit complicated and confused in the Latin.

- Book 5: On Scribes
- Book 6: On Ambassadors
- Book 7: On Governors
- Book 8: On Army Officers
 - Description of the Horn of Themistius
- Book 9: On the Conduct of War
 - Astrological advice
 - Onomantic table for determining victory in battle
- Book 10: On the Occult Sciences
 - Talismans
 - Alchemy
 - Lapidary
 - Herbal

The text's composite nature is likewise evident in its two-part title – in the English translation of the Arabic, it is *The Book of the Science of Government, on the Good Ordering of Statecraft* (main title) and *The Book of the Secret of Secrets* (subtitle)¹³ – as well as in its three-part introduction:

1. Anonymous Redactor.¹⁴ His are the first words of the *Secret of Secrets* that one reads in the standard, longer version of the work: “Almighty God preserve our king ... ”.¹⁵ He recounts that he is fulfilling the mandate of the king, and he describes the text that follows as “the book of morals on the direction of rule called the Secret of Secrets, which Aristotle the prince of philosophers composed for his disciple the emperor Alexander”.¹⁶ Aristotle, he says, “wrote many letters [to Alexander] about conduct because of his great love [for Alexander] and [to convey] the final secret”.¹⁷ Alexander followed Aristotle's advice and conquered the world.

13 Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, *Nine English Versions*, p. IX.

14 In the Latin he is referred to as “a certain scholar (*quidam doctor*)” (Roger Bacon, *Secretum secretorum cum glossis et notulis*, in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, eds. R. Steele et al., vol. 5 (Oxford, 1905–1940), p. 36).

15 “Deus omnipotens custodiat regem nostrum gloriam ... ” (here and in the subsequent two footnotes I cite the Latin version as found in Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*).

16 “librum moralium in regimine domini qui vocatur Secretum Secretorum, quem edidit princeps philosophorum Aristotelis filius Nichomachi de Macedonia discipulo suo magno imperatori Alexandro filio Philippi regis Grecorum” Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*.

17 “Porro multas morales epistolas composuit Aristoteles propter nimiam delectacionem cordium et finale secretum” (Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, p. 38).

2. Pseudo-Yahya ibn al-Bitriq.¹⁸ Following a literary *topos* for the revelation of arcana, Pseudo-Yahya describes how, while on a trip westward to search out the sites where philosophers had deposited their secrets, he visited the Temple of the Sun built by Aesclepius; befriending the venerable sage who lived there and who guarded its contents, he was eventually given access to a number of texts, including this one, which (presumably) he then transcribed and, having subsequently returned to the court of the Caliph, translated at the latter's order from Greek into "Rumi" and thence into Arabic.
3. Pseudo-Aristotle. In this supposititious letter from Aristotle to Alexander, Aristotle explains that, because of age and infirmity, he had been unable to comply with Alexander's desire for his service as an advisor *in situ* (Alexander was in the process of completing his conquest of the Persian Empire). As for Alexander's follow-up request, namely, a manual for rule, Aristotle explains that what he has sent will answer all of Alexander's questions and provide for all his needs; however, it contains great secrets that have been vouchsafed to him by God, and Alexander is cautioned against revealing these secrets to the unworthy.

The consensus hypothesis for the birth and development of the *Secret of Secrets* is that a Hellenistic pseudo-Aristotelian epistle to Alexander on rulership (Book 1 and part of 2 above) constituted the bedrock upon which successive Arabic-speaking redactors placed, first, material relevant to this theme (Books 3, 5–8, part of 9); next, a mass of scientific material (Book 10, part of 2); and finally, portions large and small of philosophical material (e.g., in Book 4).

Looked at as a whole, we can see that the *Secret of Secrets* basically break down into two parts: a mirror of princes; a book of secrets.¹⁹ This split is likewise reflected in the two titles of the work.

In the form in which it came to the Latin West, therefore, the *Secret of Secrets* was not, strictly speaking, a mirror of princes. For one thing, it fails the test of intentionality: it was not written for a prince, though because it pretends to have been, and was widely believed to have been, one could give it a qualified "Pass" on meeting this requirement. Second, and crucially, its mirror of princes component is much smaller in size than the "secrets" component, with the

18 Yahya ibn al-Bitriq was a well-known 9th-century translator of Greek philosophical and scientific texts, including items in the genuine Aristotelian corpus.

19 "Secrets" can be defined as recondite facts about nature, with the implication being that knowledge of such facts will allow one to manipulate nature to one's own ends; a "book of secrets" is a text focused on such facts. On all of this, see William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature. Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, 1994).

former comprising approximately one-third of the total contents. Rather than a mirror of princes, then, the *Secret of Secrets* might be described as – and here I echo the words of the person in the Introduction writing in Aristotle’s name – a “guidebook for rule”, which is something a bit different and broader.²⁰

3 The *Secret of Secrets* Considered as a Mirror of Princes

The first appearance of the *Secret of Secrets* in Christian Europe came c. 1120 in a partial version concerned exclusively with health matters that was executed for Queen Tharasia of Portugal; the translator-adaptor, John of Seville, described the *Secret of Secrets* as “the book ... that Aristotle the philosopher made for Alexander the great king concerning the disposition of the kingdom, in which many things useful for rulers are contained”.²¹ In other words, something that might be understood as a mirror of princes in our sense of the term. Over a century’s time, this little text circulated widely, and so John’s words not only whetted readers’ appetite for the complete version of what he had excerpted, they gave to those readers a sense as to what to expect, thereby pre-determining to some extent how the *Secret of Secrets* would be received as a text when it finally arrived.

For the remainder of the Middle Ages, the *Secret of Secrets* was much read and appreciated as a mirror of princes by a very large audience. The alternate title, *On the Rule of Princes* (*De regimine principum*), and the scenario described near the very start of the introduction, with Aristotle writing for Alexander “the book of morals on the rule of lords”, effectively made such a promise about

20 Nor, it should be said, is the *Secret of Secrets* an “encyclopedia” – another term that is mistakenly applied to the work. Though I disagree with a bit of what is said therein, Regula Forster, “Enzyklopädie oder Fürstenspiegel? Arabische, lateinische und deutsche Fassungen des pseudo-aristotelischen *Secretum secretorum*”, in *Allgemeinwissen und Gesellschaft: Akten des Internationalen Kongresses über Wissenstransfer und Enzyklopädische Ordnungssysteme, vom 18. bis 21. September 2003 in Prangins*, eds. P. Michel et al. (Aachen, 2007), pp. 257–273, is a “must read” on the labeling issue.

21 “Cum de utilitate corporis olim tractaremus, et a me quasi essem medicus vestra nobilitas quereret brevem libellum de observatione diete vel de continentia corporis, id est qualiter se deberent continere qui sanitatem corporis cupiunt observare, accidit ut mee menti cogitanti vestre iussioni obedire, huius rei exemplar Aristotilis philosophi Alexandro editum repente menti occurreret quod excerpti de libro qui Arabice vocatur *Cyralacerar*, id est *Secretum secretorum*, quem fecit, sicut predixi, Aristotiles philosophus Alexandro regi magno de dispositione regni, in quo continentur multa regibus utilia” (Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 354–355).

the work.²² And that promise was backed up by the work's substantial mirror of princes content that came with the claim that it was written by the person taken to be the greatest philosopher who ever lived, Aristotle, for none other than the legendary Alexander the Great, Aristotle's former student. The combination, which must have made the *Secret of Secrets* seem in readers' eyes an extraordinary work, exerted a powerful attraction on the literate public and is central to any explanation as to why the *Secret of Secrets* was a publishing blockbuster through the later Middle Ages.

The evidence for the *Secret of Secrets*' reception as a mirror of princes is extensive (indeed it could make for a book on its own); what we will do here is present some of it selectively so as to give a basic sense of this aspect of its unusual, multifaceted *fortuna*.

We begin with the fact that the *Secret of Secrets* served as both an inspiration and a mine for Western European mirrors of princes and related writings. While there were a few mirrors produced in the half-century before the appearance of the complete Latin *Secret of Secrets* c. 1230, it seems to be more than a coincidence that the number of mirrors written after this date goes up significantly, especially because the *Secret of Secrets* is cited in so many of them.²³

We have multiple indicators that the *Secret of Secrets* could be read as a mirror of princes in our sense of the term or at least something close to it. One of them comes in a remark by Thomas Hoccleve that Henry of Lancaster, Prince of Wales (son of Henry IV and the future Henry V) had read the *Secret of Secrets*, Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, and Jacobus de Cessolis' *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium super ludo scacchorum*: the grouping of the three together suggests that the author saw them as similar texts appropriate for a prince's moral and political education.²⁴ The presence of Giles' work is particularly significant here because it was far and away the most popular of the medieval mirrors, and it is clear from Hoccleve's formulation, with the two books being mentioned in

22 See n. 16 above.

23 For details, see Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 253–257. To this list of Latin works that cite the *Secret of Secrets* can be added the following mirrors of princes in the vernacular: *Fürstenregel*, late 14th-century, for Duke William of Austria; the *Bayerische Fürstenspiegelkompilation*, probably for Duke Louis IX of Bavaria-Landshut c. 1450 (on these, see Gerd Brinkhus, *Eine bayerische Fürstenspiegelkompilation des 15. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen und Textausgabe* (Munich, 1978); Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, 1999). Several possible echoes of the *Secret of Secrets* can be heard in the anonymous *Avis à Yolande d'Aragon* (c. 1425; see Jean-Patrice Boudet and Elsa Sené, "L'*Avis à Yolande d'Aragon*: un miroir au prince du temps de Charles VII", in *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 24 (2012), pp. 51–84).

24 "I am seur that tho bookes alle three
Red hath and seen your innat sapience"
(*The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Blyth, lines 2129–30).

the same sentence, that he associates Aristotle's "book of gouernaunce" and Giles "regyment of princes".²⁵ Others did as well: on a few occasions we see the two works bound right next to each other;²⁶ a bit more frequently they are found in the same "edificatory" volume or in the same section of a library.²⁷

Other texts associated with the *Secret of Secrets* in the manuscripts tell a similar story: so, Oxford, University College, 85, all in English, contains the *Secret of Secrets*, Alain Chartier *Le Quadriologue Invectif*, and *Consideracions right necessarye to the good gouernance of a prince*;²⁸ Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, 308, all in French, contains the *Secret of Secrets*, Guillebert de Lannoy *L'instruction d'un jeune prince, Enseignements de saint Louis à sa fille Isabelle*, Thibaut v of Champagne *Lettre* (to Odo of Chateauroux, on the death of Louis IX);²⁹

25 "That by wrytyng his conseil gaf he cleer
Unto his lord to keepe him fro nusance,
As witnesseth his book of gouernance.
Of which, and of Gyles of Regiment
of Princes, plotmeel thynke I to translate"

(*ibid.*, lines 2049–53). On Giles' work, see Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275–c. 1525* (Cambridge, 1999) and Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, *Les traductions françaises du De regimine principum de Gilles de Rome* (Leiden, 2011). That it was the most popular of the medieval mirrors of princes, see n. 70 below.

26 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 181; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 645; London, British Library, Arundel 59; a volume in the library of the Dominicans in the city of Majorca (Jocelyn Nigel Hillgarth, *Readers and Books in Majorca, 1229–1550*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1991), p. 344. In a 1517 printing, *Le mirouir exemplaire et tres fructueuse instruction selon la compillation de Gilles de Romme*, the *Secret of Secrets* plus a list of the kings of France with their regnal dates comes after what the publisher, Guillaume Eustache, describes as Giles' *Le regime et gouuernement des roys, princes et grandz seigneurs*; in fact, what we have here is Jean Golein's translation of the anonymous *Liber de informatione principum*): on the misattribution, which reaches back into medieval manuscripts, see Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, *Les traductions françaises*, pp. 54–56. The *Liber de informatione principum* is another work that is sometimes seen near or next to the *Secret of Secrets* in medieval manuscripts and library inventories.

27 The same "edificatory" volume: e.g., Oxford, Balliol College, 146a; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, lat. Z. 479; Vienna, Schottenstift, 129; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 571. The same section of a library: e.g., 1407 inventory of Francesco Gonzaga's library, section "Capitulum librorum philosophie moralis", with the *Secret of Secrets* nos. 6–7 and Giles' *De regimine principum* nos. 23–25 (Girolla, "La biblioteca di Francesco Gonzaga", pp. 61 and 63); 1467 inventory of Charles the Bold's library, section "Bonnes Meurs, Etiques et Politiques", with the *Secret of Secrets* nos. 924, 955–957 and Giles' *De regimine principum* nos. 926, 929–30 (Barrois, *Bibliothèque protypographique*, pp. 148–49).

28 Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, *Nine English Versions*, pp. XXXIX–XL.

29 Jacques Monfrin, "La place du *Secret des secrets* dans la littérature française médiévale", in *Pseudo-Aristotle, The Secret of Secrets. Sources and Influences*, eds. W.F. Ryan and C.B. Schmitt (London, 1982), pp. 96–97; Denis Lorée (ed.), *Pseudo-Aristote Le secret des secrets : traduction du XVe siècle* (Paris, 2017), pp. 63–64.

Vienna, Schottenstift, 145, a *Sammelhandschrift* almost all in German (the several exceptions combine Latin and German), contains the *Secret of Secrets*, three mirrors of princes (two of which – one anonymous, then Johannes von Indersdorf's *Fürstenlehren*, with his *Tobiaslehre* – precede our text in the center of the manuscript), various religious texts (including Ekbert von Schönau, *Meditatio de humanitate Christi*, which follows our text), extracts from several chronicles, plus, near the end, a work on astrology and several little scientific items.³⁰

Also relevant in this connection are the descriptive labels for the *Secret of Secrets* that we see in manuscripts and library catalogs. As a way to signal that the *Secret of Secrets* was first and foremost a mirror of princes, scribes used some variation of *De regimine principum/dominatorum/regum* or, following the formulation that comes from the Anonymous Redactor's introduction, *Liber moralium in regimine domini*; the phrase *Secret of Secrets*, if it appears at all, was typically put – again, following the lead of the Anonymous Redactor – after the main title: e.g., “Liber moralium de regimine dominorum qui alio nomine dicitur Secreta secretorum ...”.³¹ The compilers of library catalogs were generally spare with their words; nevertheless, the little they say amounts to a lot. Catalogers had two responsibilities: provide an accurate picture of the library's overall organization; provide a sufficiently detailed picture of the library's holdings so that items could be easily located. The *Secret of Secrets*, we know, was sometimes listed under the rubric “Libri morales”; sometimes this matched a specific section of the library (a shelf, a bookcase) devoted to this theme. *De regimine principum* with – but not always – a bit of qualifying information often served as a standard descriptor for our work; given compilers' penchant for verbal economy and the fact that the phrase was also used for – indeed is the title of – Giles' work, there are times when modern scholars, seeing that phrase and nothing more, are unsure as to just what text the cataloger was intending; for us, however, the interchangeability of the formula *De regimine principum* for these two texts and others (the *De regimine principum/De regno* by Thomas Aquinas/Ptolemy of Lucca, the *De regimine principum* by Engelbert of Admont, and the *De regimine principum* by Jean d'Anneux) suggests that it was used almost as a kind of generic label, something close to our own *mirror of princes*.

30 Albert Hübl, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum qui in bibliotheca monasterii B.M.V. ad Scotos Vindobonae servantur*, vol. 5 (Vienna, 1899), pp. 225–230; Friedrich, Wurms, *Studien zu den deutschen und den lateinischen Prosafassungen des pseudo-aristotelischen Secretum secretorum* (Hamburg, 1970), pp. 136–139; Brinkus, *Eine bayerische Fürstenspiegelkompilation*, pp. 21–28; *Handschriftencensus*.

31 Cf. Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 270–271. For the quoted title, see Friedrich Wurms, *Studien*, p. 25.

The *Secret of Secrets* could be packaged and sent to a prince as a mirror of princes. Some examples:

- c. 1266 Jacob van Maerlant completed his rhymed translation into Dutch of the *Secret of Secrets* for Count Floris V of Holland and Zeeland, who was in his early teens.³² The idea for the project seems to have originated with Jacob.³³ And his work came with a message: the Count, like Aristotle's "young lord Alexander", was to learn "[how] to bring justice to the world and fight against sins ... how to manage a country and remain honorable himself".³⁴
- In 1326–27 Walter Milemete commissioned two deluxe manuscripts for King Edward III of England: a copy of the *Secret of Secrets*; a complementary treatise, the *De nobilitatibus sapientiis et prudentiis regum*, that Walter wrote himself, that often quotes the *Secrets of Secrets*, and that qualifies as a mirror of princes in our sense of the term.³⁵ Walter, like Jacob van Maerlant, made clear the purpose of his double gift:

King Alexander learned the Philosopher's teachings [as contained in the *Secret of Secrets*] for ruling himself and his empire successfully ... Through this counsel ... he obtained victory in every conflict and conducted himself vigorously in every royal act. For that reason, Most Reverend Lord, I ordered

32 Jacob van Maerlant, *Jacob van Maerlant's Heimelijkheid der Heimelikheden*, ed. A.A. Verdenius (Amsterdam, 1917).

33 Floris' father, William, was killed in 1256, so the initiative could not have come from him. A boy around ten would not be likely to give such an order either.

34 "Hoe Aristotiles ende gheen ander
Sinen jonghere Alexander

Leerde die werelt berechten
Ende jeghen die sonden vechten,
Want het hoghen here betaemt
Ende elken here die hem scaemt,
Dat hi wete, hoe land bedriven

Ende selve in sire eren bliven" (*Jacob van Maerlant's Heimelijkheid*, p. 116).

35 Walter's *Secret of Secrets* is now London, British Library, Add. 47680; the manuscript has been digitized and is available online. Oxford, Christ Church, 92 contains the companion treatise; a facsimile was published by James, *The Treatise of Walter de Milemete*; an English translation of this work can be found in: *De Nobilitatibus, sapientiis, et prudentiis regum*. English translation in *Political Thought in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Treatises by Walter of Milemete, William of Pagula, and William of Ockham*, trans. C. Nederman (Tempe, 2002), pp. 24–61. On Walter's commission and the manuscripts, see Michael A. Michael, "The Iconography of Kingship in the Walter of Milemete Treatise", in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994), pp. 35–47 and Libby Karlinger Escobedo, *The Milemete Treatise and Companion Secretum secretorum: Iconography, Audience, and Patronage in Fourteenth-Century England* (Lewiston, 2011).

the copying, word for word, of this same book for your use, so that you, Lord, might have his teaching along with other supplements and excellent teachings that I have taken with careful thought [from other sources] and added to [the present] book in the hope of advancing your dignity.³⁶

- In 1497 the publisher Anthoine Vérard presented to King Charles VIII of France a sumptuous printed book production in three separate tomes that included, in order, a French version of the *Secret of Secrets* (*Le Gouvernement des princes*), Diego de Valera's *Le Tresor de noblesse*, and *Les Fleurs de Valère le Grand*.³⁷ The entire set is on vellum and illuminated. On the first folio of the first volume is a full-page miniature that pictures the standard donation ritual, with Vérard on bended knee offering his book to the seated king. The translation of the *Secret of Secrets* used by Vérard starts right in with the Anonymous Redactor's introduction, including his praise of Aristotle for the role that the philosopher played as Alexander's most trusted political advisor and prime minister ("governor and master above everyone"); by plugging Charles' name into the opening Vérard effectively turned those words into his own.³⁸ Vérard also gets the final word, recommending to Charles "the translation of this little book which is of great efficacy, as you can see by reading it".³⁹

36 "a quo libro rex Alexander documentum didicit philosophicum ad se ipsum et suum imperium ... feliciter regendum; per quod consilium ... in omni controversia triumphum optinuit; et in omni actu regali strenue se habuit. Idcirco domine reverestissime eundem librum de verbo ad verbum ad usum vestrum duxi scribendum ut vos domine eiusdem haberetis doctrinam pariter cum aliis suplecionibus et documentis perfectis ad regiam maiestatem pertinentibus que studiosa mente concepi et in hoc libro adieci ad vestram ut spero dignitatem profectura" (James, *The Treatise of Walter de Milemete*, pp. 23–24). Milemete makes similar statements elsewhere in his work. Note that my translation of the above passage differs slightly from what is found in Cary J. Nederman, *Political Thought*, p. 29.

37 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. E*-46 (Vélins 411, 412, 413); it is available online. On Vérard's gift see Mary Beth Winn, *Anthoine Vérard*, pp. 119–120, 476, fig. 4.6.

38 "Je qui suis serviteur du dict seigneur Charles VIII. De ce nom a sa louenge et honneur ay mis peine et entente dacquerir le livre de bonnes meurs au gouvernement de lui. Lequel livre est nomme le Secret des Secrets et le fist le prince des philosophes Aristote ... Car Alixandre lavoit fait gouverneur et maistre par dessus tous et laymoit moult pource qu'il estoit homme de tres bon conseil, de tres grant clergie et subtil entendement et toujours estudieit sans cesser les bonnes et gracieuses meurs et les sciences spirituelles contemplatives et charitables ..." (the first quire [A] is unfoliated; the quotation comes from the first folio after the dedication image). On the translation, see n. 41 below.

39 "Et recevant et prenant en gre tres excellent prince la translacion de ce petit livre qui est de grant efficace comme vous pourres veoir par la lecture dicelluy" (f. 22v). Just underneath is Vérard's heart-shaped monogram logo.

What is noteworthy with all three gifts is that we don't see the *Secret of Secrets* in the complete version as it came from the hands of its Latin translator, Philip of Tripoli, but rather a modified version that accentuates its mirror of princes dimension. Jacob van Maerlant excised all of the chapters on occult science, physiognomy, and technical philosophy because, we have to assume, they ill-fitted his didactic message. Walter Milemete pushed Book 2's large section on health and medicine to later in the work, thereby bringing together all of the mirror of princes contents in an uninterrupted run; he also added a chapter of his own invention, *On the Description of the Woman Whom the King Ought to Take in Marriage*, that ends with the admonition, "For your successors, be a model of nobility and virtue".⁴⁰ As for Vérard's *Secret of Secrets*, it is an example of what scholars call Version C of the French translation tradition, which eliminates an enormous amount of material, most of it connected to the subjects of "secrets" and natural philosophy: gone are Pseudo-Aristotle's introduction, Philip of Tripoli's introduction, Book 2's chapter on baths and the multi-chapter recipe for the panacea, Book 4's section on natural philosophy and the story of the Mage & the Jew, Book 8's paragraph on the Horn of Themistius, Book 9's astrological advice and onomantic table, and all of Book 10.⁴¹

Multiple abbreviated versions of Philip's *Secret of Secrets* were made and copied. To be sure, some were the result of accidents happening somewhere in the process of transmission – e.g., a quire or two became detached from the manuscript and then was lost – but many, indeed most, were deliberately made. Consider, first, the Latin tradition. We know, for example, that Engelbert of Admont prepared for his personal use a redaction of the *Secret of Secrets* while studying in Padua at the university (philosophy) and then the Dominican house (theology) during the years 1276–85: the paring is extensive and reveals just what Engelbert believed to be important in what he was

40 "De descriptione mulieris quam decet regem accipere in uxorem" (f. 26v); "Ut tuis successoribus: sis exemplar nobilitatis et virtutis" (f. 27r). While Walter's *Secret of Secrets* seems to have been rushed to completion (e.g., a number of the illuminations are just sketches) and a number of folios are missing (including what was very probably the final quire: note the catchword at the bottom of what is now the manuscript's current last folio [76v]), Walter's intention as described above is perfectly clear from the Table of Contents there at the start of the manuscript. The added chapter, which is even given its own illumination, is listed in the Table of Contents. It is worth pointing out that the philosophical material in Book 4 was almost certainly in this manuscript: several chapters are listed in the Table of Contents but do not appear where they should after the Circle of Justice mentioned at the bottom of f. 29v, which suggests the disappearance of another whole quire.

41 An edition and study of Version C can be found in *Pseudo-Aristote Le secret des secrets*, ed. D. Lorée. See also Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, *Nine English Versions*, pp. xxii–xxiv; Jacques Monfrin, "La place", pp. 92–97.

copying; organized into four books whose contents are focused on the practicalities of a ruler's public and private life, all of the occult science and philosophy has been left out, and though the physiognomy and some of the health material was kept, the overall balance of edificatory to scientific is such that the resulting text looks very much like as a mirror of princes.⁴² Another example: c. 1300, Geoffrey of Waterford, a Dominican whose resumé included residence for a time at his order's great convent/study center in Paris, deliberately omitted the occult contents of the *Secret of Secrets* from his translation into French because, he said, it was a spurious addition from the Arabic tradition.⁴³ Geoffrey was not, we know, alone in this opinion. Indeed, by the middle of the 14th century, the *Secret of Secrets'* authenticity was widely questioned.⁴⁴ One can say that there were three opinions on the issue: it was Aristotle's work in its entirety; it was spurious in its entirety; only parts of it were Aristotle's – the mirror of princes material on politics and morals, the section on health translated by John of Seville, and the physiognomy.⁴⁵ It is telling that a third of the Latin printings of the *Secret of Secrets* 1472–1555 are of abbreviated versions.⁴⁶ It is also no accident that abbreviated versions figure prominently in the vernacular tradition (something like half of the translations, in fact): it was scholars, after all, who typically did the translating, and the Latin text of the *Secret of Secrets* that they translated reflected not simply their readers' interests or what scholars took those interests to be but also their own best scholarly judgement as to what was and was not genuinely Aristotle's.⁴⁷

42 See Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 257–258, 301, 310–311, 389.

43 See Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 307, 309–10, 312–13. Geoffrey also declined to translate Book 4's section on natural philosophy (ibid. 321).

44 Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 305–23.

45 On this third opinion, see Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, 309–11.

46 On the abbreviated version that was printed and had its origins back in the 14th century, see Friedrich Wurms, *Studien*, pp. 101–106; Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, *Nine English Versions*, p. xix; Jacques Monfrin, “La place du *Secret des Secrets*”, pp. 76–77.

47 For an overview of the vernacular translations of the Philip of Tripoli text, see Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, pp. xxxi–xxxvii; Steven J. Williams, “The Vernacular Tradition of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets* in the Middle Ages: Translations, Manuscripts, Readers”, in *Filosofia in volgare nel Medioevo*, eds. N. Bray and L. Sturlese (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2003), pp. 469–482; Ilaria, Zamuner, “La tradizione romanza del *Secretum secretorum* pseudo-aristotelico. Regesto delle versioni e dei manoscritti”, in *Studi Medievali* 46 (2005), pp. 31–116. For specific vernacular traditions, there is the following additional bibliography:

French translations: Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, *Nine English Versions*, pp. xxii–xxiv; Jacques Monfrin, “La place”; *Pseudo-Aristote Le secret des secrets*, ed. D. Lorée and I. Zamuner, “(Pseudo)-Aristote, *Sirr-al-‘asrār*”.

English translations: Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, “The *Secreta Secretorum* in English Thought”; idem, *Nine English Versions*, pp. xxvii–xlviii.

The Arabic *Secret of Secrets* began its life as a proto-mirror of princes: during the later Middle Ages into the Renaissance, with the production of what we might call the numerous “mirror of princes redactions” of the *Secret of Secrets*, we can see our text reverting back to something like what it had been near the start of its career.⁴⁸

4 The *Secret of Secrets* Considered as Something Other Than a Mirror of Princes

The complete version of the *Secret of Secrets* made its initial appearance in Europe c. 1230. In the introduction to his translation, Philip of Tripoli praised the *Secret of Secrets* as “this most precious pearl of philosophy”.⁴⁹ He then went on to describe it in more detail:

The most expert prince of philosophers Aristotle composed this book at the request of Alexander, his pupil, who asked that he come to him and faithfully reveal to him the secret of certain arts, namely, the motion, operation, and power of the stars in astronomy, the art of alchemy in nature, the art of knowing natures, and operating charms and celimancy and geomancy ... Wishing to satisfy the emperor and also to safeguard the secrets of these arts, he spoke in enigmas and figurative locutions, teaching extrinsically the philosophical doctrine pertaining to kingship, preserving the health of the body, and acquiring the knowledge of supercelestial bodies, but providing intrinsically everything for which Alexander most urgently had asked”.⁵⁰

Italian translations: Matteo Milani, “Studio filologico e edizione critica delle versioni italiane del *Secretum secretorum* nell’ambito della tradizione mediolatina e romanza”, Ph.D. dissertation (Università degli studi di Torino, 2000–2002).

German translations: Friedrich Wurms, *Studien*, pp. 127–145; Regula Forster, *Geheimnis der Geheimnisse*, pp. 166–240; idem, “Enzyklopädie oder Fürstenspiegel?”, pp. 264–268.

Spanish translations: Philip B. Jones, *The Secreto de los secretos. A Castilian Version*; Hugo Oscar Bizzarri, *Versiones castellanas*. Note that the Spanish tradition includes the existence of a translation directly from the Arabic into Castilian.

48 I take this observation from Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, *Nine English Versions*, p. XIX.

49 “hac preciosissima philosophiae margarita” (Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, p. 361; cf. Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, p. 26).

50 “Quem librum peritissimus princeps philosophorum Aristotiles composuit ad petitionem regis Alexandri, discipuli sui. Qui postulavit ab eo, ut ad ipsum veniret, et secretum quarundam artium sibi fideliter revelaret, videlicet, motum, operationem, et potestatem astrorum in astronomia, et artem alkimie in natura, et artem cognoscendi naturas, et

In both his message and his formulation, Philip was extrapolating from the comments made by “Aristotle” himself, wherein the guidebook that he had written for Alexander “outwardly presented great wisdom and teaching” but hidden inside could be found all the secrets Alexander that had requested.⁵¹ For Philip, “the philosophical doctrine pertaining to kingship” was only a part of – and certainly not the most important part of – the text that he had translated; the book was first and foremost a repository of natural secrets.

The English Franciscan Roger Bacon shared “Aristotle’s” and Philip’s assessment of the *Secret of Secrets*. The best evidence for this comes in the edition of this text that Bacon prepared c. 1280 with some unknown ruler in mind as the recipient.⁵² The oldest manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner 116, is either a presentation copy or a direct descendant of it. Bacon did not intend his work as a mirror of princes; for him, the *Secret of Secrets* was decidedly not a mirror of princes as we understand the term, though it did have a mirror of princes component. Bacon divided the text into four parts: “on the kinds of kings, their conduct, and governance”;⁵³ health and medicine; occult science; physiognomy. The marginalization of the mirror of princes content seen in this organizational scheme is likewise on view in Bacon’s annotations

operandi incantationes et celimanciam et geomanciam. Qui quidem ire non potuit propter aetatem senescentem et corporis gravitatem, et quamvis secreta praedictarum artium sive scienciarum occultare modis omnibus proposuerat, tamen voluntati et postulationi tanti domini nec ausus fuit nec debuit contraire. Volens itaque in parte imperatori satisfacere et in parte secreta artium occultare, hunc librum edidit, loquens aenigmatibus et exemplis et figurativis locutionibus, docens extrinsecus litteratenus philosophicam doctrinam pertinentem ad dominum dominorum, ad sanitatem corporis conservandam, et ad ineffabilem utilitatem et cognitionem corporum supracaelestium acquirendam. Intrinsicus vero medullatenus innuit aenigmatice et secreta Alexandro principale propositum, quod ab eodem instantissime postulaverat” (Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 361–362; cf. Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, pp. 26–27).

51 Preterea quod interrogasti et scire desideras est archanum tale quod humana pectora vix poterunt tollerare; quomodo ergo possunt in mortalibus pellibus depingi? Ad illud itaque quod te decet inquirere et mihi licitum est tractare, me oportet et teneor ex debito respondere, sicut tu teneris ex debito discrecionis non exigere a me amplius ex hoc secreto quod tibi tradidi in hoc libro ... Et ego commendo tibi illud secretum cum quibusdam aliis que invenies in diversis capitulis sive titulis hujus libri. In quibus extrinsecus philosophiam maximam invenies et doctrinam, intrinsicus enim causa finalis que intenditur continetur, ibi enim est totum principale propositum et finale. Cum igitur perceperis significationes secretorum et enigmata exemplorum, tunc plene et perfecte desideratum propositum consequeris” (Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, p. 42).

52 On Bacon’s edition of the *Secret of Secrets*, see Steven J. Williams, “Roger Bacon and the *Secret of Secrets*”.

53 “prima est de regum varietate et moribus eorum et regimine” (Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, p. 28).

passim – the bulk of them appear not in Part 1 but elsewhere in the book; in his elaborate explanatory introduction, which focuses exclusively on issues connected to the *Secret of Secrets* as a summary of Aristotle's secret teaching about nature's operations;⁵⁴ and in the items in the manuscript between the introduction and the edition – four short extracts from the *Opus tertium* along with the *Epistola de secretis operibus artis et naturae* – likewise put there in order to assist in understanding the book.⁵⁵ It was the *Secret of Secrets'* scientific contents that mattered most to Bacon, as we know both from the other work produced during his mature period (e.g., his *Opus maius*), which repeatedly cites the *Secret of Secrets* for just that reason, and his words in the edition itself: according to “certain wise men”, Bacon says, the *Secret of Secrets* “was called the *Book of Ten Sciences*”,⁵⁶ it contained “the greatest secrets of nature, transmitted under a covering”,⁵⁷ considered in conjunction with his introduction and textual comments, the reader had the opportunity to discover “the greatest secrets to which Man or human invention can attain in this life”.⁵⁸ With such statements we are obviously an enormous distance away from mirrors of princes.

What we see with Philip and Bacon is often repeated later in the *Secret of Secrets'* history: a significant percentage of readers went to the *Secret of Secrets* for its scientific material and regarded it primarily as a scientific text.⁵⁹ Two kinds of evidence are pertinent here. First, citations: many medieval scholars cited the *Secret of Secrets'* scientific contents – the section on physiognomy, the section on health and medicine, the story of the Poisonous Maiden from Book 2's section on kingship, and Book 10. So, William of Clare, a University of Paris professor of Arts,

54 “Incipit quidam tractatus brevis et utilis ad declarandum quedam obscure dicta in libro Secreti Secretorum Aristotilis...” (Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, pp. 1–24); see also n. 58 below.

55 “Item capitulum extractum de quodam opere quod fecit idem frater Rogerus Bacun ... et valet ad expositionem dicitorum et dicendorum in textu” (Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, p. 24).

56 “Et intitulatur Liber Decem Scienciarum a quibusdam sapientibus” (Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, p. 25).

57 “... Secretum Secretorum ab Aristotile philosopho editus ad petitionem Alexandri magni, in quo ultima secreta nature sub velamine traduntur, sicut in prologo patet [i.e., Philip's introduction], et in capitulo tertio [i.e., Pseudo-Aristotle's introduction]” (Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, p. 25).

58 “Quem tractatum, si sapiens intueatur et bene omnia discuciat, una cum notabilibus que ipsemet frater Rogerus posuit supra textum in multis locis et diversis, inveniet ultima nature secreta ad que homo sive humana invencio in hac vita poterit pervenire, ad que quiscunque posset pertingere, vere princeps mundi poterit nominari” (Bacon, *Secretum secretorum*, p. 1).

59 By “scientific text” is meant one that is concerned with describing and understanding nature's operations and powers; it includes what we now describe as the pseudo-sciences of alchemy, physiognomy, the *scientia de imaginibus* (the science of images or talismans), and astrology. On the *Secret of Secrets* read as a scientific text, see Steven J. Williams, *Secret of Secrets*, pp. 227–247.

used some empty space in one of his philosophical manuscripts to write out what the *Secret of Secrets* had to say about astrologically appropriate times for bloodletting and taking medicines; readers duly noted what had been said about certain plants with marvelous powers, and we know of one scholar who actually spent several years searching them out; the so-called Emerald Table from the section on alchemy became a classic text in the discipline.⁶⁰

The second kind of evidence is the codicological context of *Secret of Secrets* manuscripts – i.e., the specific texts with which the *Secret of Secrets* has been bound as revealed by medieval library catalogues and codices still extant in their medieval form.⁶¹ The great library of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Augustine's in Canterbury will serve our purposes well here.⁶² The library possessed a number of *Secret of Secrets* manuscripts. As was the norm in the Middle Ages for institutional libraries, its collection was built mostly on bequests, and we are fortunate in this case to have the names of many of those who donated their books (most of the time such information is not available). Three copies of the *Secret of Secrets* are part of what might be described as “edificatory” codices, i.e., the contents are focused primarily on moral matters, suggesting that its fabricators/owners were most interested in the edificatory dimension of the *Secret of Secrets* and used it for this purpose personally and/or professionally. Two copies are in codices of mixed edificatory and scientific contents, reflecting the *Secret of Secrets*' basic bivalent nature as a text. And two copies are in codices that we can describe as scientific. One comes from an anonymous benefactor: “Compotus et in eodem algorismus metricae; glosa super donatum; tractatus noui quadrantis; Tractatus de vij planetis cum vij figuris; Magnitudines planetarum secundum campanum; Secreta philosophorum; secreta secretorum Aristotelis et phisonomia Aristotelis”; it was kept in the section of the library focused on astronomy/*compotus*.⁶³ The other was given by a certain John of London (fl. first half of the 14th century), who was probably a graduate of both Arts and medical school. Upon his entry to the monastery, John brought with him over eighty volumes, almost all of them scientific or philosophical; his *Secret of Secrets* was bound with what appears to be a pseudo-Aristotelian

60 For these examples, see *ibid.*, pp. 227–28, 243–44.

61 Care needs to be taken in the consideration of each and every copy of the *Secret of Secrets* because in some cases the binding of individual texts into a codex happened some time after the Middle Ages with a volume's contents the result of some indiscernible combination of exigency and happenstance.

62 A modern edition of the library catalog can be found in Bruce Charles Barker-Benfield, *St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, Library Catalogue* (London, 2008). On the library, see also Alfred Brotherston Emden, *Donors of Books to St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury* (Oxford, 1968).

63 Bruce Charles Barker-Benfield, *St. Augustine's Abbey*, vol. 2, pp. 1123–1124.

alchemical text (*Liber de conversione corporum*) and was ranged in the section with Aristotelian *naturalia/philosophica*.⁶⁴ We can see something similar at the University of Erfurt's Collegium Amplonianum. Amplonius Ratinck, former medical doctor and university rector, was its founder; his personal library became that of his new institution. The collection included three copies of the complete *Secret of Secrets*; each of them was bound in large codices with what one must assume the donor took to be related texts. In the library's catalog, which was compiled at the time of the donation, one of the codices was listed under the heading "De phylosophia morali";⁶⁵ two were listed under the heading "De philosophia naturali".⁶⁶

Such examples could easily be multiplied. Taken together, what they all point to is a *Secret of Secrets* routinely considered as something other than a mirror of princes.

5 Conclusion

The complexities and difficulties faced by modern scholars in trying to understand how the *Secret of Secrets* was read during the Middle Ages are nicely on view in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 571, the primary remains

64 Barker-Benfield, *St. Augustine's Abbey*, p. 1064–65. For the *Liber de conversione corporum*, see Charles B. Schmitt and Dilwyn Knox, *Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus: A Guide to Latin Works Falsely Attributed to Aristotle before 1500* (London, 1985), p. 26. In an appendix that lists persons in England who owned mirrors of princes, Ulrike Graßnick, *Ratgeber des Königs: Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherideal im spätmittelalterlichen England* (Cologne, 2004), pp. 372–373, includes under the name "John of London" his copy of the *Secret of Secrets* – the copy described above – but this is to ignore both the codicological context of this manuscript as well as what we know about John's scholarly interests and career.

65 "Item liber Aristotilis de secretis secretorum; epistola eiusdem ad Alexandrum seu de regimine principum libellus Aristotilis; vita et sentencie Secundi philosophi; liber Boecii de disciplina scholarium; liber Senece de remediis fortuitorum; sentencie quedam theologorum; sentencie multe philosophorum; liber Petri Alfonsi de disciplina clericali; liber trotule de passionibus mulierum" (*Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskatalog Deutschlands und der Schweiz*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1928), p. 46).

66 "Item liber phisionomie Aristotilis; anathomia quedam; cyrurgia quedam; compendium cyrurgie Lanfranci; libellus Aristotilis de regimine principum; liber eiusdem de morte et vita; liber eiusdem de iuventute et senectute; liber eiusdem de motibus animalium; liber eiusdem de fluxu sive inundacione Nyli; libellus de pomo Aristotilis; [natural works by Avicenna, Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, and John of Paris]; liber Aristotilis de secretis secretorum; libri Palladii de agricultura; libellus Senece de 4 virtutibus cardinalibus; cosmographia de ymagine mundi; quedam de astris et planetis; quedam bona circa libros de anima Aristotilis" (*Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskatalog*, pp. 39–40); "Item de secretis secretorum Aristotilis ad Alexandrum; de naturis et diversitate canum et equorum et eorum curis; libellus metricus Evacis regis Arabum de gemmis et lapidibus preciosis" (*Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskatalog*, p. 40).

of a large codex that had been prepared for and then in 1326 presented to – at least according to the scene pictured on f. 6r – Prince (and soon to be King) Edward III of England by his fiancée Philippa of Hainault.⁶⁷ (Both were young teenagers at the time; Edward’s mother, Isabella, seems to have played the lead role in the commission.) The main texts, all in Anglo-Norman, probably appeared in the following order: Brunetto Latini, *Le Livre du trésor*; Giles of Rome, *Le Gouvernement des Roys*; *Le Livre de Julius Cesar*; *Statutes of England*; a coronation *ordo* for the kings of France; *Lentendement de la paternostre apres le latin*; *Secré des secrez del governails des princes ou del gouvernement des seigneurs*; Raoul le Petit, *Roman de Fauvain*. Given the overwhelming preponderance of either edificatory texts or texts connected to rule, plus the descriptive title of the *Secrets of Secrets* itself, can we say that the intention behind the inclusion of the *Secret of Secrets* in this miscellany was for the *Secret of Secrets* to be read as a mirror of princes? On the other hand, doesn’t the presence of Brunetto Latini’s wide-ranging *Trésor*, which has chapters dealing with science and philosophy, and the fact that the version of the *Secret of Secrets* here is the complete one, with its own chapters on science and philosophy, mean that the *Secret of Secrets* was included for these contents?⁶⁸ Yes and yes. The volume seems to have been fabricated with the goal of providing to the fourteen-year-old Edward useful knowledge on a variety of subjects and to make a contribution to his general education: the *Secret of Secrets*’ multifarious contents suited this goal perfectly.

The *Secret of Secrets* was copied and read for many reasons: as a text in the Aristotelian corpus; as a work of technical philosophy; as a work of natural

67 Cambridge, MA, Harvard Law School Library, 12 contains the only other surviving portion of the original codex. On the codex, see Michael “A. Michael, A Manuscript Wedding Gift from Philippa of Hainault to Edward III”, in *Burlington Magazine* 127 (1985), pp. 582–99; idem, “Towards a Hermeneutics of the Manuscript: The Physical and Metaphysical Journeys of Paris, BNF, MS Fr 571”, in *Freedom of Movement in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the 2003 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. P. Horden (Donington, 2007), pp. 305–317; François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann, *Manuscrits enluminés d’origine insulaire VIIe–XXe siècle* (Paris, 1987), pp. 149–152; Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, *Les traductions françaises*, pp. 166–68; Andrew Wathey, “The Marriage of Edward III and the Transmission of French Motets to England”, in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45 (1992), pp. 1–29; Jane H.M. Taylor, “Le Roman de Fauvin: Manuscript, Text, Image”, in *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 146*, eds. M. Bent and A. Wathey (Oxford, 1998), pp. 569–589.

68 On this version of the *Secret of Secrets*, see Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, “Philip of Tripoli and His Textual Methods”, in *Pseudo-Aristotle, The Secret of Secrets: Sources and Influences*, eds. W.F. Ryan and C.B. Schmitt (London, 1982), pp. 65–66, and Jacques Monfrin, “La place du *Secret des secrets*”, pp. 79–81.

philosophy; as a work of moral philosophy; as a work of medical science; as a work of health advice; as a work of moral and religious edification; as a work connected to the figure of Alexander the Great; as a book of secrets; as a mirror of princes. To be sure, many readers went to the *Secret of Secrets* for its mirror of princes material, but many readers went it for other reasons instead. Not that it was necessarily a simple either-or: many readers probably went to the *Secret of Secrets* for several, even many or all, of the aforementioned reasons.

While the claim that the *Secret of Secrets* was the most popular book of the Middle Ages seems to be an exaggeration, it was certainly among the top “best sellers”. If we include not only the Latin tradition’s partial version by John of Seville and the complete version by Philip of Tripoli but also fragments and excerpts plus the vernacular translations, we reach a number of extant manuscripts that is closer to 1000 than 500: very few medieval texts even come close to let alone match that total. But we need to be extremely careful concerning what we do with this number: it cannot all go into the “*Secret of Secrets* as a mirror of princes” column. The fact that the John of Seville version was very popular on its own, that the section on physiognomy sometimes circulated as an independent treatise, and that a good half of the readers of the Philip of Tripoli version were primarily if not exclusively interested in its scientific contents significantly reduces the “mirror of princes” total.

The *Secret of Secrets*, it was argued in the Introduction, is not a mirror of princes in the strict sense of the term. However, we have seen that the *Secret of Secrets* could be received and read – selectively – as one; it could be turned into one, so to speak, by isolating its mirror of princes material. One could also say that the *Secret of Secrets* was highly regarded as a “mirror of princes” in a loose sense (hence the use of quotation marks here), i.e., a work of advice and information written for a prince; probably it was the most famous of the numerous “mirror of princes” in circulation. If we could imagine conducting a series of surveys during the Middle Ages in which the literate public was asked to name the first “mirror of princes” that came to mind, most would have answered with either the *Secret of Secrets* or Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum*; because of the extraordinary repute enjoyed by both the former’s supposed author and addressee – Aristotle, the archetypal sage, and Alexander, the archetypal ruler – it seems fair to say that the *Secret of Secrets* would have been mentioned much more frequently than Giles’ work.⁶⁹ One could also legitimately claim that the *Secret of Secrets* played the central role in the

69 I take the idea of archetypal Ruler and Sage from Mahmoud Ali Manzalaoui, “Noght in the Registre of Venus”: Gower’s English Mirror for Princes”, in *Medieval Studies for J.A.W. Bennett: Aetatis Suae LXX*, ed. P.L. Heyworth (Oxford, 1981), p. 162.

entire late medieval mirror of princes movement. Becoming available as early as it did, the *Secret of Secrets* helped to define the genre of mirror of princes and to give it a certain cachet, prompting a host of authors to pick up their pens and play Aristotle to some contemporary Alexander; the *Secret of Secrets* both provided a significant boost to the genre in the middle of the 13th century and then helped to sustain it for several hundred years. Nevertheless, the *Secret of Secrets* was not the most popular mirror of princes: that honor belongs to Giles' *De regimine principum*.⁷⁰ The *Secret of Secrets* can be listed in the record book as holding the very respectable position of runner-up – with, to be sure, a qualifying asterisk after its name. Still, in spite of the caution that comes with the asterisk, it is obvious that the *Secret of Secrets* deserves a prominent place in any account of medieval mirrors of princes.

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⁷⁰ The number of extant manuscripts of Giles' *De regimine principum* has been reported at over 360 (Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, *Les traductions françaises*, p. 33 n. 1), though one of the two scholars responsible for that number also says that “[it] is likely to increase considerably” (*Aegidii Romani opera omnia*, p. ix, n. 1). For a comparison of the two texts' receptions as Mirrors of Princes, see Williams, “Giving Advice and Taking It”. While it is true that the *De regimine principum* can be read as a mirror of princes, as “a moral text”, and as “a commentary on” – one might better say, “a supplement to” – “Aristotle's, *Ethics*, *Economics*, and *Politics*” (*Aegidii Romani opera omnia*, pp. xxvii–xxix), there is no question that options two and three were the necessary properties of what Giles' work was, viz., a Mirror of Princes with substantial Aristotelian content and that, by definition, includes substantial moral content. Giles' work relies heavily on Aristotle's philosophy but it was not written as a commentary on that philosophy, just as Aquinas' *Summa contra Geniles* relies heavily on Aristotle's philosophy but was not written as a commentary on that philosophy. And mirrors of princes were routinely read as moral tracts with general application to “Everyman” beyond the princes to which they were directed. It might also be worth saying here that, unlike the *Secret of Secrets*, the composition of the *De regimine principum* was due to one person, not many, and its nature is unitary, not multiple.

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The Castilian Versions of the Pseudo-Aristotle's *Secretum secretorum* and French Versions of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* (13th–16th centuries): A Comparative Perspective

Hugo O. Bizzarri and Noëlle-Laetitia Perret

1 Introduction

The circulation and reception of the Castilian *Secretum secretorum* (*Sirr-al-asrar*) and of the French version of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* in the Occident is a subject that lends itself especially well to comparative study. The choice, though, is legitimately open to question. It may seem fairer to compare comparable items—circulation of texts within languages or geographically similar regions. However, the state of current research has not allowed us to go beyond different viewpoints. In this chapter, therefore, we hope to benefit from research on these two major texts, which were among the most widely circulated and read in western Europe between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Through comparing what we know of the circumstances of their writing, their reception, and their spread, we will try to shed light on the convergences and specificities of their histories. We will pay particular attention to the historical, social, and cultural contexts that affected how they were received. Where did they circulate? Who owned the manuscripts? What were the social and cultural backgrounds of these people? How, and in what form, were these texts transmitted from one environment to another? These are the kinds of questions we considered in our research.

This comparative perspective has also given us a better understanding of the way in which the medieval West re-appropriated the heritage of Aristotle in various ways. The two works we discuss here represent a fundamental link in this transmission.

2 The Hispanic Circulation and Reception of the Pseudo-Aristotle's *Secretum secretorum* (*Sirr al-asrar*)

On the Iberian Peninsula, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were an era of great cultural renewal. A large number of scientific works were arriving, especially from the Arabic world, to revive fundamental knowledge. Among these were the works of Aristotle. Interest in the various sciences that the Greek philosopher had developed led to the translation of all kinds of treatises circulated under his name. Spain, like other European cultural centers of the time, made no distinction between strictly Aristotelian texts and those attributed to him. The Aristotelian corpus was so widely circulated on the peninsula, and its adaptation to Spanish culture was so complete, that toward the middle of the thirteenth century a scholar as eminent as the Franciscan friar Juan Gil de Zamora (1241–1318), educated in the university classrooms of Paris, believed that Aristotle was a Spanish philosopher: “*De Hispania fuit Aristoteles, Philosophorum perfectio et consummatio*” (Aristotle, the most perfect and accomplished of philosophers, was from Spain).¹

In the thirteenth century, a growing interest in the figure of Alexander the Great became part of this current. Amaia Arizaleta has called this period, during which Alexander the Great represented the ambivalent image of the warrior and the philosopher, a paradigm of the perfect prince, the *aetas alexandrina*.² The thirteenth century was a time when great texts on Alexander in Latin and French were circulating throughout Spain, giving rise to the poem *Libro de Alexandre* and to the hero's biography in the *General estoria*. The confluence of the two currents, Aristotelian and Alexandrine, created an atmosphere that favored the spread throughout the peninsula of one of the most important texts that combined the two figures: the *Secretum secretorum*. Social, cultural and political conditions certainly fostered the appearance of these writings in Castile. The coexistence of Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities on the peninsula also aided in their dissemination. The cultural weight of cities like Seville and Toledo, even during the Moorish era, mattered too. The undertaking of the Reconquest was also certainly encouraged by models of nobility like that of the monarch advised by a great sage.

1 Fray Juan Gil de Zamora, O.F.M., *De preconis Hispanie. Study and critical edition of Manuel de Castro y Castro* (Madrid, 1955), p. 175. This belief endured through the entire Middle Ages, as Francisco Rico has shown in “Aristóteles hispanicus: En torno a Gil de Zamora, Petrarca y Juan de Mena”, in *Italia Medioevale y Umanistica* 5 (1967), pp. 143–164.

2 Amaia Arizaleta in the introduction to the Hispanic panorama in Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas (ed.), *La fascination pour Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures européennes (Xe-XVIIe siècle)*, vol. 1 (Turnhout, 2014), p. 63.

The *Secretum secretorum* was translated from an Arabic text of the tenth century, the *Kitâb sirr al-‘asrâr* (in Arabic كتاب سر الأسرار). Some historians, including J. Ruska,³ believe it can be attributed to Abû Bakr al-Râzi. The name of Yuhannâ ibn al-Bitrîq, who is said to have written it in about 941, is also often mentioned.

This treatise was one of the most widely read Aristotelian texts in Spain.⁴ As in other parts of Europe, it was *the* political treatise *par excellence* until Guillaume de Moerbeke's⁵ translation of Aristotle's *Politics* and the great Summa of Aristotle's work by Giles of Rome in his *De regimine principum* in about 1279, which we will discuss.⁶ Even so, none of these works could overshadow the importance on the peninsula of this apocryphal treatise. The *Secretum secretorum* offered an ideal model of the relation between the prince and his advisor, mingled with non-traditional knowledge that remained relevant during the entire Hispanic Middle Ages.

This treatise, written in Arabic in the east around the year 975, engendered two different versions, which we briefly present here and will discuss further on. The first, shorter version is called SS/A and was probably written in about 1145. From it came the longer *Poridat de las poridades*. The book led to such an interest in nontraditional knowledge that John of Seville, a 12th-century

3 Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, “Al-Razi's Buch Geheimnis der Geheimnisse. Mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen in deutscher Übersetzung von Julius Ruska”, in *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin*, vol. 6, ed. Julius Ruska (Berlin, 1937, repub. 1973).

4 Ilaria Zamuner provides an overview of the diffusion of this work throughout the world: “La tradizione romanza del *Secretum secretorum* pseudo-aristotelico. Regesto delle versioni e dei manoscritti”, in *Studi Medievali* 46/1 (2005), pp. 31–116. In the specific case of Spain, I refer to the work of Hugo O. Bizzarri, “Difusión y abandono del *Secretum secretorum* en la tradición sapiencial castellana de los siglos XIII y XIV”, in *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 63 (1996), pp. 95–137 and to Ilaria Zamuner, “Il volgarizzamento catalano Ct₃ del *Secretum secretorum* ps.-aristotelico e il códice 1474 della Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid”, in *Quaderni de Lingue e Letterature* 31 (2006), pp. 237–245.

5 Aristotle's *Politics* was translated into Latin twice in the 13th century; a *translatio imperfecta* was done in 1255–1261, and a *translatio completa*, attributed to Guillaume de Moerbeke, before 1267/1268. The reference editions of these translations are: Aristoteles Latinus, *Politica* (Libri 1–11. 11). *Translatio prior imperfecta interprete Guillelmo de Moerbeka* (?), ed. P. Michaud-Quantin (Bruges, 1961), and *Aristotelis Politicorum libri octo cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeke*, ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig, 1872). On this subject, see Christoph Flüeler, *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen Politica im späten Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1992).

6 Jürgen Miethke, *Las ideas políticas en la Edad Media* (Buenos Aires, 1993). On the spread of this treatise in Spain, see María Jesús Díez Garretas, José Manuel Fradejas Rueda, Isabel Acero Durántez and Deborah Dietrick Smithbauer, *Los manuscritos de la versión castellana del De regimine principum de Gil de Roma* (Tordesillas, 2003).

translator in the Toledo region, translated only the medicinal section, creating another version that was disseminated under the title *Epistola Aristotelis ad Alexandrum de dieta seruanda* (Letter from Aristotle to Alexander on preserving health).⁷

John of Seville translated this version between 1112 and 1128, under the title of *De Regimine sanitatis* (On the regimen of health) or *Epistula Alexandro de dieta servanda*.⁸ A second, longer version is called SS/B. It was translated into Latin about 1243 by Philip of Tripoli.⁹ This translation later gave rise to various Castilian versions.

From the middle of the 13th century onward, the *Secretum secretorum* was a constant presence in Spain. Alfonso X use it as one of his sources in the *Partida II*, wisdom literature made frequent reference to Aristotle's advice to Alexander, and the book was an authoritative source for the entire corpus of political treatises. In the 14th century, it was the base for the *Poema de Alfonso Onceno*, a piece of propaganda for the monarchy, which created the fictitious episode of a servant's advice to King Alfonso XI (1325–1350) before he takes the reins of his kingdom.¹⁰

In contrast to translations of Giles of Rome's work, translations of the *Secretum secretorum* are usually more faithful to their source. Additional elements and changes are rare. While we have been able to identify a large number of people who ordered or possessed French copies of Giles of Rome's work, we know almost nothing about the owners of manuscripts of the *Secretum secretorum*. There are, however, considerable differences between various manuscripts. These are sometimes the result of handwritten transmission, and we cannot now know whether these changes were made by the copyists or at the request of the people who ordered them.

7 Mario Grignaschi, "L'origine et les métamorphoses du *Sirr-al-asrâr* (*Secretum secretorum*)", in *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 43 (1976), pp. 7–112 and idem, "La diffusion du *Secretum secretorum* (*Sirr-ar-asrâr*) dans l'Europe occidentale", in *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 55 (1980), pp. 7–70, as well as Regula Forster, *Das Geheimnis der Geheimnis. Die arabischen und deutschen Fassung des pseudo-aristotelischen Sirr-al-asrâr / Secretum secretorum* (Wiesbaden, 2006).

8 *De regimine sanitatis, ou Epistula Alexandro de dieta servanda*, partial Latin translation by John of Seville (v. 1145): Johannes Brinckmann, *Die apokryphen Gesundheitsregeln des Aristoteles für Alexander den Grossen* (Leipzig, 1914).

9 *Secretum secretorum Aristotelis ad Alexandrum Magnum* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), reprint of the 1555 Venice edition.

10 Hugo O. Bizzarri, "Difusión y abandono", pp. 95–137; Fernanda Nussbaum, *Claves del entorno ideológico del Poema de Alfonso XI* (Saragossa, 2012), pp. 66–82, and Gaetano Lalomia, "I Consigli di Aristotele ad Alessandro: tradizione orientale e rielaborazione occidentale", in *Revista de literatura medieval* 14 (2002), pp. 31–48.

3 Castilian Versions of the *Epistola Aristotelis ad Alexandro de dieta seruanda*

3.1 *Pedro Alfonso: First Spanish Recipient of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Treatise*

We do not have a definite date for the first appearance of the *Secretum secretorum* in Castile. The earliest stage of its dissemination is shown by Pedro Alfonso de Huesca (1062–1140), who mentions it in the definition of true nobility in his *Disciplina clericalis*.

Edissere michi, pater karissime, ueram nobilitatis definicionem. Et pater: Vt, inquit, Aristoteles in epistola sua quam Alexandro regi composuit meminit: qui cum ab eo quereret quem sibi ex hominibus consiliarium faceret, taliter per epistolam respondit: Accipe, ait, talem, qui septem liberalibus artibus sit instructus, industriis septem eruditus, septem eciam probitatibus edoctus, et ego hanc estimo perfectam esse nobilitatem.¹¹

Show me, dearest father, what is the true definition of nobility. And the father said: I remember that Aristotle answered a letter from Alexander, who had asked him how to choose an advisor: Take—he said to him—someone educated in the seven liberal arts, a scholar of the seven industries an adept of the seven probities, because I believe that that is perfect nobility.

In this passage, Pedro Alfonso reveals himself to us as the first known Hispanic reader of the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise; the letter he refers to can only be the *Secretum secretorum*. Pedro Alfonso had received a typical Andalusian education. At that time, this meant being taught in Arabic, and becoming familiar with Greek philosophy, but also with works on astronomy, physics and medicine. The Upper March of Al-Andalus, with cities like Saragossa, Lérida and Huesca, was an Islamicized zone, where sciences, philosophy, mysticism and moralistic literature flourished to an astonishing degree. The region reached its apogee with the *taifa* kingdoms between 1031 and 1110, exactly the years of Pedro Alfonso's education. Poets like Sulaymān al Qaysī (Abu Hamid al-Gharnati), Ibn Darrāy al-Qaṣṭallī (Ibn Darrāj al-Qaṣṭallī), Ibn Gabirol, Judah Halevi and Abraham ibn Ezra united poetry and knowledge. In the sciences, astronomy became prominent thanks to King Al-Mu'taman (Yusuf al-Mu'taman ibn Hud),

¹¹ Alfonso Hilka and Werner Söderhjelm (eds.), *Die Disciplina clericalis des Petrus Alfonsi (das älteste Novellenbuch des Mittelalters), nach allen bekannten Handschriften* (Heidelberg, 1911), p. 10.

whose library Pedro Alfonso probably visited, and Abraham bar Hiyya, who was the first to discuss the Ptolemaic system in Hebrew. Among physicians, there were among others Al-Kattam, who introduced the medical knowledge of Abu Al-Qasis (Al-Zahrawi) of Córdoba to Saragossa; Al-Kirmani, who applied advanced surgical techniques; Judah Halevi, an expert on medicine and logic; as well as Ibn Yana and Yunus Ibn Ishaq in pharmacopeia. Another characteristic of the region was the union of logic and grammar, as in the work of Ibn Gabirol.¹² All this gives some idea of the flowering of knowledge, and the area became fertile soil for the appearance of a work like the *Secretum secretorum*, in which various disciplines were mingled.

To return to Pedro Alfonso, part of his life was spent between Saragossa and Huesca. His astronomical knowledge led him to a long sojourn in England (between 1106 and 1116). Although particularly knowledgeable about science, his literary education was also extensive. In the prologue of *Disciplina clericalis*, he mentions that he uses allegories, fables, comparisons of birds and animals, proverbs, and Arabic advice.¹³ In 1106, he decided to convert to Christianity; his godfather was Alfonso I the Battler, king of Aragon. Despite his connection with the royal court, *Disciplina* was clearly an urbane, scholarly work, one reason that eastern-influenced allegory and the tradition of fables made inroads.

However, Moorish culture did not leave its mark on this region alone. The reconquered lands continued to benefit from the circulation of Arabic books. This was the case further south, in the three great reconquered capitals of Andalusia: Toledo, Córdoba and Seville.

3.2 *John of Seville's Epistola Aristotelis ad Alexandrum de dieta seruanda*

In the time of John of Seville, the young kingdom of Castile was expanding. In 1085 Alfonso VI of Castile seized Toledo, making him the most powerful king on the peninsula. The long years of Moorish domination had left a treasure trove of scientific texts in the old Gothic capital, which became a crossroads of the three great cultures of Spain: Moorish, Jewish and Christian. In this Islamized Toledo, Raymond, Bishop of Toledo, encouraged a series of translators, including Dominicus Gundissalinus, Judah ben Solomon, Abraham Ibn Daud,

12 Joaquín Lomba, "El marco cultural de Pedro Alfonso", in *Estudios sobre Pedro Alfonso de Huesca* ed. María Jesús Lacarra (Saragosse, 1996), pp. 147–175; José S. Gil, *La escuela de traductores de Toledo y sus colaboradores judíos* (Toledo, 1985).

13 John Tolán, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers* (Gainesville, 1959); Carlos Alvar, *Traducciones y traductores. Materiales para una historia de la traducción en Castilla durante la Edad Media* (Alcalá de Henares, 2010), pp. 57–60.

Gerard of Cremona and John of Seville.¹⁴ We know little about John of Seville, beyond his interest in astrological, philosophical and medical works. One of his first translations was the *Secretum secretorum*, of which he translated only the medicinal advice, under the title *Epistola Aristotelis ad Alexandrum de dieta seruanda*, although he had access to the entire text.¹⁵ He wrote this work at the request of a queen, who is mentioned solely by the letter “T”. Thorndike assumed that this may have been Teresa of León, the sister of Alfonso VI of Castile and León, who later married Henry of Burgundy, Count of Portugal.¹⁶

Who was the true instigator of this version? John of Seville worked under the orders of Bishop Raymond of Seville, without mentioning him here. He might have translated the work at the request of the queen, or simply on his own initiative. One way or another, John of Seville’s translation demonstrates that the *Secretum secretorum* was circulating in the courts of kings, either as a *regimen sanitatis* or as a *regimen principum*.

We know almost nothing of the diffusion and circulation of this *Epistola* on the peninsula. For that, we would need a complete list of Latin manuscripts there. Recently two Castilian versions have been discovered. The first, in the Zabálburu Library in Madrid, is a complete translation included in a manuscript that is an anthology of medicinal and wisdom literature texts.

The Zabálburu manuscript contains a complete translation of the *Epistola*, made by a translator who took into account the text of *Poridat de las poridades*, which influenced the translation. Jesús Pensado Figueiras dates it to about 1330. The dating of the manuscript that contains it, however, is harder to determine, as its watermark, a hunting horn, was in use during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁷

We have little information on the context of the production of this translation. On the other hand, we may note that, although the Castilian translation closely follows the Latin version, it omits the initial dedication to the queen (*Domine T. gracia dei Hispanorum regine J. Hispanensis salutem!*).¹⁸ This may

14 Heinrich Schipperges, “Zur Rezeption und Assimilation arabischer Medizin im frühen Toledo”, in *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 39 (1955), pp. 261–283.

15 Lynn Thorndike, “John of Seville”, in *Speculum* 34/1 (1959), pp. 20–38.

16 Thorndike, “John of Seville”, pp. 24–25.

17 Jesús Figueiras Pensado, *El códice Zabálburu de medicina medieval: edición crítica y estudio de fuentes* (Corunna, 2012), pp. 16–20; idem, “La traduction castillane de l’*Epistola Aristotelis ad Alexandrum de dieta servanda* de Jean de Séville”, in *Trajectoires européennes du Secretum secretorum du Pseudo-Aristote (XIII^e–XVI^e siècle)*, eds. C. Gaullier-Bougassas, M. Bridges and J.-Y. Tilliette (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 215–241.

18 Hugo O. Bizzarri, *Pseudo-Aristóteles. Secreto de los secretos. Poridat de las poridades* (Valence, 2010), p. 167.

be the first hint that this translation was circulated among the nobility, not royalty. Other elements will confirm this first impression.

In a gloss to folio 2va of the Zabálburu manuscript, mention is made of a certain “Cristóbal de Robles”; in folio 48va, a certain “Robles”. Figueiras Pensado has suggested that this probably refers to the brothers Lorenzo and Diego de Robles, printers in the kingdom of Aragon and Saragossa from 1582 onwards.¹⁹ In this codex, also in a very general manner, the “*vecinos de la Nava*” and a “*vecino de Miranda*” are also mentioned. Again, Figueiras Pensada maintains that these allusions could refer to two communities in the province of Burgos, Nava de Orduña and Miranda del Ebro, which would indicate that the manuscript had come through the northeastern part of Castile-León, relatively near the Basque country and Navarre.²⁰ All this evokes the widespread circulation of this *Epistola* into milieus with no links to its original production. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the tradition of wisdom literature spread further, to the nobility.

The second version of the *Epistola* is found in manuscript 155 of the Royal Spanish Academy, which mixes wisdom literature and medical texts. It is a codex that consists of four fragments of independent manuscripts.²¹ The *Epistola* is in the first fragment (folios 1 to 90). The version in this manuscript is not the complete text. It contains only the second part of the *Epistola*, the part focusing on advice concerning the four seasons of the year and the “health regimen” that follows the description of the seasons. We do not know if this was a partial translation, or if its first section was lost. In the manuscript, this translation is found after a collection of maxims translated from Catalan to Castilian at the request of Lorenzo Suárez de Figueroa, 23rd Master of the Order of Santiago, by his Jewish physician Jacob Zadique of Uclés. We know nothing about the translator. On the other hand, there is a great deal of information on the Master, as he was one of the most celebrated political personalities of his day. Employed as an advisor first to King John I, then, after participating in the regency during King Henry III’s minority, to Henry as well, he then became an active warrior in the struggle against the Muslim kingdom of Granada. He also played the role of reformer of the Order, organizing two councils (Uclés 1395 and Mérida 1403), in which the Establishments were promulgated, that is, laws for the Order that reinforced the idea of a life of poverty.²²

19 Figueiras Pensado, *El códice*, p. 19.

20 Figueiras Pensado, *El códice*, pp. 19–20.

21 For details on this manuscript, see Hugo O. Bizzarri (ed.), *Dichos de sabios. Jacobo Zadique de Uclés* (San Millán de la Cogolla, 2019), pp. 50–51.

22 Bizzarri, *Dichos de sabios*, pp. 14–23.

How was this version of the *Epistola* combined with the collection of sages' sayings? Our answer must be a hypothesis. It may have been a simple accident caused by manuscript tradition; neither can we exclude the possibility that it was an additional translation by Jacob Zadique, and that, circulated within the monastery of Uclés, it ended up being included in the collection of sayings. The Order of Santiago was made up of nobles who had taken vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Even though reading was not one of their main activities, as has been pointed out, it is possible that certain educational texts were dedicated to them.²³ The *Epistola*, copied along with this Santiago wisdom literature, is evidence that it was circulated among nobles consecrated to religious life.

Moreover, manuscript RAE 155 of this second version gives us a hint as to its owners. In folio 86v, after the copying of *Dichos de sabios of Jacopo Zadique de Uclés* was finished, we find in a fifteenth-century hand an annotation on the birth of two children of the Molina family of Córdoba, in 1447 and 1451.

En la cibdat de cordoua mjercoles enla noche ahora de las doze que media noche vn poco antes quatro dias de enero año de Mill cccc° xlvij años nasçio mj fijo pedro de moljna enlas casas de fernando angulo su padrino de la pila.

Enla çibdat de seujlla lunes enla noche xvj dias de agosto podia ser a tres oras & media despues de media noche año de Mill cccc° lj años nasçio mj fijo diego de moljna enlas casa de gomez de morales asanta catalyna en cal de sardjnas arriba delas casas de diego de ferrera fijo del mariscal ponga su padrino de la pila.

We know nothing about this family, but it is to be noticed that this manuscript, in the fifteenth century, belonged neither to a monarch nor even to a noble. It was already part of the private library of the Córdoba bourgeoisie.

3.3 *The Diffusion of Versions of the Secretum secretorum Translated for Alfonso X of Castile*

Two versions of *Secretum secretorum* circulated in Castile: the SS/A version of Guido of Valencia, under the name *Secreto de los secretos*, and the SS/B version, an anonymous translation under the name *Poridat de las poridades*. The more archaic title of the latter already indicates its close connection to Arab

23 Derek W. Lomax, *La Orden de Santiago (1170–1275)*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1965).

tradition. Although we cannot be sure, both versions seem to have been translated by order of King Alfonso X of Castile.²⁴

The king's interest in Arabic culture is well known. It led him to revive the legendary translators' school of Toledo; according to the Arabist Millás-Vallcrosa, Alfonso was its last patron.²⁵ The reconquest of Seville by Ferdinand III in 1247 gave new impetus to Muslim cultural influence in Castile. The city was an important cultural center of Al-Andalus, and Alfonso was so taken by it that he spent his last years there.

From his youth onwards, Alfonso had been interested in the Arabic literature that circulated in the peninsula. Before taking the throne, he seems to have occupied himself with the translation of *Calila e Dimna*. Once he was ruler, he may also have encouraged the translation of similar work, such as *Bocados de oro*, the *Libro de los buenos proverbios*, the *Historia de la doncella Teodor*, and versions of the *Secretum secretorum*. The scholar-king then took up translation in its twelfth-century form, that is, the production of literal translations. In 1269, a new, more creative period of cultural creation began. The king no longer worked on literal translations, but in a syncretic manner, combining several translated sources, as in the compilation of the *General estoria*. Christians, Jews and Muslims took part in the work groups he created. Some of their names have survived, including those of Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen, the *alfaquí* Abraham, Garcí Pérez, Guillén Arremón, and Juan Daspa.²⁶ As a consequence, the context of the production of these translations at the royal court of Castile was deeply influenced by the Arabic culture of Al-Andalus.²⁷

There is no surviving manuscript of the *Secretum secretorum* from the earliest period of its translation. The *Secreto de los secretos* version is preserved within a late codex, from the fifteenth century, in the Spanish National Library, Manuscript 9428. It is difficult to determine its date more precisely. Likewise, we know nothing of its history or its owners. The work is preserved with other

24 Marta Haro Cortés, *Los compendios de castigos del siglo XIII: Técnicas narrativas y contenido ético* (Valencia, 1995), pp. 57–62; idem, *Literatura de castigos en la Edad Media: libros y colecciones de sentencias* (Madrid, 2003), pp. 12–16; Alvar, *Traducciones y traductores*, pp. 55–63.

25 José M. Millás-Vallcrosa, "El literalismo de los traductores de la corte de Alfonso el Sabio", in *Al-Andalus* 1 (1933), pp. 155–187; Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *El concepto cultural alfonsí* (Madrid, 1995), pp. 65–105; Alvar, *Traducciones y traductores*, pp. 67–81.

26 Gonzalo Menéndez-Pidal, "Cómo trabajaron las escuelas alfonsíes", in *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 5/4 (1951), pp. 363–380.

27 Evelyn S. Procter, *Alfonso X de Castilla, patrono de las letras y del saber* (Murcia, 2002); H. Salvador Martínez, *El humanismo medieval y Alfonso X el Sabio. Ensayo sobre los orígenes del humanismo vernáculo* (Madrid, 2016).

wisdom literature texts of the period, not necessarily of Arabic origin: *Flores de filosofía* (fols. 1–18), *Libro de los buenos proverbios* (fols. 18–20), *Carta del rey don Pedro I* (fol. 21–27), *Carta de San Bernardo enviada a un noble cauallero (De cura rei familiaris)* (fols. 29–32) and the *Secreto de los secretos* (fols. 32–51). As we can see, this is a mixture of texts of Arabic and Castilian origin. It is possible that by this time, Arabic texts that were widely read across the peninsula were already being perceived as Castilian. The assimilation of the work into Hispanic culture can be seen, moreover, by the elimination of every possible element of numerology, magic, or astronomy. This jettisoning of anything that might be seen as unorthodox suggests that the version that arrived in Castile was one of the many that was censored in the papal court.²⁸

In the 15th century, the audience for collections of maxims and mirrors of princes grew considerably. The Castilian translations of the *Secretum secretorum*, initially used and read only by royalty, gradually began to be read by the nobility of Castile. However, nothing within the text allows us to perceive this new orientation. The original work was simply read more widely, but new versions were not created.

3.4 *Number 46, the “Old” Illuminated Manuscript in the National Library in Lisbon*

Poridat de las poridades, preserved in five manuscripts, was circulated in three different forms, although this does not imply a chronological succession, but only three specific forms of reception.²⁹ The first of these, an independent work, is the Number 46 illuminated manuscript of the National Library of Lisbon. It was written on parchment at the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century. It also contains the earliest version of this work, that is, the seven chapters with their numerology and physiognomy sections.

Although this manuscript is incomplete, it is the one that best preserves the original work that had interested Alfonso X. Its Arabic character is obvious, especially in the last section, which concerns esoteric arts. The most unusual is the one that draws on *huruf*, a technique based on giving a numerical value to each letter, through which its magical properties could be discovered.³⁰ This version also divided the work into seven chapters, following the initial outline

28 Hugo O. Bizzarri, “El *Secretum secretorum* en Castilla: una consecuencia de la censura parisina”, in *Studia Hispanica Medievalia 111. iv Jornadas Internacionales de Literatura Española Medieval*, eds. R. E. Penna and M. A. Rosarossa (Buenos Aires, 1993), pp. 9–14.

29 Bizzarri, *Pseudo-Aristóteles*, pp. 40–41.

30 Hugo O. Bizzarri, “Las ‘figuras’ de *Poridat de las poridades*”, in *Revista de poética medieval* 30 (2016), pp. 47–54.

mentioned in the prologue. However, beginning with chapter VII, entitled “*Este es el tractado .vij. en guisa de la lides & las huestes*” (“This is the seventh treatise on war and the army”), the final section starts to be subdivided into smaller chapters. Each army list becomes a different chapter. The chapter devoted to physiognomy is also divided into as many chapters as the number of traits of the persons discussed. It is possible that these new chapters were all originally annotations in the margins, before being integrated *a posteriori* into the work. Thus we observe the process of fragmentation of the text to allow it to be manipulated more easily. The same is true for the final section, a lapidary (fol. 8v), in which the description of each stone receives its own chapter. It is possible that this was influenced by the tradition of an Arabic work, the Alfonsine *Lapidario*, which was translated in the same period as *Poridat de las poridades*. All of the elements of this copy, however, point to an Arabic-influenced milieu.

3.5 *The Manuscripts Escorial L.III.2, Escorial h.III.1, and University Library of Salamanca 1763: A Fusion of Poridat de las poridades and the Libro de los buenos proverbios*

Another form of reception is attested by the manuscripts Escorial L.III.2, Escorial h.III.1, and University Library of Salamanca 1763. These manuscripts are derived from an archetype that fused the text of *Poridat de las poridades* with another collection of wisdom literature, both originating in the same intellectual circles of Baghdad: the *Libro de los buenos proverbios*.³¹ This is a collection of maxims written in the 11th century by Hunayn ibn Ishāq (809–873), with sayings of Greek philosophers. Among them, Alexander the Great and Aristotle play a fundamental role. This version of *Poridat de las poridades* had not lost its integrity nor its Arabic character. However, the two treatises, inserted after Aristotle’s lapidary, were combined as if they were a single work, due to the importance of Alexander the Great’s advice in Hunayn’s collection. This version seems to indicate the way in which the figure of Alexander the Great gained ground against that of Aristotle as the work spread through the peninsula.

3.6 *National Library of Spain Manuscript 6545: A Late Anthology of Alexander*

A last form of reception, perhaps more personal, is preserved in the 6545 manuscript of the National Library of Spain. Like its predecessor, it is an anthology

³¹ Haro Cortés, *Literatura de castigos*, pp. 16–24.

oriented towards Alexander.³² However, this copy's script suggests that it was written in the fifteenth century. We do not know who owned it, but we find, in one of its endpapers, a series of *prueba calami* with some details of a trial in which Juan, a priest of Santiago, represented Friar Díaz Zetino against María de Aguirre, wife of Alfonso de la Fuente. The date August 1615 (fol. 1r) appears here. The annotation of this trial may be a hint testifying that the manuscript was then being circulated among the nobility.

The manuscript presents the work *Bocados de oro* (fols. 1–70v) by Mubashshir ibn Fātik (ca 1048), successor to Hunayn.³³ It is a collection of twenty-four biographies of Greek sages, with their maxims. In it, the life and sayings of Aristotle and Alexander once more take center stage. Alexander the Great is the only philosopher who is, in reality, not a sage; despite many wise sayings, Alexander never loses his character as a hero. In the middle of Alexander's biography, as if wedged in, the text of *Poridat de la poridades* (fols. 6r–19v) is inserted, with the aim of amplifying the sage-hero's story. *Poridat* thus loses its autonomy and becomes part of *Bocados de oro*. Although both works are of Arabic origin, their natures are very different. *Bocados* is a work that recreates the image of the Greek schools, "private schools" where each sage taught individually. This may have had some parallel in Castilian contemporary reality, where, along with the royal court and monastery schools, there were also several "private schools" where teachers gave classes. Toledo was internationally recognized for them.³⁴

The text of *Poridat* was well adapted to the intellectual atmosphere of Toledo. The chapters of general advice on ruling the kingdom were followed by other sections concerning numerology, lapidary, physiognomy, and astrology. All of these, however, were omitted in this copy of *Bocados de oro*, which kept only the first three chapters of *Poridat de las poridades*, with the general advice on ruling the kingdom. Thus it picks up only the elements that could be combined with the hero's biography in Mubashshir's work, supplementing it.

Ultimately, this manuscript does not provide a version of *Poridat* like its predecessors, but rather demonstrates the absorption of the *Poridat* text into

32 Hugo O. Bizzarri, "Les enseignements d'Aristote à Alexandre d'après le manuscrit 6545 de la Biblioteca Nacional de España: un manuscrit pour la noblesse", in *Alexandre le Grand à la lumière des manuscrits et des premiers imprimés en Europe (XII^e–XVI^e siècle)* ed. C. Gaullier Bougassas (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 117–131.

33 Haro Cortés, *Literatura de castigos*, pp. 25–38.

34 This activity seems to have continued into the 14th century. In his *Conde Lucanor* (ex. n^o 11) Juan Manuel tells the story of a cleric who goes to Toledo to learn the art of magic (*nigromancia*) under the master Don Illán; see Jaime Ferrero Alemparte, "La escuela de nigromancia de Toledo", in *Anuario de estudios medievales* 13 (1983), pp. 205–268.

that of *Bocados de oro*. On the other hand, although the surviving versions can only have been conceived in an Arabic environment, this Madrid manuscript left this original background behind, integrating a biographical narrative that encloses a series of maxims. Here, the image of an occidental Aristotle is reaffirmed—a Greek sage whose sole eccentricity is belonging to a non-Roman classical world. In this manuscript, the admiration for Alexander the Great effaces the autonomy of *Poridat de las poridades*, which serves only to supplement the hero's biography.

To summarize, different versions of *Secretum secretorum* maintained their presence all through the Hispanic Middle Ages. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the time when the work was introduced to the peninsula, more precisely into the Arab-influenced circles of the Hispanic courts. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries added nothing new: there were no new translations nor creations of new versions. The time when Arabic texts were fashionable had come and gone, giving way to a culture based on western sources. The book was then read, like all the other wisdom literature texts, by a wider public, that of the nobility. But at no time did the “receiving” social group change the text in any major way. Contrary to what we see in the reception and circulation in France of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, the different Hispanic versions of the *Secretum secretorum* were only slightly modified. This relative stability can perhaps be explained by the fact that these works were judged to be perfectly adapted to Spanish culture, itself at the crossroads of eastern and western literary forms.

4 Circulation and Reception of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* (c. 1279) in French

Giles of Rome wrote his *De regimine principum* for the heir to the throne of France, the young Philip the Fair, in about 1279. Following the example of Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome drew on writings of Aristotle that were just being rediscovered through their Latin translations. His “mirror for princes”, written in Latin, was the first to take systematic advantage of Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*. Like the *Secretum secretorum*, it played a major role in the transmission of Aristotelian ideas in the Christian West at the end of the Middle Ages.³⁵ His work was well received and, along with the *Secretum secretorum*,

35 On this subject, see Jean-Philippe Genet, “L'évolution du genre des miroirs des princes en Occident au Moyen Âge”, in *Religion et mentalités au Moyen Âge. Mélanges en l'honneur d'Hervé Martin*, eds. S. Cassagnes-Brouquet et al. (Rennes, 2003), pp. 531–541.

became one of the most influential nonreligious works of the late Middle Ages. Giles of Rome's links with the three most important vectors of his age for the propagation of texts and for literary patronage—the Order of Saint Augustine, the University of Paris, and the French royal court of the Capet dynasty—certainly aided in the widespread diffusion of his work. In 1993, Francesco del Punta and Concetta Luna estimated that about 350 manuscripts (Latin and vernacular) survive today in European libraries and archives.³⁶ More recently, Jean-Philippe Genet has counted almost 500 Latin manuscripts.³⁷ Translations into virtually all the vernacular languages of western Europe (French, Italian, Castilian, Catalán, Portuguese, English, German, Flemish, Swedish and Hebrew) testify to the interest in this book.³⁸ As a comparison, only the *Secretum secretorum* had more success, with no fewer than 600 Latin manuscripts recorded to date.³⁹ This treatise by the Pseudo-Aristotle was also shorter, and probably easier to copy.

5 Different French Translations of *De regimine principum*; Varied Strategies, Depending on the Intended Audience

Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* was translated into French for the first time in 1282. This French version was followed by six more, the last at the end of the fifteenth century. The translators appropriated his thought; they compiled, manipulated, developed or abridged his writing depending on their intended

36 The number is probably even larger. See Francesco del Punta and Concetta Luna, *Aegidii Romani opera omnia*, vol. 1: *Catalogo dei manoscritti (1001–1075): "De regimine principum"* 1. 11: *Citta del Vaticano*, Italia, (Florence, 1993) p. 5.

37 See the database directed by Jean-Philippe Genet, *Studium Parisiense*, dedicated to the members of the schools and university of Paris between the 12th and the 16th centuries. Under the label "Aegidius Romanus", Genet has a list of manuscripts in Latin and vernacular languages of *De regimine principum*: lamop-vs3.univ-parisi.fr / stadium.

38 Charles F. Briggs provides a study of the milieu of Giles of Rome's audience in England in *Giles of Rome's 'De Regimine Principum'. Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275–c. 1525* (Cambridge, 1999) ("Cambridge Studies in Paleography and Codicology", 5). In our 2011 study, we carefully examine the reception of seven French manuscript versions. N.-L. Perret, *Les Traductions françaises du 'De regimine principum' de Gilles de Rome. Parcours matériel, culturel et intellectuel d'un discours sur l'éducation* (Leiden, 2011).

39 Cf. Schmitt, Ch. B. and Knox, D., *Pseudo-Aristoteles latinus. A Guide to Latin Works Falsely Attributed to Aristotle before 1500* (London, 1985), pp. 54–75.

audience, real or imaginary. The line between adaptation, compilation and translation is thus often difficult to discern.⁴⁰

Each of these versions conveys different intentions, ramified as they spread into new manuscripts. To identify the various French versions of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* among the 42 inventoried manuscripts, we have examined the work's structure and content. Giles of Rome's book usually comprises a dedication to Philip the Fair and three books corresponding to the Aristotelian division of practical philosophy (ethics, economics, and politics), with the first containing four sections, and the second and third each containing three sections. Seven different French versions, dated to between 1282 and the end of the fifteenth century, have these characteristics.

1. Henri de Gauchi's version for Philip the Fair (1282): 36 manuscripts⁴¹
2. "Guillaume's" version for Guillaume de Belesvoies (1330): ms. Paris, Arsenal Library, ms. 2690
3. Anonymous version for Charles v (1372): ms. Besançon, Bibl. mun., ms. 434
4. Gilles Deschamps' version (1420): ms. London, British Library, ms., Egerton 811
5. Version of a "Brother of the order of preaching friars" for the Count of Laval (1444): Paris, Arsenal Library, ms. 5062
6. Jean Wauquelin's version for Philip the Good (1452): Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, ms. 9043
7. An anonymous version (15th century): Berlin, State Library of Berlin, in Berlin, Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, ms. Ham. 672.

40 Because of its success, Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* was often translated, abridged, reworked, imitated, and commented, with the result that there are many false attributions, both in manuscripts and in library and archive catalogs and inventories, ancient and modern. This confusion is a testimony to the variety of meanings that medieval people gave to the words "author", "translator", and "translation". At that time, the creation of almost every written work was based on pre-existing models; translators did not hesitate to give themselves broad freedom to interpret and adapt the text. Many medieval authors were inspired by *De regimine principum* to write their own book. For more information, see N.-L. Perret, *Les Traductions françaises du 'De regimine principum'*. Also see Outi Merisalo, "De la paraphrase à la traduction : Gilles de Rome en moyen français (*De regimine principum*)", in *Traduction et adaptation en France à la fin du Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'Université de Nancy II, 23-25 mars 1995*, ed. C. Brucker (Paris, 1997), pp. 107, 119 as well as Outi Merisalo and Leena Talvio, "Gilles de Rome 'en romanz' : un 'must' des bibliothèques princières. Traduction en ancien français d'un texte latin", in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 94 (1993), pp. 185-194.

41 For a list and description of these manuscripts, see above Perret, *Les traductions françaises du 'De regimine principum'*, pp. 335-376 (ch. XIII: "Catalogue des manuscrits contenant une traduction française du *De regimine principum* de Gilles de Rome (xiii^e-xv^e s.)").

A comparative study of these translations has allowed us to bring to light the different approaches adopted by the translators, who exercised more or less complete freedom, abridging the Latin text in major ways or, on the contrary, supplementing it with commentaries. They adapted and reinterpreted the text depending on their intended audience. These *translateurs* were like transmitters, adapting the original text according to their own knowledge and experience. As we will see, the people who ordered the copies, the readers and owners of these translations, also intervened, often indirectly, in rewriting the book. Although some translators were careful to translate the entire text of Giles of Rome, without changing anything fundamental, others appropriated it freely, creating unique works whose textual identity is clearly different from the original.

5.1 *Henri de Gauchi's Version (1282)*

Henri de Gauchi, who was probably canon of the abbey of Saint Martin in Liège, addressed his translation to Philip the Fair in 1282, as the oldest of the manuscripts indicates (Dole, BM, 157). Unlike other French versions, this one was widely disseminated. Henri de Gauchy abridged the text in major ways and deliberately omitted certain passages he thought were too difficult for a layman, because they were "*propres a clers*".⁴² He wanted to keep only the essence of Giles of Rome's thought. Thus, although Giles refers explicitly to Aristotle's books, Henri de Gauchi merely remarks "The Philosopher says", or completely ignores any reference to Aristotle. In general, his translation displays a real effort to popularize; he worked to make Giles of Rome's text as intelligible as possible. Henri de Gauchi's attempts at simplification, however, reveal the difficulties of this undertaking. Thus, where Giles of Rome defines a man as a being who is "*communicativum et sociale*", Henri de Gauchi translates it like this: "*l'omme a enclinance naturel a vivre en communité et en compaignie*".⁴³ (Man has a natural inclination to live in communities and with others.) The following example shows the need that Henri de Gauchi felt to explicate what the Latin text expresses much more concisely than French can.

Patet ergo quod ad hoc quod domus habeat esse perfectum, oportet ibi esse tres communitas, unam viri et uxoris, aliam domini et servi, tertiam patris et filii.⁴⁴

42 *Li Livres du Gouvernement des Rois: a XIIIth Century French Version of Egidio Colonna's Treatise 'De regimine principum'*, ed. S.P. Molenaer (New York, 1899), p. 347.

43 *Li Livres du Gouvernement des Rois*, p. 146.

44 Aegidius Romanus, *De regimine principum...*, Book II, second part, ch. 6, p. 236.

La meson doit estre parfete, quant il i a assemblée d'omme et de femme. Et doit estre par nature l'omme sires. Et covient que il iait serjant et seignour por le profit de l'un et de l'autre, et covient que il i ait pere et enfanz et que li pere commande as enfanz. Et cele meson est parfete, quer il i a femme et mari et seignour et serjant et pere et fiz. (The home must be perfect when there is a union of man and woman. And there must be, by the nature of man, lords. And it is suitable that there are servant and master, for the benefit of one and the other, and it is suitable that there are father and children, and that the father commands the children. And this home is perfect, where there is husband and wife, master and servant, father and sons.)⁴⁵

Henri de Gauchi offers us an abridged French version—thus more quickly copied—of *De regimine principum*. This text was manifestly designed to be read aloud in public. This translation was very successful, and circulated under the name of Giles of Rome, as well as, usually but not always, the name of the translator. The oldest copy of Henri de Gauchi's translation, preserved in the Municipal Library of Dole as Document 157, is a good example. This manuscript, produced in France toward the end of the thirteenth century, and by the way the oldest attributed to Giles of Rome, is the only one that mentions the date of 1282 in the *incipit*. In these first lines of text, the translator's name also appears, as we can observe in other manuscripts. Philip the Fair is clearly designated as the recipient of this translation.⁴⁶

Ci commence li livres du governemant des rois et des princes estrait de politiques que frere Gile de Rome de l'ordre de saint Augustin a fait pour monseignour Phelippe anne filz mon soigneur Phelippe tres noble roi de France qui est devisez par III livres et apre par chapitres en chascun livre et est translatez de latin en françois par maistre Henri de Gauchi par le comandemant au noble roi devant dit en l'an MCCIII^{xxii}. A son especial seigneur nez de lingnie roial et seinte monseignour Phelippe tres noble roi de France par la grace de dieu frere Gile son clerc de Rome humble et devot frere de l'ordre seint Augustin salut et quanque il puet de service et donneur.

Here begin the books of the rule of kings and princes, extracted from *Politics*, which Brother Giles of Rome of the Order of Saint Augustine made for My Lord Philip's eldest son My Lord Philip very noble king of France,

45 *Li Livres du Gouvernement des Rois...*, p. 151.

46 Some manuscripts mention only "par le commandement du roi de France Philippe".

which is divided into three books and afterwards into chapters in each book and is translated from Latin into French by Master Henri de Gauchi by order of the noble king mentioned above in the year MCCIII^{xxII}. To his especial lord, born of royal lineage and sainted My Lord Philip very noble king of France by the grace of God, Brother Giles his clerk of Rome, humble and dedicated brother of the Order of Saint Augustine, health and as much as he can do of service and honor.⁴⁷

In substance, this translation includes the content of the original text. Through his considerable cuts, however, the translator produced an original work, quite different from the Latin version.

5.2 *Guillaume's Version (1330)*

The version translated by a certain "Guillaume" in 1330 is preserved in manuscript 2690 of the Arsenal Library in Paris. It presents an example different in every respect from that of Henri de Gauchi. One of the most unusual aspects of this translation is the fact that it is not addressed to a member of the nobility, like that of Henri de Gauchi, but to a "citizen" of Orleans named Guillaume de Beles Voies. Unfortunately we do not know what connection Guillaume had to the person who ordered this version, nor what motives caused Guillaume de Beles Voies to order a new translation of *De regimine principum* that was much more complete and closer to the Latin text than Henri de Gauchi's version. While the manuscripts of Henri de Gauchi's translation usually include only 193 chapters, with a few variations, Guillaume's version numbers 209 chapters, corresponding to the Latin text of its source. Unlike Henri de Gauchi, Guillaume did not try to shorten Giles of Rome's text. He went so far as to expand on Giles' thought in interlinear glosses explaining the material, in the form of a veritable dialogue between author and translator. Through his own knowledge and experience, the translator explicates the Aristotelian concepts transmitted by Giles of Rome. One of the original features of this version is

47 Dole, Bibl. mun., 157 (France, fin xiii^e), fol. 1. For this manuscript, see the following works: Jules Gauthier, *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, Départements - Dole, Belfort*, vol. 13 (Paris 1891), p. 415; Henri Séguin, "La Bibliothèque municipale de Dole", in *Richesses des Bibliothèques Provinciales de France*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1924), pp. 161–162; Danielle Ducout, "La Bibliothèque municipale de Dole", in *Patrimoine des bibliothèques de France*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1995), pp. 64–79; Léopold Delisle, *Inventaire général et méthodique des manuscrits français de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Jurisprudence - sciences et arts, vol. 2 (Paris, 1878), p. 175; Félix Lajard, "Gilles de Rome", in *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris, 1888), p. 532; Gerardo Bruni, "De regimine principum di Egidio Romano", in *Aevum* 6 (1932), p. 348; Gerardo Bruni, *Le opere di Egidio Romano* (Florence, 1936), p. 85; Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's 'De Regimine Principum'*, p. 174.

the diverse influences that mingle in it. The translator, Guillaume, is a man of the fourteenth century, probably from Burgundy, who takes a text written at the end of the thirteenth century in order to try to pass down, in French, knowledge inherited on one hand from ancient classical tradition, and on the other from Jewish tradition.⁴⁸ Indeed, it is quite surprising to see him give Jewish tradition as a model in several of his glosses, in connection with very concrete aspects of education and training, including of small children. Guillaume suggests, for example, playing on children's love of good food, advising the use of delicious dishes to turn learning into amusement. He recommends milk, cakes in the shape of letters, and other sweets, referring to the Jewish tradition of using various treats to teach children their first notions of the alphabet:

Et li Juys, si tost comme li enfant soivent parler, leur enseignent petit et petit, aussi comme en juant, espeler. Et pour ce qu'il pouissent delectablement aprendre [...] les peres leur donnent pometes et pain chaut, figues et autre fruit [...] et par raison des dons il aient bon cuer de apprendre.⁴⁹

And the Jews, as soon as children know how to speak, teach them bit by bit, also as if playing, how to spell. And so that they may learn in delight [...] their parents give them little apples and warm bread, figs and other fruit [...] and because of these gifts they are encouraged to learn.

5.3 *The Anonymous Version Written for Charles v (1372)*

The anonymous version produced for Charles v is close to that of Guillaume; but it is still independent. More concise than Guillaume's copy, the translation for Charles v presents a version in which some passages are abridged even more drastically than in Henri de Gauchi's work. The anonymous translator wishes to offer the king a text that transmits the most essential knowledge, directly useful in his performance of his duties. The passage in which Giles

48 On this subject, see Perret, *Les traductions françaises du "De regimine principum"*, especially ch. II, p. 66 ff. As the historian Bernhard Blumenkranz has noted, a fairly large Jewish community had come to live in and near Salins, Burgundy, in about the 1330s. As Guillaume's glosses indicate, there was trade between the Christian and Jewish communities despite the persecutions and expulsions of Jews (Jews were expelled from the kingdom of France in 1306, and again in 1322 under Philip V after they were briefly allowed to return in 1315). Bernhard Blumenkranz also mentions the case, which he considers rather surprising, of a certain Guillaume, a Jew of Salins, to whom the chapter rented in perpetuity (*baille à cens*) a vineyard and a house in the rue du Temple. Cf. Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Juifs en France. Écrits dispersés* (Franco-Judaïca 13) (Paris, 1989).

49 Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 2690, fol. 119r.

of Rome argues for the importance of the moral sciences in the education of young nobles is revealing on this point. The anonymous translator records the author's main idea, but without being specific about its nature.

Adhuc quaedam morales scientiae, ut Ethica, quae est de regimine sui. Oeconomica, quae est de regimine familiae. Politica, quae est de regimine civitatis et regni, valde sunt utiles et necessariae filiis liberorum et nobilium. Immo filii nobilium, maxime filii regum et principum, si velint politice vivere, velint alios regere et gubernare, maxime circa has debent insistere.⁵⁰

Il y a science moral qui est moult necessaire au gouvernement de la maison, de la cité et du royaume. A quoi doivent entendre les filz des roys qui doivent civilement vivre et autres gouverner.⁵¹

There is moral science, which is very necessary for the rule of the home, the city and the kingdom. This must be heeded by the sons of the kings, who must live civilly and govern others.

The manuscript that contains this translation is preserved today in the Municipal Library of Besançon as Document 434. This manuscript was finished in 1372, at the request of the king, as indicated by the *ex-libris* at the bottom of the last column of text, recorded by the king himself.⁵² According to François Avril, the handwriting of the manuscript is that of Henri de Trévou, the official copyist for the king, and its illustration was done in the Parisian workshops that worked for Charles v.⁵³ The manuscript that contains this translation is sumptuous, both in its lettering and its miniatures. The choice of texts in this volume clearly has the aim of exalting the person of the king, to whom these treatises demonstrate how to elevate his soul through wisdom and faith.

5.4 Gilles Deschamps' Version (1420)

In the prologue to his translation, dated to 1420, Gilles Deschamps (Ægidius de Campis), possibly the son of the poet Eustache Deschamps (1344–1406),⁵⁴

50 Aegidius Romanus, *De regimine principum*, Book 11, second part, ch. 5, pp. 308–309.

51 Besançon, Bibl. mun., 434, fol. 176r.

52 Bibl. mun., 434, fol. 244. Auguste Castan was the first to discover this *ex-libris* of Charles v. See his article "Un manuscrit de la bibliothèque du roi de France Charles v retrouvé à Besançon. Notice lue à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres le 14 avril 1882", in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 43 (1882), pp. 211–218.

53 François Avril et al., *La librairie de Charles v* (Paris, 1968), p. 106.

54 Gilles Deschamps was said to have been a notary at the Chambre des requêtes (1408 et 1413), counselor to Parliament (1418, 1419 et 1420), and secretary to the king in 1418 and is

explains that he is addressing his translation mainly to people who cannot read Latin.

Afin aussi que plusieurs bonnes parsonnes de nete voulenté et sain entendement, ausquelx Dieu n'a pas donné ceste grace qu'ilz entemdent latin, puisse prouffiter et soy et autruy ediffier en honneste et vertueuse vie me suis mis a translater et mettre de latin en francois selon mon petit sens et entendement cest present livre intitulé du gouvernement des princes, fait et compilé par frere Giles de Rome, religieux des freres ermites de saint Augustin. Comment par moy simple et ignorant a translater le quinzeyeme jour de juillet l'an mil quatre cens et vint. Mon nom trouverés en la fin de ceste presente translation se Dieu me donne grace de l'achever.⁵⁵

With the aim also that many good persons of clean will and healthy understanding, to whom God did not give the grace of understanding Latin, may benefit and edify themselves and others in honest and virtuous life, I began to translate and set from Latin into French according to my small sense and understanding this present book entitled *Of the Rule of Princes*, made and compiled by Brother Giles of Rome, a cleric of the hermit brothers of Saint Augustine. As by myself, simple and ignorant to translate, the fifteenth day of July in the year one thousand four hundred and twenty. My name you will find at the end of this present translation if God gives me grace to finish it.

Unlike Henri de Gauchi, Gilles Deschamps gives a literal translation. At no time does he seem to think it necessary to summarize or simplify the thought of the author he is translating. He proceeds “by prose without adjusting or diminishing anything from the existing Latin sentence or substance”, trying to keep as close as possible to the text he is translating to give himself the most credibility. His almost literal translation is, incidentally, difficult to understand without recourse to the Latin. This translation testifies to the ongoing interest in Giles of Rome’s treatise among the leaders and upper officials of the French state in the fifteenth century, more than 140 years after it was written in Latin.

said to have owned a manor in Champagne. Cf. Carla Bozzolo, and H el ene Loyau, *La Cour amoureuse dite de Charles VI.  dition critique des sources manuscrites, armoiries et notices biographiques*, 301–700, vol. 2 (Paris, 1982), p. 239.

55 London, British Library, ms. Egerton 811, fol. 1r.

5.5 *The Version of the “Brother of the Order of the Preaching Friars” (1444)*

The *incipit* of this copy gives us valuable information on its translator, the person who ordered the translation, and the date:

Accomply est le livre du Regime des princes, composé par frere Gilles de Rome de l'ordre des freres hermites de saint Augustin, translaté de latin en françois par ung frere de l'ordre des freres prescheurs, par le commandement de tres puissant seigneur le comte de Laval ; et fut accomplie ceste translation le septieme jours de decembre, l'an mil 1444, en la cité de Vennes en Britaigne.⁵⁶

The book of the Rule of Princes, written by Father Giles of Rome of the Order of the Hermit Brothers of Saint Augustine, translated from Latin into French by a brother of the Order of Preaching Friars, by the command of the very powerful lord the Count of Laval, is finished; and this translation was accomplished on the seventh day of December, in the year 1444, in the city of Vannes in Brittany.

The “Brother of the Order of Preaching Friars” addresses his translation to the Count of Laval, Guy IX, a nobleman raised at the court of John V of Brittany. The translator, like Gilles Deschamps, transposes the entire text of Giles of Rome, but, unlike all the other translators, keeps certain expressions in Latin, without apparently feeling the need to translate them. This leads us to think that the translator knows, or at least supposes, that the reader of his text knows enough Latin to understand these. Many expressions are close to those in Guillaume’s version, and suggest that the translator had probably drawn from that version as well as a Latin one to make his own translation. The manuscript containing this translation is preserved in the Arsenal Library in Paris as Document 5062. Illuminated by a master of Bourges, probably in the years 1470–1480,⁵⁷ it bears the arms of Robert Stuart (1470–1544), who was engaged in the service of Charles VIII and Louis XII, and became a marshal of France in 1514.⁵⁸

56 Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, ms. 5062 (end of 15th–beginning of 16th century), fol. 225v.

57 François Avril and Nicole Reynaud, *Les Manuscrits à peintures en France (1440–1520)* (Paris, 1995), p. 325.

58 Philippe Contamine, “Entre France et Écosse : Bérault Stuart, seigneur d’Aubigny (vers 1452–1508), chef de guerre, diplomate, écrivain militaire”, in *The Auld Alliance: France and Scotland over 700 years*, ed. J. Laidlaw (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 59–76.

5.6 *Jean Wauquelin's Version (1452)*

Jean Wauquelin offered this French version of *De regimine principum* to the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, in whose service he worked as compiler and copyist.⁵⁹ In his prologue, he explains that he undertook to translate Giles of Rome's work to replace an old version that had become difficult to read and understand. Jean Wauquelin includes the entirety of Giles of Rome's work, showing himself careful to omit nothing. In translating the passage on the place of the moral sciences, he strives to translate Giles of Rome's thoughts precisely, unlike the anonymous translator who worked for Charles v.

[Les fils des rois et des princes] doivent estre aussy enseigniés en plus haultaines sciences. Et quelles aultres, ou plus haultaines sciences, on les doit enseigner et proposer, il appert aussy par les choses dessus dictes car se ilz veullent vivre politiquement, c'est a dire selonc la policie du monde et estre chevaliers, ils doivent bonnement estudier les sciences morales car par elles ils porront savoir comment ils deveront eulz meismes et les aultres gouverner.⁶⁰

[The sons of kings and princes] must also be taught the highest sciences. And what[ever] others, or higher sciences, they must be taught and offered, it appears also by the things said above that if they want to live politically, that is according to the policy of the world, and to be knights, they must study well the moral sciences, for through those they will be able to know how they should govern themselves and others.

The volume that includes this translation (Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, ms. 9043) is an in-folio; its writing and decoration are particularly meticulous.⁶¹ In ordering a new translation of Giles of Rome's treatise more than 170 years after it was written in Latin for Philip the Fair, the Duke of Burgundy was calling attention to his connection to the lineage of the kings of France, and legitimizing his dynastic claims. Giles of Rome's text is clearly invested here with a

59 Concerning Jean Wauquelin, see the collective work *Jean Wauquelin. De Mons à la cour de Bourgogne*, ed. M.-C. De Crécy, with the collaboration of G. Parussa and S. Hériché Pradeau (Turnhout, 2006), in particular the chapter by Outi Merisalo, "Jehan Wauquelin, traducteur de Gilles de Rome", pp. 25–31.

60 Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, ms. 9043, fol. 197v.

61 Concerning this manuscript, see especially Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, "[Notice du manuscrit KBR 9043]", in *La Librairie des ducs de Bourgogne : manuscrits conservés à la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, t. II : *textes didactiques*, eds. B. Bousmanne et al. (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 54–60.

symbolic function, at the service of the prestige and authority of the Burgundian state. Like the imposing volume that encloses it, the text was to manifest the authority which the Duke of Burgundy wanted to magnify.

5.7 *The Anonymous Version (Fifteenth Century) Contained in the Hamilton 672 Manuscript of the Berlin State Library*

The version contained in the *Hamilton 672* manuscript of the Berlin State Library is a surprising one. Its most astonishing aspect lies in the translator's particular effort to interpret Aristotle from a Christian perspective, although Giles of Rome mentions neither the Bible nor the fathers of the Church. He translated the entire text, enriched it with *exempla*, and added Biblical quotations, thus profoundly transforming the original text. Even more than Giles of Rome himself, this translator insists on the place that theology must occupy in the program of education for young princes. He mentions only in passing the place that moral sciences should have in the instruction of the prince, although Giles of Rome considered this crucial. Although the translator's identity has remained a mystery, it may well have been a preacher eager to teach the prince the basics of irreproachable morality and the virtues of a good Christian. The manuscript in which this anonymous version appears is of modest dimensions and appearance.⁶² Unlike the great majority of manuscripts containing a French version of Giles of Rome's treatise, this one includes no illustrations, not even decorated initials. This manuscript belonged to Louis de Challant (1454–ca. 1488), who served the house of Savoy, as indicated by several sketches of weapons on the last flyleaf (fol. 71r). Louis de Challant's godfather was King Louis XI (1423–1483). It is not at all impossible⁶³ that the signature of the king also appears on this same flyleaf, where the name Loys is written five times in the background of other inscriptions. The flyleaf, used to strengthen the book as it was made, are extracts from a text taken from an older work written in northern Italy, where it was possibly composed.

62 Dominique Stutzmann and Piotr Tylus, *Les Manuscrits médiévaux français et occitans de la Preußische Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin et de la Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz* (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 235–23; Helmut Boese, *Die lateinischen Handschriften der Sammlung Hamilton zu Berlin* (Wiesbaden, 1966), p. 323; Siegfried Lemm, *Kurzes Verzeichnis der romanischen Handschriften. Mitteilungen aus der Königlichen Bibliothek IV*, (Berlin, 1918), p. 33.

63 Cf. Jean-Baptiste Rietstap, *Armorial général*, vol. 1 (Gouda, 1884), p. 232.

6 Readers and Owners of the French Translations of *De regimine principum*

We have enough information to identify the owners of 33 French manuscripts of *De regimine principum*, of the 42 that we know of today.⁶⁴ Most of these manuscripts belonged to the high nobility or to the wealthiest classes of society. Although some volumes seem relatively plain in appearance, most of them are *objets de luxe* that only the richest people and the most powerful nobles could buy.⁶⁵ Their patronage had a direct influence on their circles, which often tried to imitate them.⁶⁶ Some manuscripts of lesser value also belonged to members of lower social classes. Their limited number is probably explained by the fact that these copies were seen as less precious and were therefore more easily lost.

From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, French translations of Giles of Rome's treatise met with truly "international" success. There were copies in the royal libraries of France, England, Castile, in the princely courts of the Dukes of Berry, Burgundy, Milan, Ferrara, in the collections of the popes and of wealthy bourgeois in the cities. Many manuscripts, indeed, belonged to rich bourgeois who were clearly eager to own a copy of Giles of Rome's work as a tool for their own possible intellectual and social promotion. This lay readership

64 Gavino Scala (Università degli studi di Siena - Universität Zürich, Romanisches Seminar) is the author of a doctoral thesis devoted specifically to the manuscript tradition of Henri de Gauchi's French translation of *De regimine principum*. His research has brought to light two manuscripts not listed before: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 2514 A:27 (six short fragments) and Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale, 951/857.

65 Taking advantage of abundant documentation from northern France from the 14th and 15th centuries, Carla Bozzolo and Ezio Ornato have estimated that the average price of a manuscript in circulation was 5 *livres 10 sous paris* in the 14th century and 2 *livres 16 sous paris* in the 15th. The decrease in price is to be explained by the greater use of paper and the unfavorable economic situation. As a comparison, the price of a book owned by the Duke of Berry was as high as 74 *livres 10 sous* (Carla Bozzolo and Ezio Ornato, *Pour une histoire du livre manuscrit au Moyen Âge. Trois essais de codicologie quantitative* (Paris, 1980), pp. 25–26).

66 Hanno Wijsman, who became interested in the phenomenon of bibliophilia among the aristocratic elite of the Burgundian Netherlands, has pointed out the strong textual, material and esthetic identity of these nobles' collections, and the influence of the ducal library upon them (Hanno Wijsman, *Luxury Bound: Illustrated Manuscript Production and Noble and Princely Book Ownership in the Burgundian Netherlands (1400–1550)* (Turnhout, 2010); Idem, *La Librairie des ducs de Bourgogne. Manuscrits conservés à la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, t. 2, *Textes didactiques*, eds. B. Bousmanne, F. Johan and C. van Hoorebeeck (Turnhout, 2003), especially the chapter by Hanno Wijsman, "La librairie des ducs de Bourgogne et les bibliothèques de la noblesse dans les Pays-Bas, 1400–1550", pp. 19–37.

appropriated Giles of Rome's text in its textual as well as its spiritual dimension, as an instrument testifying to manifest prosperity and a certain social standing.

7 Conclusion

The French versions of Giles of Rome's treatise were received with lively interest by lay readers, to whom culture, more or less impartial, had become not only the sign of a certain level of wealth but also an ideal tool for their intellectual and social advancement. The social conditions for the transmission and diffusion of the *Secretum secretorum* in Castilian show a similar process, although the number of manuscripts recorded is smaller and allows more specific observations. Like the French version of Giles of Rome by Henri de Gauchi, the dissemination of John of Sevilla's *Epistola* circulated outside the royal milieu to which it was initially addressed. This translation, perhaps made at the request of Teresa, the sister of Alfonso VI of Castile and León, was read at the royal court, but also among the aristocracy and the urban bourgeoisie.

To own one or the other of these treatises destined for a royal reader—books that were often, incidentally, bound together in manuscripts—obviously demonstrated a certain prestige, as well as a growing interest in wisdom literature. Even more visibly than the Castilian manuscripts of the *Secretum secretorum*, the French copies of Giles of Rome, which circulated among the courts and the high aristocracy, were often perceived as symbolic objects, showing membership in a refined society. These famous works, spreading the values of ideal royal ethics, and often copied in particularly beautiful material forms, celebrated the splendor of the prince and his court. It is interesting to note that wealthy commoners did not necessarily try to procure the least expensive copies, as shown by the manuscript Ms. 533 in the University of Chicago Library, which testifies that the *Livre du gouvernement des rois et des princes* found an audience among the English gentry. This deluxe copy, produced in France in about 1310, contains the translation of Henri de Gauchi.

Moreover, some wealthy commoners, like Guillaume in 1330, did not stop at ordering a copy of an existing translation of Giles of Rome's treatise, but requested a new one for their own use, wishing for a more precise, more faithful translation of the Latin text, as if to take complete ownership of enlightening wisdom meant originally for a king. Alfonso X, too, was concerned to have a faithful version when he ordered the translations of the *Secretum secretorum*.

The attitude of the translators to their original source seems to have varied widely here. *The Letter of Aristotle to Alexander* had a far greater ascendancy

because of the authority of the Greek philosopher to whom the text was attributed. This authority led the translators of the *Secretum secretorum* to a greater faithfulness to the original. They may have proceeded differently with Giles of Rome's book. His translators were working with a popularized text of Aristotelian thought, and allowed themselves more leeway in their translations. Although some certainly showed they were striving for precision, and did not hesitate to expand on their translations by adding explanatory comments, several of them give themselves a great deal of latitude in relation to their source, abridging it in major ways, even reformulating and adapting it according to their own ideas. Along the way, it was Aristotelian thought itself that they were adapting, developing and "reinterpreting", and that they thus transmitted to the Christian west.

Translated by Julie Sullivan

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The Relation between Wisdom Literature, Law, and the Mirrors of Princes: Castile and Sweden

Olivier Biaggini and Corinne Péneau

In this chapter, we will discuss the relation between the mirrors of princes and texts of wisdom literature and law, which, unlike the former, are not necessarily centered on the ruler. A work of wisdom literature lays out precepts that theoretically apply to any human being, but tends to become a mirror when the preferred reader is the ruler. These two discourses are often combined using *a fortiori* logic: what is counseled for all people is even more fitting for the person who rules them. To a certain extent, the same is true for law, which can be specialized, decreeing norms valid only for the ruler, especially the king. In the West, beginning in the 12th and 13th centuries, the king himself became a legislator; if the law provides a mirror, the king is both author and target, subject and object. In this particular case, the question arises of his position relative to the law. He can be bound by it, even more than anyone else, as in wisdom literature; or, on the contrary, he can attempt to free himself from it, opening the door to ideas of absolutism. From another point of view, mirrors may be situated between texts of wisdom literature and texts of law, depending on their degree of obligation; they occupy a changeable place, constantly “renegotiated”, halfway between the ethical perspective of wisdom literature, concerned with advice or moral edification, and the prescriptive nature of law. The position of each mirror thus depends on how it absorbs or rejects works of wisdom literature or law, and on whether it explicitly argues with them or not.

This study will consider two cases in the 13th and 14th centuries: Castile (from the reign of Ferdinand III to that of Alfonso XI) and Sweden (during the reign of Magnus Eriksson). We have chosen these periods and these two kingdoms because of the adaptations of mirrors in the vernacular then, as well as intense production of legislative texts. This study does not attempt a comparative approach of texts and political ideas in Castile and Sweden, two kingdoms where authority was configured very differently; rather, it investigates the production of mirrors of princes in both of them, as kingdoms considered peripheral, where models imported from the rest of Europe, and in the case of Castile also from Al-Andalus, were adapted to the local context to produce new work. Castile, a kingdom where the king inherited his power, but in theory was not

consecrated, and Sweden, where the king was elected and then, after touring his realm, received consecration, are so different and distant from each other that a study of both allows us to explore a wide range of strategies for mirrors. Firstly, we will look at mirrors that endeavored to reinforce royal power, or even institute a new political order. In Castile, this is what was at stake, from the wisdom treatises of eastern origin to the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X. In Sweden, an adaptation of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* was intended to change the very method of designating the king. Secondly, we will examine the reactions to these works, which also took the form of mirrors, through the writings of two great aristocratic figures, Don Juan Manuel and Saint Bridget of Sweden.

1 Mirrored Kings in Castile and Sweden

1.1 *Writing Mirrors of Princes in Castile: The Oriental Influences*

The critical studies that have given an overview of the mirrors of princes in Castile in the 13th and 14th centuries have insisted on the influence of the Arab tradition, which, combined with literature produced locally or in the rest of Europe, nurtured original forms of political thought.¹ This influence was particularly clear in the time of Ferdinand III and Alphonso X, when there was a notable flourishing of vernacular prose, which has been categorized by critics as wisdom literature of eastern origin, whose main formal devices were exemplary stories and maxims, often spoken by philosophers, and sometimes directly addressing a fictional monarch.

The reign of Ferdinand III was a time of major cultural and historic upheavals in the kingdom of Castile, and these had an impact on the emergence of a literature of political mirrors. On one hand, the kingdom's definitive union

1 For an overview of Castilian mirrors, and of this distinction between western and eastern tradition, see Bonifacio Palacios Martín, "El mundo de las ideas políticas en los tratados doctrinales españoles: los 'espejos de príncipes' (1250–1350)", in *Europa en los umbrales de la crisis, 1250–1350. XXI Semana de Estudios Medievales, Estella, 18 a 22 de julio de 1994* (Pamplona, 1995), pp. 463–483; Marta Haro Cortés, *La imagen del poder real a través de los compendios de castigos del siglo XIII* (London, 1996); José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Les miroirs des princes dans l'historiographie espagnole (couronne de Castille, XIII^e–XV^e siècles). Tendances de la recherche", in *Specula principum*, ed. A. de Benedictis (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 193–207; Adeline Rucquoi and Hugo Oscar Bizzarri, "Los espejos de príncipes en Castilla, entre Oriente y Occidente", in *Cuadernos de historia de España* 79 (2005), pp. 7–30; David Nogales Rincón, "Los espejos de príncipes en Castilla (siglos XIII–XV): un modelo literario de la realeza bajomedieval", in *Medievalismo* 16 (2006), pp. 9–39; G. Fournès and E. Canonica (eds.), *Le miroir du prince : écriture, transmission et réception en Espagne (XIII^e–XVI^e siècle)* (Bordeaux, 2011).

with León in 1230, and its territorial expansion southward after the military conquest of a large part of the Andalusian zone, conferred on Castile the *de facto* supreme position in Spain, and necessarily led to administrative transformations that would have incited a rethinking of the very idea of power. On the other hand, the adoption of Castilian by the royal chancellery gave the language a new status, reinforcing its legitimacy as a written language, and encouraging continuity between legal texts as such and treatises of wisdom literature written by people near to the Crown. This continuity was even formal and formulaic; prologues of texts written at court were often inspired by the phraseology of charters, something that became particularly noticeable later, in works produced under the aegis of Alfonso x.²

Rather than following chronological order, which is not always easy to establish, in the wisdom literature of the 13th century, it is more important to identify two different kinds of works. The first consists of translations of Arabic works, both collections of exemplary stories (*Calila e Dimna*, *Sendebär*) and collections of advice and maxims (*Poridat de las poridades*, *Libro de los buenos proverbios*, *Bocados de oro*).

In 1251, a year before he took the throne, the future King Alfonso x ordered the Arabic *Kalila wa Dimna* to be translated into Castilian. This was a collection of fables of Indian origin, whose function as a mirror of princes was already well attested in Islamic countries. It is logical that the Castilian *Calila e Dimna* would inherit that function in its new context, although, in the absence of a prologue specific to the new version, the political project underlying it remained unmentioned. The preliminary sections are intended to justify the recourse to exemplary stories, while already using them and recounting the itinerary followed by the book: a Persian king, Sirechuel, eager to advance knowledge and encourage philosophers, sends his physician Berzebuey to India on a quest for wisdom; he returns with the book, itself structured as a dialogue between the Indian king Diçelem and his philosopher Burduben, who answers his questions by telling fables. While these royal listeners are flatteringly seen as promoters of knowledge—thus seeming to prefigure the ideal which Alfonso x later tried to embody—the fables told by Burduben present royal figures who are almost all failures, and therefore offer examples *a contrario*. That is the case notably in chapter III, where a lion, king of beasts, is urged by an ambitious counselor (the jackal Dimna, heedless of his friend Calila's advice of moderation) to kill his favorite, the ox Sençeba. In this and the following chapters, the characters themselves become narrators of fables, sometimes with several

2 Anthony J. Cárdenas, "The Literary Prologue of Alfonso x. A Nexus between Chancery and Scriptorium", in *Thought* 60 (1985), pp. 456–467.

levels of stories within the story, a new technique in Castilian prose.³ The models of action to imitate or avoid are thus systematically duplicated by models of reception of the words within the fiction itself, presenting interpretations that are sometimes correct but more often wrong. Through this game of mirrors, *Calila e Dimna*, putting knowledge into perspective without excluding irony, makes a mirror of itself within its own narrative structure. This idea, taken literally, is depicted humorously in the intrigue of some of the nested stories, like the fable of the hares tyrannized by a lion (chapter III), who get rid of him by having him confront his own reflection in the water of a well. Beyond its political precepts, *Calila e Dimna*, read as a mirror of princes, conveys the idea that a good king is above all a good interpreter.

The *Sendebār*, or *Libro de los engaños*, composed in 1253, was another translation from Arabic that came from the Castilian court, at the initiative of Prince Fadrique, brother of Alfonso X. This work shares many traits of *Calila e Dimna*. Its intention was to pass along political precepts, attached to exemplary stories, although here the method of nested stories is different: the dialogue between a king and his advisor is not the frame for the entire story, but a motif that runs through the main part, among several different figures at the same time. A prince, who because of an astrological prediction must remain silent for seven days, is falsely accused of rape by his evil stepmother, and his father King Alcos condemns him to death. Each day, through telling *exempla*, a counselor makes the king change his mind, but each following day the stepmother, who is a storyteller too, persuades her husband to confirm the sentence. Once the seven days have passed, the prince himself can speak, and tells his own stories, which, unconnected to any immediate argument, show his superior knowledge. While in *Calila e Dimna*, the royal listeners in the stories are treated as worthy, Alcos appears here as both a king with the utmost executive power and as an irresolute figure who changes his decision according to his advisors, incapable of any stable interpretation of what he hears. He does not base his power on knowledge, and embodies capricious law, while his son the prince, after his initiatory experience, proves that he has acquired the wisdom necessary for a future ruler. Although Fadrique, who was not called to rule, could not fully identify himself with this prince, he may have recognized in Alcos the authoritarianism of Alfonso X. The *Sendebār* certainly reflects the disquiet of members of the high nobility confronted with Alfonso's dogged determination, from the earliest years of his reign, to strengthen royal power.

3 María Jesús Lacarra, *Cuentística medieval en España: los orígenes* (Zaragoza, 1979).

Poridat de las poridades (*Secret of Secrets*), a translation of *Sirr al-asrār* (10th century), was very probably thought of as a mirror destined for the future Alfonso x. The text takes the form of a letter from Aristotle to Alexander the Great. Beyond its disconcerting and encyclopedic eclecticism (physiognomy, bodily hygiene, gemology) and its numerological hermeticism, it is centered on the relation of a king to his subjects —more precisely, on the knowledge of other human beings that a king must have in order to rule them. The *Libro de los buenos proverbios* was certainly composed during the reign of Alfonso x. An adaptation of the *Kitāb ādāb al-falāsifa* of Hunayn Ibn Ishāq (9th century), a work that has been lost, the treatise is made up essentially of lists of maxims attributed to Greek philosophers, both singly and in groups, but it also contains exemplary stories, as well as an epistolary section centered on Aristotle's advice to Alexander, ending with the death of the latter, as if to follow *Poridat de las poridades*. The book praises knowledge, which is said to have been passed down in golden letters in precious manuscripts, and makes this correspond to the sumptuous decoration of the palace: at a gathering of philosophers, in a gilded, richly decorated room, the king's son, wearing a crown, must publicly recite what he has learned. The philosophers also become metaphorical chancellors; a list is given of the maxims engraved upon their seals. Everything comes together to anchor knowledge within the court space, to make it a criterion of good government. As for *Bocados de oro*, a translation of a compilation by Al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik (11th century), it certainly dates to the reign of Alfonso x as well (1260s?). In it, we again find lists of maxims, usually accompanied by brief biographies of the philosophers who spoke them, showing the parallels between their actions and their teachings. Two long successive chapters refer respectively to Aristotle and Alexander, but —this is a new element—Alexander's deeds are no longer only his execution of Aristotle's words; Alexander himself is now considered a philosopher, as maxims are also attributed to him (usually witticisms, linked to concrete cases where he exercises his rule). The monarch is not only the intended recipient of knowledge, but becomes its producer, according to a model that must have greatly interested Alfonso x.

Along with these translations, other collections of maxims and advice that were produced in Castile imitated the characteristics of eastern treatises, while at the same time trying to systematize their material (often by dividing it into themed chapters on vices and virtues), and configuring them more explicitly as mirrors; the discourse on kings was clearly more important than discourse that would apply to everyone, while the strategy of exalting royal power was underscored. The *Libro de los doze sabios* continued the theme of a gathering of sages speaking their maxims, but these are Christians, and are supposed to

provide spiritual as well as temporal counsel. Moreover, the sages take responsibility for creating the book; in a prologue, already anchored in the fiction, they address Ferdinand III, who has called them together so that they may set down for him in writing the virtues of a good ruler. Not only Ferdinand but also his descendants would thereby be able to study the work and “look into it as into a mirror”;⁴ the king is even said to have made several copies for his sons. This integration of the mirror into the family tree is confirmed in the treatise’s epilogue, which states that when Alfonso X was confronted by the grave disorders caused by his brothers in the first years of his reign, he decided to gather the twelve sages again. After giving him much good advice, they praised his deceased father, devoting twelve maxims to him to be engraved in golden letters upon his tomb. Some critics have affirmed that this treatise was written about 1237, except for the epilogue, which was added around 1255,⁵ or even composed in three different phases;⁶ but others⁷ have ventured the idea that the whole book dates from the first years of Alfonso’s reign. The fiction of the twelve sages thus creates out of nowhere a providential continuity with his father’s reign, at a time when Alfonso was carrying out major legislative plans⁸ that were strongly opposed by much of the high Castilian nobility.

The *Flores de filosofía*, too, was written towards the middle of the 13th century. Its matter is structured into *leyes* (laws), which are nothing but maxims strung together, each supposedly spoken by a philosopher, and which were said to have been collected and edited later by Seneca, the Roman sage whose city, Córdoba, also evoked Arab culture. In the same vein as the eastern treatises, this book extols knowledge for its own sake, while demonstrating that it is also the best tool for domination—including by an illegitimate ruler. The royal figure is treated as supreme: law, king and justice are linked from the outset in

4 *Libro de los doze sabios o Tractado de la nobleza y lealtad* [ca. 1237], ed. J.K. Walsh (Madrid, 1975), p. 71: “mirar en ella como en espejo”.

5 *Libro de los doze sabios*, introduction, pp. 23–33.

6 Bizzarri, “Las colecciones sapienciales castellanas en el proceso de reafirmación del poder monárquico (siglos XIII y XIV)”, in *Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale* 20 (1995), pp. 35–73.

7 Fernando Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana, La creación del discurso prosístico: el entramado cortesano*, vol. 1 (Madrid, 1998), pp. 241–260; Rafael Ramos, “Para la tradición del *Libro de los doze sabios*”, in *Literatura medieval y renacentista en España: líneas y pautas*, eds. N. Fernández Rodríguez and M. Fernández Ferreiro (Salamanca, 2012), pp. 843–853.

8 For an interpretation of *Libro* as propaganda, see also François Foronda, “La propagande monarchique dans la Castille du XIII^e siècle. Considérations autour du *Libro de los doze sabios*”, in M. Aurell (ed.), *Convaincre et persuader. Communication et propagande aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, ed. M. Aurell, *Civilisation médiévales* 18 (Poitiers, 2007), pp. 279–299.

a relationship like that of the Trinity (“the law is the guardian of the king, and the king is the guardian of the law, and the sword, which represents justice, is the guardian of all”)⁹, while kingdom and king are bound together like body and soul.

1.2 *Alfonso X and the Making of the Law*

Even more than the translations mentioned earlier, the *Libro de los doze sabios* and the *Flores de la filosofía* resonate with the ideas promoted by legal texts of Alfonso’s time. The *Flores* was used as a source for the *Partidas* (before giving rise to an expanded version called *Libro de los cien capítulos*, possibly dating to the 1280s, as well as providing whole passages of the *Libro del caballero Zifar*). While they were long considered as landmarks of an isolated tradition, most of these wisdom treatises were produced at the initiative of the Crown, and accompanied the king’s lawmaking. Not only did these texts discuss the law, but to varying degrees they also promoted the idea of the king as the sole legislator, a central concept of legal thought in Alfonso’s time. A change of course may even be observed around the year 1256, when the embassy of Pisa proposed that Alfonso take the title of Holy Roman Emperor, an event that greatly influenced the composition of the *Siete Partidas*.¹⁰

For a sovereign seeking to free himself from any kind of spiritual tutelage, the enormous advantage of these works was that they were devoid of any trace of the Church. They contrast with another model of royal power, which also resembled a mirror, formed by the poems of the *mester de clerecía* —written by clergy probably connected to the court. The *Libro de Alexandre* (first third of the 13th century), possibly written at about the time of the accession of Ferdinand III, and the *Libro de Apolonio* (whose date is less certain, but which may have been written in the 1240s or in the first years of Alfonso X’s reign) both glorify royalty, but from a background of clerical values. In the *Libro de Alexandre*, in which Aristotle educates the young king of Macedonia as a scholastic master would, the ruler leans toward military conquest and empire, but confronts his limits because of his sin of pride. The *Libro de Apolonio* sets out the model of a scholarly king, called *clérigo entendido* (where *clérigo*, even in its larger sense of a wise man, evokes an education imbued with clerical values), lacking any military inclination, but endowed with *cortesía* (courtesy). A victim

9 *Flores de filosofía*, H. Knust (ed.), in *Dos obras didácticas y dos leyendas sacadas de manuscritos de la Biblioteca del Escorial*, ed. H. Knust (Madrid, 1878), p. 20: “la ley es guarda del rey e el rey es guarda de la ley, e la espada que se entiende por la justicia es guarda del todo”.

10 Bizzarri, “Las colecciones sapienciales” (see above, n. 6).

of unpredictable *ventura* (fate), he suffers great losses, but as a *homo viator* in a world where divine providence acts secretly, he ends by re-establishing his power, finding himself at the head of a vast territory much like an empire. According to many scholars, these figures of pagan kings, elevated as *exempla*, present motifs that in hindsight could have been attributed to Alfonso VIII, Ferdinand III, and Alfonso X; but from the time of their conception, these poems proposed to the king a contract with the clergy, a clericalization of royalty,¹¹ which, while not excluding the possible spiritual aspect, would also frame and control his sovereignty.

The political agenda of Alfonso X, as developed through his legal production, was completely different. Confronted with the diversity of local *fueros* (jurisdictions, bodies of law), which came from customary law, his plan was to construct a new social order, drawing strength from the diffuse heritage of the Visigothic tradition of the king as lawmaker, supported by contributions from Roman law. It aimed first of all at a unification and systematization that would allow *fueros* to be replaced by laws made by the king, who at the same time ensconced himself as the sole source of law and guarantor of legal expertise. This design was manifested and effected through several texts which the king claimed to have conceived and produced.

In the first place, the *Fuero real* was conceived as a *fuero* that would contribute to the progressive legal uniformity of the kingdom by being granted to several cities, beginning in 1255–1256. However, its prologue affirms that it is right for kings to make laws, and moreover, far from limiting itself to the strict measures of a municipal code, the text devotes its second section to the *guarda del rey*: both the protection of the king and the respect due to him.

At the same time, in 1255, the *Espéculo* was a first attempt, although an unfinished one, at a systematic legal code that would apply to the whole kingdom, although aimed mainly at the court and city judges, and superseding any previous legal texts. In the prologue, the king declares that he wants to put an end to the instability, contradictions and deficiencies of the *fueros* by decreeing new laws that would keep all that was correct from the previous ones, but that in reality were configuring something new, inspired by Roman and canonical law. The first book begins by defining law: it is not yet clearly in opposition to the *fueros*, but the emperor and the king are named as the only possible lawmakers, unless they delegate this function to others. They can also amend the law, through necessary additions, omissions or modifications. The discourse on the king amplifies and radicalizes the *Fuero real* discourse, explaining in

11 Amaia Arizaleta, "Modalidades de la escritura ficcional de la sacralidad monárquica (Castilla-León, siglo XIII)", in *Les Cahiers de Framespa* 8 (2011).

detail the *guardia del rey* (the king is defined as the soul and the head of the people; the second metaphor refers to his function as lawmaker, in particular) and the *onrra del rey* (the person of the king must be honored in every circumstance, whether he is seated, standing or lying). Here, the prescribed models of behavior apply only to subjects, not to the monarch. The *Espéculo* is certainly a mirror, as its title indicates, but it is not a mirror of princes; as a mirror of all rights (“espejo de todos los derechos”), it is presented to the gaze of a judge, and by extension to other subjects, so that they may recognize themselves in it and conform to it. It is created, given, and guaranteed by the king, but he is not, for all that, an absolute monarch; he himself is also subject to the law, in fact more than anyone else. However, whatever power the king loses in theory, he gains in power of representation. The implicit idea is that the king is the embodiment of the law.

This idea becomes explicit in the *Siete Partidas*, a work of extraordinary scope, although it was originally conceived of as a reworking of the *Espéculo*, motivated by the new imperial intent. Only the first book survives¹² from its original version (1256–1265), which was entitled *Libro del fuero de las leyes* (and there is nothing to indicate that there were actually seven books), whose first *título* (title or section) is almost identical to that of the *Espéculo*; the following *títulos* provide a treatise on canonical law. Thus, as soon as he had established his own power to make laws, the king pronounced upon Church law from a position that seemed to be above papal jurisdiction.

In a second version (1272–1275) and a third (before 1278?), the book is divided into seven parts: I. canonical law; II. a treatise on temporal power; III. justice; IV. law on the family and on dependents; V. contracts and private law; VI. inheritance law; VII. penal law. The prologue aims to institute law starting with a new paradigm, which radicalizes the relation between the king and the law. On the one hand, the mirror is given not to subjects but to the king himself, with a view to the future, for Alfonso intended the work for his successors: “We have deliberately made this book so that the kings of our domain will forever look into it as if it were a mirror, and that they will see the things that they must rectify, and rectify them”.¹³ On the other hand, citing Aristotle as well as the Bible, the prologue finishes with a long exposition of the virtues of the number seven. This number also refers to the indestructible bond between

12 This version is represented by the British Library manuscript published in *Primera partida según el manuscrito Add. 20.787 del British Museum*, ed. J.A. Arias Bonet (Valladolid, 1975).

13 *Siete Partidas*, ed. G. López, 1 (Madrid, 1985), *Segunda Partida*, fol. 3v.: “fezimos señaladamente este libro porque siempre los reyes del nuestro señorío se caten en el ansi como en espejo, vean las cosas que han de enmendar e las enmienden”.

the king and the law, as the initial letters of each *Partida* altogether spell the name ALFONSO. While other western royal regimes based their sovereignty on their sacred nature, the *Partidas* constructed it from this metonymic bond between *corpus regis* and *corpus juris*.¹⁴ As well as contemplating himself in the law, the king becomes the living image of the law. The metaphor of the mirror thus acquires an ontological, even mystical, meaning, making the quest for absolutism unnecessary. The king has no need to liberate himself from the law, for he himself embodies the law. Thus, the fourth and fifth sections of the *Segunda Partida* regulate the words¹⁵ and actions of the king, even down to the physical stance he should adopt; here we find prescriptions that in the *Espéculo* were aimed at courtiers, but which now concern the king. Applied to the king, these norms, which are more in the domain of etiquette than of ethics, do not have the goal of limiting his power, but on the contrary emphasize his visibility. In a kind of mirror within a mirror, the law demonstrates that the king manifests the law. Moreover, the first section of the *Primera Partida* offers a much more exclusive notion of the law than that of the *Espéculo* or the *Libro del fuero de las leyes*. On the one hand, the law is now clearly distinguished from *usos* (practices), *costumbres* (customs), and *fueros*; on the other hand, the king, still the sole producer of laws, is also the only one who can order them to be amended, which is the reason it is suitable that he surrounds himself with experts in legal knowledge. Even the clarification of the law's meaning must remain within his purview; this immediately excludes free interpretation of the text. This hermeneutic closure makes the king himself the guardian of the language of the law.¹⁶

To control the text of the law is, by virtue of its performativity, to bring a new order, and in particular a new kind of royalty, into the world. The *Segunda Partida* combines legislative prescription with a theoretical exposition of political law, of varied origin: biblical and patristic tradition; Roman law in its pro-imperial interpretation, following the ideology of the Hohenstaufen family of Alfonso's mother; Aristotle's *Ethics*, but also his *Politics*, in one of its very first utilizations in the medieval West;¹⁷ and wisdom treatises of eastern

14 Jesús Rodríguez Velasco, "La urgente presencia de *Las Siete Partidas*", in *La corónica* 38 (2010), pp. 99–135.

15 Olivier Biaggini, "Le roi et la parole dans quelques recueils d'*exempla* castillans des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles", in *e-Spania* 4 (2007).

16 Rodríguez Velasco, "Theorizing the Language of the Law", in *Diacritics* 36 (2006), pp. 64–86.

17 Georges Martin, "Alphonse X roi et empereur. Commentaire du Titre 1 de la *Seconde partie*", in *Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale* 23 (2000), pp. 323–348, in this case pp. 345–348.

origin. The prologue takes up the Gelasian theory of the two swords, but only to reinforce the universality of the temporal sword, which cuts through all visible evils. The first section indicates that the emperor does not receive this from the Pope, by delegation, but directly from God, whose vicar he is. As for the kings, they form a similar vicariate: "Vicars of God are the kings, each in his realm, placed above the people to keep them in justice and in truth in the temporal world, just as the emperor is in his empire".¹⁸ This is not an original idea, but the similarity of the two powers allows the *Partidas* to establish the royal and the imperial plans of Alfonso X using a discourse that can be interpreted on two separate levels. However, the power of the king is in some ways superior to that of the emperor. On the one hand, kingship, more ancient, originally had a spiritual dimension, as God Himself is the king of kings; on the other hand, the royal function is not elective but hereditary, meaning that the king can give away a part of his kingdom if necessary, which leads to a patrimonial conception of royalty.¹⁹ This intrinsic relation of the king to his kingdom is summarized by an old metaphor, renewed here, in line with a phrase from the *Flores de Filosofia* and the *Espéculo*: the king is not only, as in John of Salisbury, the head of the kingdom, ruling all its members, but also the people's heart and soul. Just as the soul, whose seat is in the heart, makes the body live, so justice, whose seat is in the king, makes the people live.

Moreover, this bond between the king and the people is shown through an original concept, *naturaleza*, which must be distinguished from the concept of *natura* (in its double meaning of "nature", or the order of Creation, and "birth", the fulcrum of rank and lineage), although the lawmaker makes the most of etymology to suggest that in the political sphere, *naturaleza* is the counterpart of the *natura* established by God.²⁰ This *naturaleza*, as theorized in the *Cuarta Partida*, is defined as a specific bond that unites people in a vertical relationship (that of the sovereign and his *naturales*) or a horizontal one (that of the *naturales* to each other), but also of people to a territory, the one where they were born or where they have lived for a long time. The notion of *señor natural* gives rise to a rethinking of the king's relation to members of the high nobility; not only is the passively occurring *naturaleza* distinguished from the king's relationship with his vassals, but all the effort of the *Partidas* goes

18 *Siete Partidas*, ed. G. López, vol. 1, *Segunda Partida*, fol. 4v: "Vicarios de Dios son los Reyes cada vno en su reyno, puestos sobre las gentes, para mantener las en justicia e en verdad quanto en lo temporal, bien assi como el Emperador en su imperio".

19 Martin, "Alphonse X de castille, roi et empereur", pp. 334–339 (see above n. 17).

20 Martin, "Le concept de 'naturalité' (*naturaleza*) dans les *Sept parties* d'Alphonse X le Sage", in *e-Spania* 5 (2008).

into establishing that it is more important. As a result of *naturaleza*, the great nobles become subjects of the king, just like other members of the political community, and thus the entire feudal regime is left behind.

In 1272, a general uprising among the nobility began in Castile, just as the second version of the *Partidas* was being written. This reaction by the feudal aristocracy is largely explained by the content of the book's political program, which ten years later led to the *de facto* deposition of the king, who retreated to Seville, one of the last cities that stayed loyal to him. The last stage of Alfonsine legal production, dating from these years of political impotence, was the *Setenario* (the last third of his reign?), a text organized into laws, although its legal discourse is enriched throughout with the language of wisdom literature, and occasionally of historiography. The first eleven laws reprises elements of the prologue of *Siete Partidas*, considerably amplified; and its contents are systematically organized into seven-item lists. Because his name, Alfonso, began with *alpha* and ended with *omega*, the king could state that he had received the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. He then expatiates on the virtues linked to the seven letters in the name of his father "Ferando". Through a lengthy panegyric to Ferdinand III, who was said to have produced the first version of the book himself (this has led some critics, even today, to date the *Setenario* to the 1250s), Alfonso projects onto the figure of his father a systematic and thorough version of his own 'political science' in order to create a convenient continuity between their two reigns, attributing his own innovations to that universally respected monarch.²¹

Although the question has been debated, it seems to be established that the *Partidas* were not promulgated during the reign of Alfonso X, and that they did not enter into effect until 1348, under the reign of Alfonso XI, through a provision in the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* that made them a supplemental legal code. Not only did this work remain an obligatory reference for all legal and political thought in the Hispanic world, but its own configuration predisposed it to multiple 'reactivations' at specific historical moments.²² For our purposes, it is important to emphasize that, within the handwritten or printed tradition of the *Partidas*, the 'legalist' versions, close to their initial state as conceived by royal jurists, existed alongside 'wisdom literature' versions that, departing from their original prescriptive role, were developing the idea of royal centrism understood partly from an absolutist point of view, which is absent from the first version of the *Partidas*.²³

21 Martin, "Alphonse X ou la science politique", (*Septénaire* 1–11), in *Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale* 20 (1995), pp. 7–33.

22 Rodríguez Velasco, "La urgente presencia de *Las Siete Partidas*" (see above, n. 14).

23 Jerry R. Craddock, "Must the King Obey his Laws?", in *Florilegium Hispanicum: Medieval and Golden Age Studies Presented to Dorothy Clotelle Clarke*, eds. J.S. Geary, Ch. Faulhaber

One of the remarkable traits of Alfonso x's legal texts is that it is the king who articulates the political doctrine of the mirror. Two texts produced in Castile after the end of his reign continued this pattern. In *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV* (1293), the king—Alfonso's second son, who had helped depose his father and was cursed by him—addresses his own son, the future Ferdinand IV, to give him moral and political advice focused on the royal role, illustrating vices and Christian virtues with a plethora of *exempla* and maxims. The king says that he has written the treatise with the help of “científicos sabios”, perhaps jurists.²⁴ Although the content of some passages originates in eastern tradition, the sources mentioned refer to religious history or to a lesser extent to classical antiquity or contemporary Castile, as if to distance the work from the Arab models emblematic of the preceding reign. Even though direct imitations of the *Partidas* can sometimes be detected, the imprint of the clergy is constantly visible throughout the discourse, giving the mirror the feeling of a sermon²⁵ tinged with references to canon law. While consolidating Sancho's fragile legitimacy and reaffirming royal centrism, the work offers remarkable rhetoric, like the long allegory in chapter XI, which projects the doctrine of the mirror onto the insignia and ornaments of a king enthroned in all his majesty. As with Alfonso, the royal prerogatives tend to overflow from the temporal to the spiritual realm, especially in establishing their distinctive relationship to truth, held to be the foundation of the political bond.

This was not true of the *Castigos del rey de Mentón*, a section of the *Libro del caballero Zifar* (1330s?) which also presents itself as a mirror articulated by a king, but this time within a fiction. This king is Zifar himself, after his knightly adventures, and his instructions are destined for his sons Garfín and Roboán; at the end of the story, Roboán becomes emperor. Unlike the *Castigos* of Sancho IV, this text draws abundantly from eastern wisdom literature, taking entire passages from *Flores de filosofía*. Furthermore, unlike Sancho speaking to Prince Ferdinand, the king of Mentón does not at the outset consider his sons as future monarchs, and his teaching—sometimes presented as simple advice—seems to envision several different kinds of listeners. The advice variously describes ideal versions of a king, a great lord, a courtier or a counselor—their ranks do not seem to be exclusive, as they must all cultivate the chivalric virtues. The mirror's configuration may reflect a concern for social harmony in a context that may be that of Alfonso XI's conflict with some of his

and D.E. Carpenter (Madison, 1983), pp. 71–79; Daniel Panateri, *El discurso del rey, El discurso jurídico alfonsí y sus implicancias políticas* (Madrid, 2017), pp. 52–71.

24 Bizzarri, *Las colecciones sapienciales castellanas* (see above n. 6), p. 56.

25 Bizzarri, “Sermones y espejos de príncipes castellanos”, in *Anuario de estudios medievales* 42/1 (2012), pp. 163–181, here pp. 170–173.

great vassals, especially Don Juan Manuel.²⁶ While referring to an imaginary world centered on lineage, *Zifar* questions the notion of nobility, which is no longer limited to the rank received at birth, but is achieved by practicing a code of ethics. The king is thus presenting a model of nobility in which he can also recognize his own royalty.

1.3 *A Mirror Against the Law: Um styrilsi konunga ok höfthinga*

In Sweden, the mirrors of kings did not originate in the tradition of wisdom or maxim literature. On the other hand, their relation to the law, which had been written down beginning in the 13th century, seems to have been crucial. *Um styrilsi konunga ok höfthinga* (On the government of kings and princes) is an adaptation into old Swedish of the mirror of Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*.²⁷ It was published for the first time in 1634 by Gustavus Adolphus's tutor Johannes Bureus, who dedicated the book to the king's daughter, Queen Christina. In the 17th century, this political treatise, which aspires to demonstrate the superiority of the hereditary principle over that of the elective, met an ideological context favorable to its diffusion: for almost a century, the Swedish monarchy had become hereditary. The 15th-century manuscript, probably originating in Vadstena, that Bureus used disappeared shortly afterwards,²⁸ but in 1867, fragments of a medieval manuscript of *Um styrilsi konunga* dating from 1430–1440 proved that Bureus's text was reliable.²⁹

Um styrilsi konunga includes no dedication. However, this kind of didactic literature was normally aimed at a specific recipient. *De regimine principum* was written for the elder son of Philip III of France. When it was translated into Castilian by the Franciscan Juan García de Castrojeriz in about 1344, at the request of Bishop Barnabas of Osma, it was intended for the future Peter of Castile; the bishop was his tutor. This Castilian translation has the particular feature of a commentary, which adds many *exempla*, but also occasionally

26 Rodríguez Velasco, "El Libro del Cavallero Zifar en la edad de la virtud", in *La corónica* 27 (1999), pp. 167–186.

27 The title may indicate influence from the French translation of the work by Henri de Gauchi, with a similar title, *Li livres du gouvernement des rois et des princes*. See Michael Nordberg, *I kung Magnus tid* (In the Time of King Magnus) (Stockholm, 1995), p. 139.

28 Knut F. Söderwall, *Studier öfver Konunga-styrelsen* (Study about the Government of Kings) (Lund, 1880), p. 50; Lennart Moberg, *Konungastyrelsen. En filologisk undersökning* (The government of kings, A philological study) (Uppsala, 1984), pp. 17–18; Hans H. Ronge, "Om Konungastyrelsen" ("On the Government of Kings"), in *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* 101 (1986), p. 217.

29 We cite the Bureus edition published by Moberg, in spite of its modernized spelling: J. Bureus (ed.), *Um styrilsi konunga ok höfthinga* [1634] (Stockholm, 1964).

rewrites, reorganizes, or corrects the original text, and attempts to develop to the utmost the synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and moral theology that had already been presented by Giles on a Thomist foundation.³⁰ The Swedish adaptation of the mirror dates from the same years as the Castilian version.³¹ Philological analysis has indeed shown that the Swedish mirror could only have been written in the first half of the 14th century.³² There is a definite similarity between the Swedish mirror and the ordinances promulgated by King Magnus Eriksson beginning in 1335.³³ It is therefore likely that Magnus Eriksson's sons Håkon and Erik, born in 1339 and 1340, were the intended readers.³⁴

Um styrilsi konunga is a work written in prose. In the 14th century, prose in Swedish was used only for charters and collections of laws, or for the composition of hagiographic or scholarly texts.³⁵ The use of prose is explained by the normative nature of this text, intended for the king and the great men of the kingdom. The work also has a clerical aspect. It is presented as an adaptation of works written by masters (*mästara*), in other words authorities, linked to the world of universities. Its last three sections correspond to those in the *De regimine principum*, composed according to the three branches of practical philosophy; but the Swedish author places a new chapter at the beginning, where "it is explained why the people must have a king, and upon whom it is incumbent by right to be king";³⁶ and in each section, he organizes the arguments of his model, sometimes quite freely, using complementary sources as well, in particular Thomas Aquinas's *De regno*. In its thorough mastery of

30 Bizzarri, "Fray Juan García de Castrojeriz receptor de Aristóteles", in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 67 (2000), pp. 225–36. The addition of the *exempla*, which brings the mirror closer to wisdom literature, explains in part why a version of the *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*, perhaps dating to the beginning of the 15th century, included entire sections of Castrojeriz's text.

31 Leif Dannert, "Konungastyrelsens politiska åskådning och skriften datering", in *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 23 (1938), p. 43; Carl I. Ståhle, "Medeltidens profana litteratur" ("Secular Literature of the Middle Ages"), in *Ny illustrerad svensk litteratur historia*, vol. 1, ed. E.N. Tigerstedt (Stockholm, 1967), p. 84.

32 Hans H. Ronge, "Om Konungastyrelsen" (see above n. 28), p. 222.

33 Moberg, *Konungastyrelsen* (see above n. 28), pp. 96–97.

34 Moberg, *Konungastyrelsen* (see above n. 28), p. 107; Dannert, "Konungastyrelsens politiska åskådning" (see above n. 31), p. 60; Kristin Drar, *Konungens herravälde såsom rättvisans, fridens och frihetens beskydd. Medeltiden fursteideal i svensk hög- och senmedeltida källmaterial* (The Power of the King as Guardian of Justice, Peace and Freedom. The Medieval Ideal of the Prince in the Sources of the Central and Late Middle Ages) (Stockholm, 1980), pp. 71–72.

35 See Birgit Klockars, "Medeltidens religiösa litteratur" ("Religious Literature of the Middle Ages"), in *Ny illustrerad svensk litteratur historia*, vol. 1, *Forntiden, Medeltiden, Vasatiden*, ed. E.N. Tigerstedt (Stockholm, 1967), pp. 156–162.

36 J. Bureus (ed.), *Um styrilsi konunga ok höfthinga*, p. 1.

scholastic reasoning, the Swedish mirror also testifies to the influence of the Swedish students who were bringing new ideas back to Sweden after studying on the continent. The authorship of Master Mathias is one serious hypothesis. This canon of Linköping, who died in 1350, had studied in Paris. He composed scholarly works and was close to King Magnus Eriksson.³⁷

The Swedish mirror served as a way to circulate the latest developments in political philosophy, especially the promotion of a monarchical state on the French model, i.e. centralized and hereditary.³⁸ The description of a state founded on the relation between a lawmaking king and his people, as well as the absence of reference to feudal relations, probably made it more acceptable in Sweden, where those relations had never constituted a real political system; but the question of inheritance was a thorny one in this elective monarchy. In the second chapter of the last section, devoted to government in peacetime, Giles of Rome contends that a hereditary kingdom is preferable, because the interests of the king and of the kingdom will then be the same. Moreover, a king who inherits his kingdom seldom becomes a tyrant, for he has already acquired his subjects' obedience. This argument allows Giles of Rome to conclude that power should be transmitted in order of male primogeniture. However, he begins by affirming that in itself, it would be better to designate a ruler by election; it is man's corruption that makes the hereditary system preferable. Giles of Rome was not the only writer to take this stance at the end of the 13th century.³⁹ To adapt the mirror to Swedish elective law would therefore have been easy, but the author manifestly chose another point of view. He added a chapter showing the superiority of hereditary succession, and distanced himself somewhat from Giles of Rome's position, refusing to admit the theoretical superiority of election. The mirror, then, contradicts Swedish elective law, which has been attested from the beginning of the 13th century and was developed with precision in the 1335 Charter of Election.

Indeed, the first book opens, like *De regno*, with the statement that everything that has been created, to accomplish its purpose in being created, must be governed. The author holds that the entire population must lead a just life, which implies marriage and the possession of goods acquired in a just manner. This first argument in favor of the hereditary principle establishes the

37 Drar, *Konungens herravälde* (see above, n. 34), pp. 168–177; Moberg, *Konungastyrelsen* (see above, n. 28), pp. 222–227.

38 Jacques Krynen, *L'Empire du roi. Idées et croyances politiques en France, XIII^e–XV^e siècle* (Paris, 1993), pp. 184–188.

39 Elsa Marmursztejn, "Élections et légitimité politique dans la pensée scolastique au tournant du XIII^e et du XIV^e siècle", in *Élections et pouvoirs politiques du VII^e au XVII^e siècle*, ed. C. Péneau (Pompignac, 2008), pp. 143–162, here pp. 151–152.

family and its patrimony as the foundation of human society. Then the author, following *De regno*, emphasizes that humans must live in society to make up for their weaknesses through their own industry, and to benefit from the activity of others. At this point in the argument, the author inserts an objection that allows him to introduce his main subject: when many people are together, they all want to act as they please, and discord can break out. It is necessary for people to be governed, and led towards peace and freedom. They must be protected from their enemies with strength and with good counsel. The people, the author concludes, call those who thus protect them kings and princes.

The introduction of the word “king” gives the author the chance to propose his main argument in favor of heredity.

The king (*kununger*) gets this name from his kindred (*kyni*), for the king must come only from a good kin. He must be king by (*äpte*) birth and inheritance, after (*äpte*) his father and his ancestors. The kindred (*kyn*) give good advice and urge him to pious acts.⁴⁰

Konunger, in fact, means “one who comes from a kindred”.⁴¹ But the inclusion of the possessive adjective *sin* shows that the author wanted to create an additional meaning, based on a wordplay between the word *kyni* and the thing it designates, the family. This inheritance is a name: that of king. The phrase means both “*kununger* is a word that derives from *kyni*” and “the king receives his power from his family”. This confusion between etymology and genealogy, which was identified by Howard Bloch⁴² as a veritable “mental structure” of the medieval era, allows hereditary succession to be justified by recourse to the Swedish language. The Swedish elective tradition is thus immediately disqualified by etymology.⁴³ The author adds an explanation to this argument, in the form of a zeugma: the king must be king by (*äpte*) birth and inheritance, as he is king after (*äpte*), i.e. in the place of his father.

40 J. Bureus (ed.), p. 5: “Kununger havär namn aff KYNI sino at äy må konungär utan af godho kyni komin wara ok thy skal konungär wara äpte byrd ok arf som äpte fadher ok föräldre sina. Then kyn är til godha rådha ok rönter til froma gärningar”.

41 Jean-Marie Maillefer, “Recherche sur l’ancienne royauté scandinave et l’idéologie des trois fonctions”, in *Études germaniques* 4 (1981), pp. 377–392.

42 R. Howard Bloch, “Genealogy as a Medieval Mental Structure and Textual Form”, in *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters* 11, eds. H.U. Gumbucht, U. Link-Heer and P.M. Sjangenberg (Heidelberg, 1986–1993), pp. 135–156.

43 Michel Senellart, *Les arts de gouverner. Du regimen médiéval au concept de gouvernement* (Paris, 1995), pp. 65–67.

Contrary to Swedish law, which stipulated that the king should “preferably”⁴⁴ be the son of a king, the mirror shows that he must necessarily be one. As Giles of Rome states, only the hereditary principle, by designating in advance who will be the next king, allows for him to be given an appropriate education from childhood onwards. The author of the mirror, of course, is unable to ignore the elective system, but he quickly rejects it as a bad custom (*sidhwänio*) that is dying out.⁴⁵ He thus categorically opposes both law emanating from the king, described as “living law”,⁴⁶ and custom, emanating from the people. While this corresponds to the evolution of royal power in Sweden from the 13th century onward,⁴⁷ it contradicts the theory of legislative power that made provincial assemblies (*thing*) the places where laws were produced, or at least ratified.

Before considering election, the author discusses the principle of the uniqueness of the king and shows that he agrees with the thinking of the “masters”. The end of the first book reminds the reader that wise men have compared the advantages to the people of hereditary succession and of election. Some of these sages have declared that it is best for the people to choose, for this choice can fall upon the wisest and most experienced. On the other hand, in a hereditary system, rule can fall to a child or to a man who might lead the people to ruin. This principle of competence, however, is contradicted by the arguments in favor of the hereditary principle, which is defended by “all wise men”. According to nature, the son who succeeds his father as king will receive more love from his subjects because they have known his ancestors. This argument, although not original, resonates with the etymological claim proposed at the beginning of the book, and thus acquires a new value in the Swedish context.

The author then examines three arguments against the elective principle. The first contradicts the principle of competence. If the king is a child, the people may suffer. In a hereditary monarchy, the father can prepare his succession and entrust his son and the government to those close to him, who will be able to take care of the kingdom until the child is of age. The second reminds the reader that in an elective monarchy, at the moment of the king’s death, the people must choose a new king, which is a source of conflict. The author completes his demonstration by analyzing a particular case. If an elected king wishes to have his son succeed him, conflicts can arise either at his death,

44 *Södermannalagen efter cod. Havn. Ny Kgl. Saml. 4: o. N:o 2237* (Södermanland Law), ed. K.H. Karlsson (Stockholm, 1904), p. 27.

45 J. Bureus (ed.), p. 6: “Ok mädth the skäl aff ålder kumit i sidhwänio manna At almoghe må sik konung wälia thän hånom åsämbbar. Än thz är wågthat ok grympt ok ostadhokt ok thy är thz flästa stadhi aff lagt”.

46 J. Bureus (ed.), p. 68.

47 Drar, *Konungens herravälde* (see above, n. 34), pp. 51–52.

or at the very moment of the election. The author concludes that countries where the king is elected often suffer from wars. The last argument, specific to the author of the Swedish mirror, emphasizes that people are inclined to choose a child or an inexperienced man as king. In an elective monarchy, this choice is harmful, as each will reign as he pleases. Although the kingdom is not named, contemporaries could recognize Sweden, where Magnus Eriksson was elected in 1319 at the age of three. The author concludes by reminding the reader that travelers can testify that the countries that apply the hereditary principle are rich and live in peace.⁴⁸

The author of the mirror thus disqualifies the people from acting as a body in the political realm. However, he never attacks Swedish elective law frontally, even though the outline of the first section reveals his intentions, for in it he examines the two basic principles at the beginning of the Charter of Election: "In all Sweden, there must be only one royal crown and one king. (...) In Sweden, the king must receive the kingdom by election, and not by inheritance".⁴⁹ The author never cites the law directly, but his ambition was to produce a text that resembled it. For example, he divided the mirror into four parts (*balka fyra*).⁵⁰ The word *balker* designated the great thematic divisions of Swedish law.⁵¹ The anaphoric use of the adverb *nu*, which elsewhere often introduced articles of law, must also be noted.⁵² Early on, philologists remarked on the author's alliterations, which, without being unique to laws, are often encountered in normative texts.⁵³ A large number of expressions, synonym doublets, or syntactical constructions are common to both the mirror and Swedish laws, especially the *Södermanland Law* and the orders promulgated by Magnus Eriksson in the 1330s and 1340s.⁵⁴ Mirrors have a mimetic relation to the law, without the similarities being linked to the writing style of any particular author. The choice of Swedish prose and the use of turns of phrase common in legal language indicate

48 J. Bureus (ed.), pp. 10–11.

49 *Södermannalagen* (see above, n. 44), p. 26: "Jvir alt sueariki agher æi kununglik krona ok konunger uæra utan en (...). Nu ær til konunghs rikit i suærichi konunger uæliande. ok æi æruande".

50 J. Bureus (ed.), p. 1. This remark was made by Ståhle ("Medeltidens profana litteratur" (see above, n. 31), p. 84), Sten Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria* (Stockholm, 1975), p. 100 and Moberg ("Konungastyrelsen" (see above n. 28), p. 22), but the authors did not pursue this line of thought.

51 Carl J. Schlyter, *Glossarium ad Corpus iuris Sueo-Gotorum antiqui, Corpus iuris sueogotorum antiqui*. Samling af Sweriges gamla lagar 13 (Stockholm, 1877), p. 294.

52 Emil Olsson, *Utdrag ur Magnus Erikssons Landslag (Excerpts from Magnus Eriksson's Law)*, 4th ed. (Lund, 1956), p. 155.

53 Söderwall, *Studier öfver Konunga-styrelsen* (see above n. 28), p. 38.

54 Moberg, *Konungastyrelsen* (see above, n. 28), p. 116f.

that the author was trying to imitate normative texts, but usually to propose a different vision of royal power.

However, the ambiguity is not only formal. The text sometimes seems to agree almost entirely with the law, but with subtle differences. The oath sworn by the king, as prescribed by the Charter of Election, revealed the strengthening of royal power since the 13th century, but imposed on him the restraint of respect for the law.⁵⁵ At first glance, the mirror proposes principles of rule very close to those contained in the oath:⁵⁶ the king must be fair, preserve the laws, and respect freedoms and privileges. He must not threaten people's goods, diminish the wealth of the Crown, levy illegal taxes, or rule with foreigners. These parallels, which some scholars have emphasized,⁵⁷ should not delude us. The effectiveness of the Swedish mirror depends on its refusal to confront the letter of Swedish law. The mirror integrates the content of the oath into its own framework of reasoning, but this transfer from one form to another entails a radical change of meaning, due to the difference in the underlying political notions. For example, let us compare how the love which the king must have for God is expressed. In the oath, it is the first article.

The same day, in the same spot, the king must take his oath of fealty to all the inhabitants of the kingdom. The first article is that he must love God and the Holy Church and uphold its rights, without, however, harming the rights of the king, the Crown and the people of Sweden.⁵⁸

The fiction is that this is an exchange: the king, in order to possess his power, must bow to a norm. The laws do not use the word “subjects”. In the election, the Swedish people are considered as participants, and it is they who put the king in power, while obliging him to submit to their law.

By disqualifying election, the author of the mirror implicitly rejects the oath. Thus, he introduces the equivalent of the first article of the oath in a radically

55 Corinne Péneau, “Le roi lié. Le serment royal en Suède d’après les lois du XIV^e siècle”, in *Oralité et lien social au Moyen Âge (Occident, Byzance, Islam) : parole donnée, foi jurée, serment*, eds. M.-F. Auzépy and G. Saint-Guillain (Paris, 2009), pp. 187–208.

56 *Södermannalagen* (see above, n. 44), pp. 27–29.

57 Dannert (“Konungastyrelsens politiska åskådning” (see above, n. 31), pp. 52–60) and Nordberg (*I kung Magnus tid* (see above, n. 27), pp. 150–153) state that the mirror cannot be the expression of an absolute power, as its content recalls that of the royal oath.

58 *Södermannalagen* (see above, n. 44), p. 27: “a sama dagh ok stað agher konunger allum innan richis boandum trygdar eþe sina ganga. Fyrste articulus at han scal ælska guð ok the hælghu kirkiu. Ok ræt hænnu styrkia. oskadum allum konunglicum ræt. kronnuna ok alz suerichis almogha”.

different fashion. "If you wish to be just, you must begin by loving God".⁵⁹ He replaces legal limits with moral injunctions. In the fiction laid out by the mirror, everything occurs as if the king has the choice of how to behave. Nothing can limit his power but his own will to be a just king. This free will of the king is explained by the position he occupies in the world, as the second section of the mirror makes explicit: as God alone gave the king his power, the king occupies an intermediate position between the people and God. Likewise, he is defined "as a sort of god above the people".⁶⁰ Directly subject to divine law, the king appears to be exempt from human law. At this point, the virtue of the king replaces his submission to the law, and morality is substituted for a legal definition of the relation between a king and his people. The only guarantee of good government should be the link that unites him to God.

The precepts developed in the mirror and in the oath are differentiated by the context of their articulation. The mirror constructs a power removed from any human control. With much citing of authorities, it proposes to the king that he should benefit from his good actions. On the other hand, through its place at the heart of the elective ritual, the oath imposes legal limits on the king at the very moment he receives his power. By asserting the superiority of the hereditary principle, the mirror erases the oath, and substitutes for it, as sole constraint, the words of the masters. *Um styrilsi konunga* was doubtlessly written in the 1340s, when Magnus Eriksson was trying to free himself from the sway of the aristocracy. The birth of his sons, Erik and Håkon, had led him to aspire to a dynasty. In 1343, the personal union of Sweden and Norway was transformed. On August 15th, Magnus reached an agreement with Norwegian councilors in which they consented to Håkon as king. The agreement was attached to a peace treaty and subject to the condition that Magnus would assume power until his son was of age. On November 18, 1343, at Varberg, King Magnus Eriksson negotiated with the Danish King, Valdemar Attertag, a definitive union between Scania and the kingdom of Sweden. This agreement would put an end to the long conflict over the Danish province, which the Swedes had bought in 1332 from the Count of Holstein, who had held it as collateral. In 1341 the Danish king had recognized the cession of Scania and Blekinge to Sweden, and sold to Magnus Eriksson the remaining Danish enclaves from west of the Sound and south of Halland. But in 1342, divisions had led to open war between Magnus, supported by the rulers of Holstein, and Valdemar, allied with the Hanseatic cities. The agreement of Varberg was supposed to create the basis for a new political equilibrium in Scandinavia, as the kings were committing

59 J. Bureus (ed.), p. 25: "Wilt tu wara rätvis / Tå skal du först älska gudh".

60 J. Bureus (ed.), p. 39: "suåsom nokor gudh iui almogha".

themselves not only in their own names, but also in the name of their “successors and heirs”.⁶¹ On the same day, at the king’s request, the Swedish bishops and prelates committed themselves to elect Erik Magnusson king of Sweden, giving immediate reality to the phrase.⁶² The rest of the charter indicates that elective law was officially preserved, but it would be applied only if Erik died without descendants, which made it more or less meaningless.⁶³

Did the Swedish mirror encourage this action, or was it written to justify it *a posteriori*? In 1343, Magnus Eriksson already seemed to be following its advice, as the anticipated election of his son allowed him to prepare for his potential minority as in a hereditary succession. It seems that the Swedish prelates were the first to argue in favor of this manipulation of the meaning of election, as the composition of the mirror itself suggests. The election took place on December 6, 1344.⁶⁴ On the same day, in Uppsala, Magnus Eriksson promulgated a reform ordinance, as he had already done in 1335 at Skänninge, that was intended to combat the bad “customs” (*sithwæniør*) instituted during his own minority.⁶⁵ The Swedish mirror may have been written to prepare for this meeting at Varberg, but it might also have been conceived as a gift for young king Erik, who would be able to read in it a justification for his father’s actions. Yet another hypothesis is that it was written at the end of the 1340s, at a time when the project of writing a code of law valid throughout the whole kingdom, or National Law, gave a new immediacy to the debates around the 1335 Charter of Election, which in the end was included without any great changes.

2 Reflexions of Two Aristocrats: Don Juan Manuel’s and Saint Bridget’s Own Mirrors of Princes

2.1 *The King is Naked*

Reactions to these mirrors written in favor of royal centrism can be seen both in Castile and in Sweden, in the works of two great aristocrats, Don Juan Manuel (1282–1348) and Saint Bridget (1303–1373). In Castile, after Alfonso X, one of the

61 The expression, used by both Valdemar Birgersson (*Diplomatarium suecanum* 3741, 3742, 3744) and Magnus Eriksson (*Diplomatarium suecanum* 3743), has been viewed as a sign of the Swedish king’s ambition to found a hereditary monarchy (Erik Lönnroth, *Sverige och Kalmarunionen 1397–1457* (Sweden and the Kalmar Union 1397–1457) (Gothenburg, 1934), p. 35).

62 *Diplomatarium suecanum* 3746, p. 226.

63 *Diplomatarium suecanum* 3746, p. 228.

64 *Diplomatarium suecanum* 3865.

65 *Diplomatarium suecanum* 3175 and 3864.

main political countermodels to growing royal power was developed by Don Juan Manuel, a grandson of Ferdinand III and nephew of Alfonso X. He was one of the most powerful lords of his time because of his prestigious origins, his large inheritance, and the importance of his political roles. Notably, he had been co-regent of the kingdom of Castile during the minority of Alfonso XI, but once Alfonso was of age, in 1325, he removed Don Juan Manuel from office, later entering into open conflict with him several times. As for Bridget, she belonged to one of the most powerful families in Sweden. Her marriage brought her to Court, where she was named governess to Queen Blanche. Her revelations, attributed to God, the Virgin, or various saints, interested Magnus Eriksson, and some were written down at his request, but Bridget did not hesitate to express her opposition, in particular when the king was trying to launch a crusade. Bridget and her father, who was one of the writers of the *Law of Uppland* and one of the participants in the election of Magnus Eriksson, shared the conviction that the king should be elected. Thus she declares that “the king is not lord of the Crown, but its guardian”.⁶⁶

Among the singular writings of Don Juan Manuel, several works resemble mirrors of princes, although with different points of view. In the *Libro del cavallero et del escudero* (between 1326 and 1328), of which only a truncated version survives, the story opens by evoking a king, presented as the perfect *señor natural*, who attracts to his court the flower of chivalry. Here the concept of *naturaleza*, inherited from the *Siete Partidas*, is reinterpreted: it is no longer a bond anchored in a territory of birth or long residence, but a bond that has become personal, even elective, for it is said that it is foreigners, seeking honor and reward, who decide to become the king’s *naturales*. Most of the subject matter is included in a dialogue between a squire and an aged knight (*cavallero anciano*), who gives him all the knowledge he needs to comprehend chivalry and, once he has been knighted, to continue to learn. These questions deal with subjects directly linked to the sociopolitical domain or connected to theology, cosmology and natural science; but the master’s rhetorical efforts consist less of delivering a great deal of particular advice than of trying to create, by exclusion, a field of knowledge that would be specific to knighthood. This endeavor is accompanied by a definition of knighthood as the most worthy of conditions (*estados*) in the lay sphere, parallel to the condition of priesthood in the ecclesiastical sphere, for it is received like a sacrament. On the one hand, kings and great lords are not separated hierarchically; on the other hand, the state of knighthood is given by another, according to a rite later codified, and

66 R IV.3 (R VIII.41) (§14): “rex non dominus corone est sed rector”.

which is transmitted by the will of the lord in elective fashion. Here, in answer to the portrait of the king as the perfect natural lord, is an approach centered on interpersonal relations, in the feudal spirit, that does depend on *naturaleza* but surpasses it.

While adopting a dialogue structure similar to that of the *Libro del caballero et del escudero*, the *Libro de los estados* (between 1327 and 1332) is much more clearly related to mirrors of princes. Its fictional framework, inspired by the legend of *Barlaam et Josaphat*, presents the education of a future king. Prince Joas, heir to the throne of a pagan kingdom, is taught first by one of his father's advisors, a knight named Turín, and then by a Christian preacher named Julio, who, by moral and theological arguments, converts him to Christianity, thus obtaining the conversion of the entire kingdom. The cleric thus seems to take precedence over the knight, but Julio himself defends the idea of total compatibility, even an essential link, between the temporal prerogatives of the *bellatores*, appropriate to maintain their honor and their power, and their spiritual aspirations. Not only can every Christian be saved by obeying the rules of his own *estado*, but a high temporal dignity, if correctly worn, appears as a predisposition to salvation. In the same spirit, it is significant that Julio is a preacher from Castile, and that he mentions several times his friendship with a certain "Don Johán", the author's fictional double, whose tutor he is said to have been. On some points, Julio even bases his reasoning on the enlightened opinion of "Don Johán", whose experience and common sense then seem to surpass his own knowledge. This device tends to legitimize the words of laymen in the spiritual realm, and to justify Don Juan Manuel in arrogating to himself the role of a preacher by writing the *Libro de los estados*.

This work also features the emergence of a vision of power specific to the nobility, with the royal figure called into question. Not only does Julio announce immediately that his friend "Don Johán" is at war with the king, but the treatise seeks to efface—without being able to deny it directly—royal preeminence in the secular sphere: the figure of the king is practically never mentioned as such, but only together with that of the emperor, as if he had no specific characterization. On this point, although still using the *Siete Partidas* several times, the *Libro de los estados* is moving away from its spirit. In particular, Don Juan Manuel reinterprets the Alfonsine concept of *naturaleza*, in a sense that no doubt owes a great deal to his conflict with Alfonso XI, whom he had decided to *desnaturarse* ("denaturalize") in 1327; although the *Cuarta Partida* states that deficiencies in the *natural* toward the lord will automatically dissolve the *naturaleza* that unites them, Julio asserts that the lord is responsible for this bond to a higher degree than his *natural*, and that the

denaturalization of the latter is thus nothing but his legitimate recourse in taking note of the betrayal of the former.⁶⁷ The only royal figure that Julio speaks well of is King Ferdinand, who distinguished himself in the conquest of Andalusia, and who deserves the name of martyr for the service he rendered to God; Don Juan Manuel acclaims his grandfather as a king gifted to the highest degree with the knightly virtues.

While the *Libro de los estados* is concerned with the education of a future king, this aspect is not found in two other works by Don Juan Manuel that are comparable to mirrors of princes, the *Libro infinido* (between 1334 and 1337?) and *El conde Lucanor* (finished in 1335), where a great noble becomes the recipient of the teaching. The *Libro infinido* is presented as an educational treatise that Don Juan Manuel addresses to his son Fernando, according to a pattern that may have been meant to rival that of Sancho IV's *Castigos*; but while that royal mirror is structured by an axiology of vices and virtues, here the point of view is resolutely political, for, beginning in the prologue, it is said that "through knowledge, men honor themselves and are governed, and some are subjected to others."⁶⁸ With its constant references to the *Libro de los estados*, of which it can be read as an *ad hoc* commentary,⁶⁹ the *Libro infinido* develops a discourse centered specifically on the lineage of the Manuels—inferior to the king's, but superior to all the other Castilian lineages. Fernando, therefore, must know how to uphold his rank, both toward the king, his lord, and toward his inferiors, without ever being able to deal with someone who is his equal. This custom-made ethics makes for complex relationships with other people, and this is reflected in the final part of the treatise, which lists no fewer than fifteen kinds of political love. The main characteristic of this *Libro infinido*, or "unfinished book", is that it presents itself as the result of the author's personal experience, and consequently cannot be finished in his lifetime. Don Juan Manuel says that he has recorded the things he has lived, which is supposed to confer upon them an indisputable truthfulness, better than any references from textual authorities. The mirror's

67 Olivier Biaggini, "Du vassal rebelle au chevalier parricide : usages et manipulations par Don Juan Manuel du concept politique de *naturaleza*", in *Histoires, femmes, pouvoirs. Péninsule Ibérique (IX^e-XV^e siècle). Mélanges offerts au Professeur Georges Martin*, eds. J.-P. Jardin, P. Rochwert-Zuili and H. Thieulin-Pardo (Paris, 2018), p. 701.

68 [Don] Juan Manuel, *Libro infinido*, ed. C. Mota (Madrid, 2003), p. 113: "por el saber se onran et se apoderan et se enseñorean los unos omnes de los otros".

69 Francisco Bautista, "Autoría, niveles literarios y autócita: el *Libro de los estados* en la obra de don Juan Manuel", in *Voz y letra* 25 (2014), pp. 7–16. Moreover, the *Libro infinido* is also the very first vernacular Castilian text that explicitly mentions Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, even before it was translated by Juan García de Castrojeriz.

speaker is also therefore, in large measure, the book's very matter, and the specificity of the Manuels' lineage makes Fernando its only full, complete intended audience, even though, obviously, it also aimed to display this political model to other noble readers, who could recognize themselves in it to some degree.

While the *Libro infinido* presents itself as an unfiltered discourse, *El conde Lucanor*, like the *Libro del cavallero et del escudero* and the *Libro de los estados*, uses the framework of a dialogue between two fictional characters, Count Lucanor and his advisor Patronio. The latter, who may be either a cleric or a layman, combines the abilities of the *cavallero anciano* and of Julio. The knowledge he is transmitting usually concerns temporal questions—dealings with friends or enemies, prudence or daring in military operations, relationship to wealth, detection of frauds, etc.—but also spiritual questions, if they have some connection to the ethical code of the nobility. In keeping with the *Libro de los estados*, the main principle being defended is that the great lord can achieve salvation without having to renounce his temporal prerogatives, but, on the contrary, through behaving as a perfect *bellator*.

El conde Lucanor may be read as a mirror of princes, since, on the one hand, it presents the teaching given by Patronio to Lucanor, and on the other hand, invents exemplary royal figures. Clearly, this is an atypical mirror, created for readers among the nobility. Lucanor is not a king, and furthermore, he is a mature man—far from the young man who is the usual intended recipient for manuals of political education. Learning does not consist only of bookish instruction, but continues lifelong, through experiencing an unstable world made up of false pretenses. The work is composed of, in order, a collection of exemplary stories, three books of maxims, and a short treatise mingling theology and social ethics, all spoken by Patronio for Lucanor's benefit. The nesting of the examples and the lists of maxims within it recalls the techniques of eastern wisdom treatises, but those speech models are reinterpreted. Unlike *Calila*, *El conde Lucanor* inserts each example into a closed structure, along with a piece of advice from Patronio and a versified moral attributed to "Don Johán", fictional *alter ego* of the author and ultimate guarantor of the meaning. Some stories present Muslims, or more radically, indicate their own descent from Arabic sources, and in three cases even include proverbs in that language. However, on the ethical plane, eastern monarchs are seen as praiseworthy only up to a certain point. The fascination for the culture of the Other and for the forms of wisdom it has transmitted exist side by side with condescending, sometime ironic observation. For all these reasons, far from a passive imitation of Arabic sources, Don Juan Manuel is actively "colonizing" their cultural

model,⁷⁰ including the narrative techniques themselves. Moreover, the variety of forms of wisdom literature, arranged according to a subtle numerical structure, present writing as a reflection of the world, chaotic in appearance but orderly once the signs can be deciphered.⁷¹ The multiplicity of cases mentioned, more juxtaposed than structurally related, gives the writing the aspect of an archive recorded by the author for use by the nobility.⁷²

On one hand, according to many critics, from a variety of perspectives within the text, it was aimed at establishing the spiritual legitimacy of the *bellator*, while distancing itself from clerical mediation. Thus, the third example shows that Richard the Lionhearted's daring leap against the infidels was more effective toward salvation than the ascetic life of a hermit; and in many ways that king-knight recalls Ferdinand III, who is represented in two other stories (examples 15 and 28) as the arbiter of knightly worth. On the other hand, several examples are centered on the figures of inept kings,⁷³ in the tradition of royal mirrors that show monarchs' vices to incite them to virtue. However, beyond the *a contrario* reasoning of the moral mirror, some stories enjoy ridiculing the figure of the king to the point of diminishing his dignity. Thus, naïve and greedy kings are fooled by a false alchemist (example 27), or by three swindlers who say they can weave a garment that only people of legitimate birth can see (example 32). In the latter story, the indirect source of the famous Hans Christian Andersen tale, the scope of the exemplarity goes well beyond the satire of moral disorder to demonstrate the mechanisms of all relations to power, based on conventions tacitly accepted by those subject to them. The supposed visibility of the inexistent fabric becomes the new law supporting the whole political edifice, which the king, once he puts it on, is supposed to exhibit in all its performativity. But this body of the king as mirror of the law—which may recall the idea behind the *Partidas*—cannot withstand the remark of a black groom, who declares the evidence of his own eyes and shatters the

70 David A. Wacks, *Framing Iberia. Maqāmāt and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 129–156.

71 Laurence de Looze, *Manuscript Diversity, Meaning, and Variance in Juan Manuel's El Conde Lucanor* (Toronto, 2006), pp. 117–132; Olivier Biaggini, *Le gouvernement des signes, El conde Lucanor de Don Juan Manuel* (Paris, 2014).

72 Michael Gerli, "Textualidad y autoridad: hacia una teoría de los orígenes de la escritura señorial (el caso de *El libro del conde Lucanor*)", in *Propuestas teórico-metodológicas para el estudio de la literatura medieval hispánica* ed. L. von der Walde Moheno (Mexico, 2003), pp. 335–350.

73 Carlos Heusch, "'Yo te castigaré bien commo a loco'. Los reyes en *El Conde Lucanor* de Juan Manuel", in *e-Spania* 21 (2015).

collective illusion. The parade of the nude king can also be interpreted as a ferocious parody of Alfonso XI's coronation ceremony (Burgos, 1332), in which, contrary to Castilian custom, the king had himself anointed; Don Juan Manuel's story blasts this royal pretention to sacredness, and beyond the acerbic criticism of his personal enemy, it reflects the position of a great noble who cannot accept the increase in royal power.⁷⁴

2.2 *How to Treat Rebellious Kings?*

In Sweden, a similar reaction to royal political innovations—in this case, the anticipated election of Erik Magnusson—is perceptible in the *Revelations* of Saint Bridget. Unlike *Um styrilsi konunga*, this work is a series of original texts, rapidly translated into Latin by her confessors. The first of these was Master Mathias, a possible author of the mirror, but Bridget took the opposing position on Swedish law. As the daughter, wife and mother of *lagmän*—specialists in the law who presided over provincial assemblies—she had a good knowledge of the law,⁷⁵ and several of her revelations testify to this particular interest.⁷⁶ Written for the most part during the 1340s, at the same period as the mirror, the *Revelations* of Bridget, like the texts of Don Juan Manuel, exalt the figure of the knight, capable of surpassing that of the cleric or the king. These works create a synthesis between the Christian ideal of royalty and the specific characteristics of Swedish law.

Unlike the mirror, which presents the king as not bound by human law, and as master of his subjects and his kingdom, Bridget insists on the king's dual submission to God and to the law. Among the ten pieces of advice to the king, a number recalling the Ten Commandments, Bridget has Christ say,

74 Olivier Biaggini, "L'évidence et le secret : sur l'exemple 32 du *Conde Lucanor*", in *Le partage du secret. Cultures du dévoilement et de l'occultation en Europe, du Moyen Âge à l'époque moderne*, eds. B. Darbord and A. Delage (Paris, 2013), pp. 97–122.

75 Medieval Swedish literature was strongly influenced by the law. The fact that law specialists, or *lagmän*, belonged to the elite of the society explains the frequent citations or allusions to the law in works written for them or produced by their circle. Bridget's *Revelations* are therefore no exception. See Birgit Klockars, *Birgitta och Böckerna. En undersökning av den Heliga Birgittas källor* (Bridget and the Books. A Study of the Sources of Saint Bridget) (Stockholm, 1966), pp. 139–149, and Sven-Erik Pernler "'Tres leges sunt'. Om lagmansdotter och lagarna" ("Tres leges sunt'. On the Lagman's Daughter and the Laws"), in *Heliga Birgitta – Budskapet och förebilden – Föredrag vid jubileumssymposiet i Vadstena 3–7 oktober 1991* (Saint Bridget - Message and Model - Lectures at the Jubilee Colloquium in Vadstena), eds. A. Härdelin and M. Lindgren (Stockholm, 1993), pp. 51–65.

76 Corinne Péneau, "Révélations et élections. Le corps du roi et la parole dans les Révélations de sainte Brigitte", in *Médiévales* 50 (2006), pp. 77–102 and Corinne Péneau, "Visions et élections : la propagande électorale en Suède au milieu du xv^e siècle", in *Revue d'histoire nordique* 4 (2007), pp. 38–67.

The ninth piece of advice is that he should not transgress against the law of God, nor introduce new laws contradicting good ordinances. He should not administer using his own power, nor judge according to what is passing through his mind, but *do everything with justice according to God's law and that of the kingdom.*⁷⁷

Because the king's purpose is to enforce respect for the law, he must be the first to set an example and submit, both to the Ten Commandments and other divine dictates and to the laws of his kingdom. One original element in Bridget's thought is that her revelations are based less on Saint Augustine or Saint Thomas Aquinas than on Swedish law. Far from offering to Magnus Eriksson the ideal of a king unbound by human laws, she insists on the required respect for the oath.⁷⁸

With Bridget's canonization in mind, her last confessor, Alfonso Pecha, the former bishop of Jaén, organized the work into seven books of revelations, an eighth book called the *Liber celestis imperatoris ad reges*, which was a compilation of the revelations addressed to kings, and a ninth book of *Extravagantes*, revelations discarded from the official corpus.⁷⁹ The order he adopted rarely follows the chronology of the revelations. Except for the books that were already finished, Alfonso Pecha employed his own logic, especially in book VIII, which he turned into a true mirror for a king by adding the revelations concerning lay power, either new revelations or those copied from other books. He was greatly influenced by Alfonso X's legislative doctrine, and for this eighth book he adopted the framework of the *Segunda Partida*.⁸⁰

77 R VIII.2 (§ 24–25): “Nonum est quod legem dei non transgrediatur nec nouas inducat consuetudines contra statuta laudabilia. Nec potestatiue disponat et iudicet que occurrunt menti eius *sed iuste secundum legem dei et regni agat omnia*” (our emphasis).

78 Olle Ferm, “La legittimazione della rivolta di Brigida contro il re Magnus Eriksson”, in *Santa Brigida, Napoli, l'Italia: atti del convegno di studi italo-svedese, Santa Maria Capua Vetere, 10–11 maggio 2006*, eds. O. Ferm, A. Perriccioli Saggese and M. Rotili (Naples, 2009), pp. 11–22.

79 Bridget Morris, “Labyrinths of the Urtext”, in *Heliga Birgitta – Budskapet och förebilden – Föredrag vid jubileumssymposiet i Vadstena 3–7 oktober 1991* (Saint Bridget - Message and Model - Lectures at the Jubilee Colloquium in Vadstena), eds. A. Hårdelin and M. Lindgren (Stockholm, 1993), pp. 23–33.

80 Hans Torben Gilkær, “Redaktionelle problemer i Åbenbaringernes VIII bog. Bogens disposition: Alfons Pechas ordningsprincipper” (“Writing Problems in Book VIII of Revelations. Layout of the Book: Alfonso Pecha's Principles of Classification”), in *Birgitta, hendes værk og hendes klostre i Norden*, ed. T. Nyberg (Odense, 1991), pp. 435–446; Gilkær, “New Perspectives on *Liber Celestis Imperatoris ad Reges*”, in *Santa Brigida, profeta dei tempi nuovi - Saint Bridget, prophetess of new age, Proceedings of the international study meeting, Rome, October 5–7, 1991* (Rome, 1993), pp. 846–852; Gilkær, *The Political Ideas of St. Birgitta*

One revelation in Book IV, which also appears in Alfonso Pecha's mirror, reveals Bridget's position on the election, and the image she wants to give of the elected king. The third chapter of this book is a dialogue between God and the wife (*sponsa*), that is, Bridget herself. In it she asks a series of questions that clearly concern the situation in Scania, which, she affirms forcefully, is part of the kingdom of Sweden. The last question evokes the hypothetical case of a king with two kingdoms, one hereditary, one elective, whose elder son was elected in the elective kingdom, while the younger son is chosen for the hereditary kingdom. God answers that this should have been done the other way around. The end of the revelation then takes the form of a prophecy: the elective kingdom will not be prosperous as long as the man who should rule there has not been elected.⁸¹ The link between the Scania question and Erik's election allows us to date this revelation to the middle 1340s. Here Bridget explains her ideal of power, which is closer to the royal oath in the 1335 Charter of Election than to that of the mirror.

The interpretations of the revelation at first focused on the protagonists and on Bridget's own interests.⁸² The fact that she calls into question the choice of a younger son for a kingdom transmitted by primogeniture has led some historians to declare that she considered hereditary rule superior to elective; thus, she had the same opinion as her confessor Mathias of Linköping,⁸³ and her vocabulary betrays her preferred political system.⁸⁴ However, in fact Bridget sees no hierarchy between hereditary right and the will of the people. She is only emphasizing the differences between two political systems: that of Norway, where the king is designated by a law of succession which, to her, falls under *jus*, and that of Sweden, where no law chooses the king in advance; his nomination is left to the judgment of the representative assembly gathered at Mora Sten. The expression *fauor populi* has no pejorative nuance. It means only that the king is selected not by his personal right, but according to a choice expressed by the people, also based in law. Indeed, Bridget's only argument is that the king and those who supported him in his decision had not followed the established norm. They had four errors: "inordinate love"—this love for the king, so strongly affirmed by the mirror, could be an obstacle to good government; "simulated wisdom"—the very words may have been an indirect attack

and her Spanish Confessor, Alfonso Pecha. *Liber Celestis Imperatoris ad Reges: A Mirror of Princes* (Odense, 1993).

81 R IV.3 or R VIII.41.

82 Sten Engström, *Bo Jonsson*, vol. 1 - *Till 1375* (Uppsala, 1935), p. 24.

83 Drar, *Konungens herravälde* (see above, n. 34), pp. 105 and 116.

84 Nordberg, *I kung Magnus tid* (see above, n. 27), pp. 141–142; Moberg, *Konungastyrelsen* (see above, n. 28), p. 227.

on the prelates, or even against the author of the mirror himself; flattery; and most importantly, “a lack of trust toward God and the people.”

This is why their choice was made against justice, against God, against the good of the *res publica* and the interest of the community. For peace to be ensured and the community's interests taken into consideration, it is necessary for the older son to receive the hereditary kingdom and for the younger son to come to power by election.⁸⁵

Bridget does not mean to give priority to one kingdom over another, but is asking for the correct application of their respective rules of succession. The solution that she prefers is unambiguous: the verbs *recipiat* and *veniat* do not refer to the same modes of access to power. The king of Sweden must, before taking possession of his kingdom, be elected. In arguing that the man who should have taken the throne of Norway was elected in Sweden, Bridget also emphasizes the deviation from the norm by Swedish institutions. In mentioning “the lack of trust toward God and the people”, she places herself in a Swedish context. As the 1335 Charter of Election shows, election is founded on an alliance between God and the community of the kingdom, particularly at the moment when the oaths are exchanged. Bridget's attention to the community must not, of course, be interpreted as a democratic tendency, but as an attachment to legality befitting a great noblewoman. This attachment to the *thing* is mentioned by Bridget in a revelation in Book I, which was written before 1346, in which God states that he is postponing his justice for the wicked, acting as a king who waits for “the general assembly where they can be heard out with the greatest attention by the listeners”.⁸⁶ In a classic comparison between God and the king, Bridget introduces the general assembly (*placitum generale*), a term that in the *Revelations* refers to the *thing*, which a king must summon in order to render justice. The bond between the *rex iustus* and the assembly is thus set out as a foregone conclusion.

By showing that the community has been neglected, Bridget condemns both the king and those who supported him in his plans. She does not try in any way to prove the superiority of one principle over the other. She simply

85 R IV.3 or R VIII.41 (§ 26–27): “Ideo electio eorum fuit contra iusticiam, contra Deum, contra bonum rei publice et utilitatem communitatis. Propterea ad providendum paci et consulendum utilitati communitatis necesse est, quod senior filius recipiat regnum hereditarium, iunior vero ad electionem veniat”.

86 R I.25 (§ 2): “quia nondum venit placitum generale, ubi ad maiorem cautelam audiencium audiri possunt”.

affirms, axiomatically, that election is the method of designating the king of Sweden; God himself pronounces the link between either the hereditary or elective principle and each of the two kingdoms. The absence of any specific detail, such as the name of Norway or Sweden, transforms this revelation into an *exemplum* that invites kings to obey the laws proper to their kingdom.

These Castilian and Swedish examples allow us to understand the opposing positions that mirror literature could take toward the law. In Castile, the tradition of eastern wisdom literature and its reinterpretation by the king, who found in it a political doctrine unconnected to any clerical mediation, accompanied a legislative effort that tended to merge the king and the law indivisibly, to the point that in the *Siete Partidas*, the law reflects, mirror-fashion, that the king manifests the law. On the other hand, in Sweden, Giles of Rome's mirror was adapted to oppose the law, undermining the principle of election. While not contradicting the oath's portrait of the ideal king, which conferred the status of king at the same time as it limited his power, the mirror substitutes the model of a king untrammelled by the law, but subject to the words of the clergy. In different ways, these two works both aspired to establish a new political order. The two plans failed; Alfonso X and Magnus Eriksson were both dethroned. While the *Partidas* had a vast political influence on posterity, the Swedish mirror fell into obscurity until the 17th century. The National Law, which included the Charter of Election, was not promulgated by Magnus Eriksson, but was speedily applied, and its prestige was so great that in the 15th century it was attributed to Saint Eric. The short-term failure of Alfonso's legislative plans and the long-term triumph of Swedish law can be explained in large part by the political role of the nobility, which produced its own mirrors in the two kingdoms. Although Don Juan Manuel and Bridget shared the same social rank, their strategies were completely different. Don Juan Manuel speaks in his own name and, beginning from what he presents as his own personal experience, invents alter egos of incontestable authority. Bridget, as a woman, hides herself entirely behind her revelations. However, whether the figure of the author is promoted or negated, in both works the sources are rarely named. While avoiding any explicit textual mediation, especially from the clergy, Don Juan Manuel and Bridget also display no open hostility to mirrors that acclaim royal power, instead adopting evasive rhetoric. Their positions led both of them to support and even foment rebellion against their kings. The *Libro de los estados* and *El conde Lucanor* provided a profusion of arguments and examples that, to different degrees, justified Don Juan Manuel's revolt against Alfonso XI, blaming the disorder on the king's shortcomings. Bridget believed that order must be reestablished when the king disturbed it, and declared that God knows how to use

his “force against rebellious kings and princes”.⁸⁷ At the beginning of the 1360s, in a revelation from exile in Rome, she called on Swedish knights to take power in Magnus’s place.⁸⁸ Thus, some mirrors could be transformed into swords.

Translated by Julie Sullivan

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The Use of Mirrors of Princes

Hans-Joachim Schmidt

The term ‘mirror of princes’ signals the use of the texts that it refers to: addressed to the king or another ruler, their aim is to instruct him, enabling him to establish a good government. The problem, however, is that many of the texts identified as such demonstrably never came to the attention of rulers. A distinction must thus be drawn between the contents of these texts, which specify that they offer instructions for rulers, and their reception, some of which took place beyond the sphere of rulers and their courts.¹ The dedications and direct addresses to rulers and their sons that often featured in them are, of course, to be taken seriously; they reflect real efforts to formulate a political doctrine and impart it to actors in power.² But other aims were involved too. The authors of mirrors of princes also referred to the goal of proclaiming the glory of emperors and kings, so that they would live on in the memory of future generations. If the lives and works of rulers were not recorded in writing, then even their greatest deeds would be hidden by the darkness of forgetting, wrote John of Salisbury in the mid-12th century.³ Moreover, mirrors of princes were a genre for the discussion of political issues which were not enshrined in mere

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- 1 Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, Schriften des Reichsinstituts für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde, MGH 2 (Leipzig, 1938); Hans-Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit*, Bonner Historische Forschungen 32 (Bonn, 1968); Linda T. Darling, “Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability”, in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. A. Classen (Berlin, 2013), pp. 223–242; Regula Forster and Negin Yvari (eds.), *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered* (Boston, 2015); Friedrich Merzbacher, “Die Rechts-, Staats und Kirchengauffassung des Aegidius Romanus”, in *Recht, Staat, Kirche. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, eds. G. Köbler et al. (Cologne/Vienna, 1989), pp. 177–188; *Specula principum*, ed. A. De Benedictis, *Ius commune*. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Europäische Rechtsgeschichte. Sonderhefte 117 (Frankfurt, 1999); Jürgen Miethke, “Politische Theorien im Mittelalter”, in *Politische Theorien von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. H.-J. Lieber (Wiesbaden, 1991), pp. 47–156, 50–55, 99–104; Alain Boureau, “Le prince médiéval et la science politique”, in *Le savoir du prince du moyen âge aux Lumières*, ed. R. Halévi (Paris, 2002), pp. 25–50; *Die gute Regierung: Fürstenspiegel von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, eds. M. Delgado and V. Leppin (Fribourg, 2017).
 - 2 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Turnhout, 1993), pp. 9–19.
 - 3 *Inutiliter enim eis gerentur egregia, perpetuis tenebris obducenda, nisi litterarum luce clarescant*; John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, p. 22.

personal morality. Further topics discussed in them include geography, bodily hygiene, child rearing, spousal relations, and the duties of the laity toward the church.

My preliminary thesis, then, is that the instruction of rulers is too tight a corset to hold the full range of the uses of mirrors of princes. In what follows, I will explore this subject by answering two questions. First, what can the dissemination of manuscript copies of mirrors of princes tell us about their use and reception? Second, beyond instructions for princes, what topics featured in them? Based on the answers to these two questions, I will seek to give a definition of the mirror of princes that takes their broader use into account. To do so, I will draw on an exemplary selection of the most widely used mirrors of princes of the late Middle Ages.

1 Doctrines of Virtue

After the end of ancient Roman imperial rule, with the establishment of kingdoms in the erstwhile lands of empire, the question of how power could be successfully built on Christian foundations was hotly contested. Answers were needed to the question of how rule could be established and justified under the changed conditions, with a plurality of rulers whose legitimacy was not derived from the Roman emperor, and where the unity of the Church was not matched by an imperial unity. Kings stood in great need of legitimation. Institutions and personalities of the Church fulfilled this need.

One of the first to offer a sophisticated theoretical conception of power in the Middle Ages was Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), Bishop of the city and influential partner of the Visigoth kings. The instruction was included in an encyclopaedia, which in principle was addressed to all, and in reality to the literate, and thus to the clergy.⁴ Among other words, the text defines *rex*: he who is to act well – *recte agenda*. This injunction is based on an argument that derives the content of the term from its etymology. The document calls for the king to correct the misdeeds of the people – and to do so severely. This is the only way for the king to attain the virtue of justice. In his *Sententiae*, Isidore offers detailed explanations of political issues. The king, he explains,

4 Hans-Joachim Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla und das westgotische Spanien* (Berlin, 1977), pp. 273–290; John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge, 2007); Hervé Inglebert, “Isidore de Séville en son monde: lieux, peuple, époque”, in *Antiquité tardive* 23 (2015), pp. 109–122; Gerd Kampers, “Isidor von Sevilla und das Königtum”, in *Antiquité tardive* 23 (2015), pp. 123–132.

acts as an instrument of God, guiding the conduct of his subjects toward the good and ensuring the security of the church.⁵ However, despite this political content, the primary recipients of the text were not rulers. Its content was conveyed to them by the clergy.

Over the following centuries, this would continue to be the case. An early example of a text that could be called a mirror of princes, offering instruction and advice to the ruler – although it was probably not intended for one – was produced in Ireland in the 7th century. The text, entitled *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, was written by an anonymous author and attributed to Cyprian.⁶ The text had a considerable impact on the political ideas of the following centuries, notably in continental Europe, and was received and quoted by the authors of later mirrors of princes. However, it cannot be proven that this anonymous text was known at any royal court, nor if it was even directly addressed to a ruler. Its impact and uses were mediated by the knowledge of other, later clerical authors of mirrors of princes.⁷ They repeated the anonymous author's assertion that royal authority springs from the constraint he imposes upon his subjects. On the God-given power set out in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 13:1), and invoking Isidore of Seville's statements on terror, the anonymous author identifies three things as indispensable to the king: *terror, amor et ordinatio*.⁸ These three words would go on to shape reflection on the foundations and exercise of royal governance for centuries.⁹

Texts by clerical authors of the 9th century detailed the meaning of these terms, and provided practical instructions to accompany them. They were reacting to heightened moral standards that resulted from the integration of the Kingdom of the Franks into the sphere of rule whose legitimation, conception, and intentions were marked by Christian influence. The king received his power by the grace of God, and specific duties were incumbent upon him as a result. In the light of the Christian doctrine of moral behaviour and of the universal commandment of love, the imperatives to which the king was subject

5 Isidor of Sevilla, *Sententiae*, ed. P. Cazier, CCSL 111 (Turnhout, 1998) pp. 295–298.

6 Pseudo-Cyprianus, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*.

7 Anton, *Fürstenspiegel* (see above, n. 1), pp. 67–71.

8 Pseudo-Cyprianus, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, ed. S. Hellmann, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur altchristlichen Literatur* 34 (Leipzig, 1910), p. 43.

9 Pseudo-Cyprianus, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, pp. 43 sq., 51–53; Eugen Ewig, "Zum christlichen Königsgedanken im Frühmittelalter", in *Das Königtum: Seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen*, ed. E. Ewig, *Vorträge und Forschungen* 3 (Sigmaringen, 1956), pp. 7–73; Hans-Hubert Anton, "Pseudo-Cyprian De duodecim abusivis saeculi und sein Einfluss auf den Kontinent, insbesondere auf die karolingischen Fürstenspiegel", in *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. H. Löwe, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 568–617.

could also be formulated as conditions on his rule: these clarified how power was exercised, how it could permissibly be exercised, and why it was justified. Seeds of political thought and concepts of social order sprouted from these discussions.¹⁰ However, the instructions were based on an argument whose logic lay outside the sphere of political doctrine; they presented a doctrine of virtue aimed at normalizing and standardizing the king's behaviour. These virtues were to allow power to be used for religious benefit. The demands notably included the connection of the kings to the papacy, their positioning as allies to the Church, and their adherence to rules which were seen as preconditions for justice.¹¹ The king's *ministerium* was a conglomeration of duties.¹²

In the time of Charlemagne and the environment of the Aquitanian court of his son, the future emperor Louis, Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel wrote a mirror of princes entitled *Via regia*. It sets out the duties of a ruler, who is to fulfil them just as any other Christian must. It is thus based not on a discussion of political problems, but on an ethical programme, which only occasionally appears to be specific to the sovereign. According to Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel, power and subjection to it are results of the fall of man, and can never be corrected within worldly life. However, for Smaragdus, no difference between the moral demands on ruler and ruled follows from this situation. The rules of monastic life were carried over to the king, so that the leadership tasks of spiritual and secular leaders took similar forms. This elevated the moral obligations of the king; however, he – unlike a monk – was to exercise them not in isolation, but facing the world, bringing benefits to his subjects.¹³

A text more focused on political power and the specific requirements of rulers is one by Jonas of Orleans that scholars have treated as a mirror of princes. Bishop of Orleans until his death in 842/43, Jonas maintained close relations with the West Frankish king Charles the Bald, and addressed to him a letter known under the title *De institutione regia*. In the text, Jonas portrays divine

10 Hans-Hubert Anton, "Gesellschaftsspiegel und Gesellschaftstheorie in Westfranken/Frankreich. Spezifik, Kontinuitäten und Wandlungen", in *Specula principum* (see above, n. 1), pp. 51–120.

11 Berges, *Fürstenspiegel*; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*; Miethke, *Politische Theorien*, pp. 50–54; Boureau, *Prince*, pp. 25–50.

12 Corinne Margalhan-Ferrat, "Le concept de « ministerium » entre littérature spéculaire et législation carolingienne", in *Specula principum*, pp. 121–158, 139.

13 Smaragdus, "Via regia", in PL, coll. 931–970, 936, 968; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 154–157; Wolfgang Stürner, *Peccatum und potestas: Der Sündenfall und die Entstehung der herrscherlichen Gewalt im mittelalterlichen Staatsdenken*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 11 (Sigmaringen, 1987), p. 108; Fidel Rädle, *Studien zu Smaragd von Saint-Mihiel*, Medium Aevum 29 (Munich, 1974); Otto Eberhardt, *Via Regia: Der Fürstenspiegel Smaragds von St. Mihiel und seine literarische Gattung* (Munich, 1977).

and royal authority as closely linked. Kings are to rule by force. Bishops, in contrast, should not exercise rule; their influence should be indirect, exercised by exhorting kings to fulfil their duties, as Jonas himself claimed to do. This would ensure just rule. The text was formulated as an admonition to kings, but it was conceived as a compendium of knowledge for the clergy, enabling them to fulfil their duty to influence those in power.¹⁴

The concept of rule through coercion, fear, and terror, to be spread along with love – a form of rule that was necessary because it was demanded by God – was initially aimed at the clergy. Thus, it was announced to them at the Council of Paris in 829, whose decisions were probably strongly influenced by Jonas of Orleans, and whose formulations in any case accorded with those of his mirror of princes. The text of the mirror of princes was used to formulate a decree of the Council of that diocese of Orleans. It proclaimed, among other things, that the king must prevent injustice, even by means of terror. The decree threatens the ruler with terror of his own – in the Last Judgment – should he fail to fulfil his duty to use terror to enforce justice.¹⁵

God's disciplining of the king was the prerequisite for the king's disciplining of his subjects. The Irish-born monk Sedulius Scotus, who resided in Liège, took the same position (†880). He produced theological and didactic texts, as well as poems in praise of several of the Carolingian kings of the Lotharingian and West and East Frankish kingdoms. In his mirror of princes *De rectoribus christianis*, likely dedicated to the Frankish king Lothair II (855–869), he wrote that the king's right action had to accord with the name of the royal office, as asserted and etymologically derived by Isidore. But it was not only the *rex* who was to be under a duty of *recte agere*; this applied to all. When he presented it as the special duty of the king to wield authority over himself, his family, his servants, and his people, Sedulius was thus offering a genuinely political argument. The existence of rule, he wrote, follows directly from a commandment from God. Repeating Pseudo-Cyprian's trinity of *terror, amor et ordinatio*,

14 Jonas d'Orléans, *De institutione regia*, ed., trans., and comm. A. Dubreucq (Paris, 1991), pp. 172–175, 184–203, 220–225; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 222–225; Etienne Delaruelle, “En relisant le *De institutione regia* de Jonas d'Orléans: L'entrée en scène de l'épiscopat carolingien”, in *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge dédiés à Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), pp. 185–192; Yves Marie Le Clanche, *La position de Jonas d'Orléans vis-à-vis de l'empereur Louis le Pieux: un évêque loyaliste ou subversif?* (Antwerp, 1988); Patricio Zamora Navia, “Teoría del poder en el *De institutione regia* de Joñas de Orléans (siglo IX). Construcción ideológica y ordenamiento social en la alta edad media”, in *Intus – legere. Historia* 1 (2007), pp. 81–98.

15 *Concilia aevi Carolini*, 2 vols, Albert Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2 (Berlin, 1908), II, pp. 651 ff.

he explained that this combination was to apply to the king, characterized as *imago Dei*.¹⁶

Hincmar of Reims (845–882) was the most influential of the authors of texts on the instruction of princes in the early Middle Ages. As the Archbishop of Reims from 845, he defended the metropolitan rights of his church, kept in close contact with the royal court, knew it from personal experience, and was informed of the actions of the king. His writings represent thus more than just the self-interpretations of the clergy, and served purposes beyond informing the clergy; they did in fact claim to instruct the king.¹⁷ Hincmar strongly defended the king's power. In his mirror of princes *De regis persona et regio ministerio*, he presents force as the appropriate means to ensure good behaviour, an orderly society, and guidance to eternal salvation, with no exceptions.¹⁸ In his work on the organization of royal rule, *De ordine palatii*, Hincmar went on to explain that the ruler needs three things: first, the love of his subjects; second, if this is lacking, their fear of him; and third, order, in order to balance the first two elements of rule and apply them appropriately to different people and situations. Here again, the triad of terms is emphasized.¹⁹

Early medieval mirrors of princes evaluated the actions of rulers. However, they were also self-affirmations, on the part of the clergy, of their ability and will to use their knowledge to shape political power. They envisaged the realization of virtues, but not genuinely political ones. Their political analysis remained confined to normative didactics. That a theoretical deficit prevented an analysis of power relations is highlighted by the fact that the reception of these texts lasted only until the 12th century. As discussions of royal rule and its grounds, legitimation, and benefits attained a new level of theoretical sophistication

16 Sedulius Scottus, *Liber de rectoribus christianis*, ed. S. Hellmann, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 1,1 (Münster, 1906), pp. 19–91; Richard Düchting, “Sedulius Scottus”, in *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. H. Löwe, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 549–598; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 272–275; Stürmer, *Pecatum*, pp. 114ff.; Monette Dalley, “Le Liber de rectoribus christianis de Sedulius Scottus et les vertus du roi comme moyen d'action politique”, in *Les philosophes morales et politiques au moyen âge. Actes du 9^e Congrès international de philosophie médiévale, Ottawa 17–22 août 1992*, ed. C.B. Bazán (New York, 1995), pp. 1486–1492.

17 Jean Devisse, *Hincmar, Archevêque de Reims, 845–882*, 3 vols., Travaux d'histoire éthico-politique 29 (Geneva, 1975/76); Margaret McCarthy, “Hincmar's Influence during Louis the Stammerer's reign”, in *Hincmar of Rheims: Life and Work*, ed. R. Stone et al. (Manchester, 2015), pp. 110–128.

18 Hincmar of Rheims, *De regis persona et regio ministerio ad Carolum Calvum regem* PL 125: coll. 834–839, 844–850.

19 Hincmar of Rheims, “De ordine palatii”, in *MGH Fontes* 3, ed. and transl. T. Gross and Rudolf Schieffer (Hannover, 1980), pp. 67–83.

in the 13th century with the adoption of Aristotelian political philosophy, the early medieval texts fell out of use and disappeared from memory.²⁰

2 Institutional Doctrines

In the 12th century, texts on political theory came to be less focused on instructing the powerful, and more on evaluating their actions and their power. The most important aspect was no longer the exercise of influence on the royal court by clerics who were close to it, but critiques of the court and of those acting within it. The use of the texts underwent a social expansion. It was not limited to those who collaborated with the powerful, but included those who stood far from them, and who gathered knowledge in order to warn subjects about power and the powerful.

Emperors, kings, and princes had to face fundamental critiques of their position, providing counterarguments and theoretically substantiating them. To do so, knowledge was required. The *Didascalion* of Paris theologian Hugh of Saint Victor (c. 1096–1146) surveys the skills and practical knowledge of various social groups, among them kings and their rule. Hugh counts governing among the activities he refers to as *artes mechanicae*.

The ruler was also to be part of the community of the useful and well-informed.²¹ John of Salisbury (†1180) saw the knowledge that he called *philosophia* as a prerequisite for the appropriate practice of power, termed *militia* – in the various offices within the state. The kings reign by their wisdom and they make laws and give justice by their wisdom.²² For John, a king must be a learned man; otherwise he would be nothing but a crowned donkey on the throne.²³ This statement found its way into the literature for the instruction of rulers and noble princes, especially in the mirror of princes of the Dominican friar Vincent of Beauvais, written around 1260. In it he described the antithesis of the ideal of the learned king: a blundering dolt, incapable of explaining his actions and penetrating their causes and aims; moreover, lazy, more devoted to food than to governing, neglectful even in the commemoration of his dead

20 Miethke, *Politische Theorie*, pp. 157–186.

21 Hugo von Saint-Victor, *Didascalion*, ed. C. H. Buttmer, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Latin 10 (Washington, D.C., 1939).

22 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, p. 253.

23 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, pp. 120, 254; Peter Classen, “Die hohen Schulen und die Gesellschaft im 12. Jahrhundert”, in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 48 (1966), pp. 155–180, 167.

ancestors, forgetful in all other matters, and fickle.²⁴ King Alfonso X of Castile set out this duty to acquire knowledge in several of the works attributed to him. It was the duty of the king himself to teach, to proclaim the truth to his people like a prophet, and above all to pass on his knowledge to his children and the heir to his throne.²⁵

Out of the conflict between emperors and kings, on one side, and popes and the clergy, on the other, arose a need for theoretical concepts. In this context mirrors of princes became a literary genre partly devoted to critiques and their refutation. In them, criticisms were directed at unjust rulers. Hugh of Saint-Victor thought that obedience to such kings, and taxes paid to them, were necessary for subjects, but also pernicious. The rulers would absorb the funds just as the stomach does the food that men put into it. Hugh argued that the fattening of the rulers was a credit to the humility of the subjects, while that of the stomach spoke only of gluttony.²⁶

Peter of Blois (1135–1204), in contrast, explicitly belittled kings as tyrants. He had received a thorough education in Tours and Paris in the theology, modelled on the ancients; was a student of John of Salisbury for some time; acquired knowledge of canon law in Bologna and produced legal scholarship; and became chief legal adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He also had connections to the English royal court, presumably through Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine – but this did not prevent him from critically evaluating the king and his court.²⁷ In a fictional dialogue with King Henry II of England, he described the king's unchecked propensity to violence: letting himself be carried away by rage, he would kill his opponents. Peter has the king argue that his action is justified because the behaviour of traitors merits cruel punishment. The kings of the Old Testament would have acted no differently in taking revenge upon their enemies, and animals would do much the same in rage against others of their kind. Peter of Blois saw the chances for the establishment of good rule as poor, since both the king as a person and the court as an institution stood in the way.

24 Vincent of Beauvais, *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*, ed. A. Steiner (Cambridge, MA, 1938), p. 8.

25 Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "Lerne zu Regieren. Anweisungen König Alfons X. von Kastilien an seinen Nachfolger", in *Schüler und Meister*, eds. A. Speer and T. Jeschke, *Studia Mediaevalia*. Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts der Universität zu Köln 39 (Berlin, Boston 2016), pp. 779–796.

26 Hugo of Saint Victor, *De archa Noe*, ed. P. Sicard, CCCM 176 (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 77–79.

27 Michael Markowski, *Peter of Blois: Writer and Reformer* (Syracuse, 1988); Stephen Hanaphy, *The Classical Erudition of Peter of Blois* (Dublin, 2009).

The intention here was not instruction, but fundamental critique. The work served to confirm the clergy's opposition to King Henry II.²⁸

In the face of this critique of the hereditary monarchy, which was unable to provide an appropriate ruler, a response that legitimized the well-established tradition of dynastic rule had to be found. The eventuality of an incapable and immoral successor exercising power was to be counteracted by a number of means: in particular, justice, aesthetics, and above all, education. The goal was the production of the common good.

Beginning in the 13th century, mirrors of princes introduced an educational programme for the future king. Thereafter, they were aimed not at the reigning king, but at his successors. The topic of education raised the possibility that the texts would have readers other than the princes themselves. Political instruction, too, would thus no longer be limited to rulers. The broad social bandwidth of the mirrors of princes was already evident in their spread in manuscript form. Unlike the early medieval mirrors of princes, particularly those of the Carolingian period (such as those of Hincmar of Reims, Smaragdus of Saint Mihiel, and Jonas of Orleans),²⁹ from the 12th century these texts did not content themselves with cataloguing virtues and reminding readers of the need to abide by them; they presented arguments.

The first mirror of princes of the Middle Ages that spoke to the need for a practice of rule illuminated by scholarship and guided by reason was that of John of Salisbury, who cooperated with, but more often stood in opposition to, King Henry II.³⁰ The effects of his text *Policraticus*, which can be understood as a fundamental critique of the royal court, reached far beyond the court. Rather than offer instruction to an individual ruler, it defined the court as a refuge of evil, especially as an institution. Manuscripts featuring *Policraticus* contained other writings by John of Salisbury, all of which were identified as philosophical texts: *de dogmate philosophorum*. These manuscripts were held in the archives of monasteries, where they were also most certainly produced.³¹

28 Peter of Blois, *Dialogus inter regem Henricum II et abbatem Bonaevallensem*, PL 207: coll. 975–988, especially coll. 979 and 982 sq.; Michel Senellart, *Les arts de gouverner. Du regimén médiéval au concept de gouvernement* (Paris, 1995) pp. 111–121; John D. Cotts, "Peter of Blois and the Problem of the 'Court' in the Late Twelfth Century", in *Anglo-Norman Studies 27, Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2004* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 68–84.

29 Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*.

30 Ursula Odoj, *Wissenschaft und Politik bei Johannes von Salisbury* (Munich, 1974); Julie Barrau, "Ceci n'est pas un miroir, ou le *Policraticus* de Jean de Salisbury", in *Le prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), pp. 87–112.

31 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, pp. xviii–xxxvi.

Policraticus was part of a literature on general world knowledge that combined the preservation of ancient textual traditions with discussion of current practical problems. In this context, the subject of politics was not confined to instruction for princes, but was opened up to a broader reception. *Policraticus* played a role in learned discourse over the centuries that followed. It was quoted by many medieval authors, and its reasoning drawn upon, including by Vincent de Beauvais, Chaucer, and Dante. Late medieval scholars of Roman law saw John of Salisbury as a reference source on constitutional law. Knowledge of the work in the royal courts was probably only the result of later scholarly appropriation. In the 1370s, King Charles V of France had Jean Golein prepare a commented and illustrated excerpt in French, a manuscript of which was placed in the royal library. *Policraticus* thus stood among the many other writings on general world knowledge whose collection and translation was ordered by the French king. The text thus reached the court not as a source of instruction for princes, but as a work of erudition.³²

The study of the institutional foundations of rule did not, however, bring an end to moral appeals to rulers. A text produced by the Anglo-Welsh scholar Giraldus Cambrensis (†1223) offers less a political doctrine than a moral didactics. Drawing on a wealth of ancient scholarship – including writings by Cicero and Seneca – he assessed rule in terms of virtues, which provide the structure of the mirror of princes that he wrote toward the end of his life.³³ In it he bases a normative evaluation of kingship, which he sets in opposition to tyranny, on the king's demonstration of sympathy for his people as *patriae pater atque patronus*, through clemency: *affectu clementia*.³⁴ But Gerald's text did not reach the royal courts, and only a small number of manuscript copies circulated outside of them.³⁵ By the early 13th century, the genre of moral

32 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, pp. xvi sq., xviii–xlii; Ammon Lindner, “The Knowledge of John of Salisbury in the Late Middle Ages”, in *Studi Medievali* 3/18,2 (1977), pp. 315–366; Senellart, *Arts*, pp. 145–147; Max Kerner, “Johannes von Salisbury im späteren Mittelalter”, in *Das Publikum politischer Theorie im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. J. Miethke (Munich, 1992), pp. 25–47; Elizabeth Morrison and Anna D. Hedeman, *Imagining the Past in France: History in Manuscript Painting, 1250–1500* (Los Angeles, 2000), p. 189.

33 Giraldus Cambrensis, *De principis instructione*, ed. and trans. Robert Bartlett, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 2018).

34 Giraldus Cambrensis, *De principis instructione*, pp. 54–57.

35 Michael Altmann, *Strukturuntersuchungen zu Giraldus Cambrensis' De principis instructione* (Regensburg, 1974), pp. 55 sq., 90–93; Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 69–100; Istvan Pieter Beczcy, “Gerald of Wales on the Cardinal Virtues: A Reappraisal of *De principis instructione*”, in *Medium aevum* 75 (2006), pp. 191–201; Mario Turchetti, *Tyrannie et tyrannicide de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris, 2001), p. 256.

admonitions to rulers had become obsolete. Addressing appeals to rulers was considered futile.

Rulers continued to rely on the provision of information to shape their actions. However, this mainly took the form not of moral instruction, but of explanations of the institutional requirements and uses of power. Not unlike other laypeople, rulers benefited from an increasing number of instructional texts dealing with a wide range of topics. These included sermons and encyclopaedias. They offered rules of life for people in different life situations, occupations, and organizations.³⁶

The instructions also included tips on the health and beauty of the body. Nowhere was this notion of aesthetic and bodily shaping as concisely treated as in a pseudo-Aristotelian text based on a tenth-century Arab-Muslim work entitled *Sirr al-Asrār*, or the 'Book of the Secret of Secrets'. John of Seville produced an incomplete translation, significantly entitled *Epistula Aristotelis ad Alexandrum de regimine sanitatis*, sometime in the years 1112 to 1128, which became available in western Europe from around 1140, with subsequent textual additions into the mid-13th century. Around 1230 Philip of Tripoli produced a new Latin translation, referred to as *Secretum secretorum*. Finally, in around 1275 Roger Bacon produced a commented version, and in this form the text received a wide reception in western Europe. These texts, which continued to undergo numerous transformations, were among the most frequently copied

36 Jacques Le Goff, "Métier et profession d'après les manuels de confesseurs au moyen âge", in *Beiträge zum Berufsbewusstsein des mittelalterlichen Menschen*, ed. P. Wilpert, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 3 (Berlin, 1964), pp. 44–60; Wolfgang Heinemann, "Zur Ständedidaxe in der deutschen Literatur des 13.-15. Jahrhunderts", in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 88 (1967), pp. 190–279; 89 (1968), pp. 290–403; 92 (1970), pp. 388–437; Volker Mertens, "Der implizierte Sünder. Prediger, Hörer und Leser in Predigten des 14. Jahrhunderts", in *Zur deutschen Literatur und Sprache des 14. Jahrhunderts. Dubliner Kolloquium 1981*, eds. W. Haug et al., *Beihefte zur Literatur und Sprachwissenschaft* 45 (Heidelberg, 1983), pp. 76–114; Christel Meier-Staubach, "Grundzüge der mittelalterlichen Enzyklopädie. Zu Inhalten, Formen und Funktionen einer problematischen Gattung", in *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*, eds. Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann (Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 467–500; Michel Zink, *La prédication en langue romane avant 1300* (Paris, 1982); David d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985); Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "Allegorie und Empirie. Interpretation und Normierung sozialer Realität in Predigten des 13. Jahrhunderts", in *Die deutsche Predigt im Mittelalter. Internationales Symposium Berlin 3.-6. Oktober 1989*, eds. Volker Mertens and Hans-Jochen Schiewer (Tübingen, 1992), pp. 301–332; *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History and Sanctity*, ed. N. Bériou (Spoleto, 1994); Christel Meier-Staubach, "Über den Zusammenhang von Erkenntnistheorie und enzyklopädischem Ordo in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit", in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 36 (2002), pp. 171–192.

in manuscripts: 150 of the early Latin translation alone, and about 350 of that of Philip of Tripoli and of Bacon's version with commentary. Many translations into European vernaculars followed.

The text presents itself as a lesson given by Aristotle to Alexander the Great, and thus belongs to the genre of mirrors of princes. Its reception benefited from the prestige of its two characters, which had increased since the 12th century, and from its many uses: as an encyclopædic compendium as well as a source of instruction for rulers, moral instruction, medical textbook, dietary advice, rules of dress, advice on the ornamentation of the body, and more. It was known and read both within and outside the royal courts, and was reshaped in different ways in relation to its various uses. Sometimes, for example, only the parts containing medical and dietary advice were copied, and kept in a setting away from royal courts.³⁷ On the Iberian Peninsula, the so-called wisdom literature drew on the *Secretum* in presenting knowledge in the form of apodictically formulated principles.³⁸

Texts addressed to the laity were expected to be easily understandable. A learned idleness and a casual, conversational tone were intended to combine the educational with the agreeable. The content of Gervase of Tilbury's (c. 1150–1235) *Otia imperialia*, which was addressed to King (and later Holy

37 Mario Grignaschi, "L'origine et la métamorphose du Sirr-al-'asrar", in *Archives historiques doctrinales et littéraires du moyen âge* 43 (1976), pp. 7–112; Id., "La diffusion du Secretum secretorum (Sirr-al-Asrar) dans l'Europe occidentale", in *Archives historiques doctrinales et littéraires du moyen âge* 47 (1980), pp. 7–70; William F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt, *Pseudo-Aristotle, The Secret of Secrets. Sources and Influences* (London, 1982); Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Late Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 2003), pp. 7–141; Id., "The Early Circulation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Secret of Secrets in the West: the Papal and Imperial Courts", in *Le science alla corte di Federico II*, ed. A. Paravicini-Bagliani, *Micrologus* 2 (Turnhout, 1994), pp. 127–144; Regula Forster, *Das Geheimnis der Geheimnisse. Die arabischen und deutschen Fassungen des pseudo-aristotelischen Sirr al asrar/Secretum Secretorum* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 1–19; Denis Lorée, *Édition commentée du Secret des Secrets du Pseudo-Aristote*, 2 vols. (Rennes, 2012), pp. 21–27, 57–60; Hugo Bizzarri, "Difusión y abandono del Secretum Secretorum en la tradición sapiencial castellana de los siglos XIII y XIV", in *Archives historiques doctrinales et littéraires du moyen âge* 63 (1996), pp. 95–137; Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, Margaret Bridges and Jean-Yves Tilliette, "Cheminevements culturels et métamorphoses d'un texte aussi célèbre qu'enigmatique", in *Trajectoires européennes du secretum secretorum du Pseudo-Aristote* (13e-16e siècles), eds. M. Bridge et al. (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 5–26; Hugo Bizzarri, "Le secretum secretorum en Espagne. De traité médical à miroir de prince", in *Trajectoires européennes du secretum secretorum*, pp. 187–214; Michele Milani, "Un compendio italiano del Secretum secretorum. Riflessioni e testo critico", in *Trajectoires européennes du secretum secretorum*, pp. 257–315.

38 *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, vol. 4, eds. P. Schulthess et al. (Basel, 2017), pp. 1035–1041.

Roman Emperor) Otto IV (1198–1218), fulfilled the expectations spurred by its title. It provided a compilation of knowledge that was didactically formulated, pleasantly presented, and encyclopædically concentrated. The work was to make knowledge accessible to the laity. It included discussions on the justifications and applications of rule, but also dealt with a wide range of other topics, notably including a broad treatment of geographical knowledge.³⁹ The work found its way into an environment where rulers were seen as participants in scholarly conversations and instruction for them was understood as necessary, but it also made its way to laypeople far from the royal courts.

Gervase, who was from England, worked successively in the service of King Henry II of England, King William II of Sicily, and Emperor Otto IV. He argued that the ruler's idle hours – the time not strictly devoted to governing as such – should be dedicated to the acquisition of knowledge. No longer, Gervase wrote, should the powerful spend time on the tall tales of actors and poets. Their focus instead should be on true knowledge, both textual and experiential. This took nothing away from the recommendation that the teaching be made agreeable. Curiosity needed to be awakened.⁴⁰ There are a number of indications that the reception of *Otia imperialia* was not limited to Emperor Otto IV and his entourage, but that it was much wider, to the point of becoming an integral part of educational knowledge in the late Middle Ages.⁴¹ These notably include the multitude of surviving manuscripts of the work, their wide geographic distribution, and the two French translations by the Hospitallers John of Antioch at the end of the 13th century and Jean de Vignay in the 1330s. The text combines the characteristics of an encyclopædia and a mirror of princes. The political theory of rule that it presents largely dispenses with moral injunctions, instead offering an argument that, cruel as it may need to be, the rule of kings must serve to benefit their subjects.⁴²

39 Gervasius von Tilbury, *Otia imperialia. Recreation for an Emperor*, ed. and transl. S.E. Banks and J.W. Binns, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 2002), especially p. 215.

40 Michael Rothmann, "Wissen bei Hofe zwischen Didaxe und Unterhaltung. Die höfische Enzyklopädie des Gervasius von Tilbury", in *Erziehung und Bildung bei Hofe, 7th Symposium der Residenzenkommission, Celle 23.-26. Sept. 2000* (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 127–156; Eckart Conrad Lutz, *Schreiben, Bildung und Gespräch. Mediale Absichten bei Baudri de Bourgueil, Gervasius von Tilbury und Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, Scriptorium Friburgense 31 (Berlin, 2013), pp. 139–197.

41 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia*, pp. LXIII–LXXXVII; Cinzia Pignatelli and Dominique Gerner, *Les traductions françaises des Otia imperialia de Gervais de Tilbury par Jean d'Antioche et Jean de Vignay* (Geneva, 2005).

42 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia*, pp. 2–8.

3 Theoretical Reflections through the Reception of Aristotelian Texts

The 13th century saw the opening of a new era in political thought. The focus was no longer on moral instruction and endowing rulers with virtue, but on analysing and evaluating the techniques of power. This shift is also reflected in the mirrors of princes produced from this period forward. The decisive impulse behind this change in the intellectual environment came out of the discovery of Aristotle's writings in political philosophy, which became available in the mid-13th century through William of Moerbeke's translations of the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. These texts altered the terms of political thought, heightening its level and spurring the development of an institutional approach, where political ethics is treated as a matter not of individual virtue, but of the proper application of knowledge about the preconditions and practices of power. They offered a textual basis for political reasoning, wherein power was no longer interpreted exclusively in biblical terms, submission to a ruler was no longer regarded merely as a punishment and means of correction ordained by God following the fall of Adam, and socialization was not solely understood as a result of the mistrust and need for protection brought into the world by Cain.⁴³ It made room for viewpoints that placed great value on the good life in this world, *bene vivere*, and even raised it to a status as the goal of all forms of human coexistence, and thus of the exercise of any form of power. The earlier understanding of political order as a mark of accidental features of human existence created by sinful actions could now be re-evaluated; political communities and states could be seen more positively in relationship to natural, intrinsic features of humanity, understood in Christian terms as instilled by God's act of creation, and thus as essential. Humans could thus now be conceived of as gregarious, inherently social and political beings, independently of salvific interpretations of historical processes.⁴⁴ Man, his needs,

43 Stürmer, *Peccatum*.

44 Martin Grabmann, *Studien über den Einfluß der aristotelischen Philosophie auf die mittelalterlichen Theorien über das Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat*, Sitzungsberichte d. Bayer. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Abt. 1934, Heft 2 (Munich, 1934); Georg von Hertling, *Zur Geschichte der aristotelischen Politik im Mittelalter* (Kempten/Munich, 1911); Fernand van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West* (Louvain, 1955); Guillaume de Moerbeke, *Recueil d'études à l'occasion du 700e anniversaire de sa mort (1286)*, eds. J. Brams and W. Vanhamel (Louvain, 1989); John Dunbabin, "The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's Politics", in *Traditio* 44 (1988), pp. 373–388; Cary J. Nederman, "The Meaning of Aristotelism in Medieval Moral and Political Thought", in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57/4 (1996), pp. 563–585; Catherine König-Pralong, *Avènement de l'aristotélisme en terre chrétienne. L'essence et la matière. Entre Thomas d'Aquin et Guillaume d'Ockham* (Paris, 2005); Benjamin Schmid, "Bürgererfahrung und das politische Denken in der spätmittelalterlichen Aristotele-

and his predispositions stood at the centre of the philosophical thought of scholars in the universities inspired by Aristotle, the *philosophus* par excellence, interpreting his works, commenting on them, and making them the basis for their doctrines.⁴⁵ Because their topic was human happiness, all citizens were called upon to bring about happiness, and they were thus to be provided with knowledge.⁴⁶

This carried consequences. The exercise of power was to be assessed on the basis of its ability to fulfil its function: namely, the extent to which it enables the members of politically constituted communities to live a good life. Rulers were no longer bound by religious commandments alone, their office was not merely the result of trespass caused by original sin, their function not only to remedy its consequences, and their legitimacy no longer derived solely from God's assignment. Instead they were to be tested and evaluated on the basis of the temporal benefits they brought to the people.

Thomas Aquinas – Dominican, university professor, and one of the most significant philosophical thinkers of the 13th century – was one of the first to argue on the basis of the Latin translation of Aristotle's *Politics*. In doing so, he adopted Aristotle's classification of three good and three bad forms of government. He weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of these alternative constitutional models. His text *De regno ad regem Cypri*, written in the sixth or seventh decade of the 13th century, is particularly focused on political issues. Thomas did not complete the text, but it was continued by his fellow Dominican and pupil, Ptolemy of Lucca. This combination of the work of the two men became influential, with manuscripts in broad circulation. Thomas Aquinas was generally identified as the sole author; only with the beginning of modern editions did the textual contributions of the two authors begin to be distinguished.⁴⁷

les-Rezeption", in *Zur Geschichte des politischen Denkens. Denkweisen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, eds. D. Lüddecke and F. Engelmann (Stuttgart/Weimar, 2014), pp. 51–72.

45 Christoph Flüeler, *Rezeption und Interpretation der aristotelischen Politica im 13. Jahrhundert. Studien, Texte, Quellen*, Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie (Amsterdam, 1993).

46 Johann Baptist Schneyer, "Alberts des Großen Augsburger Predigtzyklus über den heiligen Augustinus", in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 36 (1969), pp. 100–147; Ulrich Meier, *Mensch und Bürger. Die Stadt im Denken spätmittelalterlicher Theologen, Philosophen und Juristen* (Munich, 1994), pp. 55–58; Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "Politische Theorie und politische Praxis: Albertus Magnus und die städtische Gemeinde", in *Albertus Magnus. Zum Gedenken nach 800 Jahren. Neue Zugänge, Aspekte und Perspektiven*, ed. Walter Senger (Berlin, 2001), pp. 343–357.

47 Thomas Aquinas, *De regno ad regem Cypri*, ed. H.F. Dondaine, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 42 (Rome, 1979), pp. 419–71; about the manuscripts, the author and the date of writing *ibid.*, pp. 421–44; Christoph Flüeler, "Mittelalterliche Kommentare zur Politik des Aristotele-

In the text Thomas discusses the question of how political organization should be obtained. The occasion for the text indicated in the dedication is the precarious political situation of the Crusader state Cyprus in the 1360s, which was marked by baronial opposition to the king.⁴⁸ In reality, however, this context was of no particular importance either for Thomas's argument or for the later reception of the text. Even today it remains a matter of debate whether the text was addressed to King Hugh II of Cyprus (†1267) or his cousin and successor Hugh III (†1284).⁴⁹ The dedication of the text was in stark contrast with its actual use. Thomas's arguments in the text on the founding of a new empire and new cities,⁵⁰ referring to the situation of Crusader states *outremer*, did not yield a manuscript tradition in the Latin East, including Cyprus. Instead the manuscripts remained connected to Dominican monasteries, insofar as their erstwhile provenance can be determined today. In manuscripts, the text is usually associated with other, shorter works by Thomas Aquinas or with other mirrors of princes. A Madrid manuscript collected the best-known mirrors of princes of the late Middle Ages in a single codex: those of Gilbert of Tournai, Vincent of Beauvais, Giles of Rome, and Thomas Aquinas.⁵¹

The fact that the text treats its subject at an abstract distance from a concrete political situation is reflected in the title it is given in the numerous manuscript copies: *De regimine principum*. The analysis in the text is in fact detached from any particular concrete context, drawing on examples from various eras and regions. These offered a basis for the interpretation and intellectual framing of contemporary political reality, set apart from mere wishful thinking by the critique of existing orders and designs for worthwhile states. Thomas did not content himself with adopting the Aristotelian classification of political constitutions, but undertook a study of the constitutional realities of the Middle Ages. He wrote that the king possesses the highest legitimacy, but it is a matter of scholarly controversy whether he considered monarchy to be the best form of government. Some scholars see Thomas as a proponent

les und zur pseudo-aristotelischen Oekonomik", in *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 29 (1987), pp. 193–239; the text of Thomas Aquinas is edited with the continuation by Ptomomaeus de Lucca in Thomas Aquinas, *Opuscula philosophica et theologica*, ed. A.M. De Maria (Città di Castello, 1886), pp. 3–170.

48 Hans-Eberhard Mayer, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (6th ed., Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 214 sq., 238–240; Peter W. Edbury, *The Disputed Regency of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1264/1266 and 1286*, Camden Miscellanea 27 (London, 1979).

49 Volker Leppin, "De regimine principum. Weisen der Christianisierung des Aristoteles bei Thomas von Aquin und Aegidius Romanus", in *Gute Regierung*, pp. 188–203, 189 ff.

50 Thomas Aquinas, *De regno*, p. 468.

51 Ms. Madrid Biblioteca Nacional, 10254; Thomas Aquinas, *De regno*, pp. 425–435.

of absolute monarchy;⁵² others believe he favoured a limited monarchy; still others that he supported a mixed constitution. It has even been argued that he advocated republicanism.⁵³ These contradictory judgments are based on inconsistencies between various statements made by Thomas himself. This has led some authors to conclude that Thomas did not offer instruction for royalty at all, but rather an analysis of political processes independently of different forms of government – whether monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy.⁵⁴ Michel Villey sought to resolve this problem by regarding Thomas's magnum opus, the *Summa theologica*, as his only authentic work, and arguing that Aquinas was not the author of *De regimine principum* (the real author's identity being unclear). Villey does not support this hypothesis with solid arguments, considering his own analysis of the content of the text as sufficient proof. However, his interpretation of the text as an unreflective homage to monarchical government fundamentally misunderstands its intention.⁵⁵

Thomas does not derive the legitimacy of rule from its origins, from dynastic succession, or from divine appointment – but from its results. On his account, men should live together and be politically organized in a way that provides an abundance of opportunities for human development. This led to the use of the text, which was consistently regarded as a mirror of princes, far from the royal milieu.⁵⁶

Consequently, the addressee of Thomas's instructions is neither the king nor the prince. Referring to a dilemma wherein autocracy is considered the best form of government, but tyranny the worst,⁵⁷ he sees the solution not in the ruler's morality, nor in his pedagogical preparation for the duties of his office,

52 Charles H. McIlwain, *The Growth of Political Thought in the West* (New York, 1932), pp. 329–33; John D. Lewis and Oscar Jaszi, *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide* (Glencoe, IL, 1957); John Morall, *Political Theory in Medieval Times* (New York, 1962), pp. 78ff.; John Dunbabin, "Aristotle in the Schools", in *Trends in Medieval Political Thought*, ed. B. Smalley (Oxford, 1965), pp. 65–85, 72; Kurt Flasch, *Das philosophische Denken im Mittelalter: von Augustin zu Machiavelli* (Stuttgart, 1986), p. 304.

53 Gabriel Bowe, *The Origin of Political Authority* (Dublin, 1955).

54 Berges, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 199; Georg A. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York, 1961), p. 274.

55 Michel Villey, "La théologie de Thomas d'Aquin et la formation de l'État moderne", in *Théologie et droit dans la science politique de l'État moderne. Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'École française de Rome avec le concours du CNRS, Rome, 12–14 nov. 1987*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 147 (Rome, 1991), pp. 31–49.

56 Leppin, *De regimine*.

57 Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "König und Tyrann. Das Paradox der besten Regierung bei Thomas von Aquin", in *Liber amicorum necnon et amicarum für Alfred Heit. Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte und geschichtlichen Landeskunde*, eds. F. Burgard et al., Trierer Historische Forschungen 28 (Trier, 1996), pp. 339–357.

but in institutional safeguards whose aim is to diminish his power: *'Deinde sic disponenda est regni gubernatio ut regi iam instituto tyrannidis subtrahatur occasio.'*⁵⁸ The character of government should be based on advice given to the ruler by a group of wise and learned men. Using the notion of *pars in principatu*, he describes the position not only of the monarch, but of every member of a given community. In addition to the monarch, according to Thomas, there should be a number of other *principantes*. *Iudices et magistri constituti* participate in the king's rule.⁵⁹ In addition to the king – not against him, but in cooperation with him – institutions were to pursue the goal of the political community, i.e. the *bonum commune*. This participation fits with the conception of hierarchy expressed by the pseudo-Dionysian texts and their interpreters, Thomas Aquinas among them. In this conception, the power of the single ruler is mediated by a graduated series of authorities. Relations between the various levels of the hierarchy establish order: among the angels, in the church, and in the state.⁶⁰

Thomas did not finish *De regno* before his death; when the Dominican Ptolemy of Lucca continued it, because he saw it as an ideal constitution for the Italian city-republic, he significantly altered the character of the work, including its addressees and its recommendation on the form of government. Each of the two authors produced a treatise of political theory, presenting knowledge and reasoning that would provide a basis for political thought for all scholars, including students and graduates of universities and *studia generalia*.⁶¹

Mirrors of princes could be distanced from the royal court in terms both of the readers to whom they were addressed and of their content. This applies even to some that pointed still more clearly to the prince as initiator and recipient than did that of Thomas Aquinas. The Dominican Vincent of Beauvais († 1264) dedicated himself to answering the questions of how a ruler can be led to do good, and of the conditions that must obtain in order to make possible not only the existence of a good ruler, but good governments in general. Here again, rather than offering a catalogue of virtues to justify a view of the hereditary monarchy as the best form of government, Vincent offers methods for attaining the goal of just power, which is to produce the common good.

58 Thomas Aquinas, *De regno*, p. 454.

59 Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri politicorum*, Opera omnia 48 (Rome, 1971), pp. 262, 271; Id. *Summa theologica*, ed. R. Busa, Opera omnia (Stuttgart, 1980), II, pp. 501–504.

60 David Luscombe, "Thomas Aquinas and Conceptions of Hierarchy in the Thirteenth Century", in *Thomas von Aquin. Werk und Wirkung im Licht neuerer Forschungen*, ed. A. Zimmermann, *Miscellanea mediaevalia* 19 (Berlin, 1988), pp. 261–77.

61 *Publikum*, ed. Miethke.

Vincent was connected to the French court. He wrote a mirror of princes that was delivered to Louis IX of France as well as to Theobald v, Count of Champagne, and that was intended for the education of the future king Philip III. In it, Vincent represents the education of the prince as a solution to the dilemma that Thomas Aquinas so clearly set out in around 1270: autocracy is the best form of government, and at the same time the worst.⁶² He also highlights the tension: in a hereditary monarchy, which he describes as the best system, the best person would have to exercise power, but given the vagaries of family succession, this could not be assumed. Thus, if a bad man becomes the ruler, the actions of a tyrant may transform the best form of government into the worst. As a solution, Vincent proposed a preparation for the royal office that was to generate an optimal political constitution, optimal governance, and optimal benefit to the subjects.⁶³ Again, rather than limiting his text to the instruction of the king, Vincent presented a doctrine of government. This work was linked to his efforts to produce broad world knowledge in a form accessible to all – a project represented more extensively by his great encyclopædia.⁶⁴ Terminologically, this encyclopædia was closely akin to the mirrors of princes. The word *speculum* reflects the two categories of inherent and intended teachings, without presupposing an exclusive circle of addressees.⁶⁵ While this work, like the mirror of princes, was commissioned by the French king, in reality the copies in use were held by the Dominican order, which made them manuals of practical pastoral activity for everyone. They were employed as a source in teaching the students of the order and to enrich sermons with information from all areas of knowledge. The linkage of all of Vincent's texts to the royal court is thus at the very least problematic, and certainly not self-evident.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the dissemination of Vincent's mirror of princes in manuscripts, which was closely connected to the Dominican Order. The source for the copies was an exemplar held in its monastery in Paris. There, many copies were produced, presumably through the *pecia* system, wherein

62 Thomas de Aquino, *De regno*, pp. 419–423.

63 Vincent of Beauvais, *De morali principis institutione*, ed. R.J. Schneider, CCCM 137 (Turnhout, 1995).

64 Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum morale*, ed. R.J. Schneider, *Speculum quadruplex sive speculum maius* (reprint Graz, 1964).

65 Christel Meier-Staubach, *Grundzüge*; Christel Meier-Staubach, "Vom Homo Coelestis zum Homo Faber. Die Reorganisation der mittelalterlichen Enzyklopädie für neue Gebrauchsfunktionen bei Vinzenz von Beauvais und Brunetto Latini", in *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter. Erscheinungsformen und Entwicklungsstufen. Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums 17.-19. Mai 1989*, eds. Hagen Keller et al., Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 65 (Munich, 1992), pp. 157–175.

manuscripts were disassembled and the pieces copied quickly and in parallel by multiple copyists. The monasteries and schools of the mendicant order thus proved to be the hubs of its intellectual diffusion.⁶⁶ However, the great wave of manuscript dissemination began only after around 1300. Dominican monasteries and *studia generalia* received the texts, and copies were also found in university colleges. The group of manuscripts that also included Vincent's text on the education of noble daughters was more closely linked to the royal courts, but there were considerably fewer copies – in fact, only two are known to have existed. There is no evidence of any impact in the courtly milieu.⁶⁷ Its dissemination in France was apparently impeded by Vincent's disparagement of the right of succession as a source of legitimacy. The French kings lay great store by the unbroken historical continuity of their dynasty – since Louis IX, extending back to the Carolingians – as a justification for their rule. This could not readily be reconciled with the break in continuity portrayed by Vincent.⁶⁸

4 Politics and Pedagogy

The Franciscan Gilbert of Tournai (†1284) also wrote a mirror of princes at around the same time. He was a master at the University of Paris and, like Vincent of Beauvais, minister at the court of King Louis IX of France. His writings had a considerable impact that continued after his death. He gave and wrote sermons for various social groups. His predominant topic was moral didactics. In his mirror of princes, he discussed the foundations of kingly

66 D'Avray, *Preaching*, pp. 160–163, 273–282.

67 Johannes B. Voorbij, *Une liste des manuscrits du Speculum historiale de Vincent de Beauvais*, in *Scriptorium* 41 (1987), pp. 286–294; Vincent of Beauvais, *De morali principis institutione*, pp. LXXVIII–LXXXII.

68 Chester Tuttle Wood, “Queens, queans, and kingship: an inquiry into theories of royal legitimacy in late medieval England and France”, in *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph Strayer*, eds. W. Chester Jordan et al. (Princeton, 1976), pp. 367–400, 562–570; Elizabeth A.R. Brown, “Vincent de Beauvais and the *reditus francorum ad stirpem Caroli imperatoris*”, in *Vincent de Beauvais: Intentions et réceptions d'une œuvre encyclopédique au moyen âge*, eds. M. Paulmier-Foucart et al., Cahiers d'études médiévales. Cahier spécial 4 (Saint-Laurent, 1990), pp. 180–188; Elizabeth A.R. Brown, “La généalogie capétienne dans l'historiographie du Moyen Âge: Philippe le Bel, le reniement du *reditus* et la création d'une ascendance carolingienne pour Hugues Capet”, in *Religion et culture autour de l'an Mil. Royaume capétien et Lotharingia. Actes du colloque Hugues Capet*, eds. D. Iogna-Prat and J.C. Picard (Paris, 1990), pp. 199–214; Joachim Ehlers, “Kontinuität und Tradition als Grundlage mittelalterlicher Nationsbildung”, in *Beiträge zur Bildung der französischen Nation in Früh- und Hochmittelalter*, ed. H. Beumann, *Nationes* 4 (Sigmaringen, 1983), pp. 15–47.

power and good practices for their rule.⁶⁹ In contrast to the views of the leader of his order, Bonaventure, he explicitly included love within the scope of the constitution and exercise of worldly rule – on grounds not of political rationality, but of the force of the divine will. On Gilbert's account, God intervenes directly in the order of earthly things. Good rule is thus possible thanks to divine providence.⁷⁰

The political dilemma of how good and just rule can be reconciled with the vagaries of dynastic transmission could be resolved neither through an anthropologically grounded aptitude for cooperation nor through trust in divine intervention. The fundamental idea and assumption of mirrors of princes was that a good ruler inherits his office and is prepared for it by instruction. The problem was thus to be solved pedagogically and didactically. The most widely disseminated late medieval mirror of princes, that of Giles of Rome, gave detailed indications on how this was to be accomplished.

As with the other mirrors of princes, here I will examine its character as a vehicle of political thought. However, I also wish to consider it as an example of reflection on pedagogical action.⁷¹ The polyvalence of potential understandings of the text expanded its use as a general textbook of knowledge. This is also evident in its use and reception. Giles's mirror of princes in particular offered sweeping world knowledge; it approaches the genre of texts that combine ethics with information and seek to optimize human behaviour – heightening efficiency and improving morality. In sermons and confessional manuals, pedagogical contents were conveyed to a broad public, inasmuch as their reception was not limited to a courtly milieu.⁷² The 'process of civilization' was

69 Carla Casagrande, "Le roi, les anges et la paix chez le franciscain Guibert de Tournai", in *Prêcher la paix, et discipliner la société. Italie, France, Angleterre*, ed. R.M. Dessi (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 141–153.

70 Guibert de Tournai, *Eruditio regum et principum*, ed. A. de Poorter, Les philosophes belges 9 (Louvain, 1914).

71 Berges, *Fürstenspiegel*; Merzbacher, *Rechts- Staats- und Kirchengauffassung*, pp. 88–97; Miethke, *Politische Theorien*, pp. 47–156, 71, 75–77, 83–94.

72 Odo Capitani, "Ipotesi sociali del francescanesimo medioevale: orientamenti e considerazioni", in *San Francesco. Giornata lineea indetta in occasione dell' VIII Centenario della nascita, Roma 12 nov. 1982* (Rome, 1985), pp. 39–57; Dieter Berg, "Bettelorden und Bildungswesen im kommunalen Raum. Ein Paradigma des Bildungstransfers im 13. Jahrhundert", in *Zusammenhänge, Einflüsse, Wirkungen. Versuch eine Bestandsaufnahme*, ed. J.O. Fichte, Symposium des Mediävistenverbandes 1 (Tübingen, 1986), pp. 424–425; Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "Arbeit und soziale Ordnung. Zur Wertung städtischer Lebensweise bei Berthold von Regensburg", in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 71 (1989), pp. 261–296; Nicole Bériou, "Le vocabulaire de la vie économique dans les textes pastoraux des frères mendiants au 13^e siècle", in *L'economia dei conventi dei frati minori e predicatori fino alla metà del Trecento. Atti del XXXI Convegno intern. Assisi 9–11 ott. 2003* (Spoleto, 2004), pp. 151–186.

not restricted to the royal courts; the civic and bourgeois milieu, with its specific disciplinary demands, was an equally important site for this process, so decisive in western history.⁷³

Mirrors of princes, too, influenced this process of acculturation. They treated the actions of rulers, as of all people in their respective offices and fields of activity, as learnable. The notion of an automatic transfer of virtues from father to son was no longer accepted. The task of solving the problem of how rule could be transferred to the 'best' individuals despite the vagaries of dynastic succession, while justifying monarchy as the best system of government, was entrusted to education.

Pedagogy was to resolve the political dilemma identified by Thomas Aquinas, that the best constitution is the monarchy of a good ruler, while the worst is the despotism of an unjust ruler. The quality of autocracy thus depended on the properties of an individual, and the political question could be made into a psychological one. From this starting point, what was required was to mould the individual's character into an appropriate shape.

The intention of mirrors of princes initially concerned political action, but this included education. In various milieux, the reception of the pedagogical concept was uncoupled from the strategy for solving a political problem. As the transmission of manuscript copies attests, the intentions to which it could be attached were entirely mutable; it could be adapted for use in various ways and by various social groups.

Giles of Rome's mirror of princes, probably written around 1279, is clearly marked by a pedagogical impetus toward an all-encompassing regulation of human behaviour, whose intended reach far exceeded the political sphere. The work deals at once with the *princeps* and with the *cives*. Contrary to what is implied in its prologue, wherein Giles dedicates the text to the heir to the French throne, the future King Philip IV of France, the work was not addressed only to the ruler and his family.⁷⁴ It lays out a general moral doctrine for all those concerned with the *utilitas publica* and the education of their children. It discusses the education required to produce a good father, the head of the family, and – at the level of individual psychology – the education of each individual for a good life, independent of any given social context.

At the turn of the 14th century, Giles of Rome was one of the most important theologians of the Augustinian Order, and is considered the founder of the theological orientation that, while closely following Thomas Aquinas in

73 Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (Frankfurt, 1976).

74 Aegidius Romanus, *De regimine principum libri tres* (Rome, 1556, reprint Frankfurt, 1968), II, 28; III, 2, 1; III, 2, 30; III, 2, 32.

commenting Aristotle, also drew on Augustine. In its general chapter of 1287, the Augustinian Order decided that all of its scholars should adopt and defend all of Giles's views, doctrines, and judgments up to that point, as well as all those he would go on to produce. The Order was thus made into a multiplier of his writings, ensuring him an extraordinarily wide-reaching impact throughout Europe.⁷⁵

The argument of the work takes up the themes of an already well-established understanding of Aristotle: felicity as the aim of human aspiration, the imperfection of all individuals (which can only be partly compensated by socialization), and the reciprocal connection of any political collective to the claims of individuals. The structure of the work is based on an anthropological conception which takes rule over the self, in the family, and in the kingdom to be grounded in analogous principles. Similar requirements are derived in each case; the content is thus applicable beyond the social milieu of the prince and the court. Giles held that the sequence of levels of action, culminating in rule over a great multitude, corresponds to the natural principle of perfection, whose purpose is felicity – that is, making possible a perfected and thus virtuous life: *bene et virtuose vivere*. Each person, characterized precisely in the sense of Aristotle's political theory as an *animal politicum*, was charged with behaving in such a way as to show himself useful to the *res publica*. This could be achieved in various social positions. However, preparation and guidance were required: Giles did not consider individuals' natural dispositions and their mutual sympathies sufficient to ensure the necessary socialization. He did see the disposition toward mutual support inherent to human nature as a precondition for life in societies, but he considered that human relations need to be moulded through instruction, guidance, and command. Tellingly, the key concept in the work is not the *civitas*, but the *regimen*, meaning subordination to layers of hierarchical leadership – beginning within the family and culminating in the rule of the king. The *regimen* also designates the mastery of individual impulses.

Giles regarded the potential of man as the precondition for this shaping through education, guidance, and learning. This potential was not to be activated by an isolated act of divine grace, but consisted in abilities inherent in

75 *Chartularium universitatis Parisiensis*, eds. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, vol. 2 (Paris, 1881), p. 12; Richard Scholz, *Die Publizistik zur Zeit Philipps des Schönen und Bonifaz VIII. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Anschauungen des Mittelalters* (Amsterdam, 1962), pp. 109 sq.; Berges, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 216; Merzbacher, *Rechts- Staats- und Kirchenauffassung*, pp. 88–97; Adolar Zumkeller, "Die Augustinerschule des Mittelalters: Vertreter und philosophisch-theologische Lehre", in *Analecta Augustiniana* 27 (1964), pp. 167–262.

human nature, whose realization nonetheless required the external influence of instruction. General human ability, Giles argued, allowed for emotional bonds between men, which thereby – here again following the medieval reception of Aristotle – provided the basis for socialization in various realms.

The distribution of manuscripts of Giles's mirror of princes clearly shows that most were written, conserved, and obviously also read in the monasteries of the mendicant orders. A great number were produced: there are at least 284 known manuscripts containing the Latin edition, as well as a total of 78 in various vernaculars.⁷⁶ The texts with which the Latin version was combined in manuscripts reflect a close connection to moral didactics addressed to all, not only to rulers. A typical example is the manuscript that was kept in the Franciscan monastery of London, which, in addition to the *regimen principum* also includes John of Wales's confessional treatise *Tractatus de penitentia* and his *De septem viciis*.⁷⁷ Giles's text was often combined with texts offering practical guidance for daily life, schoolbooks, and excerpts from sermons. Augustinian friars in Italy combined Giles's text with the work of Bartholomew of Bergamo on orthography, as well as a number of grammar textbooks and excerpts from *auctoritates super diversis materiis utilibus*, a compact florilegium of theological works from Augustine to Bernard of Clairvaux. They also included hagiographies.⁷⁸

The use of the text for pastoral care is made obvious precisely by its association with sermons. Together they offered a corpus of written *sermones* from which portions could be selected for oral speech.⁷⁹ However, the text was seldom found in manuscripts devoted to the literature on political theory. An exception is an English manuscript of the 14th century, which combined Giles's mirror of princes with Thomas Aquinas's *De regno*. Occasionally it was

76 Gerardo Bruni, *Le opera di Egidio Romano* (Florence, 1936); Gerardo Bruni, "Saggio bibliografico sulle opere stampate di Egidio Romano", in *Analecta Augustiniana* 24 (1961), pp. 351–355; Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, *Les traductions françaises du De regimine principum de Gilles de Rome. Parcours matériel, culturel et intellectuel d'un discours sur l'éducation, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* 39 (Leiden/Boston, 2011).

77 British Library London, Ms. Royal 4 D.iv; Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275–c. 1525* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 74–91, 161; Jens Röhrkasten, *Mendicant Houses of Medieval London 1221–1539, Vita regularis. Ordnungen und Deutungen religiösen Lebens im Mittelalter. Abhandlungen* 21 (Münster, 2004), pp. 340–379.

78 Bibliotheca Vaticana Apostolica, Ms. Urb. Lat. 1376; *Calalogo dei manoscritti de regimine principum 1/n: Città del Vaticano – Italia*, eds. F. Del Punta and C. Luna, *Aegidii Romani Opera omnia* 1 (Florence, 1993), pp. 54–59.

79 D'Avray, *Preaching; The sermon*, ed. B.M. Kienzle, *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental* 81/83 (Turnhout, 2000).

also combined with Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle's *Ethics* and on his work of politics. Its predominant context, however, was in manuscripts combining it with texts on rhetoric and didactics.⁸⁰

Giles's instructions on child rearing, parental duties, spousal relations, the legal basis of marriage, close emotional ties between spouses and between parents and children, and love between family members could be used by many different social groups. They were addressed to a broad public, like that of the sermons, and indeed the mirror of princes could also be drawn on in the composition of a sermon. The alphabetical list of general terms such as *abominatio* and *amor* appended to one manuscript by the observant Florentine Dominicans, along with detailed definitions, demonstrates the use of the text in the service of pastoral care for the entire laity. An often detailed table of contents also attests to the isolated use of individual passages. Elements that could be extracted in addition to a linear reading of Giles's text provided building blocks for sermons. This use massively multiplied the text's reception.⁸¹ In addition to political information, it also provided pedagogical information. The pedagogy was of interest to many, including outside the royal courts. In particular, it was a topic of pastoral care, presented to broad sections of the population especially by the members of the mendicant orders, and especially in cities.⁸²

Because secular clerics were increasingly engaged in lay pastoral care and as preachers from the 13th century onward,⁸³ Giles's mirror of princes also often found its way into the private book collections of canons and the libraries of collegiate churches. The addressees of pastoral care were laypeople, who thus received information from Giles's text. However, evidence of manuscripts in the possession of laypeople is slim, and mainly relates to Italian cities, with their more developed urban scholarly culture in comparison to other European countries. Outside Italy, the existence of a French translation in the collection

80 University Library Cambridge, Ms. Ii.4.22; Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, Ms. 508/387; Balliol College Oxford, Ms. 282; University Library Cambridge, Ms. Ii.2.8; Pembroke College Cambridge, Ms. 158; British Library London, Ms. Royal 5.C.iii.

81 Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Firenze, Ms. S. Marco 452; Zelina Zafarana, "La predicazione ai laici dal secolo XII al XIV", in *Studi medievali* 24 (1983), pp. 265–75; Maria Corti, "Structures idéologiques et structures sémiotiques dans les sermons ad status du 13e siècle", in *Archéologie du signe*, eds. L. Brind'Amour and E. Vance, Recueils d'études médiévales 3 (Toronto, 1983), pp. 145–63.

82 Schmidt, *Allegorie*.

83 Michel Zink, *La prédication en langue romane avant 1300* (2nd ed., Paris, 1976); Nicole Bériou, *La prédication de Ranulphe de la Houblonnière* (Paris, 1987); Louis J. Bataillon, "Prédications des séculiers aux laïcs au 13e siècle de Thomas de Chobham à Ranulphe de la Houblonnière", in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 74 (1990), pp. 457–465.

of one of the leading citizens of Calais, who held the position of alderman after the English conquest of 1347, demonstrates a certain interest among bourgeois groups. This interest may have been greater than the evidence indicates, due to problematic conservation conditions.⁸⁴

Giles of Rome's mirror of princes was also used as a teaching text in universities, serving in the philosophical and theological training of clerics. It contained material on ethics, and thus was not confined to the teaching of politics. Beginning in 1323, *De regimine principum* was included in the compulsory programme for students at the University of Paris. Other universities followed. A copy was donated to the library of the University of Heidelberg in 1444 by Friedrich Motter, the former rector and the dean of the Marienkirche in Neustadt.⁸⁵ A manuscript was also present in the library of Amplonius Rating de Berka in 1425, when he donated his book collection to the college he founded at the University of Erfurt in order to provide a complete range of scholarly knowledge for students, covering all disciplines.⁸⁶ Multipliers of the content of the text conveyed it to the laity, including those beyond the royal courts.⁸⁷

The versions most closely connected to the royal courts were the vernacular translations.⁸⁸ The fact that the library of the French king Charles V contained a French translation of *De regimine* may seem almost self-evident in light of his passionate collector's desire to see all of the knowledge of his time gathered at his court, and of course an acknowledged preference for political theory. The exemplar in his possession was a magnificently illuminated manuscript decorated with gold lettering. Likewise, the English King Richard III owned a copy in the late 15th century, as did members of his court. It was also found in the entourage of his contemporary French King Louis XI; the queen possessed a copy. There is no evidence, however, that they read them personally, and indeed it is not even likely, given the large size of these collections, which

84 *Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, 1, ed. F. Del Punta (Città del Vaticano, 1987), p. 11; *Catalogo dei manoscritti De regimine principum*, eds. F. Del Punta and C. Luna, *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Testi e studi 12* (Florence, 1993), pp. 109–112, 141–144, 151–154, 164, 179–181, 193–195, 240–242; Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Ms. S. Croce Plut. XVI sin. 11; *Literatur und Laienbildung*; Irmgard Fees, *Eine Stadt lernt schreiben. Venedig vom 10. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 103 (Tübingen, 2002).

85 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 726; Giles (see above, n. 77), pp. 160–162, 166.

86 *Der Schatz des Amplonius. Die große Bibliothek des Mittelalters in Erfurt. Begleitbuch zur gleichnamigen Ausstellung in Erfurt 2. Sept.–4. Nov. 2001*, ed. K. Paasch (Erfurt, 2001), p. 197.

87 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 523; Biblioteca del Collegio di Spagna Bologna, Ms. 62; Biblioteca Universitaria Bologna, Ms. 1512.

88 Perret, *Traductions*.

speak more of a drive to collect texts than of a determination to absorb their contents. The manuscripts were, however, presumably used by the court personnel. Marks of ownership point to this circle of recipients. The acquisition and possession of manuscripts at court and among clerics acting as confessors, preachers, and advisors to rulers, will have opened up an important pathway to knowledge of their contents. In the late 15th century there was a copy of Giles's *Regimen* at Westminster Abbey, in close connection to the English court. The chamberlain of King Edward IV, William Hastings, and his daughter-in-law also possessed a manuscript.⁸⁹ Most of these manuscripts collected at court were resplendent editions, and – contrary to the Latin originals – were written out with great care. They provided more than just their textual contents; the books themselves were the important objects. They were evidently intended to exhibit their owners' prestige, but – more importantly still – to prove that they had absorbed the teachings in the mirror of princes and, at the least, displayed them. They became treasures – objects that combined material and ideal value.⁹⁰

Translations of the text into a vernacular – German, French, English – considerably expanded its reception, and brought its contents to a public beyond the circles of Latin-speaking university scholarship. Henri de Gauchi, canon of Saint Martin in Liège, produced a French version before the end of the 13th century. It was the most successful, with more than 20 surviving manuscripts. Other translations existed.⁹¹ Manuscripts also reached members of the nobility and the court. Women were among the recipients of these manuscripts.

The first manuscripts in Italian were produced, again quickly – before the end of the 13th century – on the basis of de Gauchi's translation.⁹² The German versions began somewhat later, and they too spread through both bourgeois and royal milieux. According to its prologue, a manuscript dated 1437 was

89 Jesus College Cambridge, Ms. Q.B.9; Lambeth Palace Library London, Ms. Arc.L.40.2/L.26; Lambeth Palace Library London, Ms. 184; Bodleian Library Oxford, Ms. Digby 233; Léopold Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V* (Paris, 1907), pp. 87 sq.; Vanina Kopp, *Der König und die Bücher. Sammlung, Nutzung und Funktion der königlichen Bibliothek am spätmittelalterlichen Hof in Frankreich* (Ostfildern, 2015); Carra Ferguson O'Meara, *Monarchy and Consent: The Coronation Book of Charles V of France* (London, 2001); Jean Favier, *Louis XI* (Paris, 2001), p. 240.

90 Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "Schatz, Geld und Rechnungsführung des Königs von Frankreich", in *Le trésor au moyen âge. Discours, pratiques et objets*, eds. L. Burkart, P. Cordez, P.-A. Mariaux and Y. Potin, Micrologus Library 32 (Florence, 2010), pp. 199–220.

91 François Maillard, *Les traductions du De regimine de Gilles de Rome*, Positions des thèses de l'École de Chartes (Paris, 1948); Perret, *Traductions*.

92 Francesco Corazzini, *Del reggimento de' principi di Egidio Romano* (Florence, 1858).

dedicated to Duke Albrecht v of Bavaria, and intended for his use. Rhyming versions increased the prestige of the text and its appropriation. They may have served to optimize the reception of the text, enabling it to be absorbed not only by way of public oral presentations, but through private reading. In any case, the text was the subject of intellectual activity; the aim was to capture the meaning. These manuscripts thus represented more than just the styling of rulers as knowledgeable men, or a label signifying noble and kingly learning, although they did serve this function in France and elsewhere.⁹³ Translations into English, Castilian, and Catalan allowed the text to be received in the courts of the local kings. Dedication to rulers – as to Henry, the son and later the successor of the English King Henry IV – demonstrates proximity to the exercise of political power.⁹⁴

It is a noteworthy fact that Giles's text even overcame the barrier of religion: it was also translated into Hebrew, with the oldest manuscript dating from the 14th century.⁹⁵ The reasoning in the text, at an abstract remove from any specific Christian foundations, made it suitable for reception in a different religious environment. The ethically precise, religious but non-specific text is open to taking on polyvalent functions. Its uses were thus not necessarily confined to either royal or Christian pastoral contexts. The appearance of translated versions in manuscripts alongside texts on military technology, warfare, chronicles, chivalric romances on the Alexandrian model, and Alain Chartier's moral teachings for the nobility, attest to wide-ranging interest. The intention underlying its presentation to educated laypeople from the nobility was thus not always to fulfil demands for educational guidance.⁹⁶

93 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Munich, Cod. Germ. 201; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Vienna Co. 2815 u. 3061; Elisabeth A.R. Brown, "Royal Salvation and Needs of State in Late Capetian France", in *Order and Innovation* (see above, n. 68), pp. 365–383; Jacques Krynen, *L'idéal du prince et pouvoir royal en France à la fin du moyen âge (1380–1440): Etude de la littérature politique du temps* (Paris, 1981); Jacques Krynen, *L'empire du roi: Idées et croyances politiques en France 13e-15e siècles* (Paris, 1993).

94 Charles R. Blyth (ed.), *Thomas Hoccleve: The Regiment of Princes* (Kalamazoo, 1999); Maria Jesus Diez Garretas and Juan Manuel, *Los manuscritos de la version castellana del De regimen principum de Gil de Roma* (Valladolid, 2003); Rudolf Beer, *Handschriftenschatze Spaniens* (Vienna, 1894), pp. 202 ff.

95 Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Cod. 22; Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, Bibliotheek, Cod. Warn. 11.

96 University Library Cambridge, Ms. Ee.2.17; Corpus Christi College Cambridge, Ms. 283; British Library London, Ms. Royal 10.C.ix; Ms. Royal 15.E.vi.

5 Prestige and Legitimacy

It need not be assumed that the kings read the literature that they gathered at their courts, nor that in any case it predetermined thinking or action, or even that it was used as a guidebook for behaviour in the family. But having to react to intellectual demands, which required self-reflection and the evaluation of actions, led to change in the self-conception of kings and emperors. Beginning at the time of King James I of Aragón and his contemporaries King Alfonso X of Castile, Emperor Frederick II, and King Louis IX of France, rulers gathered around them a circle of persons who, working at the intellectual intersection of government, power, and obedience, developed a conceptual framework wherein the grandeur of emperors and kings is based on values. King Alfonso X of Castile even made it a legal duty for the ruler to learn, and to teach his successors. *Siete Partidas*, a legislative text identified as Alfonso's work, set out a requirement of teaching and learning for the king and his family.⁹⁷

Kings, it explained, are preservers of knowledge. They must present themselves as promoters and repositories of truth. The figure of the *rex eruditus* became the ideal. The manuscripts at the royal courts were thus more than simply a great treasure held as a credential, whose content was to be handled and used only by other members of the court, typically the clergy. Beginning in the 13th century, the activity of writing and reflecting on texts formed part of the ideal of the good, just, and above all pious king. This can also be seen in the reports of numerous authors on the canonization of King Louis IX, and particularly the biography written by Jean de Joinville.⁹⁸ The king endowed with texts was the epitome of the intellectual king. The possession of manuscripts, and especially those that directly described, standardized, and evaluated the office and duties of the king, thus served as a credential indicating that the king was fulfilling his function as a keeper of knowledge. The manuscripts at the royal court stylized the royal office, presenting the king as a scholar. Proximity to texts served to legitimate the king's position. Dealing in texts did not equate to writing and reading – although rulers such as Frederick II, King Louis IX of France, King Alfonso X of Castile and King James II of Aragon exercised these skills, or at least pretended to. The ownership of a document could be used to style oneself as master of its contents. Ostentatious display was not required to fulfil this function; the splendour, rich decoration, and ornamentation of the royal books did not have to be shown at all, and indeed they were more often held in secrecy. Works in the arcanum, however, were not considered any

97 Schmidt, *Lerne zu Regieren*, pp. 779–796.

98 Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris, 1996).

less potent – indeed, their placement in the arcanum made it clear that only the ruler could absorb them. The possession of the text thus stood as a badge of erudition. This was a virtue that the ruler had to manifest in order to meet the intensified demands of an era that conceived knowledge of ethical behaviour as learnable material.

The appropriation of texts imbued those who possessed them, and who purported to have absorbed their contents, with the aura of a reflective person of action. For rulers, this aura was necessary. But the text itself could also be used far from the court. It offered an updated ideal of the household and the family, which it was nonetheless held to stabilize.⁹⁹ Here, too, although stylization may have been more important than real intellectual mastery of the content, contact with the text nonetheless showed its potential, which lay in the shaping of behaviour – and thus worked at least in part, as behaviour was to be judged against an idealized concept. Mirrors of princes are documents of late medieval thinking on the methods and content of a pedagogical intervention. They served to consolidate codified rules of conduct, regarded as prerequisites for assuming social and political roles, within the context of family ties. The civilizing disciplinary function was deployed within the family. The generative continuity of the family was not to be left to biological succession alone, however; its content needed to be enriched. Because mirrors of princes solved a political problem – that of combining hereditary succession with just rule – through a pedagogical programme, they could be used pedagogically by persons who were at a distance from the ruling family.

The considerations presented here call into question the succinct conventional definition of the mirror of princes as a text for the instruction of princes, aimed at producing good government. It also cannot be taken for granted that these writings were addressed to rulers. Moreover, the texts should not be defined in terms of their topics, such as ‘fostering the common good, particular care for the weak, promoting happiness and prosperity, upholding justice and the law, avoiding tyranny, etc.’¹⁰⁰ Of course, the texts discussed these issues, and princes were explicitly addressed in them. Those facts notwithstanding, their use was by no means limited to rulers, whose advisors were not alone in understanding them, and they were not found only at royal courts. The texts clearly reached far wider audiences through clerics, their teaching in monastic schools and universities, and their sermons to broad swathes of the population. I therefore regard the mirrors of princes of the late Middle Ages as texts

99 Alfred Haverkamp (ed.), *Haus und Familie in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt*, Städteforschung A 18 (Cologne, 1984).

100 Mariano Delgado, “Foreword”, in *Die gute Regierung*, p. 9 ff.

that provided a forum for reflection on politics. Up to the 12th century, political science had neither its own institutional framework nor its own textual genre. The latter void was filled by the mirrors of princes. They offered general reflections on reasons and justifications for rule, how it should be exercised, the anthropological foundations it is built on, and the goals it pursues or should pursue. The abstract political doctrine of mirrors of princes offered reading and grounds for reflection to any learned person in the late Middle Ages – i.e., those educated at the universities – and, moreover, to anyone who heard sermons, who was taught by priests, or who as a layperson was able to read didactic texts.¹⁰¹ The composition and use of mirrors of princes was thus part of a great educational offensive, which also involved the production of other works referred to as ‘mirrors’, and which envisioned a disciplining of all areas of life and all activities, providing and calling for information and reflection to this end. In summary, mirrors of princes were didactic texts which treated political topics in practical terms, and which contributed to popularizing knowledge of politics. Their impact was evidently paradoxical: that which posed as a mirror of princes forced open the arcanum of power and led to the spread of knowledge about power through the social body.

The texts referred to as ‘mirrors of princes’ had multiple aims and uses. These were by no means restricted to the instruction of rulers, but include both veneration and criticism of rulers, the conception of a political theory, the conception of a general pedagogy, instructions on marriage, hygiene, and nutrition, definitions of the duties of the clergy, and the dissemination of general world knowledge. A definition of the mirrors of princes must take into account their use. In summary, I propose to define mirrors of princes as texts which present and discuss knowledge that is useful for political action, but which also provide knowledge to a broad audience beyond the circles of political power, and which deal with practical daily life concerns (health, child rearing, married life). Mirrors of princes are thus texts that deal with world knowledge theoretically, while also supplying practical applications. As a genre, mirrors of princes were closely related to encyclopædias. Both linked theory and praxis, and both could also be understood by non-scholars. Mirrors of princes should thus be understood as texts for lay education, including not only princes but various other laypeople.

Translated by Paul Reeve

¹⁰¹ *Laienbildung*.

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Conclusion: Mirrors for Princes and the Development of Reflections on the State

Jean-Philippe Genet

The communication systems of contemporary societies are rapidly adapting to the social, political and cultural transformations that they are helping to generate. But was this the case before the advent of the printing press?¹ The choice of the editors of this volume to take a long-term view—covering a long period from the seventh century B.C. to the beginning of the sixteenth century—can only highlight the permanence of many characteristics of this very particular “political literature” that constitutes the texts grouped under the disputed and questionable, but convenient, name of “mirrors for princes”. While not a literary genre in the strict sense,² those discussed in the preceding pages form a collection of acceptable homogeneity, if we take at least two of the three criteria retained by Einár Már Jónsson in his classic definition:³ 1. they are addressed to a ‘prince’—whatever his title, royal or not; in reality it may be a group—and 2. they are meant to educate him with advice, information and possibly criticism to make him an ideal prince, the one he can see in the mirror held up by the text. Most often, this is done by going through a catalogue of both private and public virtues (the royal function makes any distinction between these two spheres futile). Beyond this base, diversity reigns: diversity of the literary forms chosen, diversity of the institutional and situational situations of the addressees, diversity of the social and sociolinguistic contexts.... It is therefore obvious that we must not allow ourselves to be locked into the problem of literary genre, and from this point of view, the term paradigm,

1 Ezio Ornato, “Quelques réflexions pour une histoire matérielle de la culture écrite dans le monde occidental”, in *Vecteurs de l'idéal et mutations des sociétés politiques* (Le pouvoir symbolique en Occident (1300–1640) - XIII) ed. J.-Ph. Genet (Paris/Rome, 2021), pp. 93–201.

2 Virtually all the authors in this volume address this question at one point or another. The texts listed in Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Schriften II) (Stuttgart, 1938, repr. 1952), which is an essential starting point, form both the classic corpus of the “genre” and a particularly heterogeneous set of texts in terms of both content and form.

3 Einár Már Jónsson, “La situation du *Speculum regale* dans la littérature occidentale”, in *Études Germaniques* 42 (1987), pp. 391–408, at p. 394. See, by the same author, *Le Miroir : naissance d'un genre littéraire* (Paris, 1995).

which Charles Briggs and Cary Nederman happily use, seems to me a useful substitute.⁴

1 The Legacy of Antiquity

Of course, as early as Greek antiquity, other types of texts present royal figures and possibly comment on their qualities, defects and duties. But they are not mirrors because they show a kingship that is not debatable, that imposes itself as a fact of nature, marked by the seal of a legitimacy that cannot be questioned. John Lenz quotes Hesiod on the Homeric kings: *Kings are from Zeus*.⁵ And Tom Stevenson puts his finger on the borderline between this primal kingship and the one that mirrors will take over when he evokes the treatises on monarchy of the Hellenistic period, which transcend this *rule without accountability*⁶ that is the hallmark of kings by highlighting the virtues of the Prince, starting with the first of these, ‘philanthropy,’ i.e. love for his subjects. To the royal monolith in relation to the gods is added (without replacing it) the king in his relation to the humanity of citizens and subjects. It is obviously to Athens, to the development of the Greek city and to the appearance of democracy that we owe the appearance of this second stratum; but the Hellenistic example shows that the first did not disappear. In fact, it remained present throughout the history of mirrors, not without tensions and contradictions. And in the Roman period, as in the Middle Ages, the king chosen by God(s), whose legitimacy and power cannot be questioned, continued to be put forward, in parallel with his reappearance in the mirrors, notably in the liturgies: Karl Ubl cites the *Laudes regiae*,⁷ but one could also cite the *ordines* of the coronations of Western kings, mirrors in action as revealed by the analysis of the “ordo-miroir” (Jacques Le Goff) of the coronation of Saint Louis, probably made for the king on his return from the crusade.⁸

4 Charles F. Briggs and Cary J. Nederman, “Western Medieval *Specula*, c. 1150–c. 1450”, *supra*.

5 John R. Lenz, “Ideal Models and Anti-Models of Kingship in Ancient Greek Literature”, *supra*.

6 Tom Stevenson, “The influence of the *Speculum Principis* in Roman Literature”, *supra*. This theme is found in Roman law with the opposition between the king who is above the law (Ulpian’s dictum, “*Princeps legibus solutus est*”), but who can voluntarily submit to the law, as advocated by the emperors Theodosius and Valentinian in the *Digna Vox* constitution.

7 Karl Ubl, “Carolingian Mirrors for Princes: Texts, Contents, Impact”, *supra*.

8 Jacques Le Goff, Éric Palazzo, Jean-Claude Bonne and Marie-Noëlle Colette, *Le sacre royal à l'époque de Saint Louis* (Paris, 2001), pp. 11–19 and 200–205.

The case of ancient Greece helps us understand why this duality is constitutive of mirrors. Indeed, it was with the disciples of Socrates, reacting to the “excesses of democracy”⁹ in fifth-century Athens, that they began to reflect on kingship in terms of its superiority over other modes of government. It is in this movement of thought that the first texts appear that can be considered as mirrors, highlighting eastern models (Cyrus, for Xenophon and Antisthenes) or peripheral models (Evagoras, the king of Cyprus, for Isocrates, and we know that Plato wrote for the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius). Aristotle—himself from Macedonia—follows this view when he argues for monarchy as the best type of government. For all these authors, the problem lies in the personality of the prince and his ability to practice the virtues, an ability that distinguishes him from the tyrant, whose antithesis he is. The Hellenistic treatises developed this classical opposition between the prince and the tyrant and gradually penetrated Roman ideologies.

But the Romans, although they were able to recognize and fight tyrants very early on, apparently had nothing to do with kings, whose removal was precisely the basis of their political culture. Hence the real difficulty in grasping the problem of personal power, even though it was gradually imposed in the very structures of the republic. However, the evidence became clear: since everything that could curb or control the will of the *princeps* had disappeared, everything depended once again on his virtues. The great Roman texts that can be likened to mirrors are either treatises devoted to virtues, such as *De Clementia*, which continues the path traced by Cicero in his pleadings for clients who had to rely on Caesar’s clemency, or biographical portraits of rulers, such as the one offered by Cicero’s *Dream of Scipio*, which, like *De Clementia*, was to remain a widely read text throughout the Middle Ages (along with Macrobius’ commentary). The first two texts mentioned give a cosmic dimension to the reflection on the power of the Prince: understanding of the world and of natural cycles is imposed on those who have the responsibility of leading the *res publica*. If they raise themselves to the level of the gods, they must then accomplish their mission by coming up against the harsh realities of earthly life,¹⁰ and it is through their *humanitas* that they will succeed in doing so, a virtue that Seneca recommends above all to Nero, for whom his treatise is

9 Lenz, “Ideal Models and Anti-Models of Kingship”, *supra*.

10 Claire Auvray-Assayas, “Le cosmos et l’éthique du Prince: une relecture du *De clementia* de Sénèque et du *Songe de Scipion* de Cicéron”, in *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l’Antiquité aux Lumières*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), pp. 19–30.

intended.¹¹ This transcendental vision of politics gives pride of place to ethical reflection, which it helped to integrate with Christian thought, as shown in the *Life of Constantine* by Eusebius of Caesarea, which is both an imperial biography and a eulogy of the first Christian prince.¹²

On the other hand, the few treatises written by Greek philosophers during the Roman period show above all how incapable they were of replacing Greek kings with emperors;¹³ these texts had no posterity, unlike the historical biographies and “Caesarian speeches” (as Tom Jefferson calls them) of Cicero. All in all, since the Romans did not see themselves as followers of kingship, they did not make their mark on the mirror genre, preferring, in the imperial biographies written by historians, a philosophical discussion of the virtues or a historical perspective. Only Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* stands out from this literature; but it was written in Greek and was not read again until the Renaissance, whereas Alexander haunted the medieval imagination, as did Trajan, whose passage to posterity as a model of a virtuous ruler is partly due to Pliny the Younger’s *Panegyric of Trajan*. This text marks a decisive break from this point of view by bringing together the Prince as a historical individual (Cicero’s Scipio is largely imaginary) and the abstract model of the active virtues. Panegyrics, in prose and increasingly in verse, were to become a genre in themselves. Here, one can speak without restriction of a literary genre, in which the rhetors whose importance in the *paideia* of the transition period between antiquity and the Middle Ages¹⁴ is well known, and of which one of the most striking examples is the *Panegyric of Theodoric* by Ennodius of Pavia.¹⁵ But the genre quickly ran out of steam, as the recipients capable of appreciating the virtuosity of the authors disappeared. It was no longer the philosopher who addressed the new sovereigns, the barbarian *reges*, but the priest, and the letter from Saint Remi to Clovis is also another point of rupture that marks a new beginning. The letter replaces the speech.

11 Tom Stevenson, “The influence of the *Speculum Principis*”.

12 Françoise Thélamon, “Constantin, ‘l’empereur cher à Dieu’ selon Eusèbe de Césarée dans la *Vita Constantini*”, in *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia, pp. 31–43.

13 Tom Stevenson, “The influence of the *Speculum Principis*”.

14 See for this period in general Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 243) (Rome, 1981).

15 Christian Rohr, *Der Theoderich-Panegyricus des Ennodius*, Monumenta Germanica Historica, Studien und Texte 12 (Hannover, 1995); see also Vincent Zarini, “Le prince au miroir des panégyriques versifiés dans la latinité tardive”, in *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia, pp. 45–67.

2 Mirrors for Three Worlds

As we can see, the mirror, or what took its place, was sensitive to the socio-political environment, well before the appearance of the modern state. The transition from Late Antiquity to the three worlds that share its legacy amply demonstrates this. There may be letters in Byzantium, such as that of Photius to the Bulgarian Boris I, or that of Nicholas the Mystic to the Khalifa Al Muqtadir, addressed by a cleric to a prince as a bishop does in the West to a barbarian *rex*. But on the whole, Byzantine mirrors retain the imprint of ancient models, with a strong presence of collections of advice (*gnomai*), even if they are often shaped by the eventual context of their writing. While he refutes Paolo Odorico's peremptory verdict that there are simply no mirrors for a Byzantine prince,¹⁶ Günter Prinzing acknowledges that there are relatively few of them:¹⁷ he counts only twenty, eleven of which are what he calls *integrated mirrors*, i.e. speeches or chapters included in a larger work. This differentiates Byzantium not only from the medieval West, but also from the Islamic world.

Mirrors for princes abound in the Islamic world, where history was also, as in Rome, an inexhaustible reservoir of subjects for political reflection: they often appear as a mixture of maxims and historical *exempla*. These allowed the opinion of the reader/listener to be directed in a subtle way while sheltering behind the authority of history; at least, this is what is revealed by Louise Marlow's¹⁸ comparison of anecdotes featuring Hārūn al-Rashīd in three of these oriental mirrors. Although the term *mirror* is hardly ever used, it does apply to several kinds of texts, although a very broad definition can also be adopted for the Islamic world: most historians consider the story collection *Kalila and Dimna*, Ibn al-Muqaffā's translation into Arabic of a Persian version of the Sanskrit *Panchatantra*, to be a true mirror. The complete Arabic version was in turn translated into Castilian in 1251 at the request of Alfonso X of Castile,¹⁹ and from there into Latin (by Raymond de Béziers). Coming from Persia, the *Testament of Ardashīr* refers more directly to the Sassanid political tradition. The first political texts translated into Arabic also show a Greek filiation through the apocryphal correspondence between Alexander and Aristotle,

16 Paolo Odorico, "Les miroirs des princes à Byzance. Une lecture horizontale", in *L'éducation au gouvernement et à la vie. La tradition des 'règles de vie' de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge, Actes du colloque international de Pise, 18 et 19 mars 2005* (Autour de Byzance 1), ed. P. Odorico (Paris, 2009), pp. 223–246.

17 Günter Prinzing, "Byzantine Mirrors for Princes: An Overview", *supra*.

18 Louise Marlow, "Royal Power and its Regulations: Narratives of Harun al-Rashid in Three Mirrors for Princes", *supra*.

19 See below.

which would eventually give rise, in the tenth century, to the *Sirr-al-asrar*, the compilation of which is attributed to Yahyā Ibn al-Bitrīq and which exists in numerous versions in which the pseudo-Aristotelian content is accompanied by scientific, medical and occult content that makes this mirror for prince a sort of encyclopedic manual and further accentuates its naturalistic side. As we shall see, its diffusion throughout the Latin West was extraordinary.²⁰ One of these letters, undoubtedly Aristotelian if not authentic, the *Letter of Aristotle to Alexander on the policy towards the cities*,²¹ would play a particularly important role in political reflection in the land of Islam.

These Greek and Persian filiations permeate the literature of the *adab*, which is generally agreed to be equivalent to that of the Western²² mirrors. The Sassanid tradition is particularly evident in the texts produced in the Iranian world, insofar as Iran forms the heart of the Abbasid caliphate: after its collapse, the center of gravity for political thought would shift to Syria.²³ It is clearly visible in one of the earliest and most widespread Arabic mirrors, Ibn al-Muqaffā's *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, written during the reign of the caliph Al Mansūr. But even the *ādāb sultāniyya* or *Ādāb al-mulūk* (literally "advice to the king") such as that of Al Tha'ālibī or the *Sīyar al-mulūk* of Nizām al-Mulūk, while they transmit the Sassanid tradition of a ruler by divine right, also contain an essentially religious Arabic component, derived from the *Qur'an*, *hadith* and *sunna*. In the Arab-Iranian East, as Ardashīr's will stated, "kingship and religion are sisters",²⁴ a phrase found in many Arabic mirrors.

We certainly find here the Sassanian heritage of an absolute monarchy against which it is impious to revolt, but the security it provides the prince allows him to devote himself to the ideal of political justice that should be his. "When the king renounces justice, the people renounce obedience", says Ardashīr, and Makram Abbès, who quotes this text, makes this explicit by stressing that the religion in question here "means not so much religious laws as moral habits and social traditions rooted in a society or community",

20 On these texts, see Steven J. Williams, "The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets* as a Mirror of Princes", *supra*.

21 Józef Bielawski and Marian Plezia, *Lettre d'Aristote à Alexandre sur la politique envers les cités* (Wrocław, 1970). See the particularly enlightening critical note by Pierre Thillet, "Aristote conseiller politique d'Alexandre vainqueur des Perses?", in *Revue des Études Grecques* 85, n. 406–408 (1972), pp. 527–542.

22 For example, see Makram Abbès, "The Arabic Mirrors of Princes as witness to the evolution of political thought", *supra*.

23 Denise Aigle, "The Conception of Power in Islam: Persian Mirrors of Princes and Sunni Theories (Eleventh-Fourteenth Centuries)", *supra*.

24 Quoted by Denise Aigle, "The Conception of Power in Islam".

which some people continue (wrongly) to analyze as a powerful factor in conservatism.²⁵ Religion, “as a moral bond between men”, thus appears in the mirrors as the omnipresent subtext of the discourse on the ethical commitment of the prince through the virtues he must practice, in the first place justice. Compared to the Latin West, the relationship between the religious and the political appears singular here: there is no cleric who admonishes or enlightens the one he addresses. Muslim theologians are concerned with finding a theoretical solution to the problems of *imamat* or religious laws, not with giving advice to a prince. The authors of the Arab mirrors were, moreover, mainly viziers or secretaries whose experience legitimized them as wise or learned men, and although religion underlay their discourse, it was in no way opposed to philosophy, through which Greek political theory infiltrated.

While it is known that the Arabs were generally much more familiar with all Greek texts, including those of Aristotle and Plato, than the Latins, this was not entirely true in the political sphere, since Aristotle’s *Politics* remained virtually unknown in the Arab world. If Aristotle’s work occupied an essential place, it was mainly through the *Nicomachean Ethics*, although Plato played a more important role, with the *Republic* and the *Laws*, than in the West.²⁶ A fundamental point is the fact that the translators did not find an equivalent for the word *politeia*, which refers to the constitution of the Greek city. As we know, the same problem arose for Latin translators,²⁷ and the separation of the Latin mirrors into several branches according to whether they were addressed to princes or to city magistrates is an echo of this difficulty. In fact, the “constitutional” question is secondary; the essential point is that politics and ethics must be inseparable in order to lead the social community (not the city) to prosperity and happiness. Thus Averroes, in his *Commentary on Plato’s Republic*²⁸ (a text lost but reconstructed from its Hebrew translation), draws a parallel between the physician and the prince, both of whom use their practical rather than their theoretical intelligence. This diversion through philosophy is necessary to understand the extent to which pragmatism penetrated the Arab mirrors, leading them to approach certain problems from the modern angle of the

25 Makkram Abbès, “The Arabic Mirrors”, *supra*.

26 Makkram Abbès, “The influence of Aristotle’s thought on Arabic political philosophical ideas”, *supra*.

27 Nicolai Rubinstein, “The history of the word *politicus* in early modern Europe”, in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe*, ed. A. Pagden (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 41–56.

28 *Averroes on Plato’s Republic*, ed. R. Lerner (Ithaca/London, 1974), commented by Makkram Abbès, *supra*.

“reason of state”,²⁹ far from the conservatism that is attributed to them, and well before this concept emerged in Commynes or Machiavelli.

In any case, this is a far cry from the Latin West, where knowledge and wisdom are almost always enunciated by a cleric, speaking from his double pedestal as pastor and legitimate interpreter of holy texts to a layman who is by definition illiterate. However, these texts, which are considered to be mirrors, as in the Byzantine and Arab worlds, adapted to the evolution of sociopolitical structures. Letters to bishops of barbarian kingdoms were succeeded by treatises intended for Carolingian kings and emperors, in which the relationship between ecclesiastical and royal power became more complex, similar to the relationship between the emperor and the patriarch in Byzantium. The change in political structure began in the middle of the eighth century and transformed what was perhaps the most important vector of communication with the appearance of the *Laudes Regiae* in the middle of the mass. But it took time to clarify the position of the sovereign in relation to the Church (with Charlemagne’s *Admonitio generalis* in 789) and for reflection to begin on this point before a new interpretation of the royal image could be developed. For the Carolingians deliberately broke with ancient models, seeking the foundations of kingship in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament: Josiah, David, Solomon as models, Nimrod, Saul and Rehoboam as bad examples. The monks Smaragdus and Sedulius Scotus and the bishops Jonas of Orleans and Hincmar of Reims drew their arguments from church fathers (Augustine, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville and an Irish treatise, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*) and each addressed a particular ruler to persuade him that he was invested with a divine office. The major concern of these authors is the salvation of the prince, as if this were the necessary and (almost) sufficient condition for their subjects to be well governed. Moreover, it is significant that Jonas and Hincmar expressed their ideas on royal ministry within the framework of the councils of the Carolingian church, at the Council of Paris in 829 for Jonas, and at the Council of Quierzy in 858 for Hincmar.³⁰ The sovereign must above all protect the Church and its property, on which his salvation depends; as for his subjects, the essential virtue that the prince must practice towards them is justice. But the Carolingian mirrors were a false start: the genre faded as quickly as the empire.

One text, however, escaped this genealogy. Indeed, the *Sirr al-asrār*, already mentioned, entered the West through Andalusia, translated by John of Seville

29 Makkram Abbès, “The Arabic Mirrors”, *supra*.

30 Karl Ubl, “Carolingian Mirrors”, *supra*.

between 1112 and 1128.³¹ This short version of the *Secret of Secrets*, entitled *Epistola Aristotelis de dieta servanda*, of which more than 150 manuscripts survive, retains the Aristotelian reference but concentrates on the medical part of the treatise: as Hugo Bizzarri says,³² it is a *regimen sanitatis* as much as a *regimen principum*. Between 1230 and 1240, a second (long) version comprising the entire text was translated by Philip of Tripoli for the bishop of that Palestinian port: more than 350 manuscripts survive. Accounting for the manuscripts is made very difficult by the existence of multiple versions, each author or compiler reorienting the text according to his own interests or those of his sponsors. Great scholastics, such as the Benedictine Engelbert of Admont³³ and the Franciscan Roger Bacon, studied this text, and Bacon produced an edition with extensive notes in which he showed himself to be much more interested in the scientific aspects than in the political.³⁴

Above all, numerous Latin versions were translated or adapted into the main European languages. For example, Hugo Bizzarri lists two castilian translations of the short version for John of Seville and at least two of the long version for Alfonso X, the most widespread of which is the *Poridat de las poridades*. A new translation (Aragonese, by Juan Fernández de Heredia) seems to have become established; there is also a Catalan version. In French (including Anglo-Norman), there are two complete translations of the long version (one and five manuscripts respectively) and at least seven more or less complete, but better distributed, versions which remove the cosmological, magical and astrological

31 On this text, see Steven J. Williams, "The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets* as a Mirror of Princes", *supra*.

32 Noëlle-Laetitia Perret and Hugo Bizzarri, "A comparative perspective on the circulation and reception of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* in French and the Spanish translation of the Pseudo-Aristotle's *Sirr-al-asrār* (*Secretum Secretorum*) (13th–16th centuries)", *supra*.

33 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/19054-engelbertusadmontensis>. In order not to overextend the notes, I refer to the bio-bibliographic records of the *Studium Parisiense database* (available online at <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/>) which contains data on masters and students of the Parisian universities and schools, with a brief biography for each individual and a complete list of works with the manuscripts and editions containing them. The database is currently being compiled.

34 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/51826-rogiariusbacon>. The edition of the *Secretum secretorum* dates back to the 1270s, as it is based on another translation, by Bartholomew of Messina, made at the court of Frederick II's son, King Manfred of Sicily, as Steven J. Williams has shown. It is known from four manuscripts and is accompanied by a *Tractatus ad declarandum quedam obscure dicta in libro Secreti secretorum*. Both texts are edited by R. Steele and F.M. Delorme, *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconis* (Oxford, 1920), v, pp. 1–172.

passages to concentrate on moral and hygienic aspects.³⁵ In English, there are about fifteen versions, often translated from Anglo-Norman or French.³⁶ To this must be added German translations (at least seven from 1282), Dutch, Italian (at least three), Dutch, Czech (two different translations) and even Russian. All in all, Stephen J. White's estimate of a thousand manuscripts rather than 500 is convincing. But even if the Dutch version, for example, is a real mirror, an abridgment in verse made around 1266 by Jacob Van Maerlant for the young Count Floris V of Holland,³⁷ the *Secret's* character as scientific encyclopedia often makes it appear as a kind of manual of good behavior, going from social morals to hygiene and medicine, clothing and food.³⁸ Once scholars had in their hands the genuine political texts of Aristotle, they stopped considering the *Secret* as an Aristotelian reference text. Only the vernacular versions were ever printed. The *Secret of Secrets* nevertheless disseminated a crypto-Aristotelian ideology in the West, stemming from the assimilation by the Arab authors of Aristotle's *Ethics* and their awareness that humans are first and foremost social animals and that what matters above all is the happiness and prosperity of their society, a prosperity that it is the duty of the prince to foster through his government. This was in any case different from the vision of the Carolingian mirrors, which were soon forgotten, but the evolution of sociopolitical frameworks would lead to the reinvention of mirrors in the West in a completely different form.

3 The Modern State

3.1 Capetian Mirrors and Political Language

The birth of the modern state can be placed in the second half of the thirteenth century, although its genesis began much earlier.³⁹ This is consistent with both

35 Françoise Ferry-Hue, "Secret des secrets", in *Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises. Le Moyen-Âge*, eds. G. Hasenohr and M. Zink (Paris, 1964), pp. 1366–1370.

36 Mahmoud A. Manzalaoui, *Secretum Secretorum. Nine English Versions*, Early English Texts Society, O.S. 276 (London, 1977).

37 Anton Andries Verdenius (ed.), *Heimlijkheid der heimlijkheden* (Amsterdam, 1917), <https://www.uvaerfgoed.nl/beeldbank/xview?identificatie=hdl:11245/3.37017>.

38 Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "The uses of mirrors of princes", *supra*.

39 Joseph R. Strayer, *On the medieval origins of the modern state* (Princeton, 1970), situates the development of the modern state between 1000 and 1600 in Europe; distinguishing the long-term process of "genesis" (from the eleventh century) and the actual beginning (1250–1350), I would be tempted to extend the phase of development to the eighteenth century: Jean-Philippe Genet, "La genèse de l'État moderne: les enjeux d'un programme de recherche", in *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences sociales* 118 (June 1997), pp. 3–18.

the chronological path proposed by Charles Briggs and Cary Nederman and their presentation in the form of a textual⁴⁰ family; it is clear that the three “ancestors” they present are not mirrors, although they have to do both with politics in general and with the affirmation of feudal monarchy. Eugene III, to whom Saint Bernard addressed his “mirror of the popes” (the expression coined by Jean Jolivet)⁴¹, had as enemies not only the people who had driven him out of Rome, but also the savage kings castigated by Giraldus Cambrensis⁴² and John of Salisbury⁴³ in their respective treatises, through the figure of Henry II. The first salvo of authentic mirrors—in that they were addressed to the prince himself to offer him the image of what he should be—was indeed that of mirrors mostly produced at the Capetian court in the years 1250–1265 for Saint Louis and members of his family (his wife Queen Marguerite of Provence or his son-in-law Thibaut v of Champagne) or his court (Thibaut IV of Champagne) by mendicant friars (Vincent of Beauvais,⁴⁴ Guibert of Tournai)⁴⁵ who had passed through the Parisian schools. Others followed, such as the *Speculum dominarum* by the Franciscan Durand de Champagne⁴⁶ for Queen Jeanne de Navarre (the wife of Philip IV the Fair), or the *Liber de informatione principum* (also by Durand de Champagne?)⁴⁷ for Louis X. This statement should be qualified: one of the authors was a future Cistercian (Jean de Limoges)⁴⁸ and it is not absolutely certain that one of the Dominicans, Guillaume Peyraut,⁴⁹ did indeed pass through the Parisian schools. And let us not forget that Saint Louis

40 Charles F. Briggs and Cary J. Nederman, “Western Medieval *Specula*”, *supra*.

41 *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 205 (3), 1988, p. 320.

42 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/23283-gerardusdebarri>.

43 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/50678-johannessesberiensis>.

44 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/52253-vincentiusbelvacensis>.

45 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/50877-guibertustornacensis>.

46 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/19049-durandusdecampania>.

47 The work is anonymous, but it marks a clear change by its interest in the concrete aspects of politics, in particular the beginnings of taxation, which the author contests: see Lydwine Scordia, “Le roi, l’or et le sang des pauvres dans *Le livre de l’information des princes*, miroir anonyme dédié à Louis X”, in *Revue Historique* 306 (3) (2004), pp. 507–532. The text should be read in conjunction with William of Pagula’s treatise, Briggs and Nederman’s *black sheep*, cit. *supra*.

48 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/52254-johanneslemovicensis>; the form of his mirror (Joseph’s dialogue with Pharaoh) is also different; in fact, Nicolas Michel demonstrates that in all likelihood Jean de Limoges was a secular master of arts who became a Cistercian monk at Clairvaux only after writing his mirror between 1240 and 1250: Nicolas Michel, “Entre milieu universitaire et espace monastique: la vie et l’œuvre de Jean de Limoges, nouveaux regards”, in *Revue d’Histoire ecclésiastique* 112 (3–4) (2017), pp. 707–734.

49 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/23409-guillelmusperaldus>.

wrote his own mirror (around 1267?), *Enseignements à son fils et à sa fille*,⁵⁰ for his children, the future Philip III and Isabella, who became the wife of the king of Navarre, Thibaut v of Champagne.

These texts were successful: some of them were also translated, including the *Mirror* of Guillaume Peyraut (into French and Italian), one by Vincent de Beauvais (into French by Jean Daudin) and the *Liber de informatione principum* (into French, by Jean Golein for Charles v), and they were relatively well distributed.⁵¹ They also benefited from the canonization of Saint Louis, whose figure is visible in the background, a charismatic model, and not only for those countries whose dynasties included him in their symbolic genealogy (France, Naples, Hungary, Poland, England). As is rightly pointed out here, these works drew on the old Augustinian background and continued to convey the traditional hostility of clerics towards the power of the lay *domini*, descendants of Nimrod and the predatory kings of the Bible,⁵² who were stripping the Church and abandoning themselves to the vices of lust and greed, guided only by the arbitrary *vis et voluntas* of the tyrant.⁵³ In the face of the development of a feudal monarchy in the Plantagenet style, the charismatic personality of Saint Louis showed that a new type of king, through the strength of his personal virtues, could save the Church and his people by practicing a government of justice instead of the tyranny to which his *potestas* predestined him. The need for the sovereign's salvation is still as strong as in the Carolingian period: everything is based on the sovereign's individual personality, and it is this personality that the "Capetian mirrors" intend to shape through the mastery of the rhetoric of persuasion developed by the mendicant orders; but beyond the royal person, there is not an ounce of state in the Capetian mirrors.

However, at the time when these Capetian mirrors were written, between 1240 and 1260, there was what can be called an "écrit d'État". Benoît Grévin

50 They are published in David O'Connell (ed.), *Les propos de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1974), pp. 185–194. Jacques Le Goff has devoted an interesting development to him (and to Guibert of Tournai) in his chapter "Le roi des 'Miroirs des Princes'", in Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris, 1996), pp. 402–431, especially pp. 418–430.

51 112 manuscripts for the *Somnium Pharaonis* according to FAMA (<http://fama.irht.cnrs.fr/en/>), which however lists only 88; 56 manuscripts for the *De eruditione principum* of Guillaume Peyraut: but this is very few compared to his two "sums" from which the latter drew the essential part of his *exempla* (631 manuscripts for the *Summa de Viciis* and 437 for the *Summa de virtutibus*).

52 Charles F. Briggs and Cary J. Nederman, "Western Medieval *Specula*", *supra*. On the basic hostility of clerics towards secular power, see Philippe Buc, *L'ambiguïté du Livre. Prince, pouvoir et peuple dans les commentaires de la Bible au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1994).

53 On feudal levies and the opposition between procedures *by will* and procedures *by law*, see the analyses of Gerald L. Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369* (Oxford, 1975), p. 8.

reminds us that, although the successive powers in Western Europe had inherited “un même ensemble d’outils communicationnels liés à la romanité impériale”, and in particular a “prose d’État ... rhétoriquement surchargée”, the skills that had allowed them to be used were quickly lost in the High Middle Ages. The first attempts at constructing a political language by feudal and royal chancelleries, inspired by the papal model, did not come until the end of the eleventh century,⁵⁴ when they fully blossomed in the imperial chancellery of Frederick II⁵⁵ and spread to all western chancelleries. This construct took up elements from late antiquity, but incorporated new content, particularly biblical. Even as Latin gave way to the vernacular languages, from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, it passed on its “phraseology”. This is precisely the time when the transformation of feudal kingdoms into modern states was taking place, under the pressure of their increased needs and the ensuing fiscal development; it is therefore tempting to bring these mirrors closer to the writings of contemporary political practice. Of these writings, legislative and normative texts are particularly important.

Let us leave Castile aside. Although the *Siete partidas* (as they were to be called when they finally came into force in the fourteenth century) were assembled by a group of jurists around 1252–1265 at the instigation of Alfonso X the Wise, the undertaking was premature and its impact was initially negative due to opposition from the Castilian aristocracy. Instead, a completely different type of texts, of eastern inspiration, spread, and although these may be compared to mirrors, provided that the term is taken in its broadest sense, they had nothing to do with the Capetian mirrors. In 1251, *Kalila and Dimna* was translated from Arabic into Castilian for the future Alfonso X,⁵⁶ and in 1253 the *Sendebär* for his brother Fadrique. In addition to these collections of stories and *exempla*, there are collections of maxims, also produced in the royal entourage, which “imitate the characteristics of oriental treatises”, such as the *Libro de los doze sabios* and the *Flores de filosofía*. These texts imparted a completely different ideology from that of the French treatises, exalting a monarchy in which the king exercises supreme power unhindered by clerical

54 Benoit Grévin, “Le style de l’État. Réflexions sur la naissance et le développement de la phraséologie étatique occidentale (XII^e–XVII^e s.)”, in *Vecteurs de l’idéal et mutations des sociétés politiques*, ed. J.-Ph. Genet, pp. 221–249.

55 Benoit Grévin, *Rhétorique du pouvoir médiéval: les Lettres de Pierre de la Vigne et la formation du langage européen (XIII^e–XV^e siècle)*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 346 (Rome, 2010).

56 John E. Keller and Robert W. Linker (eds.), *El libro de Calila e Digna* (Madrid, 1967); see Corinne Peneau and Olivier Biaggini, “Acquaintance between wisdom literature, law and the mirrors of princes”, *supra*.

control, a message close in fact to that of the Arabic texts from which they originated or which influenced them. This tradition continued into the fourteenth century in, among others, *El Conde Lucanor* by Don Juan Manuel, this time conveying the views of the aristocracy against a royal power that it considers invasive.⁵⁷

In France too, legislative concerns were present, and in December 1254 Saint Louis published his famous *Ordonnance de réforme*, behind which Louis Carolus-Barré believed he could, no doubt rightly, discern the hand of Guy Foucois, the future Pope Clement IV, one of the main administrators of Alphonse of Poitiers and of Saint Louis.⁵⁸ The recent work of William Jordan, Jacques Le Goff, Gaël Chenard and Marie Dejoux, however, makes it possible to reintroduce order into a tight sequence of which Louis Carolus-Barré was only able to situate a few stages, and whose key moments are the investigations ordered by Saint Louis (1247–1248) and his brother Alphonse of Poitiers (1249, 1251) to prepare their departure for the Seventh Crusade,⁵⁹ which continued after the return of the king in 1254. The technique of the enquiry came from England, through the Capetian conquest of Normandy; the Plantagenet administration practiced it assiduously, and the Capetian monarchy had resorted to it since the reign of Philip-Augustus. However, the aim of Capetian enquiries had become quite different from that of the Anglo-Norman enquiries, which were primarily concerned with infringements of the king's rights or domain, although, to instill confidence in their subjects, they also sometimes aimed to restore unjustly confiscated property (particularly the early enquiries, under Henry II).

On the contrary, from 1247–1248 onwards, the Capetian enquiries are remarkable for their spiritual and penitential scope, which takes on its full meaning in view of the Crusade, the major preoccupation of Saint Louis, to which he subordinated everything else.⁶⁰ The objectives of these enquiries are

57 John E. Keller and Robert W. Linker (eds.), *El libro de Calila e Digna*.

58 Louis Carolus-Barré, "La Grande Ordonnance de Réformation de 1254", in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 117 (1) (1973), pp. 181–186. See Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, pp. 216–220; but see today Marie Dejoux, "La fabrique d'une loi. Retour sur la grande ordonnance de réforme de 1254", in *Médiévales* 79 (2) (2020) pp. 189–208.

59 Gaël Chenard, *L'administration d'Alphonse de Poitiers (1241–1271)* (Paris, 2017), pp. 497–512, in particular on the general enquiry, pp. 512–524. The conclusions of the enquiries and the *Salus Anime* register are published in Pierre-François Garnier and Pascal Guébin, *Enquêtes administratives d'Alfonse de Poitiers : arrêts de son parlement tenu à Toulouse et pièces annexes* (Paris, 1959).

60 William C. Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade* (Princeton, 1970).

described in the letters of commission given to the investigators, most of whom were ecclesiastics or lay or mendicant friars; they were to collect all complaints against royal officers and, after examining their validity, to restore the sums or goods that had been wrongfully appropriated. Marie Dejoux proposes to speak of “enquêtes de réparation” rather than administrative investigations.⁶¹ They were followed by several others in the domains of Alphonse of Poitiers in 1249, when he was about to join the king as a prisoner in Damietta, and then, as he had crossed again on his return, in 1250–1251, his first departure having been cancelled. There were then almost annual enquiries, although they were not always general, as, from postponement to postponement, Alphonse did not leave until 1270, attending Louis in Tunis at his death, and dying himself near Genoa on his way home. These investigations were also followed by ordinances in which reforms were attempted to remedy the shortcomings noted, as in 1251 (the officers of the county of Toulouse),⁶² and in 1253 and 1255 (the importance of morality in the choice by the seneschals of tenants on the provosts’ farms).⁶³ The similarities between all these texts are numerous: Marie Dejoux has thus counted nearly fifteen similarities between the Alphonse ordinance on the officers of the county of Toulouse of 1251 and the *Grande ordonnance* of Saint Louis of 1254. The penitential concern is omnipresent: the title of one of Alphonse of Poitiers’ main registers, *Salus anime*, is significant. Although undoubtedly a response to a demand from public opinion, reparations were primarily intended for the salvation of the prince’s soul, and in this respect were fully in line with the soteriological aim of the Capetian mirrors.

Across the English Channel, meanwhile, the political discourse, albeit exactly contemporary, was completely different. In fact, is it really necessary to cross the Channel? The tug of war between John Lackland and his barons, essentially due to the king’s financial needs and his desire to draw on his subjects’ assets, began as soon as he acceded to the throne, culminated in *Magna Carta*, and almost led the father of Saint Louis to take the English throne. Louis VIII did not fail to inform himself thoroughly about the institutions and conditions of the political dialogue that he would have to conduct in his future kingdom;⁶⁴ in fact, he may have had a copy of the *Magna Carta* during his

61 Marie Dejoux, *Les enquêtes de Saint Louis. Gouverner et sauver son âme* (Paris, 2014).

62 Marie Dejoux, *Les enquêtes de Saint Louis*, p. 357.

63 Chenard, *L’administration d’Alphonse de Poitiers*, p. 517.

64 See Frédérique Lachaud, “La collection londonienne de lois : un ‘Miroir’ pour Louis de France (1216–1217) ?”, in *Les miroirs aux Princes aux frontières des genres*, ed. N. Michel, forthcoming.

English adventure.⁶⁵ The Capetian entourage was all the more aware of the crisis that England was going through at the same time as the mirrors were being written because Saint Louis was both Henry III's brother-in-law—they had married two sisters—and the brother-in-law of Simon de Montfort, who had married Henry III's sister. In January 1264, the opposing parties appealed to the king of France to arbitrate their dispute at the Mise of Amiens; in order to be able to decide, the king received some of the texts issued by both Henry and the barons. He was not impressed by them; in his arbitration, he ordered that all these "*predictas provisiones, ordinationes, et obligationes omnes, quocumque nomine censeantur*" be cancelled.⁶⁶ He is seen to be insensitive to this effort to institutionalize the language of negotiation between king and subject, which continued as confrontation and up to civil war, from the Magna Carta in 1215 to the *Dictum* of Kenilworth in 1266. The Lord Edward, on the other hand, understood the meaning of this evolution of political dialogue and language: having defeated Montfort, he took over many elements of the baronial *Provisions of Westminster* of 1259 in what became the *Statute of Marlborough* in 1277 and, as Edward I, gradually shaped Parliament.⁶⁷ For their part, the successors of Saint Louis, especially Philip the Fair and his sons, quickly aligned themselves with the new political language, abandoning the penitential aspects of reparations and transforming institutions by opening up dialogue with their subjects.

3.2 *The Shock of Aristotelianism*

Did these transformations in political language and the affirmation of the modern state at the end of the thirteenth century imply the end of the mirrors for princes? The answer is no, but it was at the cost of a real revolution. The authors of the great mirrors of the late thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome, were friars, like Vincent of Beauvais or William Peraldus, and they both addressed a specific king: the king of Cyprus, Hugh II of Lusignan by Thomas in Rome around 1266–1267, and the future Philip the Fair for Giles in Paris in 1277–1279; but they based their approach on an excellent knowledge of Aristotle. Political Aristotelianism was not totally new; although it was diffused, as we have seen, in the versions of the *Secret of Secrets*, and even in tales of eastern origin that circulated at the time, it was not unknown to John of Salisbury,

65 The Treaty of Lambeth stipulated in 1217 that Prince Louis should return, among other royal records, "the charters of liberties made in the time of King John at Runnymede": Sir James Holt, *Magna Carta* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1992), p. 443.

66 Reginald E. Treharne and Ivor J. Sanders, *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 280–290 (citation p. 286).

67 Treharne and Sanders, *Documents of the Baronial Movement*, p. 60.

even if the great texts of Aristotle were still unavailable.⁶⁸ But the translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (by Robert Grosseteste in Oxford), the *Rhetoric* (by Hermannus Alemannus in Toledo around 1250–1260) and the *Politics* (by William of Moerbeke in 1260) in the years 1250–1260 radically changed the situation. Thomas Aquinas commented on *Politics* and *Ethics* during the years 1269–1272 in Paris, where Giles de Rome was attending his classes; he himself commented on the *Rhetoric* in Paris. Thomas Aquinas' mirror is unfortunately unfinished, and although it was later completed by another mirror written by the Dominican Ptolemy of Lucca, that was in a spirit quite different from that of Thomas.⁶⁹ We shall therefore concentrate on the *De regimine principum* of Giles of Rome,⁷⁰ whose success was immense; the treatise was translated into 38 versions in ten languages, of which 440 manuscripts have survived (319 for the Latin version, not including the abridgments).⁷¹

Although, as we have said, it is undoubtedly a mirror, it breaks radically with those that preceded it. The plan of the work is purely Aristotelian: the first book shows how the prince must govern himself to achieve happiness (see *Ethics*), the second how he must govern his house to achieve harmony (the *Economics*), the third how he must govern the City so that his majesty imposes itself on the kingdom harmoniously (*Politics*). Several traditional elements of the content of mirrors of antiquity are found in this plan: the first part deals with morals, passions and virtues; the second with the choice of advisers and their qualities. Above all, at the beginning of book III, he poses the principle that humans are by nature social animals and that the City is a natural organism, which implies that its government must be guided by natural reason. This does not mean abandoning the Christian virtues—they were dealt with in the first part—but it does imply choosing the best possible regime, and Giles relies on Aristotle to justify the choice of monarchical power, which is best able to guarantee the happiness and prosperity of the social community. He therefore refers politics to nature, as does Thomas Aquinas, for whom human laws are based on natural law, not divine law.⁷² But Thomas proposes an integrated

68 Cary J. Nederman and John Brückmann, "Aristotelianism in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 21 (2) (1983), pp. 203–229; the article shows that John was familiar with the *Organon*, including the *Topics*.

69 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-paris1.fr/individus/12000-thomasdeaquino>.

70 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-paris1.fr/individus/50875-aegidiusromanus>.

71 Jean-Philippe Genet, "Giles de Rome dans le champ théologico-politique à la fin du XIIIe et au début du XIVe siècle", in *Le théologico-politique au Moyen-Âge*, ed. D. Poirel (Paris, 2020), pp. 103–123.

72 François Daguét, "Thomas Aquinas and the Renaissance of Political Science in the 13th Century", in *Le théologico-politique au Moyen-Âge*, ed. D. Poirel, pp. 87–102.

model of the coexistence of the two laws, in which “the natural edifice, composed of human laws based on natural law, can only play its role fully if it is supplemented by divine law. ... This whole rational organism functions, left to itself, only in a defective manner. It needs to be supported (*adjuvatus*) by grace in order to operate properly”.⁷³ For Giles, perhaps forced by circumstances—for he had become one of Boniface VIII’s advisors and must be seen as inspiring, along with Matthew of Aquasparta, the bull *Unam Sanctam*—the relationship between the two laws, natural and supernatural, was a hierarchical one; this is what he expressed in 1302 in his *De ecclesiastica potestate*.⁷⁴ While royal power enjoys a certain autonomy in the natural order, it remains subject to the supernatural order, which implies the supremacy of papal power.

It should be added that the political Aristotelianism seen in the *Nicomachean Ethics* was also disseminated at the same time by another text, the *Treasure*⁷⁵ of Brunetto Latini.⁷⁶ This notary, who was to become a renowned rhetorical master by the end of his life, was a supporter of Charles of Anjou, whom he served in Tuscany and Florence, notably as chancellor in 1272–1274, and to whom he dedicated his work in 1266. It is written in French, which shows that its author was trying to reach a wide audience. But this layman did not choose to write a mirror for prince, a genre still reserved for ecclesiastics. He chose to write a kind of encyclopedia in three books, the second of which is on ethics and logic, and the third on rhetoric and politics, a section he entitled “How the lord should govern his people”. Latini frequented academic circles in Paris, which may have given him access to early translations of the *Ethics*, but he was certainly familiar with Eustratius’ commentary on the *Ethics*. Although less successful than that of Giles of Rome, the work was nonetheless widely read: 95 manuscripts of the original version survive, and it was translated into Latin, Italian (four translations and 38 manuscripts), French (re-translated from Tuscan), Castilian (15 manuscripts), Aragonese (one manuscript) and Catalan (three translations in five manuscripts). If we add to this the numerous manuscripts of the *Secreta Secretorum*, conveyors in Latin or in the vulgar of a diffuse Aristotelianism, as we have seen, it is clear that from the end of the thirteenth century onwards, the spread of political Aristotelianism was rapid and reached a wide range of audiences, especially because the *De regimine principum* was quickly translated into French, as we shall see.

73 François Daguet, “Thomas Aquinas and the Renaissance of Political Science”, p. 97.

74 Robert W. Dyson, ed. and trans., *Giles of Rome on Ecclesiastical Power. A medieval theory of World Government. A critical edition and translation* (New York, 2004).

75 Francis James Carmody, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, 4 vols. (Berkeley, 1939–1948).

76 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/1564-brunettolatini>.

4 The Consequences of the Success of *De Regimine Principum*

The triumphant success of *De Regimine principum*, coupled with the indirect impact of *De ecclesiastica potestate*, had two main consequences. One, however, is of no direct interest to us here: it is the radical transformation of the field of political theory, where the problem of the nature/supernaturalness of political power and of the possible superiority of the power of the pope over that of the Emperor or kings triggered a virulent debate between Augustinian theologians on the one hand (James of Viterbo, Augustine of Ancona) and their opponents (John Quidort of Paris, Marsilius of Padua, William of Ockham, the Dante of *De monarchia*). This debate became increasingly complex and quickly extended to new questions, prompted by the events and institutional transformations that disrupted the fourteenth century. This field of political theory also gave new life to old texts, such as John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus*, which was once again copied and read.⁷⁷ Reflections on the State were found only incidentally in the mirrors, which, while retaining some of Giles' concepts (the notion of government, the rational approach to the problems of societies perceived as natural structures), still put the personal—and Christian—virtues of the prince back in the foreground.

The other, however, is of direct interest to us, for the success of texts of Aristotelian inspiration profoundly modifies the field of production of mirrors for princes. Indeed, the copies of the manuscripts of the *De Regimine*, to which those of the *Secret* may be added, while leaving some room for the production of new texts, encouraged an evolution of the genre: from this date onwards, we can indeed speak of a genre in which the memory of Saint Louis, as seen in Capetian mirrors, and the Aegidian model merge. The reading public continued to believe in the pedagogical virtue of mirrors, and it seemed normal to buy them for the training of young men: William of Paris,⁷⁸ the Dominican preceptor of the children of King Philip the Fair, had a missal worth 20 livres parisis bought for the princes' chapel, as well as a breviary and a *De eruditione principum*, perhaps that of Vincent of Beauvais, for 32 livres parisis, along with two Bibles for Louis and his brother Philip (Philip V) for 80 livres tournois.⁷⁹

77 Frédérique Lachaud, "Filiation and Context. The Medieval Afterlife of the *Polycraticus*", in *A Companion to John of Salisbury*, eds. C. Grellard and F. Lachaud (Leiden, 2015), pp. 377–438.

78 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/50809-guillelmusdeparisius/>.

79 Jules Viard (ed.), *Les journaux du trésor de Philippe IV le Bel* (Collection des documents inédits sur l'Histoire de France) (Paris, 1940), p. 653, no. 4480; see Sean L. Field, *The Beguine, the Angel and the Inquisitor: The Trials of Marguerite Porete and Guiard of Cressonssart* (Notre-Dame, 2012).

Hence a kind of dichotomy in literary production between Latin and vernacular mirrors. The Latin mirrors are quite numerous, but the vast majority of them had a very low circulation. Some of them aim to address a message to the king on a contemporary political problem and wrap their message in a more or less careful mirror presentation; this is the case, for example, of William of Pagula's⁸⁰ *Speculum regis Edwardi III*. Five manuscripts survive, while the same William is the author of an *Oculus sacerdotis* of which more than fifty survive (not to mention its widespread abridgment by John de Burgh). Another remarkable mirror is the one that the Infante Peter of Aragon (a layman, but soon to enter the Franciscan order) addressed to his nephew, King Peter IV of Aragon: he intended to give him useful advice on the war he would soon be waging with Castile and to remind him that he would need to enlist the support and collaboration of his subjects. Only one manuscript is known. Alexandra Beauchamp, who has studied this text, emphasizes its pragmatic aspect and notes that there is no trace of Aristotelian or Aegidian influence.⁸¹ Other Latin mirrors are more like visiting cards left by the author to make himself known and to signal the potential granting of a favor.

Mirrors in the vernacular are even more numerous, mixing translations of the Capetian mirrors (already mentioned), translations of Giles of Rome, and some new texts. Some were the result of commissions and had a small circulation, such as the *Avis au roy*.⁸² Like the Latin mirrors, they can be a response to the demands of the moment. Thus *Um styrilsi konunga* was written (probably by Matthias Laurentii)⁸³ after 1340 for the children of King Magnus Eriksson. But to the three parts of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, which he adapts, the author saw fit to add an introductory chapter in which he asserts, in accordance with the views of his patron, the superiority of the hereditary principle

80 Josephus Moisant (ed.), *De Speculo Regis Edwardi III* (Paris, 1891), pp. 83–123 and Cary J. Nederman (ed. and trans.), *Political Thought in Early Fourteenth-Century England* (Tempe, 2002), on *purveyance*. This is a good example, as the first version is a petition addressed to the king by William as rector of Winkfield in Windsor Forest, while the second version is a real *speculum* written in more general, if no less severe, terms; see Briggs and Nederman, *supra*, pp. 37–40.

81 The text is available online: <http://www.narpan.net/ben/indexderegimine.htm>. On this mirror, see Isabelle Beauchamp, “De l'action à l'écriture : le *De regimine principum* de l'infant Pierre d'Aragon (v. 1357–1358)”, in *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 35/1 (2005), pp. 233–270.

82 Julien Lepot, “Le cœur équivoque dans l'*Avis aus roys* : un 'miroir des princes' du XIV^e siècle”, in *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 28 (2013), pp. 273–294, *CRMH*, <https://doi.org/10.4000/crm.13418>. Julien Lepot believes that this is a treatise probably written by John the Good's confessor, the Dominican Pierre de Treilly, future bishop of Senlis, for the king's children in 1347.

83 <http://studium-parisiense.univ-parisi.fr/individus/8893-matthiaslaurentiideupsalia>.

in royal succession, whereas Giles placed election in the first place (which was in fact the Swedish tradition), hereditary succession being imposed in the end only because of corruption.⁸⁴ The market was, however, invaded by translations and adaptations of the Capetian mirrors and especially those of Giles of Rome's *De Regimine principum*. The Castilian translation of Giles of Rome was made for the future Peter I. Provided with glosses and additions, it survives in three distinct redactions, some twenty manuscripts and two incunabula editions.⁸⁵ Noëlle-Laetitia Perret's study of the French versions shows that only one of them, made by Henri de Gauchy, was really disseminated; but, whether they were unable to obtain it, were unaware of its existence, or recognized its limitations, patrons never ceased to request new translations. It is remarkable that the social level of the enthusiasts was extremely varied, from the French king Charles V himself to a simple bourgeois from Orléans.⁸⁶ Copyists of these other mirrors sometimes ascribed the often anonymous texts they were copying to Giles, as shown by certain manuscripts of the *Liber de informatione principum*. These texts were generally not very successful, with the exception of those distinguished by their exceptional literary quality, such as Thomas Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*, which is essentially an adaptation of Gilles de Rome's *De regimine principum* (it is counted among the 38 versions mentioned above), and the works of Christine de Pisan, whom Charles Briggs and Cary Nederman rightly refer to as "the most prolific, and yet often overlooked, author of political 'mirror' books in medieval Europe".⁸⁷

5 Decline or New Departure?

In the absence of striking successes, the mirror genre seemed to wither away in the fifteenth century, but the evolution of political structures and cultural transformations gave it new life. The progress of an absolute monarchy of divine right, which was intended to concentrate power in the hands of the prince without his becoming a tyrant, on the one hand, and a humanism now capable of proposing reading programs that included all the

84 Corinne Péneau and Olivier Biaggini, "Acquaintance", *supra*.

85 Corinne Péneau and Olivier Biaggini, "Acquaintance", *supra*.

86 Noëlle-Laetitia Perret and Hugo Bizzarri, "A comparative perspective", *supra*; see Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, *Les traductions françaises du De Regimine Principum de Gilles de Rome* (Leiden, 2011).

87 Charles F. Briggs and Cary J. Nederman, "Western Medieval *Specula*", *supra*.

great texts of antiquity,⁸⁸ on the other, led to the exaltation of a dominating monarchy whose prince must be virtuous, of course, but also perfectly well trained by a thoughtful educational program. Among the mirrors that continued to be offered to sovereigns or their children, whether commissioned or not, there was one that would profoundly mark the era: the *Institutio principis christiani*, written by Erasmus for Charles of Ghent, the future Emperor Charles V, who was all the more attentive to the pedagogical aspect because he had little confidence in his pupil's intellectual abilities.⁸⁹ The rediscovery of ancient texts—Sylvène Édouard points out the influence of Isocrates' Nicocles discourse and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*—offered a wide range of new models, while Erasmus' Christian humanism tempered royal absolutism with an insistence on the necessary *sapientia* of the sovereign and the importance of the wise advisors who should surround him. The survey presented here concerns a dozen mirrors (but there are many others, such as Guillaume Budé's *Institution du prince*) and does not go beyond the 1550s,⁹⁰ but the genre continued until at least the eighteenth century in northern Europe. Monique Cottret suggests that Jacques-Joseph Duguet's *Institution d'un prince* is the last mirror,⁹¹ although she herself adds that there may be another, and the most beautiful of all, Mozart and Schikaneder's *Magic Flute*.

But this applies only to northern Europe. Italian humanism seems to have treated the mirror genre quite differently. Of course, there were mirrors in Italy, such as Giovanni Botero's *De regia sapientia*, dedicated to Charles-Emmanuel of Savoy in 1583. But many of the Italian Renaissance states had moved away from the model of the modern state, and humanists no longer offered their patrons the model of Saint Louis but that of Julius Caesar. The mirror was completely folded into historical biography, as in Roman antiquity, while the discourse became purely rhetorical. From this point of view, the *De rebus gestis Alphonsi I commentarii* by Bartolomeo Facio (1455), Lorenzo Valla's successful rival for the position of official historiographer of Alfonso of Aragon, King of Naples, was a text that influenced the whole historiography of the *signori*,

88 Sylvène Édouard, "Specula principum and sapientia in The Renaissance: a political and social utopia?", *supra*.

89 Marie Barral-Baron, "Place et rôle de l'histoire dans l'*Institution du prince chrétien* d'Érasme", in *Le Prince au miroir*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia, pp. 351–367.

90 See Reinhardt Volker, "Political Praxis and Political Theory in the Florence of the Medici", *supra*, for further mirrors.

91 Monique Cottret, "The *Institution of a Prince* by Jacques-Joseph Duguet (Leiden, 1739). Un dernier miroir?", in *Le Prince au miroir*, eds. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia, pp. 393–403.

starting with that of the Sforzas, the *De vita rebusque gestis Francisci Sfortiae* by Lodrisio Crivelli and the *De rebus gestis Francisci Sfortiae commentarii* by Giovanni Simonetta.⁹² The Italian model even reached northern Europe, where Tito Livio da Forlì was commissioned to write mirror biographies for Henry V, King of England, and his brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who commissioned the two works. The heroic rhetoric of the princely biographies finds a striking parallel in the portrait of the prince in armor, a characteristic of Italian Renaissance⁹³ painting.

But the “princely republic” of Medici Florence⁹⁴ had little taste for armor: Alexander de Medici, the gravedigger of the Republic, was the first to wear a shining suit of armor in Giorgio Vasari’s portrait of him in 1534.⁹⁵ It was therefore not a question of the rhetoric of princely power; Florentine historians, starting with Leonardo Bruni, developed a whole rhetoric of freedom to retrace the history of the social community that was Florence. And it is within this framework that Florentine thinkers developed their ideas, in the dark atmosphere of a city marked by the descent of the French upon Italy, the revolution that drove out Peter de Medici, the preaching of Savonarola and the failure of the Republican restoration. By basing his theory on the actions of men “as they are and not as they ought to be”,⁹⁶ Machiavelli wiped out the Christian precepts that ecclesiastics had tried to instill in princes for centuries. What counts in the end is *virtù*, that quality that allows one to grasp the best “way of doing” according to the occasion.⁹⁷

The dialogue in which the cleric stands above the layperson was dead: like Philippe de Commines before him, whose misnamed *Memoirs* also invigorated the mirror genre,⁹⁸ Machiavelli addresses the reader directly, using his

92 Gary Ianziti, *Humanistic Historiography under the Sforzas* (Oxford, 1988).

93 See Diane H. Bodart, “Le prince miroir : métaphore optique du corps politique”, in *Le miroir et l'espace du prince in Italian Renaissance art*, ed. P. Morel (Tours, 2018), pp. 123–143.

94 Reinhard Volker, “Refutation, Parody, Annihilation. The end of the Mirror for Princes in Machiavelli, Vettori and Guicciardini. Political Praxis and Political Theory in the Florence of the Medici”, *supra*.

95 See Antonella Fenech Kone, “1534 : trois artistes pour Alexandre de Médicis, premier duc de Florence”, in *De Dante à Rubens. L'artiste engagé* eds. É. Anheim and P. Boucheron (Le pouvoir symbolique en Occident (1300–1640) - XI) (Paris, 2020), p. 313, esp. pp. 326–328 for the analysis of the symbolism of decorative elements of this portrait “d’un prince victorieux dont la suzeraineté vient des armes”.

96 Volker, “Refutation, Parody”, *supra*.

97 Jean-Louis Fournel and Jean-Claude Zancarini, *De principatibus. Le prince* (Paris, 2000), pp. 20–27.

98 Joël Blanchard (ed.), *Philippe de Commines. Mémoires* (Geneva, 2007), 2 vols.

knowledge, intelligence and experience as a Florentine agent of a specific regime (the Republic), to propose an analysis that is entirely new in its absolute cynicism. The effective prince must be cruel, manipulative, concealed, a liar if need be; religion is only one of his instruments. Machiavelli's Prince owes nothing to the Prince of the mirrors, and even his attempt to save him by his *virtù* and education cannot withstand the sarcasm of a Guicciardini or a Francesco Vettori (a colleague and friend of Machiavelli's), depicting the popes who have succeeded each other on the throne of Saint Peter's since Paul II. Volker Reinhart places particular emphasis on the case of Clement VII as analyzed by Guicciardini, for whom Clement was the prince with the highest qualities imaginable, yet who by his very qualities caused the ultimate catastrophe of the sack of Rome by Charles V's *Landsknechte*. Guicciardini contrasts this failure with the success of the Venetian republic, governed by the collective experience and intelligence of a class of individuals selected for their merit. His reflections align with those of a work that was the great success of the modern era, contributing to the marginalization of mirrors, Baldassare Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, in which the solution to the problem of government lies less in the virtue of the Prince than in that of his entourage.⁹⁹ Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governor* also follows this line. Giovanni Botero's attempt to rescue the Prince's Christian virtues in his *Ragione di Stato* stumbled on the question of religion: if, between Catholic Christian princes, one must behave according to the precepts of Christian education as laid down by the Council of Trent, this is impossible with regard to the "unbelieving" powers of the enemies of the divine word, those Protestants against whom the reason of state and all the moral compromises and crimes it justifies are allowed.



The introduction of Aristotelianism and the triumph of *De regimine principum* unleashed the growth of political theory, but the mirrors for princes became, for many readers, clones, in less finished form, of the Aegidian mirror. The only ones that really stand out are those that focus on a specific problem or benefit from the literary talent of their authors, like Hoccleve or Christine de Pisan. But even Christine de Pisan, a courtly writer if ever there was one, was not content with the genre of the mirror to the prince; she also entered the historical field with the *Livre des faits et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles v. Le livre du corps de policie*, generally considered to be one of her mirrors, also belongs

99 Volker, "Refutation, Parody", *supra*.

by its content to the political field. The development of the field of politics is one of the constitutive elements in the genesis of the modern state;¹⁰⁰ but the initially considerable place occupied by mirrors in this field was progressively reduced as new objects of debate and controversy appeared. As for the field of history, an inexhaustible source of *exempla*, which was also expanding rapidly with the affirmation of the state, its texts also came to compete with mirrors, as shown by the heroic biographies of Italian princes, or Philippe de Commines so called *Mémoires*. Christian humanism may have led people to believe in a new beginning, but the morose contemplation of the damage caused by the modern state of war led the best minds to make this fatal observation: the worst enemy of the king, who is the incarnation of the state, is the king within the limits of his human body, all too human, impossible to educate or raise to the level of perfection, a perfection that would be useless, moreover, in confronting the hazards of the moment.¹⁰¹ So what good are mirrors?

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100 Jean-Philippe Genet, *La genèse de l'État moderne. Culture et société politique en Angleterre* (Paris, 2003), pp. 292–305.

101 Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957).

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